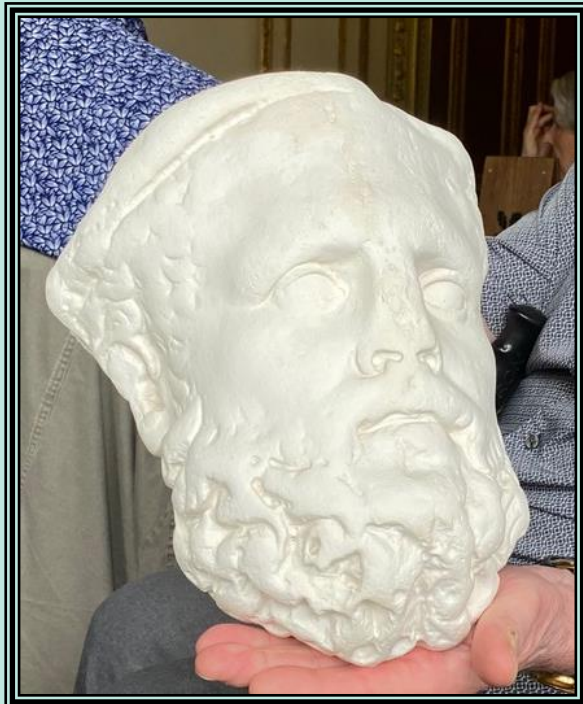


North Staffordshire National Trust Association

Newsletter No. 129

Autumn 2024

www.northstaffsnt.org.uk



Replica of Greek artefact to be displayed at Biddulph Grange.

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 apologies 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. 129 Autumn 2024 Programme

A Note from the Chair



It seems strange to be writing for The Autumn Edition of The Newsletter when we haven't had any Summer yet. Here's hoping the weather improves for the events in the programme.

Exploring, research and the wonders of creation seem to be this season's theme.

What will you discover on Heritage Open days or in South Wales. Are there Neolithic Axeheads in the Potteries Museum like the one discovered in Betley? Will you come across one on the walk in path of a glacier?

Thinking of 'remarkable' things left behind by ancestors, I love the Saloon at Chillington, but would consign the fireplace to somewhere else! The spectacular and spectacularly ugly together!

Less controversial is our responsibility to hand on healthy trees to the next generations. Peter Thomas will explain their longevity on a diet of compost and water.

We hope The Newcastle Vic Theatre will be around for a long time too. The Backstage tour will lift the curtain, if it had one, on the creation of magic. This is my cue to produce a theatrical pun: Don't forget to keep 'tabs' on the NSNTA Website for up to date information.

Enjoy the New Season, I look forward to seeing you, bring your friends.

Best Wishes

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.

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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.

### **Fri 6<sup>th</sup> - Sun 15<sup>th</sup> September: Heritage Open Days.**

The Heritage Open Days are annual events, publicised by the National Trust, supported by players of the People's Postcode Lottery and delivered locally by a large range of organisations, including Civic Societies, heritage organisations, local councils and thousands of volunteers. It offers free access to heritage events and activities across England. It is England's contribution to European Heritage Days, taking place across 50 countries, including Wales and the Doors Open Days in Scotland.

The NSNTA is not organising visits but members can easily find details on the Heritage Open Days website. One example is at Trentham Parish Church, ST4 8AB, on Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> September. No pre-booking is needed. Discover traces of past centuries and links to the Dukes of Sutherland. The Trentham Heritage Project will showcase local people and places, many lost in time and living memory.

### **Tue 10<sup>th</sup> - Fri 14<sup>th</sup> September: South Wales Holiday: 4 days/3 nights at the Parkway Hotel & Spa near Cardiff.**

Details of this have been distributed and are on the website, or are available from Regent Travel who are arranging it for us. It includes

- Entry & guided tour of Cardiff Castle
- Included 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
- Entry to Ludlow Food Festival
- Executive coach travel from local departure points

There are possibly still rooms available including a single room – please contact Regent on 01785 818202.

## Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September: Talk: Joe Perry, Curator at the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery.

A review of the ceramics found at Hilderstone, with reference to the Potteries Museum Collection.

In 2023, an archaeological dig unearthed a rich and colourful selection of Staffordshire ceramics, ranging from 1600 to 1840. Joe will talk on their production and social significance with comparison to examples in the Museum's own wonderful collection.

Joe works as Curator (Local History) at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery. His role looks after both the social history and archaeology collections at the Museum, including the Hoard. Early last year he gave us a guided tour of the amazing Spitfire Gallery.

Joe studied archaeology at the University of Manchester then went on to obtain a Masters in Heritage Management through the University of Birmingham. He has worked for Stoke-on-Trent museums in various roles for more than 13 years, as well as at Buxton Museum & Art Gallery and the Museum of Science & Industry in Manchester.

He is now also a Collections Consultant for System Simulation, who make collections management software for museums and archives.

## Sunday 6th October: Walk: Betley circular ramble and Lunch.

Three miles, easy walking (mostly), no hills, twelve stiles.

Betley has most of the things you could ask for in an English village - welcoming pubs, village school, parish church with adjacent cricket ground, half-timbered houses and a



small shop/post office. Not to forget the modern additions of speed cameras

along the High Street and wind turbines dotted around the perimeter. See them all with us on this three mile, 2 hour, pre-lunch walk.

This walk starts and finishes at the Hand and Trumpet pub CW3 9BJ. We will meet on the car park at 10.45 for an 11am start, and will return for lunch at 1.00pm.

The walk is 3 miles long, mostly on footpaths through pastures and arable land. There are around a dozen stiles, some more challenging than others though none too difficult, and several narrow wooden bridges crossing streams. We skirt by Betley Mere, which is one of the few natural standing waters in Staffordshire, and dates back to the end of the Ice Age when the glaciers retreated and left shallow depressions in their wake. Depending on recent weather, there could be boggy conditions underfoot here. The return loop to the pub is on higher ground with far-reaching views.

As usual, non-walkers are welcome to join the group for lunch.

Suggested donation is £3.00 for members, £4.00 for guests, payable on the day. Children and well-behaved dogs are welcome at no charge.

Please book your place with Richard Adams, by email, or by post with an SAE, by 23<sup>rd</sup> September if possible to ensure viability and table bookings.

[rjadams@doctors.org.uk](mailto:rjadams@doctors.org.uk) or 79 Whitmore Road, Newcastle ST5 3LZ

## Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October: Car Trip: Chillington Hall and Gardens, Brewwood, Staffs.

Chillington has been in the hands of the Giffard family since the 1100 and has an interesting history including: falling in and out of royal favour, persecution for Catholicism and support for the King in the Civil War.



The current hall dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and is a product of two differing Georgian styles. The South side built in 1724 by Francis Smith of Warwick has rooms of an intimate size contrasted with those built on a grander scale by Sir John Soane some sixty years later. The Saloon, typical of Soane design, features a soaring ceiling topped by a great lantern with beautiful plasterwork.

The parkland, landscaped by Capability Brown, incorporates the lake and its architectural follies.

Arrive by 10:30 to freshly brewed tea, coffee and biscuits, followed by a guided tour taking approximately 45-60 minutes, after which you can explore the gardens at your leisure, before the short drive to Brewood for lunch at one of the cafés or pub restaurants at your own expense.

Reconvene at 2:30 at the Brewood Parish Church of St. Mary & St. Chad, where you will be welcomed and given an introductory talk about the history of the church and its main points of interest. It is by far the oldest building in Brewood Parish. The oldest part of the present building is its chancel, which dates from the Early English period of seven hundred years ago. The chancel houses four Giffard tombs. Of alabaster, once richly painted and gilded, the first of these bears the effigy of Sir John Giffard who died at the ripe age of ninety years. He lies in Tudor armour, with his two ladies, both in period costume, surrounded by their eighteen children.

You can then tour the church at your leisure and return home at your convenience.

### **Travel**

Chillington is approx. 50 minutes from Stoke depending on road and traffic conditions. There is plenty of free car parking on site, but this is located on the grass park to the front or to the side of the Hall. There are some accessible car parking spaces for visitors with limited mobility.

A map of Brewood and options for lunch will be provided on booking.

Cost: £16 (£17 for non-members) for admission, parking, refreshments on arrival and a guided tour of Chillington Hall. Lunch is at own expense.

Please apply to Marilyn Vigurs, enclosing application form, cheque and SAE by 13<sup>th</sup> September. Enquiries E: [marilyn.vigurs@ntlworld.com](mailto:marilyn.vigurs@ntlworld.com) or T: 01782 658716 or M: 079 0606 1704

### **Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October: Talk: Shaun Farrelly: Keeping Off the Rocks - a brief history of British Lighthouses.**

The coastline of mainland Britain is 4467 miles long and has some perilous waters to be navigated by seafarers. Since the 16th century efforts have been made to alert shipping to most of the hazards, originally to save precious cargoes from being lost at sea. Fortunately, the same beacons also happen to save lives. A major contribution to this was the construction of lighthouses long before radio-based navigational aids. This talk examines the pioneering efforts of those builders.

Shaun is an established speaker who talked to us recently on The Atlantic Telegraph.



## **Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October: Behind the Scenes tour of the New Vic Theatre.**

Following the excellent talk about The New Vic Theatre by Jill Rezzano on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023, a behind the scenes guided tour has been arranged.

We will assemble at 10.45am near the booking office on the ground floor, for a guided tour commencing at 11.00am and lasting one hour.

The restaurant on the first floor is open from 10.00am if you would like tea/coffee (at own cost) before the tour.

Please indicate on the entry form the number of seats you would like reserving for the optional lunch in the restaurant after the tour (at own cost).

As the number of places is limited to 24, and also the theatre needs to plan the optional lunch seating requirements well in advance, please reply as soon as possible.

Cost: £7.00 (non-members £8.00) includes guided tour and the usual donation to the NSNTA. Free on-site parking.

Enquiries: John Pedrazzini 07594 599 375 / johnpedrazzini@yahoo.co.uk

Please apply to John Pedrazzini sending the booking form, cheque made payable to "North Staffs NT Association" and an SAE.

Closing date for applications: Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September.

## **Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November: Talk: Dr. Peter Thomas: How can a tree live for 5,000 years?**

Trees are the oldest living things in the world. So, what allows them to live for millennia when most life spans are counted in decades or centuries. We will delve into the mechanics of how trees stand up against storms, the clever defences to outwit fungal and insect attack, and, ultimately, what we can do to keep our trees alive for longer.

## **Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December: Christmas Lunch at DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel.**

This year's festive Christmas lunch will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, Festival Park, ST1 5BQ. from 12.00. with lunch at 1.00pm. This is a good central location with ample parking. It is a large hotel, well used to catering for large parties.

We have booked the Josiah Wedgwood Suite with its own staffed bar (own cost) for our exclusive use, so we will have ample time and space to celebrate the season. Cost £35pp for a 3 course lunch & coffee.

## **CHRISTMAS LUNCH MENU**

### *STARTERS*

- *Winter Vegetable Soup with tomato oil dressing (G)*
- *Smoked Salmon Tart served with lime creme fresh and pea shoots (F.D.GF)*
- *Chicken Liver Parfait, marmalade dressed mixed leaves and ciabatta croutons (G.E.S.M)*

### *MAINS*

- *Traditional roast turkey with all the trimmings, served with roast potatoes, seasonal vegetables and a rich gravy. (G)*
- *Braised featherblade of beef with Yorkshire pudding, served with roast potatoes seasonal vegetables and a rich gravy (G.E)*
- *Hake Fillet, with roasted new potatoes, samphire and wilted spinach with a caper butter sauce (F.M)*
- *Vegetable Ragu, served with roast potatoes and vegetables*

### *DESSERTS*

- *Christmas pudding, with a brandy sauce (G.M)*
- *Chocolate orange tart, with fruit compote (G.VE)*
- *Baked vanilla cheesecake, with fruit coulis (GF.E.M)*

### *COFFEE*

Please inform of any dietary requirements

The Hilton Hotel requires numbers and menu choices three weeks prior to the event, (20<sup>th</sup> November). Please send your menu choices on the booking form together with a cheque made out to North Staffs N.T. Association with a stamped addressed envelope or email address to Phil Alcock at Millstone House, Bagnall, Staffordshire Moorlands ST9 9JR at your earliest convenience.

This is always a very popular event, a time to meet old friends and to make new ones whilst reminiscing over the association's events of the past year.

For further information please contact marionlycett@hotmail.com /07481817048 or phil.alcock@yahoo.co.uk/ 07814028828

We look forward to seeing as many people as possible at what promises to be a great start to the festive season.

## *Advance Booking*

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

Thu 28<sup>th</sup> Aug - Mon 1<sup>st</sup> Sep 2025: Coach Holiday: 5 days in Douglas, Isle of Man.

### **DISCOVER THE ISLE OF MAN**

***Embrace island life and explore peaceful harbour towns and much more.***

Attractions include:

- The new Manxman Ferry from Heysham
- The Victorian 4\* Sefton Hotel on Douglas promenade
- Steam railway ride from Douglas to Port Erin
- The Great Laxey waterwheel, the Isle of Man's most iconic landmark
- Visit Ramsey and the harbour town of Peel with its fishing port and castle
- Scenic drives with stupendous views and marine life at the Calf of Man
- Evening talk and company of a local Blue Badge guide
- Visit museums including the island's rich Celtic and Viking past plus
- The TT motorbike gallery
- Seafood - local kippers and queenies

Cost for a twin or double-bedded room: £535 per person.

See the flyer, more details and booking form on the website or from Cynthia Dumbelton on [dumbeltoncynthia@gmail.com](mailto:dumbeltoncynthia@gmail.com). If you don't use the internet, please ring on 01782 641765.

We already have sufficient advanced bookings to ensure this trip is viable. All single rooms are taken but applications will be very welcome for the few remaining rooms.

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Membership

We have pleasure in announcing and welcoming the following who have joined since we last welcomed new members: Mary Rayner, Brenda Croasdale, Halina Clapinska and Melanie Deacon. Current membership is 238.

NT Membership Discount A reminder that a discount on the general National Trust membership subscription is available to eligible members as outlined in the last Newsletter and on the NT website.

Car Sharing

In the interests of economy, the environment and those who have problems with transport the committee is keen to encourage car sharing – something it probably should have done some time ago but precipitated by the increasing number of car journeys due to the problems in arranging viable coach trips. Booking forms will now include three options – Willing to give lifts, Willing to accept lifts, Need a lift, for those who don't have transport and would otherwise be unable to partake in the event. This will also be included on coach trips to assist travel to the meeting point. Where possible the event organiser will attempt to match up requests from similar localities, but note that it is not incumbent on the organiser to do so and it is up to the members to arrange the sharing between them. Only tick these if you require assistance in finding potential sharers and you agree that your contact details may be passed on to them.

Help the Committee!

The committee are always keen to hear from members concerning the activities of the NSNTA, whether it is suggestions on how things could be improved, ideas for events, particularly alternative forms of event, or, and in particular, offers of help in organising an event. The Programme Coordinator holds regular informal Planning Meetings which anyone may attend without obligation. There is plenty of guidance and assistance in organising an event so that it does not necessarily fall on the shoulders of one person. The next planning meeting is on Friday 4th October – if you wish to attend please contact Marion (see inside back page) for details (and to ensure you get a seat!). **Do please consider seriously if you can help in this way** – many of the present organisers have been doing so for many years and feel they are due for retirement, and fresh blood is needed to maintain this very important aspect of our Association.

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## *Booking / Enquiry Forms*

*It is preferable that organisers hold emergency contact details for members on trips should a situation arise. You are therefore invited, particularly if travelling without a companion, to provide the name and number of someone who can be contacted in emergency, along with any critical medical conditions that might be relevant, or whether (and where) you carry ICE (In Case of Emergency) details. We also request that you provide your own mobile number so that you can be contacted should you fail to appear at a rendezvous.*

## *Photographic Archives*

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.

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.

## *Reviews of Recent Events*

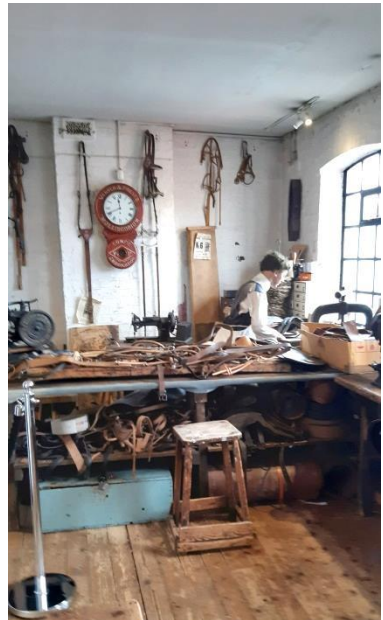
Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April: Coach Trip: Walsall Leather Museum and Art Gallery.

For many years Walsall was a centre for saddlery, when horses played the main role in transportation. When motorised vehicles became the norm, industry had to change so lorinery, the making of metal parts for bridles along with other small items, became a more specialised industry.

The museum is housed in a lovely Edwardian brick building the width of which is noticeably narrow. This meant that windows could be sited on both sides of the building on each floor to ensure maximum light.

After refreshments we were divided into three groups to visit the three floors.

On the first floor small items are made and it was here that we attempted to make a key ring. On the second floor all the skins are stored - from pigskins to exotic crocodiles. The tanning





process is done abroad. The third floor is where decorative finishes are done to small items such as dog collars. One astonishing fact we learned was the late Queen's favourite make of handbag was made in Walsall. That firm is Launer and each handbag costs over £2000. Rumour had it that the queen had over 200 of these bags but apparently it is probably around 10. Launer described itself as being made in London - no mention of Walsall!



We then left the museum to walk the short distance to the art gallery, which houses at least 3½ thousand works, including the Garman Ryan collection, incorporating important works by Jacob Epstein, which his widow Kathleen Garman donated to the museum. Many artworks from Monet to Picasso are on display - in fact something for every taste.

After an interesting but exhausting day we left Walsall for the short journey home. Many thanks to Rose for organizing a great day out.

*Shirley Timmis*

## Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April: Talk: Steve Booth - "The Potteries Blitz - June 1940 - March 1941"

In the early stages of the war, the Potteries received evacuees from Manchester, the Central Bank Clearing House which came to Trentham, and French soldiers after the falls of France and Norway, most of whom afterwards joined De Gaulle's Free French. The *Luftwaffe's* main target in the area, however, was Shelton Bar, which was crucial in the manufacture of supports for air raid shelters, as well as in the manufacture of steel for general use. Other targets in the area were the big bomb factory at Swynnerton (ludicrously mis-pronounced as Swinerton by Lord Haw-Haw), and the Royal Ordnance factory at Radway Green.

Stoke came 14<sup>th</sup> on the nation's list of cities which suffered fatalities in the Blitz; 41 were killed in the area and we heard detailed accounts of some of these tragedies –

such as a four-year old evacuee who had arrived from London only the previous day, and a whole family with a monument in Newcastle cemetery. We heard stories of bottle ovens being used as emergency bomb-shelters, and of the heroism of the young men who were awarded the George Medal by the King and Queen outside Stoke Station for extinguishing a dangerous fire.

It was a revealing story for those of us whose acquaintance with north Staffordshire does not go back so far, of what life has been like in previous generations.

*Chris and Sandra Wain*

## **Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April: Guided tour of the Collection of Flowering Cherry Trees at Keele.**

On the first glorious spring day this year, 22 members gathered on Cherry Tree Walk at the University to be shown some of the collection of flowering cherry trees, expertly guided by Dr. Peter Thomas.

The collection began by chance in the plant nursery attached to Keele Hall. When taken over by the university, there were several small cherry trees ready for planting and these formed the basis of what now comprises 273 different varieties. Granted National Collection status in 2012, it is the biggest collection of grown out trees in Europe and contains many rarities.

The pride of the collection is the Matsumae cherries raised around Matsumae Town, Hokkaido, in Japan by Masatoshi Asari, a teacher who is now 93. His life's intention was to rehabilitate the cherry and spread peace, harmony and beauty around the world after the cherry's samurai warrior connection in WW2.

Britain has 2 wild cherries: the Bird Cherry and the Native Cherry, both of which are forest trees so will grow large. New cherries are no longer grafted on to these, but on to smaller-growing ones.

Temperature and soil conditions affect the colour of the blossom. This year, due to the vagaries of the climate, almost all the cherries are 3 weeks early. The bright pink trees on campus in April, and in and around Newcastle, heavy with double blossoms, are Prunus 'Kanzan', a Japanese tree with the name of a Chinese mountain. This tree is described by Peter as "tough as old boots" and has a lifespan of 50-70 years, hence its ubiquity!

Many of the cherry trees are bred to have spreading branches, so that you can put down a blanket on the grass underneath and enjoy your picnic under the clouds of blossom. National news in Japan broadcasts details of Blossom Time as it moves up through the country, to enable you to make the most of "Hanami".

Prunus serrula, from Tibet, and Prunus rufa from the Himalayas each have peeling, shaggy bark, revealing shiny mahogany bark underneath. Planted with low evening

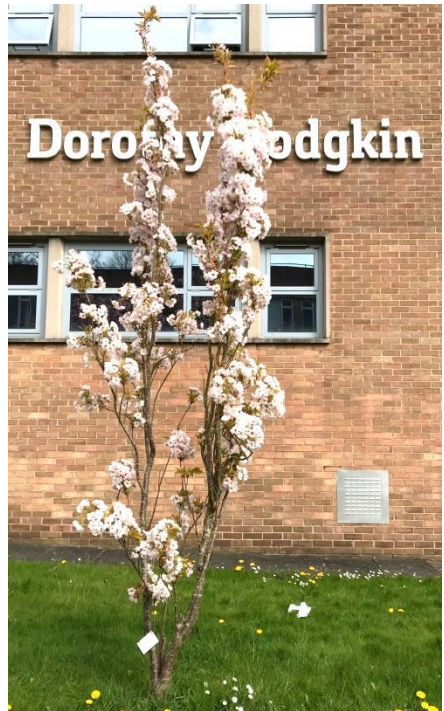
sun behind them, they look stunning. Many, like Prunus 'Tiltstone Hellfire', have glorious dark red autumn leaf colour.

Collingwood (Cherry) Ingram, a very talented and knowledgeable amateur grower, was responsible for growing and developing many cherry trees, hence his nickname. Prunus 'Tai-haku', previously one of Japan's most revered trees, was lost in the rush to industrialise after WWII. One tree was discovered by Cherry Ingram in Sussex. He took scions (cuttings), grafted them and was so successful that these magnificent trees (Tai-haku means "Great White") could be re-introduced to Japan and appreciated once more. This re-introduction, and the re-introduction of many more cherry trees, formed the basis of the book "The man who saved Japan's blossoms" by Naoko Abe, broadcast on Radio 4 in 2020.

Though we may think of cherry blossom as pink or white, single or double, there is one, Prunus 'Ukon', that is yellow and has been known in Japan for over 1000 years. This was another of his re-introductions. If you visit Bridgemere in April and park in the large car park, look out for the large yellow cherry tree at the far end. Now you know its name!

Unfortunately, some cherries are subject to the fungus "blossom end rot" which spoils the flowers. The leaves are unaffected so still give glorious autumn colour.

Many of these trees are huge and if you only have a small garden, the upright, columnar Prunus 'Ama-no-gawa', ("Milky Way"), shown here, is the one for you. However, if you have a cherry tree that has outgrown its space, then chop it off about 12" from the base and it will re-sprout. Cherry trees are very forgiving!



How fortunate we are to have this remarkable collection here on our doorstep, and what a pleasure it was to be so expertly guided by Dr. Peter Thomas. You will never look at cherries with the same eyes again!

Our thanks to Anthea Bond for arranging this splendid visit.

*Jane Cameron*



## Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May: Car Trip: Social event at Biddulph Grange.

On the afternoon of May 13<sup>th</sup> forty members of the association gathered in the drawing room for a presentation by Helen, General Manager at Biddulph Grange, at which she thanked the Association for their latest donation.



Victorian gentlemen were often inveterate collectors of anything that they considered to be amusing. James Bateman was no exception, but his collection was of a different order, he had a specific interest in artefacts from ancient Greece, Rome, and the Far East. His other great passion was for fossils. Consequently, The National Trust at Biddulph Grange has inherited a significant archive, which up until now it has been unable to display. Recently however the Grange has been able to acquire the funds necessary to purchase a display cabinet worthy of the collection at a cost of £15,000. The N.S.N.T.A

decided to contribute £5,000 which has been gratefully received.

The presentation was followed by an excellent cream tea which included scones baked in the Grange's own kitchen, this was an opportunity for members to catch up with old friends and to welcome new ones. An additional bonus to the visit was the beautiful gardens where the azaleas and rhododendrons were at their finest providing a grand vista through the windows.

Biddulph Grange is the most significant National Trust property in our area, so it was good to make a tangible contribution. We are always made welcome by Helen and her team, a partnership to be encouraged.

Thanks are due to Chairman Ralph for organising this enjoyable event.

*Philip Alcock.*



Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May: AGM and Talk: Ray Johnson on Biddulph Grange.

## **North Staffordshire National Trust Association**

**Draft Minutes of the 44<sup>th</sup> AGM at the North Staffs Conference Centre, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024**

Richard Adams welcomed 71 members to the AGM. There were 9 apologies.

Chairman's opening remarks: Ralph thanked the committee for all their hard work, Kay for maintaining our archives, Anthea and Hazel for organising and introducing our talks, and Marion for organising and co-ordinating our events programme. Thanks too to the many people who suggest and/or organise individual events and attend the planning meetings to discuss events.

Marion has advised that she wishes to step down within the next 12 months; anyone interested is invited to contact her or any committee member to discuss taking over.

Ralph thanked John Spriggs, who continues to do an excellent job as editor of our newsletter and as our webmaster on [www.northstaffsnt.org.uk](http://www.northstaffsnt.org.uk).

Ralph thanked Roger Cartlidge, who has now retired from the committee after many years' service to the association. Roger has organised and led numerous successful events, often with Shirley by his side, and has also acted as liaison between us and the conference centre.

The minutes of the 43rd AGM: were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

The minutes of the EGM in October: were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

Secretary's Report: Richard said that the membership total is now 240, which includes about 10 people who are non-members of the National Trust. He extended a special welcome to them. Richard felt that we could be cautiously confident that the Covid years are now behind us and that we can look forward to the future, albeit with a reduced membership.

In the 12 months up to the end of March we enjoyed 25 different events. 7 varied and fascinating talks, the AGM and an EGM, 3 walks, 6 car outings and 3 coach trips. There were two social events, and not one but two holidays - 5 days in Northumberland and a long weekend in Salisbury.

Treasurer's Report: Huw presented the accounts for 2023-24, copies of which had been distributed. Our finances remain in good shape, with a surplus of £1,496 over the year bringing our reserves at the end of the year to £15,869. We made one donation, of £300 to Mompesson House, and expect to make a more substantial donation to Biddulph Grange shortly.

Huw thanked James Scott of Hardings Chartered Accountants for examining the accounts. The accounts were accepted by the meeting.

**North Staffs National Trust Association**  
**Income and Expenditure Account for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

|                                                       | 2023/2024  |              | 2022/2023            |              |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|
|                                                       | £          | £            | £                    | £            |
| <b><u>Income</u></b>                                  |            |              |                      |              |
| Members' Subscriptions                                | 2563       |              | 2724                 |              |
| Donations                                             | 50         |              | 53                   |              |
| Surplus on Trips and Events                           | 2039       |              | 2210                 |              |
| Bank Interest                                         | <u>159</u> |              | <u>15</u>            |              |
|                                                       |            | 4811         |                      | 5002         |
| <b><u>Expenditure</u></b>                             |            |              |                      |              |
| Talks (incl Venue Hire )                              | 1840       |              | 1876                 |              |
| Newsletter Costs                                      | 515        |              | 590                  |              |
| Postage and Officers' Expenses                        | 610        |              | 547                  |              |
| Donations Mompesson House                             | <u>350</u> |              | <u>0</u>             |              |
|                                                       |            | 3315         |                      | 3013         |
| <b>Net Surplus for the year</b>                       |            | <u>1496</u>  |                      | <u>1989</u>  |
| <b>Balance Sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024</b> |            |              |                      |              |
| <b><u>Assets</u></b>                                  |            |              |                      |              |
| Bank Balance                                          |            | 15869        |                      | 14273        |
| Payments in Advance                                   |            | <u>0</u>     |                      | <u>100</u>   |
|                                                       |            | 15869        |                      | 14373        |
| <b><u>Liabilities</u></b>                             |            |              |                      |              |
| Sundry Creditors                                      |            | 0            |                      | 0            |
| <b>Total Net Assets</b>                               |            | <u>15869</u> |                      | <u>14373</u> |
| Represented by :                                      |            |              |                      |              |
| <b><u>Reserves</u></b>                                |            |              |                      |              |
| Reserves brought forward                              |            | 14373        |                      | 12384        |
| Surplus for the year                                  |            | 1496         |                      | 1989         |
| <b>Total Reserves</b>                                 |            | <u>15869</u> |                      | <u>14373</u> |
| R White---Chairman                                    |            |              | H Davies---Treasurer |              |

I have examined the accounts set out above and in my opinion they are in accordance with the records produced to me and properly reflect the financial affairs and position of the Association.

J. Scott FCCA (Hon Examiner)  
Hardings Chartered Accountants, 6, Marsh Parade , Newcastle under Lyme

Subscription level for next year: The meeting agreed to keep subscriptions for 2024-25 unchanged at £12 for individual members and £8 for further members at the same address.

Approval for re-election: The meeting was asked for approval to waive the requirement in our constitution for committee members to stand down after 5 years. Agreed.

Election of officers and committee: There were no new nominations.

The following were put forward for re-election, and all were elected:

|            |                                                                                                                 |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chair      | Ralph White                                                                                                     |
| Vice Chair | (vacant)                                                                                                        |
| Treasurer  | Huw Davies                                                                                                      |
| Secretary  | Richard Adams                                                                                                   |
| Committee  | Phil Alcock, Cynthia Dumbelton, Marion Lycett, Jane Mayer, John Pedrazzini, John Spriggs, Sue Till, Bob Winter. |

AOB: None.

The meeting closed at 7.22pm and was followed by the talk.

**Talk: Ray Johnson on Biddulph Grange: Films from the archive.**

After the AGM, Ray Johnson came to show us some films from his huge collection of life in Staffordshire. Some films he chose for us were dated 1946, judging from the numbers on the edges of the reels. The first film showed how the gardens were designed by James Bateman in the nineteenth century, with a mixture of horticulture and fantasy to house his international plant collection.

Other films showed Biddulph Grange in 1947, before the NHS. The house and garden became an orthopaedic hospital, with children from Liverpool and Manchester spending many months there for procedures eg TB of the bone, or bone deformities seen at birth. They saw little of their families.

By 1987, a film made for the NT showed a very dilapidated Chinese Tea House. There were years of work before the gardens were ready to be open to the public. It was one of the largest garden restoration projects ever undertaken by the National Trust.

The NSNTA has given financial help, when asked, for renovation of this Grade I listed Victorian Garden and part of the building. This has gone towards the Chinese house, the replacement and gilding of bells there, regilding of the bull, recreation of the dragon design in coloured gravel, making and erecting an iron rose arch near the entrance to China, an aluminium mobile scaffold tower for high level pruning and seats in the Wellingtonia Avenue.

*Anthea Bond*

## Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June: Car Trip: "The Buxton Experience"

Spring water has given Buxton in Derbyshire it's prominence from Roman times to the present day.

In 1853, The Duke of Devonshire developed a water works in the Market Place. In the years following, The Midland Railway Co built an extension line, permitting more easy access for Buxton's visitors. Around this time, the Palace Hotel was built.



In 1894, the Pump Room was built and the spa was further developed, which attracted all the rich and famous including King Edward V11 and Queen Alexander, Queen Mary and Mary Queen of Scots, said to sought treatment for her rheumatism.

Buxton's jewel in the crown is the famous Grade 1 building, The Crescent. It was built for the 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire in



the 1780's by a Yorkshireman, John Carr, as a centrepiece for the growing popularity of the natural spa waters. Unfortunately, in 1990 structural problems and deteriorating conditions lead to its closure for 30 years. Thanks to funding from various bodies, it has since been restored at a cost of £68m and was re-opened in 2020 as a 5 star Spa hotel and a visitor centre.

On a beautiful sunny day we enjoyed a fascinating conducted tour of the visitor centre, which is spread over 9 rooms which reveals the story of this spa town, the building's remarkable restoration, details of its famous waters and the many people who visited to seek a cure. The highlight is perhaps the reality video of the area, taken from a hot air balloon.

Our visit concluded by being invited to fill a bottle of spa water as a memento of our visit. Several of us then had lunch at the Pavilion and then spent the afternoon wandering around the lovely town.



A most enjoyable visit and our thanks to Joan for organising.

*Bob Winter*

## Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June: Car Trip: Arley Hall and Gardens, Northwich, Cheshire.

Despite unseasonably grey skies and the occasional spell of light drizzle the festival, Hall and gardens did not disappoint. The numerous plant stalls, marquees containing crafts, garden accessories and delicious food ensured that, once again, I returned home with a full car and an empty purse. The herbaceous borders were as magnificent as ever and the garden tour which I attended was fascinating and helpful for both the experienced horticulturalist amongst us and the barely trained, but keen like myself.

This was my fourth visit to the festival over the past few years and the first time I made it into the Hall itself and it was well worth the visit. I was delighted to find watercolours, painted by a former occupant of the Hall, of a Herefordshire village and one house in particular that I had only been reading about the night before and was previously quite unknown to me. A serendipitous coincidence!

My companion, whose first visit it was, savoured the various delights of the day and we are already planning a return visit for afternoon tea.

*Rose Wheat*

## Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> July: Walk: Little Moreton Hall and Scholar Green.

This walk was cancelled due to a clash with other events and a less than favourable weather forecast. It is hoped to reschedule it next year.

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Quiz

The following are anagrams of National Trust properties visited on NSNTA arranged events over the last three years, all except one which was visited but is not NT.

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 UK POOLHOLES | 7 LOCALSPAS CURE |
| 2 HONES MOAPOSSUM | 8 LANDRULES |
| 3 DIGRACES | 9 TENSEEN THOUME |
| 4 GELCHEAT SIRZS | 10 DARKRAY MPH |
| 5 RALPHING BUDGED | 11 ROUGH OCCUTTON |
| 6 CRAFTLINE SANSLIDE | 12 ALLDID ENDLESS EARTH |

See if you can decode them and identify the non-NT one. No prizes but an honourable mention in the next Newsletter for the best entries received by the editor.

NSNTA Committee 2024	
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Vacant Vice-chairman and Talks Organiser	
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Huw Davies Treasurer huws.family@gmail.com	2 Vicarage Crescent Newcastle ST5 1NJ 07825 475382
Marion Lycett Programme Coordinator marionlycett@hotmail.com	Millstone House, The Green, Bagnall Stoke-on-Trent ST9 9JR 01782 502919
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Sue Till st.till@icloud.com	6 Kingsfield Oval, Basford, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs ST4 6HW 01782 405415
Bob Winter robert.winter14@btinternet.com	15 Robinson Road Stoke-on-Trent ST4 8ED 01782 642942
Other Posts	
Kay Williams williakay@gmail.com	3 The Spinney, Madeley Heath, Crewe, CW3 9TB. 01782 751018
Anthea Bond Talks Organiser antheabond@hotmail.com	

Programme Summary

September

Fri 6 th	Heritage Open Days: Friday 6 th – Sunday 15 th
Tue 10 th	South Wales Holiday: 4 days / 3 nights at the Parkway Hotel & Spa.
Tue 17 th	Talk: Joe Perry, Curator at the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery.

October

Fri 4 th	Planning Meeting at Millstone House, The Green, Bagnall ST9 9JR.
Sun 6 th	Walk: Betley circular ramble and lunch at Hand & Trumpet.
Fri 11 th	Car Trip: Chillington Hall and Gardens, Brewood, Staffs.
Tue 15 th	Talk: Shaun Farrelly: Keeping Off the Rocks - a brief history of British Lighthouses.
Wed 23 rd	Behind the Scenes tour of the New Vic Theatre.

November

Tue 19 th	Talk: Dr Peter Thomas: How can a tree live for 5,000 years?
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December

Wed 11 th	Christmas Lunch at DoubleTree Hilton Hotel on Festival Park.
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January

Tue 21 st	Talk: Catrin Jones, Chief Curator at the V&A Wedgwood Collection.
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February

Tue 18 th	Talk: Stuart Haywood, Victorian Migrants from Wales to North Staffs.
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March

Tue 18 th	Talk: Steve Booth: The Dukes and Duchesses of Sutherland after 1833 and their local impact.
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April

Tue 15 th	Talk: Danny Wells: Gothic Revival church buildings in Staffordshire.
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May

Tue 20 th	AGM and Talk.
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August

Thu 28 th	Coach Holiday: 5 days in Douglas, Isle of Man.
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This Newsletter (and previous editions) is available on the website.