North Staffordshire National Trust Association

Newsletter No. 128 Summer 2024

www.northstaffsnt.org.uk





Visiting the RAF Museum Cosford

Arrangements for Trips

Coaches now depart promptly from **Brunswick Street** at the front of the Jubilee Baths. **The car park on School Street is now short stay.** The nearest long stay car park is the public car park next to the Borough Arms Hotel. We do not pick up members en route.

Please send a separate cheque, with the event name on the reverse, and a stamped addressed envelope of at least 8½" x 4" for each event applied for, even if it is with the same organiser. People wishing to sit together should complete one form.

Non-members travelling as members' guests pay an extra £2 for Coach Outings and £1 for car trips. If circumstances dictate they have lower priority booking.

Please make cheques payable to "North Staffs National Trust Association". Cheques are normally not cleared until after an event. We will give notice if we need to do otherwise.

Refunds on cancellation are possible only if there is a waiting list. Please do not find your own substitute travellers: people on the waiting list have priority.

The Committee reserves the right to cancel any event that is not viable.

The National Trust makes insurance arrangements, including public liability insurance, for Supporter Groups that carry out volunteering/activities for the benefit of the National Trust.

Whilst participating in an event please make sure that you carry the organiser's mobile phone number from the booking acceptance form in case you get lost. Please DO NOT MAKE alternative arrangements to get home without first telling the trip organiser.

This Newsletter is published by North Staffordshire National Trust Association to provide members with information on the forthcoming programme, reports on recent events, and other membership issues. The text and images are copyright and may not be reproduced without the owner's permission. Any views expressed by individual contributors are their own and not necessarily of the NSNTA or the NT. No liability will be accepted for errors or omissions.

We are always delighted to welcome new members – see further details on the inserts in the centre of this Newsletter.

The editor welcomes items of direct relevance to Association activities, and thanks all contributors, with apologises for failure to acknowledge any, particularly if sent by post.

The Newsletter is published in April, August and December. Copy and correspondence for each issue should be addressed to NSNTA.newsletter@outlook.com (01782 791360) by the 15th of the preceding month at the absolute latest (but earlier if possible!)

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North Staffordshire National Trust Association

Newsletter No. 128 Summer 2024 Programme

A Note from the Chair



Welcome to this new programme of activities and reports. I am sad the membership has dropped to around 250. It seems a long way from the glory days when we could plan events and not worry that if no more than 10 per cent of the membership booked, they wouldn't happen.

In search of inspiration, I look for links between the various outings. It wasn't difficult to spot that there are some fine historic properties set in beautiful gardens or landscape. You will, not for the first time, be in the footsteps of some famous people.

Emerging from behind topiary, I don't know if I would have been more frightened to have met Owain Glyndwr's daughter, General Patton, Edith Sitwell or more likely, since he was at two of them, Cillian Murphy as Thomas Shelby.

There is just time to note the good work of the Trust, supporters like you and tenacious donor families. Had it not been for The Trust, just after World War Two, Croft Castle would have been the eighteenth historic house in Herefordshire to have been demolished for redevelopment.

Happy Exploring,

Ralph

Data Protection Policy

The North Staffordshire National Trust Association (NSNTA) is a non-profit voluntary organisation which endeavours to comply with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998, and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of May 2018.

Personal data collected by us on membership forms, renewal forms and event booking forms will be limited to: names, addresses, email addresses and telephone numbers. It will only be used for: administration of membership, communication of information and organisation of events within and related to the NSNTA.

Personal data will not be shared with the National Trust or any third party, or to other members.

Membership lists are destroyed when 18 months old. Lists relating to specific events are destroyed when the event is complete.

Contact the Membership Secretary if you wish to view/amend/delete any of your personal data.

By providing personal data on our membership forms and event booking forms, you are consenting to this, our Data Protection Policy, and to our stated use of your personal data.

In order to comply with the terms of GDPR and to improve security and privacy the following policies are being adopted with particular reference to the publishing of details of members organising events. Full leaders' postal addresses will only appear on the booking forms and not in the main text of the magazine, which will just carry email addresses and telephone numbers. The booking forms are included in Newsletters distributed to bona-fide members of NSNTA but will not be contained in copies of the Newsletter posted on the website. Access to back copies of the Newsletter on the website which contain leaders' addresses will be restricted by password, available to members on request.

Attendees of NSNTA events are advised that they may be included in group photographs for publication in the Newsletter or on the website, but they will not be named without their specific permission. If anyone does not want to appear in such photographs, please let the organiser or the editor know.

Forthcoming Events

All talks commence at 7:30 p.m. at the North Staffordshire Conference Centre (the Medical Institute), Hartshill Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 7NY unless otherwise stated.

Some events book up very early, others more slowly. You can check with the organiser or the STOP PRESS on the web site if events are full or are undersubscribed, or if it has been necessary to change details or booking arrangements, availability etc. or there are other matters which may be of interest. Do let the organiser know if you are interested in an event but can't attend so the feasibility of repeating it on another date can be assessed. Remember also the web site has copies of past Newsletters going back to 2002, and also a list of past events. The latter is fairly sketchy for the earlier days so if you can add more information, dates, corrections etc., or have good copies of earlier Newsletters that could be added, please get in touch with the editor.

Monday 13th May: Car Trip: Social event at Biddulph Grange.

Tea in The Dining Room at Biddulph Grange, to coincide, hopefully, with the arrival of the new display cabinet, to whose cost The North Staffs Association contributed. Helen Wilshaw, Visitor Operations and Experience Manager, will give a short presentation followed by Tea prepared by the Chef at Biddulph. There is no charge for this event, but entry fee to the property will be required unless you have an NT membership card.

The event is open to a maximum of 40 persons. Please contact Ralph White by email or booking form, not telephone, thank you. If emailing please include all information requested on the booking form. If sending booking form please remember SAE and new postage charge!

We will try to accommodate any reasonable special dietary requirements which do not add significantly to our costs! The offer is Tea/Coffee, Scone, Jam, and Cream or Cake.

Please apply to Ralph White by May 3rd.

If booked but unable to attend please give at least 24 hours notice otherwise we may be unable to reallocate your booking to someone on the waiting list and/or will be charged for refreshments.

Tuesday 21st May 7:00pm: AGM and Film: Ray Johnson 'Biddulph Grange.' FORTY-FOURTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NORTH STAFFS CONFERENCE CENTRE, HARTSHILL

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for absence
- 2. Chairman's Opening Remarks
- 3. Approval of Minutes of the 43rd AGM
- 4. Approval of Minutes of the EGM held October 2023
- 5. Secretary's Report Matters Arising
- 6. Treasurer's Report Matters Arising
- 7. Setting of Subscription Level for 2024 2025
- 8. Approvals for re-election to committee *
- 9. Nominations for Officers and Committee **
- 10. Election of Officers and Committee for 2024 2025
- 11. Any Other Business
- * Under our constitution, committee members should normally stand down after 5 years. Nearly all of the current committee have served for at least this time, and wish to continue in post. They therefore require the approval of the AGM to stand for re-election this year.
- ** Members are invited to submit nominations for the Committee and Officers (Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer). Each nomination should be signed by the proposer, a seconder and the nominee, all of whom must be paid-up members of the Association. If possible, please send nominations in advance of the meeting to Richard Adams, Secretary, 79 Whitmore Road, Newcastle ST5 3LZ.

Film introduced by Ray Johnson on Biddulph Grange

Ray Johnson MBE. Emeritus Professor of Film and Documentaries at Staffordshire University. Actor, writer, entrepreneur and entertaining polymath. If you are an Arts Organisation, Museum, from Stoke Film Theatre to The West End and a Royal Variety Performance, if you need archive footage, Ray is your go-to man. Ray made this film for The National Trust.

You will be amazed at how he was able to illustrate the story of Biddulph Grange and Gardens. A must see. Look at his Linked in profile, this is a rare opportunity.

Thursday 6th June: Car Trip: "The Buxton Experience".

This trip is fully booked with a waiting list. Don't forget to bring your water bottles to refill with free Buxton water from St. Ann's Well.

Sunday 30th June: Car Trip: Arley Hall and Gardens, Northwich, Cheshire.

This garden festival is one of my favourite events of the year, a great day out for everyone who likes plants, gardens, crafts, food and fun. In addition to entry to the numerous horticultural stalls and marquees, visitors will also be able to explore the Hall itself and to tour the stunning gardens, with their famous double, herbaceous beds. Garden tours throughout the day are led by the owner, Lord Ashbrook and the Head Gardener and are included in the ticket as are a programme of talks and demonstrations. Experts from The Professional Gardeners' Guild will be on hand to answer any questions you may have.

High quality garden accessories, crafts and gifts will also be available to purchase and a selection of food and drink outlets will satisfy all tastes. In the morning, the Wabash Jazz Trio will provide entertainment followed by the Lymm Concert band in the afternoon.

Cost £16.50, non-Members £17.50, includes admission to the Festival, Hall, Gardens and Guided Walks and the usual contribution to the National Trust. Arley Hall will be signposted from both Junctions 19 and 20 off the M6 so follow the brown tourist signs or your Sat Nav CW9 6NA.

We will meet as a group outside the main entrance marquee at 11:00am and once we have gained admittance the rest of the day is yours to enjoy as you wish before your return home whenever it suits you to do so.

Enquiries: email st.till@icloud.com or tel:01782 405415 or to book, please return the application form with your cheque and a SAE to Sue Till.

Closing date 31^{st} May, no refunds can be made after 14^{th} June when tickets will have to be paid for by the organiser.

Sunday 14th July: Walk: Little Moreton Hall circular ramble.

Four and a half miles, easy walking, no hills, eight stiles.

This walk starts and finishes at Little Moreton Hall, a favourite and special place for many of us. We will head off in to the Cheshire countryside, taking a loop to Scholar Green then a second loop back to the hall for lunch and/or a chance to tour the hall again.

We will meet on the main car park for an 11am start, and expect to return by around 1.30pm. The walk is about 4.5 miles, all on level ground though there are about eight stiles to negotiate. It's a mixture of grassy fields, quiet roads and canal towpath. We do need to cross the busy A34 road twice, with appropriate care — away from this road we soon find the peace of countryside.





Landmarks en route include Rode Hall, All Saints Church Scholar Green, and Ransdell Hall. The

latter predates the Macclesfield canal which now runs across the bottom of their front lawn – perhaps uniquely, the then owners came to an agreement with the canal company who, as compensation for the loss of unimpeded views, erected a decorative fence along the canal. This fence is still there 197 years later, well maintained, and at least a quarter of a mile long.

This event could suit couples where one enjoys walking and one does not or can not. Little Moreton Hall can easily entertain one partner for a couple of hours while the other takes their exercise!

Suggested donation for the walk is £3.00 for members, £4.00 for guests, payable on the day. Children and well-behaved dogs are welcome at no charge. Dogs are not permitted anywhere inside the hall.

Please book your place with Richard Adams, by email, or by post with an SAE. rjadams@doctors.org.uk or 79 Whitmore Road, Newcastle ST5 3LZ.

Wednesday 24th July: Car Trip: Dorfold Hall Nr. Nantwich.

Dorfold Hall is a magnificent brick and stone gabled, Grade 1 listed, Jacobean House, located on the outskirts of Nantwich. It was built in 1616 by Sir Roger Wilbraham whose family still own and live in the property. It is surrounded by gardens and extensive woodland making it a delightful country house to visit.





The exquisite interiors retain their original spectacular plaster ceilings and elegant oak panelling. The Drawing Room boasts an original barrel vaulted ceiling dating back to 1621, the work of renowned Venetian plasterers.

In 1771, the architect Samual Wyatt redesigned the downstairs of the house and in 1863 William Nesfield was commissioned to re-landscape the lake and grounds, resulting in a magnificent approach to the house.

This will be an afternoon visit to this gem of a property.

Please note that there is an uneven cobbled courtyard on the approach to the entrance to the house and many steps in the house!

Meet at 2:00 pm for tea/coffee and cake before our guided tour of the house.

Cost: £20 p.p. (non-members £21) for refreshments and the guided tour, and then we are free to wander around the gardens and woodland walks.

Please apply using the booking form to Bob Winter enclosing an SAE and a cheque.

Advance Booking

Some events in the Autumn programme need to be booked before, or very quickly after, the next Newsletter is published:

Tue 10th - Fri 13th September: South Wales Holiday at the Parkway Hotel.

As you will be aware the 4-night holiday planned at the New House Country Hotel announced in the last Newsletter has been replaced by a 3-night stay at the Parkway Hotel due to cost.

Flyers for this have been distributed and are available from Regent (01785 818202) and on the website. At the time of publication there were still spaces available including one single room, so do please ask, and there is always a possibility of cancellations.

This four star AA accredited hotel is a family owned hotel with over 7 acres of beautiful gardens.

Attractions include:

Entry & guided tour of Cardiff Castle
Boat trip around Cardiff Bay
Full day to explore St Fagan's National Museum of History
Free time in Cardiff
Visit to Hay-On-Wye
Scenic drive through the Brecon Beacon National Park

On the return journey we visit the Ludlow Food Festival, originally planned as a separate trip.

More will be welcome on this promising trip!

Booking / Enquiry Forms

are not included in the on-line version for data protection reasons: contact the leader to book if necessary.

Have Your Say!

The last Newsletter included a summary of the results of the previous questionnaire seeking members' views, with thanks to all those who responded. The committee are still keen to know members' views on the activities of the NSNTA and are happy to continue to receive feedback at any time. This could be in the form of the completed questionnaire – there's one on the website – or use this to prompt for topics to comment on – or in any other form: if we don't know what people are thinking we can't adjust the programme to suit as many as possible.

Membership

We have pleasure in announcing and welcoming the following who have joined since we last welcomed new members: David Grange, Michael & Diane Owen, Dorothy Riley, Barbara Harper, Maureen & Antony Pennington, and John & Madeleine Kempsey. Current membership is 242. Sadly more people are failing to renew than are joining.

NT Membership Discount A reminder that a discount on the general National Trust membership subscription is available to eligible members – see Newsletter 110 or their website for more details.

Photographic Archives

Readers are reminded that an extensive range of photos is available on the website. On the Archive page select 'A list of past visits and outings' and click on [Photos] where you see it against an event. Chris Wain has kindly allowed access to his extensive selection of photos from some events - look for a [More Photos] button on a photo page header.

A reminder that Kay Williams, would be grateful for some photos/leaflets from visits when she is not there herself; prints or digital images are equally acceptable. See inside the back cover for Kay's contact details.

The editor acknowledges and thanks contributors of photographs included in this issue, and also for any photos sent but not used. Any photographs submitted will also be passed on to Kay for possible use in the archives, and may be used on the NSNTA website for record or publicity purposes. Copyright (which must be owned or obtained in writing by the submitter) is acknowledged for all images even if not stated in the magazine. Please contact the editor if more details of any item are required.

Reviews of Recent Events

Tuesday 19th December: Christmas Lunch at The Swan With Two Necks.

When thinking about where to hold the Christmas lunch in 2023, when we were in a car passing the "Swan with Two Necks" in Blackbrook we decided to pop in and have a look to see if they had a room suitable for our needs. The manager showed us to a cosy room off the main restaurant and we booked it.

Later, just before our lunch was due to take place, I had a phone call to say that there was a new restaurant manager who thought that the room we had been allocated was too small for our needs and we would be rather cramped with pillars obscuring the view for some tables. He suggested that we take advantage of the new 'tipi' they had just installed, principally to host wedding receptions. There is normally a cost to use this facility but, for us, it would be free of charge. Initially I thought it would be much too cold for an event in December so off we went to have a look. However we were pleasantly surprised to find it warm and welcoming with a huge heater outside the tent.





The room was well decorated and it was certainly a very different type of venue for the 60 plus Association members who came and enjoyed our Christmas meal.

Where will we go in 2024? All suggestions are welcome.

Cynthia Dumbelton

Tuesday 16th January: Talk: Bill Klemperer - "His Work".

Mr. Klemperer, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquities, is a recently retired archaeologist who worked as a Principal Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Historic England for the Midlands and the Welsh Borders.

Looking after ancient monuments plays a big role in increasing economic activity, promoting investment, business growth and tourism. Many are in dire straits; in 2021 10% of Scheduled monuments were on the Heritage at risk list. Mr. Klemperer's work had many facets including land and planning, repair and restoration, protecting and working on archaeological sites, and being involved with treasure troves.

Historic monument records are maintained by local councils, so a field evaluation is needed to inform the local plan although many sites don't have a local plan due to lack of resources. It was proposed to build an industrial area close to the M54 near a Roman hill fort but an evaluation of the site discovered Roman marching camps so the development was not permitted. At Nescliffe Iron Age hill fort near Shrewsbury it was discovered that tree roots were damaging the site so tree clearance took place and the area was restored to heathland.

Wroxeter was the fourth largest city in Roman Britain where it was decided to build a platform for a restored Roman villa to protect it and the site below. He was also was involved with sites at White Ladies Priory next to Boscobel House, Much Wenlock Priory, and at Hulton Abbey where medieval tiles needed preservation. At Ironbridge specialist funding was needed for laser scanning.

He gave us an insight into the various archaeological techniques: LIDAR, Light detection and Ranging, targets a surface with a laser and measures the time for the reflected light to return to the receiver enabling detailed mapping.

Radio Carbon has a half-life of 5000 years and the oldest dates that can be reliably measured date to 50,000 years ago by which time 99% of the carbon has decayed.

Aerial photography shows variations in growth of vegetation indicating where infilling is less compact. This is complemented by a Geophysical examination of the ground which measures resistance, a high resistance suggesting a wall whereas a low resistance means a ditch. Magnetometry is useful for finding hearths and bread ovens. Laser scanning gives a very helpful 3D image. He then gave details along with illustrations of excavations at several castles on the Welsh borders. In 1996 Wigmore castle was poorly preserved so all the vegetation was removed from the walls then the tops were covered with turf as it acts as a thermal blanket. Hopton Castle west of Ludlow was very overgrown and falling down and negotiations with the landowner led to Lottery funding

being obtained to preserve the site. At Kilpeck, south of Hereford, a site well known for its Romanesque church, a Motte and Bailey castle was found. The shell of the keep was in danger of falling down, so inclined ground anchors of the highest quality steel were inserted.

Mr. Klemperer and the treasure valuation committee decide the worth of precious metals found by metal detectorists, including, of course, the Staffordshire Hoard.

A very interesting evening with a comprehensive presentation of the role of the archaeologist.

Bronwen Montgomery.

Tuesday 20th February: Talk: William Durose - "Sixteen in the Sixties"

Having been a teenager in the '60's, I was looking forward to going back in time with Bill Durose and I was not disappointed.

Memories came flooding back as Bill, with his love of '60's music, evoked a much simpler, pre-computer life by talking, singing and playing his guitar, highlighting the key events, TV programmes and hit songs of each year of the decade.

Bill invited us to sing along to well-known tunes like "Living Doll" and "Travelling Light" and entertained us with personal recollections of visits to the Potteries and Leek by new groups such as the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. The Beatles appeared at Trentham Gardens on 11 October 1963 (Bill was there!) and just a few weeks later they flew to New York and became world famous.

Among his memories were the advent of Radio Luxembourg, licensed betting shops, Coronation Street, Lewis's in Hanley ('62), the BT Tower in London ('65), Radio Stoke ('68) and the folk music of Bob Dylan with "Blowing in the Wind" in 1966. Saturdays were spent sampling discs in Sherwin's music shop in Hanley.

We were tested on our ability to recognise hit numbers and performers from introductory guitar chords and to identify advertising slogans for household items such as soaps and cigarettes.

In 1963, Beeching announced cuts of train lines here and President Kennedy was shot. In 1964 Harold Wilson was our Prime Minister, Winston Churchill died in 1965. Abortion was legalised in 1968.

It was a nostalgic and very enjoyable reminder of the much-loved decade as well as a lovely trip down memory lane.

Christine Bell

Thursday 7th March: Car Trip: RAF Cosford Museum and Cold War Exhibition guided tour.

This car trip directed us to the RAF Museum Midlands, based in RAF Cosford.

The museum is regarded in high esteem by aviation buffs as holding one of the premier aircraft collections not only in the UK but worldwide.

We were split into two groups and our group guide, Stuart, presented a very interesting history lecture on the Cold War, its protagonists, incidents, outcomes and equipment involved.

Starting off from the well-appointed visitor centre, we made a short detour to Hangar 2 to have a look at the impressive TSR-2, (one of many projects cancelled at great expense before entering service) before we made our way to take in the purpose of our visit.





The Cold War Exhibition is held in a purpose built building, which reflecting its predominantly aviation theme appears to be designed to look like an oversized aerofoil. Inside, one cannot fail to be impressed by the array of aircraft displayed. Ranging from V bombers, interceptors, fighters and transport aircraft. Some of these aircraft were suspended from the rafters in flying poses, so realistically you could view aircraft from above, below and laterally. Armaments displayed



included terrifying nuclear weapons, free fall bombs, guided missiles and so on. Furthermore, the display also contains non-aviation related artefacts of the Cold War era, such as armoured fighting vehicles, posters, uniforms, mannequins of Soviet Cold War leaders and lots more. If you want



to delve into the dark world of espionage, subterfuge and propaganda this is the place to start.

Though British aircraft are predominantly displayed, aircraft built by the USA and

the Soviets are on display and as exhibits, just as impressive as our own aircraft.

To each exhibit that was pointed out to us came a commentary of some of its finer facts, nuances and campaigns that it either participated in or defended. So we saw equipment from



many campaigns including the Korean War, Berlin Airlift, Cuban Crisis, Falklands Campaign, Gulf War and more.



Due to time constraints, not the whole of the Cold War Display was covered by our guide, but we were more than welcome to investigate on our own, which many of us willingly did.

As a venue and a museum exhibition site, I would thoroughly recommend a follow up visit. The

whole site is people friendly, wheelchair friendly and there are plenty of museum staff to help you enjoy your day. All the exhibits have information boards, some have interactive displays, not forgetting that there are other hangars with their own themed displays.

















I first visited RAF Cosford in the 70's and every visit since I have seen something different.

If this has whetted your appetite how about the Cosford Air Show Sunday 9th June? All-ticket entry https://cosfordairshow.co.uk/the-air-show/air-show-2024/. Copelands offer a coach trip for £49 including entry. Tel 01782 334466.

Richard Castille.

Tuesday 19th March: Talk: Susan Munro – Elizabeth's Group

We had a talk with a film about the campaign to gain recognition for "the Congleton Suffragist", Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy, who has now had a statue erected in her memory at Bridge Street, Congleton. Elizabeth lived from 1833 right through to 1918, and was involved in campaigns for many important women's issues, against the Contagious Diseases Act, for the Married Women's Property Act, and finally for women's votes before the First World War. She spent many years, firstly as a pioneer of girls' education in Salford and in Moody Street, Congleton, later as a parliamentary lobbyist and an indefatigable writer of letters to MPs. Emmeline Pankhurst described her as "the brains behind the movement" for women's suffrage. A pacifist as well as a secularist and a feminist, she eventually parted company with the Suffragettes over their use of terrorist tactics, but even in 1913 her achievements were recognized when the Women's Suffrage Pilgrimage, organised by the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, while passing through Cheshire and Staffordshire, paid tribute to the Oldest Suffragist by visiting her at Congleton.

It is good that her memory should not be forgotten in modern Congleton, despite the higher profile that the Pankhurst family have had over the years!

Chris Wain

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Programme Summary and provisional future dates	
Мау	
Mon 13 th	Car Trip: Social event at Biddulph Grange.
Tue 21 st	AGM and Film introduced by Ray Johnson on Biddulph Grange.
June	
Thu 6 th	Car Trip: "The Buxton Experience".
Sun 30 th	Car Trip: Arley Hall and Gardens, Northwich, Cheshire.
July	
Sun 14 th	Walk: Little Moreton Hall and Scholar Green.
Wed 24 th	Car Trip: Dorfold Hall Nr. Nantwich.
September	
Sep	Walk.
Tue 10 th	South Wales Holiday: 4 days / 3 nights at the Parkway Hotel & Spa.
Tue 17 th	Talk:
October	
Fri 11 th	Car Trip: Chillington Hall and Gardens, Brewood, Staffs.
Tue 15 th	Talk:
November	
Thu	Behind the Scenes tour of the New Vic Theatre.
Tue 19 th	Talk:

This Newsletter (and previous editions) is available on the website.