

North Staffordshire Association of National Trust Members

NEWSLETTER No. 71

APRIL 2005

and APRIL to SEPTEMBER 2005 PROGRAMME

A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR:

Recently I have listened to several radio programmes celebrating the life and achievements of Sir Winston Churchill in honour of the 40th anniversary of his death. In one programme listeners were 'taken round' Chartwell, an NT property, by the Manager and the tour brought back to me clear memories of my visit to Chartwell about 7 years ago. I reflected on how much our understanding and appreciation of historic periods, events and characters is enhanced by visiting properties directly connected with famous people or significant moments in the past. Without the Trust's careful stewardship of these places we would be without so many opportunities to understand our past.

The NT is aiming to encourage many more young people to visit properties and they have developed various ways to attract them, such as themed days, costumed guides, re-enactments of events and especially educational visits. Most property managers have good evidence that when children have been brought on a school visit, some of them return with family members in tow; the children have been so fascinated by what they have seen, heard and probably touched that they want Mum, Dad and Auntie to come as well! Because this may well lead to increased membership from the younger generation, we have decided to make donations this year to support several local primary schools visiting nearby NT properties. The money may well go towards transport costs as schools often find it very difficult to obtain money for this from hard-pressed budgets. We hope our members will be pleased with this news.

As usual, the committee has had an enjoyable time planning the summer programme and I urge you to book in good time for what I am sure will be interesting and pleasurable outings.

Anne Anderson

FROM THE EDITOR

After being editor for 11 years and producing 33 editions of the Newsletter (and also typing up several editions for the previous editor, Mrs Margaret Roberts) I feel it is high time that I stood down and made way for some fresh ideas from a new editor. Consequently I will not be seeking re-election to the Committee at the AGM. I would like to express my most sincere thanks to the members of the Association for their unstinted help over the years, in providing articles when asked, in producing the Programme so efficiently and well before the deadline for printing, and to the many members who have provided the "write-ups" for the various events – I have been constantly astonished by the detail of their observation, and the excellence of their writing. Many thanks!

Ewart Okey.

SOUTH CHESHIRE HOLIDAY

We have been asked to publicise the South Cheshire Association's holiday to Perth, Sept 1st - 5th inclusive, visiting Blair Castle, Dewars Whisky, Glamis castle, etc. Queens Hotel - half board £320 shared room. For further information please contact Keith Billing 01270 623315 after Easter.

DONATIONS

During the past year the Committee have made the following donations from Association funds on your behalf:-

The Boscastle disaster appeal - £1000

Cartmel for the upkeep of the Gatehouse - £250

Little Moreton Hall, £250 for the purchase of a cooled drinks cabinet for the shop. Since its installation we are told that profits from the sale of drinks have covered the cost several times over!

Two donations of £500 to be put towards the travel costs of schools visiting local properties, in an attempt to encourage young people to appreciate what the Trust has to offer.

As 2005 is 'SeaBritain' year, and Associations have been requested by the NT to commemorate this in some way, we have decided to make our major donation this year to the 'Winning the Point' Appeal to purchase Wembury Point in S. Devon from the MoD to protect this beautiful stretch of coastline (see p.5 in the Spring NT Magazine.) We are donating £2,000 to the fund.

Members who read the last Newsletter will be aware that because of current regulations, and the uncertainty of their interpretation, the Committee has decided not to run any holidays in the immediate future. Our holidays are our biggest fund-raisers, and it is obvious that we will be unable to continue our donations to the Trust on the scale of those above.

ALSTONEFIELD FLOWER and COSTUME FESTIVAL

We have received a cordial invitation to any of our members interested in attending the above Festival in the picturesque village of Alstonefield, near Ashbourne.

The Festival, which celebrates 'Stages of Life' with flowers and antique costume displays, will run from June 16th – 19th, 10.30 a.m. till 7.00 p.m. daily, and while entrance is free, donations are requested in aid of the Church roof. It will be held in St Peter's Church, where tea and biscuits will also be available. Further information from Cathy Reavy, 01335 310125

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Ninety members attended the Christmas Lunch which was held at the Broughton Arms, Betley, on Thursday 16th December. The new venue and the mid-week date were both popular with the members, and the food was good. There was the usual huge assortment of raffle prizes, thanks to the generosity of members, who parted with £106 in their attempts to win them back. We all had a most convivial time; thanks to Mary Malcolm for organising it.

NATIONAL TRUST NEWS

1. The Trust expresses its huge gratitude for all the work done by Volunteers, without which it could not maintain the properties and visitor facilities in its care. 40,000 Volunteers contribute 2.5 million hours annually, giving what Octavia Hill called 'Gifts of Time', doing anything from acting as room stewards, garden helpers and shop assistants to conservation workers and cleaners.

This is being celebrated as "Volunteer Year" by the Government, which hopes to encourage even more people to come forward; there will be a Volunteer Week in June and 'Make a Difference' Day in October. The Regional Newsletter always gives a list of Volunteers needed at local properties.

2. The Trust has given grateful thanks to all who contributed funds or volunteering efforts to begin the work of restoration in Boscastle, where the Trust has a number of properties which were damaged in the flood. The North Staffordshire Association made a donation of £1000 towards this work.

3. Members might like to know of two forthcoming exhibitions:

A photographic exhibition 'The Coast Exposed' will showcase the natural wonders of the coast and the environmental pressures it faces; it is linked to the 'SeaBritain' theme which runs throughout 2005. This will be on show at the Lowry Gallery, Salford, from Sept. 24th 2005 until Jan 8th 2006.

At Dyrham Park from April 15th-19th 2005 the NT will stage 'Tulipomania', a 5-day festival to celebrate the flower and its role in history. The house and church will be decorated and there are Dutch furnishings, textiles, paintings and Delftware in the house.

TALKS

Monday, 17th January. David Vodden: "Open Air Museums"

The meeting started with Anne introducing Lisa Goldsmith from the Birmingham Office of the National Trust, who spoke for a short time bringing us up to date with the events and developments at properties in our area. This was fortunate, as the speaker, David Vodden, had been unable to find the Medical Institute, and nobody he asked seemed to have heard of it. However he was able to take over from Lisa Goldsmith and gave us a talk about the development of open-air museums from the earliest which were all in Scandinavia. The first British one opened at St Fagans, Cardiff in 1947. Here were assembled such buildings as a farmhouse, a farm cottage and a weaving house.

Other open-air museums followed in England such as the Weald and Downland Museum at Singleton, which many of us visited on one of Penny Moore's holidays, Beamish in the North East which was built on an industrial site, and Ironbridge, which again many of us have visited with the Association.

In 1970 a meeting was held in order to establish the Black Country Museum at Dudley. Mr Vodden showed us how many buildings had been assembled on this site in a relatively short time. He has written a book about this museum's first 25 years. His description made us feel we should re-visit it.

Tuesday, 1st March. An Evening at the Museum.

70 members assembled at the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, and after a pause when we could examine the wares on sale in the shop we made our way into the lecture theatre for an introduction to the evening's events by Sarah and Girish. We were divided into two parties, one to be shown the 'fine arts' (paintings and sculptures) by Sarah and the other the costume collection by Girish. It was a pity that our guides did not use the occasion to take us round the exhibits and explain them in more detail, but at least we were able to handle (albeit with gloves on) some of the dresses, and to see sketchbooks not normally on display. The evening ended with tea or coffee and very good cake!

VISITS

Wednesday, 9th February. Middleport Pottery. Car outing.

Our visit to the Middleport Pottery on Ash Wednesday was a most interesting experience. Set amid neat terraced housing, this original Victorian pottery makes a fascinating picture. As we stood canal-side the present owner, Mrs Rosemary Dorling, explained how she and her husband, who were running a pottery distribution business, discovered that the factory was in the hands of the receivers, and would be bulldozed if no buyer was found. They were unable to find any other buyer who could raise the money in time, and so bought it themselves. They have had to take on extra labour and continue to produce pottery with the same machinery.

We then had a conducted tour of the factory where the old methods and original machinery are still hard at work: even the transfer patterns are from the Victorian era. It was very much a “stepping back in time” experience. We were shown the ancient steam engine (which is having to be shut down because of “Health and Safety” – the boiler has to be cleaned by someone going inside) and the clay being pressed to expel surplus water. We saw plates being made both by a turning method and also by a hydraulic ram. After firing, the biscuit ware is decorated using an under-glaze pattern which is printed on tissue and then applied to the ware and brushed down using a soap solution in a process reminiscent of both wall-papering and wrapping presents. After removing the tissue the item is then glazed and fired.



Machine for printing the design on plates and bowls.

The tour ended in the Manager's Office where Mrs Dorling pointed out the stained glass windows mentioned in Anna of the Five Towns. As all good visits should, we ended with coffee and cake in the factory shop. The care and preparation by Alun Davies that had gone into the planning of this unusual visit was much appreciated.

Mary Yardley.

Tuesday, 8th March. A Day in Sheffield – Cutlers' Hall, Millennium Galleries and Winter Gardens.

One could be forgiven for walking past the entrance to The Cutlers' Hall, yet it is considered to be one of the finest livery halls in the country and those of us that made the journey across the Pennines were rewarded with a tour of the

Hall and its treasure trove guided either by Geoffrey Dakin, who holds the office of Beadle, or his deputy, Ron Slater. The Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire was founded in 1624 (a cutler being anyone involved in making a cutting edge, so knives and lawnmower blades are in but spoons and forks are not) and their motto is “Pour y parvenir a bonne Foi” which translates today as “Keep the customer happy”. The present Cutlers’ Hall is a 19th century monument to the Victorian era of great wealth and opulence when industry and craftsmanship were celebrated and fortunes were made from steel and Sheffield plate. We were given many facts and figures and shown some priceless treasures, the



The Rose Globe and other examples of modern silverware.

Norfolk knife which is a giant penknife made for the Great Exhibition in 1851, the original whistling tankards (hence the expression “to wet your whistle”), Bowie knives which were exported in great numbers to the pioneers in North America and everywhere the ubiquitous elephant, resplendent on the coat of arms, in honour of the many tusks used to make knife handles.

After lunch we could choose what to do but I think most of us made our way to the award-winning Millennium Galleries where we could view a temporary exhibition of modern sculpture which both challenged and mystified us before visiting the permanent displays in the Ruskin and Metalwork galleries, and then next door to relax in the Winter Garden – a huge greenhouse with over 2000 plants – and a very pleasant place for a cup of tea. There was just time to look in the cathedral church of S. Peter & S. Paul and see the very moving memorial chapel dedicated to the York & Lancaster regiment which includes a screen of swords and bayonets and the bell from H.M.S. Sheffield and then it was back onto the coach to head home.

Many thanks to Mary for a well-organised, enjoyable and informative day – definitely one with a cutting edge!

Sarah Akhtar



APRIL to SEPTEMBER 2005 PROGRAMME

Thursday, 14th April

COMPTON VERNEY, near Warwick.

This Grade 1 listed Robert Adam house, set in Capability Brown parkland and renovated by the Pools heir, Sir Peter Moores, over the past decade, contains a marvellously eclectic art collection. There are artworks from Naples, Germany, British portraits (including Joshua Reynolds' Mrs Baldwin) a unique Folk Art collection and a large collection of Chinese bronzes. Also there will be a Salvator Rosa exhibition, curated by Marina Warner.

We shall have coffee and biscuits on arrival at 11 a.m. approx. followed by a short introductory talk. Members are then free to view the collections at their own pace.

There is a café, but as it seats only 36 members may have to wait for a table and be prepared to find another group there. You may prefer to bring a picnic. The main picnic area is by the car park, 10 minutes' walk from the house. There is a small picnic area near the house, or if the day is fine there are 120 acres of parkland.

Early application advisable!

Depart: 9.00 a.m. School Street. Return 6 p.m. approx.

Cost: £18.00 Price includes coach, gratuities, admission and coffee.

Apply to: Mrs M. Malcolm, 17 Beresford Crescent, Newcastle.
ST5 3RG Tel: 613451 enclosing SAE
Booking closes 8th April.

Monday, 18th April Car Outing. Maximum 20

A WALK ROUND MACCLESFIELD.

An early start ensures a visit to the **MAYORAL PARLOUR** where we shall meet The Mayor. Councillor Sylvia Roberts, a Blue Badge Guide, will introduce us and then walk us round Macclesfield for about 1½ hours. There are several interesting churches and a Georgian Sunday School which now houses the Silk Museum – a good place to visit after lunch. Macclesfield has a good choice of eating places and Mrs Roberts recommends Mulberrys in The Heritage Centre.

Full directions for route and where to park will be sent to you.

Meet: Town Hall entrance. 10.15 a.m.

Cost: £5 for guided tour and donation to the Mayor's Charity Fund.

Apply to: Mrs M. Hopley, 5 Sedbergh Close, Newcastle. ST5 3JQ
Tel: 618821 enclosing SAE
Booking closes 12th April.

Tuesday, 3rd May Car Outing Maximum 30
RODE HALL, Cheshire. 2.00 p.m.

It is several years since we have arranged an outing to this popular privately owned 18th Century house and garden, home of Sir Richard Baker-Wilbraham. We shall have a conducted tour of the house, in small groups, then the opportunity to enjoy wandering in the extensive gardens, which include a walk around the lake and a well-maintained, walled kitchen garden. Afternoon tea of scones and cake is included in the price.

Meet in the car-park at 2.00 p.m. (Directions will be sent with acknowledgement of booking.) Sensible footwear necessary for gardens.

Cost: £9.00 (£10 non-member.)

Apply to: Mrs A. Anderton, 14 Berne Avenue, Newcastle. ST5 2QJ

Tel: 01782 6133024 enclosing SAE.

Bookings close April 21st

Saturday, 7th May

THREE LITTLE GEMS – A day with English Heritage

3 splendid buildings in Northamptonshire – **KIRBY HALL, LYDDINGTON BEDE HOUSE and RUSHTON TRIANGULAR LODGE**, now in the care of English Heritage. Come and see how this other great conservation body looks after and presents its properties.

KIRBY HALL is one of the great Elizabethan houses built in the hope of receiving the Queen on one of her “Progresses”. Although partially ruined, the Great Hall and State Room remain intact and have been re-fitted and redecorated in authentic 17th and 18th Century schemes, the great gardens too have been partially restored. After coffee in the Hall (included), Mr John Coulson (Head of visitor operations East Midlands) will present a short talk/slide show concentrating on how English Heritage presents its properties. Following lunch (included) at the White Hart, Lyddington, walk through the ironstone village and discover the medieval palace of the Bishops of Lincoln, transformed at the Reformation into an alms or BEDE HOUSE. Next door is the medieval Church of St Andrew (included in Simon Jenkins’ England’s Thousand Best Churches.)

After tea and cakes and biscuits (included) we will visit RUSHTON TRIANGULAR LODGE. This Elizabethan folly has 3 sides, 3 floors, 3 gables and trefoil windows and is both delightful and puzzling.

Note: There will be a considerable amount of walking on this visit, much of it outdoors and on uneven ground. Sensible shoes and clothing are essential.

Depart: 9.00 a.m. School Street. Return 7.00 p.m. approx.
 Cost: £25 (non English Heritage Members)
 £18.20 English Heritage Members. Price includes coach,
 gratuities, coffee, lunch, tea and illustrated talk.
 Please indicate your lunch choice on the application form.
 Apply to: Mrs P. Moore, 26 Parkway, Trentham. ST4 8AG
 Tel: 657645 enclosing SAE
 Booking closes 30th April.

Tuesday 10th May 25th AGM Medical Institute, Hartshill 7.00pm

After the AGM, which will start promptly at 7.00, we shall have an illustrated talk 'Libraries of the National Trust'. We are fortunate to have Mark Purcell, Libraries Curator to the Trust, to tell us something about the vast treasures for which the Trust is responsible and his work in being in charge of their upkeep. Mark has been Library Advisor to the Trust for a number of years and prior to that was in charge of early printed books at Christ Church, Oxford. He has a special interest in 17th & 18th century books but his talk will give us a general overview of the Trust's collections and should be of great interest to us all as he is a highly recommended speaker. The talk will be followed by our usual finger buffet, at which Mark will be our guest.

Time: AGM 7.00pm Talk 7.30pm Buffet 8.30pm
 Buffet Supper with tea, coffee. Bar open from 6.30pm

Any new members are especially welcome.

NB Please submit nominations for the Committee to the Hon. Sec. Josie Thomas before April 10th (See note at end of enclosed AGM Agenda)

For the £6.25 Supper Ticket please apply on the special form before April 30th to: Mrs. J. Thomas, 16 Audley Place, Newcastle. ST5 3RS Tel: 617632

**Wednesday, June 8th 2.00 - 4.00pm Consall Hall Landscape Garden
 Car Outing: Max. 40 people**

Few people have the privilege of visiting this wonderful landscape garden, created by the owner, Mr. William Podmore, OBE, over a period of 45 years in a sheltered valley once littered with mining spoil-heaps. Using his knowledge and skill as a mechanical engineer, but above all his eye for a view or a vista, he has created a dramatic series of lakes, terraces, rockeries, borders and walkways, all of which have specially-constructed features or follies from which to admire the views. This is a garden for the artist as well as the gardener to admire and enjoy and we are fortunate to have the opportunity to see it in its early summer glory.

We shall meet in the car-park at 1.45pm for the tour at 2.00. Stout footwear is essential as the paths are uneven in places, and there may be slippery paths. steps or stepping-stones, especially if it is wet, and there is no shelter. There are no refreshment facilities but members are welcome to take a picnic tea in the car-park or may wish to combine the visit to Consall with lunch or tea in Leek, Wednesday being market-day. Details of how to reach Consall Hall will be sent with booking acceptances. **Please note that no toilets are available at Consall.**

Time - 1.45 p.m. meet in car-park; Tour 2.00 - 4.00pm
 Cost - £5
 Apply to: Mrs. A. Anderton, 14, Berne Avenue, Newcastle, Staffs.
 ST5 2QJ Tel: 01782 613024
 Booking closes 20th May

Tuesday, 21st June

LOTHERTON HALL and TEMPLE NEWSAM near Leeds.

Lotherton Hall, its gardens and estate were given to Leeds in 1968 by Sir Alvary and Lady Gascoigne. This charming gentleman's residence was the last home of the Gascoigne family, local land and coal owners. Extended at the end of the 19th Century and further enlarged in 1903, it is a delightful cameo of an Edwardian country house. There are fine collections of 19th and 20th Century decorative art, costume and oriental art as well as family paintings.

We shall have coffee and biscuits on arrival. Then members are free to visit the House, the Bird Garden and the Formal Gardens. You can buy lunch in the Stables Tea Room, or bring a picnic.

After lunch we set off for TEMPLE NEWSAM, a short distance away. This magnificent Tudor-Jacobean house was the birthplace of Lord Darnley, husband of Mary Queen of Scots. The home of the Ingram family, it was bought by Leeds from Lord Halifax in 1922. 30 rooms display great paintings, renowned furniture, including Chippendale masterpieces, splendid textiles, silver, porcelain and Leeds pottery. The house has re-opened to visitors after a 2 year restoration programme. There are fine gardens with National Plant Collections of delphiniums and phlox. There is also a Home Farm. Admission to this is £3 payable on the day. There are Tea Rooms and a Gift Shop.

Depart: 8.30 a.m. School Street. Return 7 p.m. approx.
 Cost: £17.50 Price includes coach, gratuities, admission to both houses and coffee.
 Apply to: Mrs M. Malcolm, 17 Beresford Crescent, Newcastle.
 ST5 3RG Tel: 613451 enclosing SAE.
 Booking closes 14th June.

Wednesday, 6th July**GRIMSTHORPE CASTLE and EASTON WALLED GARDEN**

Lived in by the same family since 1516, GRIMSTHORPE CASTLE near Stamford is an amazing mixture of architectural styles ranging from the 13th Century to the dramatic 18th Century North Front, the last work of Sir John Vanbrugh. After coffee on arrival (included) we will have a 1 hour tour (by coach) with the Park Ranger of the 3000 acre oak deer park which is not usually open to the public. Following lunch (small tea-room available, or bring a picnic) there will be a private tour of the Castle and its State Rooms containing a fine collection of paintings, furniture and tapestries including furnishings from the old House of Lords. Nearby EASTON WALLED GARDEN, 12 acres of lost gardens dating from 1592 is undergoing extensive restoration. Here we will have a guided tour to see the work in progress and enjoy afternoon tea and homemade cakes (included).

Depart: School Street 8.45 a.m. Return 6.30 p.m. approx.

Cost: £28 Price includes coach, gratuities, all admission costs and guiding fees, coffee and afternoon tea.

Apply to: Mrs P. Moore, 26 Parkway, Trentham. ST4 8AG
Tel: 675645 enclosing SAE
Booking closes 27th June.

Monday, 18th July Car Outing. Maximum 25
LONGNER HALL and ATTINGHAM.

Designed by John Nash in 1803, Longner Hall is a Tudor Gothic style house set in a park designed by Humphrey Repton. The home of one family for over 700 years, Longner's principal rooms are adorned with remarkable plaster fan vaulting and stained glass.

After our private morning visit members may want to move on to nearby Attingham for lunch and an afternoon visit. (NT cards needed for this.)

Full directions will be sent with confirmation of booking.

Time: Meet at Longner Hall at 11.00 a.m.

Cost: £6

Apply to: Keith Walker, 49 Stockwood Road, Newcastle. ST5 3LQ
Tel: 613813 enclosing SAE.
Booking closes 10th July.

Thursday, 11th August**HARLAXTON MANOR, Lincolnshire.**

We shall spend the morning near Grantham at DOWNTOWN GARDEN CENTRE, the biggest garden superstore in the UK, Downton Superstore (home furnishing) and Boundary Mill Stores (discounted clothing) all on one 26 acre site. There is a café where members may buy lunch.

In the afternoon – HARLAXTON. Mark Girouard wrote in *The Victorian Country House* “Harlaxton must be seen to be believed and even when one has seen it, it is not always easy to believe it.” Not normally open to the public, we have negotiated a private tour of this most remarkable building. The architect Anthony Salvin built it for Gregory Gregory, a wealthy Nottinghamshire businessman. They had many differences of opinion and much of the interior is attributed to William Burn who produced an architectural tour de force with various styles and an unparalleled cedar staircase. Our visit will conclude with tea and biscuits.

Depart: 9.30 a.m. School Street. Return 7.30 p.m. approx.

Cost: £17 Price includes coach, gratuities, admission and tea and biscuits.

Apply to: Harold Yardley, 9 Paris Avenue, Newcastle. ST5 2RQ
Tel: 616752 enclosing SAE
Booking closes 1st August.

Wednesday, 24th August**MELBOURNE HALL and CHURCH, near Derby**

In the morning we shall visit the Parish Church of St Michael with St Mary, dating back to the middle of the 12th Century. It is a miniature cathedral reflecting Melbourne’s strategic importance in the Middle Ages. The Rev. Dr John Davies will tell us something of the history of the building.

In the afternoon we shall have a guided visit of the delightful interior of MELBOURNE HALL, including the upstairs rooms, by kind permission of the owner, Lord Ralph Kerr. The house was once the home of Victorian Prime Minister, William Lamb, and stands in an idyllic setting overlooking a 20 acre mill pool. The fine gardens in the French formal style, contain Robert Bakewell’s intricate wrought iron arbour and a remarkable yew tunnel.

There are Tea Rooms, a Visitor Centre, a Gift Shop and Estate Workrooms.

Lunch: bring a picnic or buy lunch at pub or café in the village.

Depart: 10.00 a.m. School Street. Return 6 p.m. approx.

Cost: £15.00 Price includes coach, gratuities, donation to Parish Church, admission to the Hall.

Apply to: Mrs M. Malcolm, 17 Beresford Crescent, Newcastle.
ST5 3RG Tel: 613451 enclosing SAE
Booking closes 14th August.