

North Staffordshire Association  
of  
National Trust Members

Newsletter 76

and

January to April 2007

Programme



Why is this picture here?

See Page 12 for details

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# 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.

## BOOKING FOR OUTINGS - Reminder from last Newsletter

The committee would like to urge all members to look carefully at what is involved in booking for an outing or a holiday. Consider the starting time, the length of the day, the amount of walking and stair-climbing involved, the number of times of getting on and off a coach, etc.

Please be sure you can manage all these independently and without help so that you can enjoy the day to the full by being able to participate in all aspects of the outing.

If you have not received acknowledgement of a booking within 2 weeks, please enquire as we believe that some bookings have recently gone astray in the post.

# North Staffordshire Association of National Trust Members

NEWSLETTER No. 76

DECEMBER 2006

and January to April 2007 PROGRAMME

## A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR:

This is a time of year for reflection and anticipation. The extensive summer programme was mostly very well supported, though it was disappointing that we did not fill the coach for the August trip to Heelis. This is a fascinating building which impressed us all with its 'green' features inside the grey outside! I do urge anyone who is in the Swindon area to visit the new HQ, enjoy a meal in the restaurant and peep into the open-plan office spaces.

From the autumn programme the visits to Chetham's, Little Moreton Hall and Arley Hall obviously appealed to members as all were fully booked very quickly. It was rather embarrassing, however, to have to cancel the trip to Buxton as Richard Tuffrey, who had talked to us about the Regeneration project, had offered to do a personally conducted tour for free! I would be interested to know what we got wrong with this as so few people booked – do tell the committee.

Looking ahead to 2007 I am very pleased to announce that we are able once more to offer rambles, something we have not done for many years. Two Association members who are experienced walkers have offered to lead rambles and we are delighted that they have shown the interest and initiative. Two such outings are planned for this year but if the scheme proves popular it will encourage us to develop it next year. These rambles will be modest in scope, and children and dogs will be welcome; I'm sure they will be enjoyable events.

It would be pleasing if we had also received offers to be 'supporters' on outings (other than kind offers from ex-committee members!) or to run a Luncheon Club, an interesting and enjoyable project which would not take much time, or involve being on the committee but would provide welcome

social opportunities. Do please consider giving some help – if you enjoy our activities, why not help to organise some? The Association will not continue if we fail to attract new helpers; other organisations have had to wind up because no-one is willing to help plan and lead activities!

Perhaps you can make a New Year resolution to give a little to the Association? Very best wishes for the coming year!

**ANNE ANDERTON.**

## **COULD THIS NEWSLETTER BE BETTER?**

This now the fifth newsletter I have put together as editor. I have tried to change as little as possible and to maintain the high standard set by Ewart Okey. Recently I have wondered whether some small changes (see below) would be useful. Please let us know what you think.

### **The number of pages.**

We sometimes have to reduce some of the interesting articles sent in describing trips. The space limit is always a factor to be considered. But the recent programme has been so active that the last two issues have required extra pages. Have you welcomed the extra content or would you prefer the newsletter to remain ‘short and sweet’?

### **Photographs**

Following Ewart’s lead I have included the occasional photograph. Several are pictures I have taken, but that means you mainly see pictures from trips that I have been on – and yet I know many of you now use digital cameras and have a better photographic eye than mine. Do you like to see the occasional photo? Would you be prepared to let us use one that you have taken?

On a practical note, the printing process we use doesn’t allow great detail (see recent issues for examples) and I don’t know whether I would be swamped with photos or receive none at all, but I am willing to try if you are!

### **Large Print**

I notice that most Association Newsletters are offered in larger print for those that need it. Please let us know if this would be helpful to you. We would, I think, only be able to produce a few copies in this way.

John Beaumont

# **AUTUMN PROGRAMME**

## **REPORT ON TALKS**

**Wednesday 11th October 2006**

### **TERRY WOOLLISCROFT: THE TALE OF THE TOILET**

or *The Potty Story of the WC*

To set the scene, Mr Woolliscroft quoted the Times Newspaper which claimed that the WC was one of the ten most significant inventions in the last 1000 years.

His skilfully illustrated talk covered the history of the toilet from Roman times until the present day with a glimpse into the future.

He praised the Romans for their cleanliness in their toiletry with flushing systems and clean water for washing, but with their departure there followed a 1000 years of squalor.

He described the various attempts at waste disposal during this period until the precursor of the modern toilet was invented and manufactured by Thomas Twyford and his son Thomas William Twyford and others including Doulton.

He spoke with humour, choosing his words with such care and delicacy to describe the disposal of our bodily waste and the operation of the toilet.

Members of the audience will forever smile when visiting the loo in the years ahead.

The applause by members reflected the excellence of the evening and demonstrated their enjoyment of a talk upon an unmentionable topic.

Peter Moxon

## **REPORT ON VISITS**

### **Thursday 13th July Car Outing to Trentham Gardens**

A very successful car outing, on a day wisely chosen in the middle of a spell of excellent (hot) weather. Our guide was Michael Walker, the Project Manager for the gardens' restoration programme, and he began by giving us an informative "potted history" of the gardens, from the points of view of both the ownership of the grounds, and the design and layout planning over two centuries. This had included some hugely ambitious projects, including digging out the lake and re-routing the river - all done with no more technology than spades and wheelbarrows!

Although the restoration project has been in hand for only two years, a considerable amount of work has been done, and the Italian Garden is already an enjoyable experience. A great deal of emphasis is on the structural appearance, as one would expect with a formal garden. This is carried further in the planting, with a great many plants chosen for height and shape rather than for colour. Some of our members found this a little disappointing, and perhaps would have preferred more in the way of colour and colour contrast; but the consensus seemed to be very favourable, and the feeling was that they were "getting it right". Besides, Mr. Walker was continually careful to emphasize how much further work there is to be done, so perhaps another visit some time next year might show some changes in that direction. My personal feeling was that this had been yet another successful day out, and thanks are due to our programme planners.

John Cliffe.

### **Tuesday 25th July Coach Outing to Ledbury and Eastnor Castle**

A Bostock's air-conditioned coach, a warm English day, my hostess, Penny Moore, me and forty-nine other National Trust members whom I'm meeting for the first time.

The occasion? A day's trip to Ledbury in Herefordshire, and to and to the nearby Eastnor castle.

We drive down Ledbury's main street and alight at The Feathers Hotel (one of those 'impossible black-and-white jobs') for morning tea, then disperse, armed with town maps, to follow our individual fancy, and find some lunch, before the coach comes to collect us at 1.30 to drive on to Eastnor.

The town is inviting - lots of small individual shops, some of them tucked away up enticing laneways. Some disappointment that the Market House is closed for renovation, but there is still St Michael's Church to see and the sixteenth century Painted Room in the Town Council Offices -and a wealth of places to eat.

Just after 1.30 we drive on to Eastnor - a bit like Bodiam at first sight, but in Eastnor we can drive right up to the castle to our coach park.

Inside, the rooms are a vision of nineteenth century opulent comfort - not a purists' taste perhaps, but an amazing collection of furnishings and treasures - early Italian, medieval, seventeenth century Venetian, Flemish, and more. And I discover an Australian connection - an Earl Somers was Governor of Victoria from 1926 to 1931!

We drive home to Stoke-on-Trent via Shrewsbury - a pleasant and stimulating day's outing, for which we applaud the organiser, Penny

Kay Thorp, National Trust Member from Adelaide South Australia.

*(Thank you Kay for coming so far to join us and being willing to contribute your impressions)*

## **Thursday 10th August      Coach Outing to Heelis - New NT Headquarters and Railway Museum at Swindon**

Duration 11 hrs, weather good, and travel excellent.

The coach left on time and we had a quiet, hold-up free journey, arriving on time and schedule into the Coffee Lounge, laid out for tea, coffee and biscuits.

The group was now split into three for an enlightening tour of the Heelis Building, giving us a full account of the design, style and efficiency of these new headquarters. Our guide, Anne, a homely Welsh lady, kept the groups' interest with her knowledge of the workings of the various computerised gadgets abounding in the building, in order to keep it at a constant temperature. The tour

lasted about an hour and finished ideally at midday, lunch was taken in various ways, a pre booked main meal, a light bite from the cafe or members own packed lunches.

The organised tour had now been completed, so all the dispersed members could make their way to the steam museum, 100yds away across the grounds of the previous works of the Great Western Workshops and Sidings. The next three hours were spent touring around the vast area covering all aspects of what once was a great engineering works of the Great Western Railway, Foundry, Pattern Shop, Machine shops, Boiler and Carriage departments, lots of interesting memorabilia informing us technically by television screens of all the main important details, lots of model trains expertly produced in detail and several full sized trains and carriages that once graced our rail networks before Dr Beeching.

We left at 4.30pm and arrived in Newcastle at 7.15 pm tired at the end of a very interesting and successful trip. Many thanks to Anne for organising it!

Vanda and Bob Hadley

## **Thursday 28th September Coach Outing to Bolsover Castle and Hardwick Hall.**

After a splendid scenic detour over the moors, we arrived at Bolsover for a late coffee. Then, ear clamped to the very well produced audio guide, we took ourselves round the impressive remains of the castle. I found the huge Riding House amazing – one could well imagine riders performing there in the manner of the Spanish Riding School of Vienna. The audio guide brought to life the masque attended by Charles I and Henrietta Maria. Probably the most memorable building was the Little Castle, with the blue-ceilinged Star Chamber and the journey through rooms depicting aspects of human nature, finally reaching the depictions of pleasure and virtue in the shape of the Elysium and Heaven rooms.

After a good lunch, we drove the short distance to magnificent Hardwick Hall, with its incredible Long Gallery, the walls covered in Belgian tapestries and family portraits. A delightful touch was the presence of many guides dressed in Elizabethan costume all over the house. There was a fascinating exhibition of embroidery too. The exterior with its turrets and walls more glass than stone was

splendidly set off by the huge herbaceous borders full of autumn colour. I loved the scents pervading the large herb garden. Warm sunshine and wonderful views from both properties made the day complete. Thanks to Keith Walker for organizing the trip.

Kay Williams

### **Wednesday 1st November-Coach Trip to Manchester and Chetham's School**

This visit proved to be very interesting-and different from other visits which the Trust has made. After pleasing ourselves for about two to three hours, we assembled in the Baronial Hall at Chetham's School at 1.35 pm to hear a concert given by four pupils playing their chosen instruments – violin, horn or `cello with piano accompaniment. As one would expect, the standard was very high.

Afterwards outside, we were given a guided tour by the head librarian. Part of the school goes back to medieval times when the cathedral opposite the school was a collegiate church. Eight priests lived in the building with a warden. In 1540 Edward VI removed the collegiate status of the cathedral and after the Civil War, Hugh Chetham, a textile merchant, left money for a school, which became a Bluecote School, and a separate library. The school eventually became a grammar school but in 1969 the government decided to change it into a school of music. Other buildings forming the school are a nineteenth century grammar school and more modern buildings, opposite the cathedral.

The 290 pupils, from 7-18, follow a normal school curriculum. Specialist music tuition is given in addition which makes for a very long day. Each pupil is expected to play two instruments.

We next visited the library, not part of the school, but very much linked to it, built in the seventeenth century. It holds 150,000 books mostly from that time, many of which were chained to prevent theft and some still are! The library, used mainly by research scholars in local and family history, was very interesting not only because of all the old books, but also because of its architecture, carvings and portraits.

A very big "thank you" is owed to Jean Scholes for organizing our visit and the people who helped her.

Sue Corlett

## SPRING PROGRAMME

### TALKS

NOTE Venue for talks. The **Medical Institute** changed its name last year to The **North Staffs Conference Centre**. We said we would continue to use the term Medical Centre for last year. So our venue is **unchanged** - only the name has changed.

#### **Thursday 25th January 2007 7.30 pm North Staffs Conference Centre**

TONY BUSFIELD: 36 UNUSUAL AND ANTIQUE OBJECTS (And that does not refer to the committee!)

Start the New Year with a challenging and intriguing evening! Tony Busfield from Leek, well-known as an architect, clockmaker and multi-disciplinary craftsman, with an interest in local history, will bring 36 items for us to inspect, talk about, puzzle over and perhaps identify. He will then explain their background and uses and correctly tell us what they are. The evening will **begin at 7.30pm** as the meeting will be a little longer than usual, but will end with coffee and biscuits at about 9.00pm.

#### **Thursday 22nd February 2007 8.00 pm North Staffs Conference Centre**

IAN MORISON: WATCHERS OF THE SKIES

The famous telescope at Jodrell Bank is a familiar and dramatic landmark in the Cheshire plain and Ian is an astronomer at the Lovell Telescope there. He is well-known on radio and TV for his explanations of events in space that are of current interest and will present an account of some of the major developments in astronomy over the centuries. He will also talk about the work at Jodrell Bank, which was the world's first radio telescope, owned and operated by Manchester University, and was very important in the early days of satellite tracking. Though it is no longer the largest such telescope, it still has an important role in modern astronomical investigations and we shall hear at first hand about the current work.

## **Wednesday 21st March 2007 8.00 pm North Staffs Conference Centre**

JOHN WHITE: NANTWICH DABBERS and their VISITORS

John is a retired local Headmaster and he will talk on the history of the market town of Nantwich - a town guide. Come and hear about: The Romans visit Vicus Malbancus for the salt. The Domesday survey when Nantwich is hardly mentioned. The Great Fire of Nantwich in 1583. The Battle of Nantwich in 1644 and the Plague of 1604.

Why is Nantwich on this site? Why are the people called Dabbers? Why are you paid to live in Nantwich? History is fun?

## **VISITS**

### **CAR OUTINGS**

**Thursday 15th February 2007 2006 Evening Car Outing to CCTV Parking and Security, The Regent Centre, Regent Road, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent      Maximum 30**

Members are invited to visit the C.C.T.V. Centre which oversees Parking and Security in the Stoke-on-Trent area.

The tour of the Regent Centre will last about one hour and will include a video film presentation.

Members should arrive not later than 6.30 p.m. There is limited parking on the forecourt, otherwise there is ample additional Pay and Display Corporation car parking adjacent to the Centre.

The Regent Centre is situated on the corner of Regent Road and Hinde Street in Hanley opposite to the Hawksmoor Inn

Cost £4.00

Apply to Peter Moxon, Millstone House, Butterton, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 4EB enclosing *SAE*

**Wednesday 14th March 2007 Car Outing to Stoke-on-Trent Waste to Energy Plant Incinerator, Campbell Road, Sideway, Stoke-on-Trent Maximum 20 members**

As last year's visit to the Incinerator Plant was heavily oversubscribed, MES Environmental Ltd have kindly offered a repeat visit. Members will be able to see the whole process of waste disposal from start to finish..

Members will have to negotiate some stairs and floor gratings and should wear flat, firm suitable shoes, Members will be required to wear hard hats and yellow waistcoats as supplied by MES.

Members will be offered coffee on arrival. The tour will take between one and two hours. Toilets are available.

Early booking is recommended. Priority will be given to members who did not visit the plant last year.

Members should arrive not later than 10.30 a.m. Directions on application.

Adequate car parking.

Cost £5.00 including coffee.

Apply to Peter Moxon, Millstone House, Butterton, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 4EB. enclosing SAE.

**COACH OUTINGS**

**Tuesday 6th March 2007 Coach Outing to Stockport: The Staircase House and Town Hall**

The recently opened Staircase House is a beautifully restored medieval town house situated in the historic Market Place in Stockport. After coffee and biscuits (included) explore the entire 18 period rooms and the beautifully restored Cage Newel staircase (one of only three surviving examples in Britain)

with the aid of an audio guide. The tour is interactive and covers the history of the house from 1460 to WWII.

As Tuesday is Market Day in Stockport, there will be an opportunity to browse in the adjacent covered Market Hall, Produce Hall and Street Market.

After lunch in one of the many nearby venues (at own cost) there will be a privileged guided tour of Stockport Town Hall which has just been refurbished for the centenary year. The Town Hall is known as the Wedding Cake and it features a number of ornate rooms including a beautiful marble staircase and magnificent ballroom complete with Wurlitzer Organ which will rise up from the floor and play. The afternoon concludes with tea/coffee and biscuits (included)

Please note that access to the Market Place will have to be on foot up a steep hill and over uneven pavements and cobble stones. This will be an active day.

Depart 09.00 am from School Street returning to Newcastle at approx 6.00 pm.

Cost £20 including coach, admission costs, audio tour (morning) and guided tour (afternoon) refreshments on arrival and before departure and driver's gratuity.

Apply to Dr A Davies, 15, Berne Avenue, Newcastle ST5 2QJ phone 01782 611711 Please enclose SAE.

Priority Booking for members who had booked for this event (which was cancelled because of strike action) in 2006 until 31st January 2007. Closing date for all applications Friday 23rd February.

## **Sunday 18th March 2007-Coach Outing to the Hallé Orchestra at the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester**

Back by popular request, our annual visit to the Hallé Orchestra at the Bridgewater Hall in a programme described as being "a musical evocation of treachery, intrigue and magic bullets"! The evening features Tasmin Little, one of the truly great violinists of recent years. Saint-Saens Organ Symphony will provide an opportunity to hear the Hall's organ in all its glory

WEBER: Overture: Der Freischütz

MENDELSSOHN: Violin Concerto in E Minor

SAINT-SAENS: Symphony No 3 in C Minor 'Organ'

LOUIS LANGRÉ - conductor

TASMIN LITTLE - Violin

Depart 17.30pm from  
School St Return 22.30pm  
approx

Cost:- £30 (non-members  
£31) includes coach, centre  
stalls seat (face value £27)  
and driver's gratuity.



Please apply to Mrs P Moore, 26 Parkway, Trentham ST4 8AG Tel 01782  
657645 Please enclose SAE

**Early Application recommended**

Booking Closes 1st March

NB All enquiries about this event AFTER February 6th should be directed to  
Mrs A Anderton 14 Berne Ave., Newcastle ST5 2QJ Tel 01782 613024

**ADVANCE NOTICE**

**In the Shadow of the Gherkin**

Friday 5th October to Monday 8th October 2007

Four days/Three nights visit centred in London's East End, right  
alongside the City. See where BIG bells are made, walk in the path  
of the Huguenots, dine in the oldest Thames side pub in London,  
see the newest part of London from an elevated position. And much  
more - all in the shadow of the world's biggest Gherkin! See front  
cover for picture. Details in next Newsletter.

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2007**

### **CAR OUTINGS**

Sunday 22nd April Sinai

Tuesday 22 May Walcott Hall

Thursday 14th June Peover Hall

Tuesday 26th June An Evening at Wollerton Old Hall Garden

Wednesday 25th July Staunton Harold Hall and Church (N.T.)

Friday 31st August Shirley Bone Mill

### **COACH OUTINGS**

Wednesday 18th April A Day in Stratford

Saturday 5th May The Churches of South Holland

### **RAMBLES**

Saturday 28th April

Sunday 10th June

### **AGM**

Wednesday 9th May

## **COMMITTEE 2005 - 2006**

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\*Penny Moore

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\* Member of the Programme Planning Sub-Committee