

North Staffordshire Association  
of  
National Trust Members

Newsletter 72

and

September to December 2005

Programme



Victoria Baths Manchester  
September outing

# ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRIPS AND MEETINGS

**Coaches** depart promptly from SCHOOL STREET, Newcastle, behind the Swimming Baths. Nearby long-stay parking. Should a member cancel their booking it is regretted that reimbursement is only possible if there is a waiting list. There will be a £2 per cheque handling charge. Members are requested not to find their own replacement. Non-members taking part in coach outings pay an additional £1. The committee has agreed that with rising numbers it is only fair that members should have priority when booking trips and holidays.

Members are asked to note that it is not possible for the coach to stop at places other than School Street to pick people up or drop them off on the outward or return journeys. The coach will not wait for members who are late, either at School Street or at other pick up points. Members are advised to take careful note of when or where they will be picked up. Anyone missing a coach will have no claim on the Association.

**Cheques** to be made payable to the “**N. Staffs. Association of NT Members**”. Due to current banking procedure, please note that cheques are not cleared until after an event. Members are asked to write a separate cheque for each event they book.

**Note:** The committee does not consider it proper that an event should incur a loss and therefore reserves the right to cancel should there be insufficient support.

# North Staffordshire Association of National Trust Members

NEWSLETTER No. 72

SEPTEMBER 2005

and SEPTEMBER to DECEMBER 2005 PROGRAMME

## A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR:

The time-honoured progress of days out and car outings has run as usual this summer, but there has been a different feel to the season. No holiday.....the departure of old and valued friends from the committee.....even the National Trust itself admitting in the Summer edition of the magazine that they have problems and a backlog of work caused by their move from London to Swindon, which is not yet complete! I wonder how many people understand that their new HQ is named Heelis in honour of Beatrix Potter who in private life was known by her married name?

However, all these things will settle down in time. We are keen to organise another holiday if we can be certain to achieve a sufficient surplus to make our usual donations to further the work of the Trust; we have recruited some excellent new committee members, though we still need more help with planning and leading outings, and HQ will eventually finish relocating and all be working in their modern building which is alongside parts of the old railway works.

People working in industry and commerce these days even go on courses to learn how to “manage change” and it is becoming an academic subject, rather to the amusement of those who find they have the ability to adapt cheerfully and resourcefully when it becomes necessary without being taught how to do so! We will keep you informed of our progress in accommodating the required changes in holiday arrangements; meanwhile, enjoy the coming events in our autumn programme, which we are confident will have a wide appeal.

Best wishes to you all,

Anne Anderton

**Dear Reader**

We hope you enjoy reading this as much as we have enjoyed preparing it. Before you settle down to read it from cover to cover can we bring to your attention the need for a speedy reply if you want to go on the 14th September trip. Also please notice the question on Page 13. Happy Reading

**The Editors****DONATIONS**

We have received letters from Moseley Old Hall and Little Moreton Hall expressing grateful thanks for our recent donations of £500 to each property. They have contacted local primary schools who are delighted to have their travel costs covered for forthcoming educational visits. The schools concerned are:-

Crescent Primary, Meir

Hassall Street, Newcastle

Springhead Primary, Talke Pits

Friarswood Primary, Newcastle

**ARCHIVES**

Georgina Pritchard has agreed to take responsibility for the Association Archives. Please send any photos of events or outings, or any appropriate leaflets or pictures to her at 3, Church Bank, Keele, ST5 5AT or hand to any committee member to pass on.

**REPORT FROM THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Anne welcomed everyone to the 25th AGM of the Association, especially those attending their first AGM. Apologies had been received from Paul Anderton and Penny Moore. Anne also mentioned that she had received a card from the Chairman of the National Trust congratulating us on our 25th Anniversary. The Secretary's Report, read by Mary Malcolm, spoke of outings to interesting buildings, houses and beautiful gardens which had been enjoyed by members, including a visit to Rode Hall with an especially delicious tea! An evening visit to the Museum in Hanley had highlighted the Museum's Art and Period Costume collections. Madeleine Hopley's Treasurer's Report showed that membership, subscriptions and expenses had not altered significantly. The report also detailed the donations made by the Association, principally one of £2,000 towards the Trust's campaign to purchase Wembury Point in Dorset.

Four members of the Committee had retired and Anne warmly thanked Josie Thomas and Sue Willson for all their hard work. She then made special mention of Mary Malcolm and Ewart Okey who had both served the Committee for many years and said that Mary's meticulous planning of many events had been carried out with enthusiasm and good humour and that Ewart Okey had fulfilled his role as Newsletter Editor with great efficiency, making an enormous contribution to the success of the Association. On behalf of the National Trust she presented Ewart and Mary with landscape prints and life membership of the Association.

After the business meeting there was an illustrated talk by Mark Purcell, Libraries Curator to the National Trust, on "Libraries of the National Trust".

We saw illustrations of several rare and valuable books, mostly obtained on the Grand Tour, but Mr Purcell explained that, contrary to a popular misconception, the vast majority of the books were useful, and the libraries were well used by their owners and often made available to interested scholars.

Mr Purcell's enthusiasm and lively presentation made this an extremely interesting talk, and should increase our appreciation when we visit Trust properties with libraries.

Judith Walker

## TALKS

### **Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March. Dr Philip Morgan: "The Crackpot Antics of the National Trust".**

Before the evening's talk the Committee had the pleasure of meeting some of the new members for an informal chat over a glass of wine. The new Newsletter seemed to have reached them all that morning, so that it was possible to discuss future events with them.

Some 90 of us then assembled in the Hall for Dr Philip Morgan's talk. In a rambling, if often humorous discourse, he attempted to communicate his personal grudges against some of the practices of the NT. These originated when the steward in charge of a property prevented him from taking photographs – for which he admitted he had no permission. He restated the much discussed arguments for restoration versus conservation – though it was hard to decide which side he was on. Towards the end we discovered that his real passion is the preservation of written records – though the examples given

had nothing to do with the NT. He finished with an appeal for the County Archives to acquire the Sutherland papers, presently on loan to them but the family now wish to sell them.

## **TRIPS**

### **Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> April. Compton Verney near Warwick.**

Unfortunately this trip had to be cancelled due to lack of support. The Committee would be glad to hear from any members who had particular reasons for not booking for this event.

### **Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> April. Car Outing, A Walk Round Macclesfield.**

Our Blue Badge Guide, Cllr Sylvia Roberts, met us at the grandiose Town Hall, dating from 1824, where she introduced us to the Mayor and Mayoress. The Mayor explained local government and showed us the regalia and silverware. Many of these were gifts from the Brocklehurst and Roe families who made their fortunes out of silk manufacture.

Our walk began at the Town Cross, originally in a more prominent place in the market where deals were struck, and later bought by a farmer who used part of it as a dog's grave. Behind this is St Michael's Church founded in 1728, but later restored, and the adjoining Savage Chapel of 1501. This was "high church" and when the curate, David Simpson, showed Methodist leanings he was disowned by the vicar but supported by Charles Roe, who in 1775 built him the 1300-seat Christ Church, where John Wesley preached on several occasions. Another ecclesiastical gem is the Unitarian Chapel of 1690, approached by a picturesque narrow passageway, where the minister showed us round.

Creature comforts were catered for by several inns, the earliest being the attractive late 16<sup>th</sup> century Bate Hall, with two small mullioned windows at the rear. Others included the Macclesfield Arms where Queen Victoria once took tea as a girl, and the coaching inns: the 18<sup>th</sup> century Bull's Head, and The Flying Horse.

Behind the church are 16<sup>th</sup> century red sandstone cottages and Brocklehurst Gardens where the old grammar school and many other buildings were once crowded. Below are the 108 steps down to Waters Green, where the railway now crosses. This was the route taken by animals on their way to market. The

Sunday School was built by public subscription in 1814 for the education of the poor and now houses the Heritage Centre.

The afternoon was free to shop, to see the rise and fall of the silk industry and its social consequences in the Heritage Centre or the manufacture of silk in Paradise Mill. Apart from the showers we had a most enjoyable day out, thanks to Madeleine and our guide.

Patrick Wilson.

### **Rode Hall Tuesday 3rd May**

We were welcomed in warm spring sunshine by Sir Richard Baker Wilbraham who explained how the house, originally a black and white Cheshire manor house, had reached its present appearance. The extensive and varied gardens incorporate design ideas of Humphrey Repton and William Nesfield and are beautifully maintained by Lady Anne Wilbraham and three gardeners.

Inside we were shown the many family portraits, including that of George Baker, physician to King George III, who had the unfortunate responsibility of declaring him insane. The house contains much Gillow furniture, a splendid library of over 4000 books, extensive collections of porcelain and drawings and ceramics by Walter Crane who spent much time there as a young man.

After a delicious tea, many of us enjoyed wandering in the gardens, where the weed-free kitchen garden drew sighs of envy from several of the party! We drove out of the park where sheep and lambs grazed at the end of a most enjoyable afternoon.

Anne Anderton

### **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May. Three Little Gems**

We arrived at our first destination, Kirby Hall ahead of schedule. It was not long before we were sitting down to be given a short 10 minute talk by John Coulson of English Heritage, which turned into a 45-minute lecture.

This left just over half an hour to have tea and biscuits and to view the site, so there was not much take up of the audio guides that the visitor to this site can use. Just one cautionary note of a visit to this site, keep an eye out for the peacocks and peahens for they have a tendency to lurk quietly and announce their presence loudly to the unsuspecting visitor.

As we started to make our way back to the coach for the prompt 12.45 departure for lunch, we could hear the sounds of air raid sirens and low flying

aircraft; this reminded us that it was the weekend when there were various VE day celebrations taking place.

Lunch was served at a hostelry in the quaint village of Lyddington. At the pub, Ye Olde White Hart, there is a noticeable observation, in that at the back it did possess a fully laid out petanque court.

After lunch, it was just a short walk to Lyddington Bede House. The house was not always an almshouse, but the building that we can see now was just part of what used to be a palace of the Bishops of Lincoln. There was an audio guide available, but the size of our party meant that not everybody was able to have one. Next to this house there was the village church, and yes, there was a wedding taking place that day. For the record there were three bridesmaids with the bridal party, dressed in lilac and arriving at the church by horse and carriage.

With us all aboard the coach by 3pm, we now made our way to Rushton Triangular Lodge, but not before tea, biscuits and cake, and the last toilet stop of the day at the Thornhill Arms in Rushton itself.

The Triangular Lodge at first glance can be described as a most unusual folly, for it has 3 sides, with 3 floors, with 3 gables on each side and 3 windows on each floor, on each side. When the steward started to talk to us, it soon became clear, over the noise of the strong breeze, that it was not a folly to its creator Thomas Tresham. For it was one man's way of showing his devotion to his religion, at a time when it was not prudent.



With this visit over, it was back on the coach for the return journey back to Newcastle.

I must thank Penny Moore for organising an excellent and informative day out, planned to almost the minute, except for the intervention of the weather.

Kevin Mayer.

Editors' note - Kevin was so impressed by this visit that he has written a lot more. If anyone would like a copy of the full version please let us know - email is easiest.

## **Visit to Consall Hall on Wednesday June 8**

In weather as perfect as that enjoyed during the Lake District holiday in September 2004 our chairman introduced a group of some 40 members to Mr Podmore, the creator of a landscape garden in the Churnet Valley. He described how he had spent forty seven years at least directing operations to establish an entirely new landscape out of derelict industrial workings and an over-wooded landed estate dominated by mining spoil heaps.

The Hall itself had been cleared of Victorian excrescences and over 70 acres cleared of undergrowth and cinder tips to produce a multiplicity of views designed to be seen from a variety of carefully selected vantage points. Mr Podmore stood on one of the architectural features bought in from houses sold off elsewhere from where a magnificent over-view of his work was seen. He identified plants and trees either rescued from obscurity or planted at his order, and led the party around many of the scenes he had designed. His eye is that of a landscape photographer and lakes, rocks, valleys and hill slopes, carefully constructed ruins as well as colour-balanced flowering shrubs had all been deliberately placed to achieve scenic effects.

The result was much admired by the visitors who were able to wander at will by Mr Podmore's invitation. Hitherto, this has been a private garden but is potentially a wonderful public asset now opened more frequently to party visits.

Paul Anderton

## **Lotherton Hall and Temple Newsam, 21st June, 2005**

After delays because of heavy traffic, we arrived a little late at Lotherton Hall, where we were soon refreshed with coffee and biscuits before being free to view the house and gardens. Lotherton was very tangibly a loved family home to the Gascoignes, since enriched by the collections of paintings, fine furniture, ceramics and costumes. I particularly liked the drawing room with its beautiful chandelier and ornate piano and garden views and the imposing hall with the tiers of balustrades as you looked up. I always enjoy houses with family portraits and photographs and there were many fascinating examples at Lotherton. The 12th century chapel was an unexpected delight with its rough rubble walls. The gardens with their borders and the formal and informal areas like the Dell were pretty and colourful in the sunshine. Another bonus was the extremely well designed wild bird garden, where the fascinating inhabitants lived in some of the best enclosures I have seen. If you have to keep birds in captivity this is the way to do it.

After a good lunch in the tea-room, we drove to nearby Temple Newsam, also used to display many of the City of Leeds' remarkable art collections. Over 30 rooms were full of wonderful paintings, furniture and pottery. Particularly memorable was the beautifully restored vast Picture Gallery, with many of its original paintings, and the Chinese Drawing Room, with wallpaper given to Lady Hertford by the Prince of Wales. There was so much to see, we were all exhausted by a surfeit of culture and it was pleasant to end the trip by meandering in the garden and park, with its spectacular views.

Many thanks to Mary Malcolm for organising the trip and to her and Penny Moore for guidance during the day.

Kay Williams

## **Grimsthorpe Castle and Easton Walled garden, 6th July, 2005**

Although rain had been forecast for Eastern England, we had sun for much of the day after a cloudy start.

The first part of our visit to Grimsthorpe Castle took the form of a tour of the grounds in our coach and a talk by the estate manager, Ray Biggs. Grimsthorpe is one of the oldest landscaped parks in Britain. John Grundy, in preference to Capability Brown, completed the work during the 18th century. He dammed a pool to make a large lake which is home to several species of birds and fish. A Cistercian abbey was demolished during the



Reformation, the stone being used to enlarge the house. Sadly only a tree-clad hill remains of where the abbey stood. A very old oak pasture contains 600 wild deer, 400 species of beetle and 6 species of bats. There is a magnificent four mile avenue of horse chestnut trees with a fine view of the house. Much of the estate is now let for farming.

After lunch we were given a guided tour of the house, very much extended and altered by Sir John Vanbrugh in the 18th century. Baroness Willoughby, who lives there for part of the year, created a charitable trust in 1978 to safeguard the property's future. We saw wonderful Flemish and English tapestries as well

as many paintings, some with an interesting history; also some fine pieces of furniture.

We continued to Easton Walled Garden dating from 1582, which is gradually being restored from 50 years of dereliction. Lady Cholmeley who showed us round is the "guiding light" in the restoration of these 12 acres and it is amazing what has been accomplished in 3 years. Unwanted trees have been removed, wild flower areas developed as well as beds full of annuals. A cut-flower garden is in place with old species of some plants. It is hoped in the future to increase the sale of plants and to have a garden book store. A big "thank you" to Penny for organizing such an interesting day.

## **AUTUMN PROGRAMME**

### **TALKS**

#### **Smaller English Country Houses and Gardens**

**by David Brown Monday October 17<sup>th</sup> 8.00pm. at Medical Institute, Hartshill.**

Come and enjoy this exclusive tour of some of the country's most interesting houses and gardens which are in private ownership and not open to the public! David is currently Donor Development Manager for the West Midlands region of the NT but on this occasion he will be sharing with us his passion for typical **manor houses and similar dwelling places** which he has been fortunate enough to visit. Some of these houses are still occupied by the original families while others have been transformed recently by new owners who have employed top designers to redecorate them and have also re-planned the gardens and we can have the fun of a glimpse through the keyhole or the garden gate. David Brown will be remembered by many members as one of the NT people who gave much help and encouragement to those who set up this Association 25 years ago; he revisited us several years ago, but looks forward to meeting a number of old friends again in October .

**From Ship to Shore - the Sea in Our Lives to celebrate 'Sea Britain' Wednesday, November 9<sup>th</sup> 8.00pm Medical Institute, Hartshill**

The National Trust has prepared a set of slides with accompanying notes for every Association and Centre and this illustrated talk will be our contribution to recognising the theme which has inspired many events this summer. ANNE ANDERTON will give the commentary on an exciting and varied set of slides

which show **coastal scenery, famous paintings, shipbuilding, the adventures of explorers, ports and harbours** as well as the work of the Neptune campaign and many other topics. To enter the spirit of the occasion we will raffle a bottle of **Navy Rum!** Come along sea-farers and landlubbers alike to enjoy the evening.

## VISITS

### **Whitworth Art Gallery & Victoria Baths, Manchester Wednesday, September 14th.**

Internationally famous for its collections of art and design, the **WHITWORTH ART GALLERY** is home to an impressive range of watercolours, prints, drawings, modern art and sculpture as well as the largest collections of textiles and wallpaper outside London. After a brief introductory talk by the curator, you are free to explore the galleries at your own pace.

**THE VICTORIA BATHS** has been described as the most splendid municipal bathing institution in the country. The **winner of BBC2 Restoration series in 2003**, it was voted the building the nation would most like to see restored. Come and see why! We will have an extensive tour of the building lasting 2 hours, followed by a cup of tea or coffee.

**Please note due to the nature of the building and its restoration works, this visit is totally unsuitable for anyone with walking difficulties.**

Depart: 9.30 a.m. School Street. Return 6.00 p.m. approx.

Cost: £20 – price includes coach, gratuities, all admission costs, lunch and a cup of tea. A sandwich lunch with unlimited tea and coffee is included in the cost of the day. Please indicate your choice of sandwich from the following on the booking form.

- A. Mature Cheddar Cheese & Homemade Spiced Apple Pickle
- B. Free Range Egg Mayonnaise & Watercress
- C. Honey Baked Cheshire Ham & Mustard Mayonnaise

Apply: Mrs P Moore, 26 Parkway, Trentham. ST4 7AG, enclosing SAE. Tel: 675645

PLEASE NOTE BOOKING CLOSES 10 SEPTEMBER – PROMPT APPLICATION REQUIRED

## **Jackfield Tile Museum and Coalport Pottery Ironbridge, Wednesday October 5th**

You may think you know **Ironbridge** and also all about tiles, but you will be amazed at this dazzling display of many different kinds of tiles and stunning room settings in this recently refurbished and much extended museum. There is a country house bathroom, a butcher's shop, a pub, an Underground station and many more tiles displayed in period settings. We shall have coffee and biscuits on arrival then explore the museum and outside areas at leisure, possibly even looking into the current working place.

We shall have a lunch of sandwiches, sausage rolls, crisps and fruit at the museum then make the short coach journey to Coalport Pottery Museum. Here a wonderful array of pieces from early blue and white ware to the most elaborate and sophisticated Caughley china is displayed in a series of rooms. There is an extensive shop. Outside there are several craft workshops and a short walk is possible along the canal to the nearby Tar Tunnel.

Both venues have steps but they are easy and there is a lift at Jackfield.

Depart 9.15am School Street                      Return 5.30pm approx.

Cost £23.50. Price includes coach fare and gratuities; entrance to both museums; tea/coffee; lunch.

Apply to: Mrs. A. Anderton, 14, Berne Avenue, Newcastle. ST5 2QJ Tel: 01782 613024 enclosing SAE

Booking closes on Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>

## **The Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, Sunday December 11th. An Evening with The Hallé**

Recently voted "Ensemble of the Year" by the Royal Philharmonic Society, the Hallé Orchestra are in sparkling form. Come and hear Britain's oldest orchestra in their Manchester base, The Bridgewater Hall. We have a limited number of

seats in the Centre Middle Stalls (face value £26). ***Early booking is recommended.***

Sibelius : Lemminkainen's Return  
 Rachmaninov : Piano Concerto No. 2 in C Minor  
 Tchaikovsky: Symphony No.6 in B Minor, 'Pathetique'  
 Paul Daniel – Conductor; John Lill – Piano

Depart: 5.45 p.m. School Street – Return 10.30 p.m. approx.

Cost: £27 to include concert ticket, coach and gratuities

Apply: Mrs P Moore, 26 Parkway Trentham, ST4 8AG. Tel: 657645, enclosing SAE

**BOOKINGS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 30<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER.**

## **Christmas Lunch, Thursday 15th December**

at Broughton Arms, Newcastle Road, Balterley.

Again, we are holding the lunch at the Broughton Arms. The menu will be:-

Starter: Vegetable Soup, Garlic Mushrooms, Melon

Main Course :Roast Turkey, Roast Beef, Sole with prawn & mushroom sauce or Vegetarian

Sweet: Christmas Pudding, or Cheese Cake

Coffee

Please state your choice of starter and main course on the special booking form. If you wish to sit with friends, please indicate this on your booking form.

We shall be pleased to receive Raffle Prizes on the day.

Time: 12.30 for 1.00 p.m. Cost: £19.00

**FUTURE SUMMER PROGRAMME**

**Would this trip interest you?**

HAVE YOU AN INTEREST IN WORLD WAR II HISTORY, COMPUTING OR SECRET CODES? Do you remember ENIGMA ? If so, would you like us to organise a visit to BLETCHLEY PARK, near Milton Keynes – Churchill’s WW2 Intelligence HQ where 10,000 people worked to crack enemy codes and developed the World’s first semi-programmable computer. The wooden code-breaking huts are still there as well as an excellent WW2 Exhibition, a wartime garage and examples of Enigma and Colossus, the first computers..

**IF YOU WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THIS TRIP PLEASE RETURN THE SLIP BELOW TO MRS P MOORE OR EMAIL THE EDITOR WITH THE INFORMATION. {NAME (S), ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER.}**

***THIS IS NOT A BOOKING FORM.***

**EVENT: BLETCHLEY PARK – WWII Intelligence HQ.**

This trip will only take place if there is sufficient interest. If this would interest you please either return this form to Mrs Moore or send an email with this information to the editor. We will let you know more in the next newsletter.

Name..... Association No..... No in party .....

Name and address:

.....  
.....

Tel. No. ....

Replies please by October 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**COMMITTEE 2005 - 2006**

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