

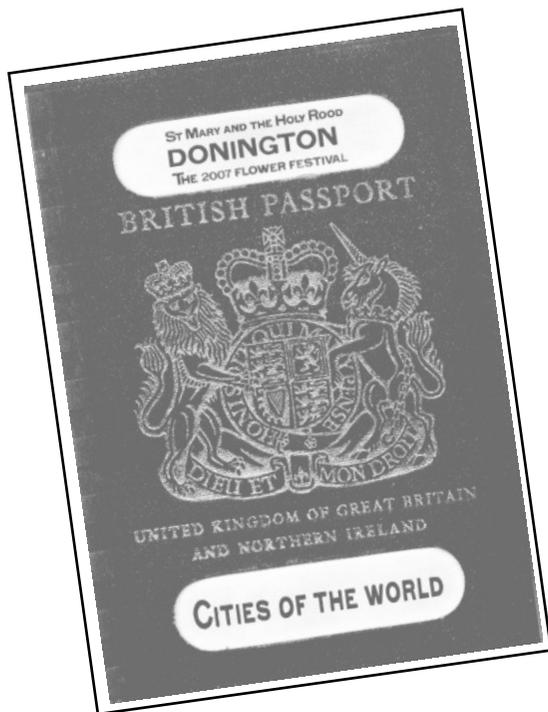
North Staffordshire Association
of
National Trust Members

Newsletter 78

and

August to December 2007

Programme



Passport to a great day out in South Holland see page 8

ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRIPS

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.

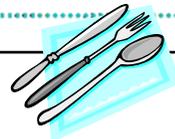
Members are asked to note that it is not possible for the coach to stop at places other than School Street to pick people up or drop them off on the outward or return journeys. The coach will not wait for members who are late, either at School Street or at other pick up points. Members are advised to 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.

For Your Safety and Enjoyment

Please look carefully at what is involved in an outing or a holiday before booking. 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.



Booking for a Lunch Club Meeting

Please:

Book by phone at least a week before the event

Give your name and phone number if you get my answer phone

Come with plenty of change! Drinks and coffee to be paid individually. Cost of meal collected by me at the end of lunch. **Mary Malcolm 01782-613451.**

North Staffordshire Association of National Trust Members

NEWSLETTER No. 78

AUGUST 2007

and August to December 2007 PROGRAMME

The summer programme this year was the most extensive we have ever run and members have enjoyed the coach and car outings, the rambles and the very successful Cornwall holiday. Our thanks go, as usual, to Penny Moore and Peter Moxon. We have a number of new organisers who have helped to provide such an interesting programme - Richard Adams, Cath Hayes, Cynthia and David Dumbelton and Rose Wheat - and we owe them special thanks for all their hard work in organising these events. Grateful thanks are also due to John Beaumont for his excellent work in managing to incorporate so much for the summer edition of the Newsletter and for such innovations as the list on the back inside cover which many people have found so helpful.

Our autumn programme looks different from usual in several respects: we are delighted that Mary Malcolm has offered to run a Luncheon Club and hope it will prove an interesting prospect for those who wish to enjoy a social occasion and good food. There will be another ramble and the usual evening talks. However, there will be no Christmas Lunch this year and there are several reasons for this. Numbers attending have declined slightly in the last two or three years and it is becoming very difficult to find a venue which can accommodate 80+ people, where there is easy parking, good food at a reasonable price and is not too far away. Various committee members have researched the matter over a number of years and we are not convinced that we can find an ideal venue. Also, many members now attend several Christmas lunches in December so the occasion is no longer the 'special' event it once was.

We do hope that the afternoon private visit to Little Moreton Hall to see the decorations and do some shopping will again prove popular and there is an extra evening event in December – a talk and social occasion - so these should put us in the Christmas spirit and compensate for the absence of the traditional lunch. (If anyone can suggest a suitable venue for us to have a lunch in a future year, please let the committee know!)

Very best wishes to everyone

Anne Anderton

REPORT ON TALKS AND VISITS

Thursday February 22nd - talk by Ian Morison: Watchers of the Skies

As visitors to the North Staffordshire Association we were initially impressed with the excellent facilities at the North Staffordshire Conference Centre, which led us to expect a high standard of talk. In this we were not disappointed as Ian Morison presented us with a history of astronomical discoveries and developments, illustrated with some superb photographs and images of constellations and nebulae. He explained how the telescopes built by some of his 'heroes' such as Galileo and Isaac Newton had furthered the study of planets and stars and spoke of how mathematics and physics aided astronomers as sometimes the existence of planets had been predicted by mathematicians. The Lovell Radio Telescope at Jodrell Bank, celebrating its 50th year in 2007, is now a major contributor to modern research and discovery, and Ian's enthusiasm for his work and his high-level involvement in some of the important current projects came over to us very clearly.

M and H Atkinson, Gloucestershire

Wednesday 21st March 2007 talk by John White: Nantwich Dabbers and their visitors

John White gave us an interesting talk on the history of Nantwich.

He began by telling us that there had been a large Roman fortified industrial settlement from the 1st/3rd centuries which had been discovered by the Manchester University Archaeological Unit in 2002. They were probably there because of the salt that they required.

The Domesday Survey valued Nantwich at £10. Next followed the Fire in 1583. After requests from the local people Queen Elizabeth I gave £1,000 towards the rebuilding of the town and also the timber for the rebuilding from her Delamere forest. The money was paid in three instalments and enabled the rebuild to take place.

In 1604 the Plague claimed 430 lives from the local population, then the Civil War was the next significant event in 1644. Nantwich supported the Parliamentarians. The battle is re-enacted each year in late January.

The Church must be mentioned. It was built in the 13th century and is a very beautiful church, known locally as the Cathedral. It has an oval tower, which is

very unusual in Cheshire. There is a clock on three sides of the tower but not one on the west side. John said that the Cheshireites had no time for the Welsh!.

Dabbers are people born inside the walls of the town, and each year they are awarded a sum of money from the local council, it could be as much as £35.00 per year!!

Thursday 15th February 2007 Evening Car Outing to CCTV Parking and Security, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

Members enjoyed an evening at the CCTV Centre when they watched a video presentation showing many of the cameras strategically placed across the City from Tunstall to Fenton.

They also saw samples of the uses to which the cameras are put in observing suspicious circumstances, potential and actual criminal incidents, tracing children who have strayed from their parents' care and driving incidents.

The Centre is run by the City of Stoke-on-Trent Council that operates 150 cameras whose films or images are constantly displayed and monitored on 90 screens in the centre for 24 hours each day and 7 days each week. Footage is kept for up to 31 days and is available to the police and members of the public for a fee. The installation of a camera can cost between £35,000 and £38,000.

Following the video presentation, members visited the operations room to watch the videos recording scenes from across the city and to see the operators at work.

Jason Handy, our host for the evening, fielded a barrage of questions from members. Members were comforted to learn that revenue from the city car parks goes towards funding the centre.

Tuesday 6th March 2007 Coach Outing to Stockport, The Staircase House and Hat Works

We arrived in brilliant sunshine at the **Staircase House** in the Market Place, where, after coffee, we acquired audio guides and explored. The house displays, on several floors, domestic life from 1460 to WW 2, linked by the eponymous staircase, beautifully restored.

Visitors can touch and examine the contents of rooms, open cupboards etc, which is particularly interesting in the kitchen and store rooms. Some furniture is of the various periods, some excellent reproduction e.g. in the bedroom where there is a fully made-up four poster with a truckle bed pulled out from underneath, showing the ropes on which the mattress would lie. Other rooms are of later

periods, lighter, with painted panelling, porcelain, and reproduction portraits. The tour finishes in a war time room.

In an hour or so of free time we lunched, walked around the market area, found the street below the square, visited the welcoming church, surrounded by supine tombstones, some dating from the late 1600s, and admired the view of hills from the churchyard.

Then off to the **Hat Works** where we visited the exhibition of hats and their wearers; it seems there is virtually nothing we have not worn on our heads at some time. There ensued a lively demonstration-cum-history of the manufacturing process; materials used, the felting process, shaping the hat, and where we get the expression 'mad as a hatter'

We are grateful to Angela and Alun Davies for organising a most interesting day despite many set-backs in the planning.

Georgina Pritchard

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

Our music programme did not include the Thunder and Lightning Polka by Strauss but we had both thunder and lightning as we drove in premature darkness to the Bridgewater Hall. Neither did it include Glinka's 'Brothers, into the Snow Storm' but that would have been appropriate for the exciting journey home.

We heard Weber's Overture: Der Freischütz and Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E Minor before the interval. According to the programme notes the soloist **Tamsin Little** plays two special violins including a rare Stradivarius. We weren't told which if either she played on the night (possibly the 1757 Guaragnini violin) but the sound she created was wonderful. When a great violinist plays on a special violin, I am never sure how much is the artist and how much the instrument. She played at times with such sweetness and delicacy, and then with vigour and passion as appropriate.

After the interval we heard Saint-Saëns' Symphony No 3 in C Minor. The interpretation was interestingly understated in places but it gave a good platform as we approached the great organ C major chord in the middle of the work. This was a great piece to show off the capability of **Jonathan Scott**, the organist, and tone of the organ. It was also a reminder of the skill with which Saint-Saëns built enjoyment into his work.

Louis Langrée conducted with an almost laid back style until we came to the applause at the end of each piece. Here the audience showed their great appreciation for what we had heard and he became greatly animated to ensure that relevant members of the orchestra received their credit for their contribution to the pieces.

We were all grateful to Penny Moore for organising the trip and for our driver Dave for getting us back to Newcastle safely. I was sorry to hear that a number of members had some difficulty getting home from Newcastle, but I believe they all got home safely in the end.

John Beaumont

Wednesday 18th April 2007 Coach Outing to Stratford-upon-Avon

We arrived in Stratford exactly on time and after refreshing coffee and biscuits, accompanied our guides on a walking tour of the town. My group was led by the enthusiastic and knowledgeable Felicity. Our first taste of **Stratford** in the glorious spring sunshine was of the cherry blossom in the riverside gardens. We then walked up to the top of Bridge Street, where we saw the house of Shakespeare's 'bad girl' daughter Judith, who disastrously married Thomas Quiney, the town drunk. We then proceeded to William's birthplace, where his father worked as a glovemaker. From there we walked along Chapel Street to Nash's House and the site of New Place, William's home for 19 years and where he died aged 52 in 1616.

We went into the **Great Garden** with its ancient mulberry tree, supposedly grown from a cutting from Shakespeare's original tree. Here are fascinating bronze sculptures by the American Greg Wyatt, each representing a Shakespeare play. In Chapel Lane, by chance the first lamp-post donated to Stratford by English towns was the one from Stoke-on-Trent. We retraced our steps and walked along Church Street, past the Guild Chapel, the Grammar School, where William stood all day at his studies and the almshouses, still lived in today by less well-to-do Stratford residents and apparently a happy community. We then turned down Old Town to Hall's Croft, where William's 'good girl' daughter Susanna lived with Dr. John Hall, past Holy Trinity Church and the Courtyard Theatre to a much-needed, excellent lunch at the **Dirty Duck**.



After lunch, my friend and I visited Hall's Croft and Nash's House with New Place. Both houses were well furnished as they would have been, with fascinating rooms, such as Dr. Hall's consulting room and dispensary. We were also impressed by the superb flower arrangements and were delighted to see more of the gardens with their vibrant spring colours. Felicity entertained us on the morning walk with all sorts of snippets of information about the origins of such things as the 'frog in the throat' and 'the baby and the bathwater' and many more; a very enjoyable and informative day was made even better by the sunshine. Many thanks to Anne Anderton, Sue Pitt and Dave the driver.

Kay Williams

Sunday 22nd April 2007 11.00 am Car Outing to Sinai Park, Shobnall, Burton-on-Trent.

There is phrase in the guidelines for writing a report on any visit that includes the phrase "if there is something out of the ordinary...." - this hardly prepared us for what we were about to see when we drove up the hill and entered the grounds of Sinai Park Farm. What a sight - heaps of beams, bricks and other building debris among which we parked. We were joined by the owner, Mrs Kate Newton, who had taken on this apparent heap of rubble in 1994.

It all began way back in the 1100's as an outpost of the monastery at Burton which owned extensive grounds in the area. They built, over the years, two large residences and at one time used them for a restorative area for people who were recovering from blood-letting - a very popular cure for all illnesses in the Middle Ages - one lived or died.

All this was changed in the 1500's when King Henry VIII decided to do away with the monasteries and give the land (or sell it) to his friends. Lord Paget (1515 - 63) acquired the two houses - built face to face - and connected the two making it into an E-style mansion. Various additions and developments were made in the next four hundred years - and obviously over that time many incidents were to happen in the area - the Civil War skirmishes between Roundheads and Cavaliers - the owners always being able to be on the right side at the right time - a few murders or mysterious deaths - providing we are told, a wealth of ghosts to investigate at various times of the year.

The Pagets sold out in the early 1900's and by the 1960's there were six families living in the now crumbling apartments. It was more or less abandoned to the farm animals until 1994 - when, with the help of **English Heritage**, the East Wing was restored and provides a very distinctive home for the present owners. They are now planning to restore the rest - a return visit in about 5 years should prove very interesting

Our thanks go to Peter Moxon for organising this very interesting outing, and also for standing by the roadside to indicate the very narrow and sharp turn that leads to the Gateway

Arthur Slight

Saturday 28th April 2007 Ramble The River Churnet and Dimmingsdale

Twenty assorted members plus four assorted dogs met at the **Ramblers' Retreat** in Dimmingsdale on the last Saturday of the warmest April for 300 years. This gave us the ideal day for walking - blue skies, a slight breeze and firm dry conditions underfoot.

We set off into the woods, soon to stop and wonder at the famous **Chained Oak** of Alton. A flight of steps leads from the footpath to an old oak, whose branches were chained together, it is said, on the orders of the Earl of Shrewsbury in 1821 after a curse was placed on the tree predicting that for each branch that falls, a member of the Earl's family would die.



Walkers with two legs and walkers with four legs.

Thank you, Richard, for the picture.

The Forestry Commission had closed our intended onward route, so we retraced our steps to follow the old railway bed to the long-deserted platforms of **Oakamoor** station. After a brief rest break, we set off again. A challenging climb up the side of the valley was rewarded by a gentle downhill stroll through bluebell-filled woods to a sociable and well-deserved lunch.

Thank you, Cath, for an enjoyable start to the renewed rambling programme.

Richard Adams

Saturday 5th May 2007 Coach Outing to Churches of South Holland

After what seemed like weeks of Mediterranean sunshine, 5th May dawned chilly and grey. However, the spring colours in gardens and hedgerows and the lambs



PADDINGTON BEAR
In flowers

trotting across Leicestershire fields, totally ignored by their mothers, gave a hint of things to come.

Our first stop was the **Baytree Garden Centre** near Spalding, where we picked up our guide for the day, Ernie Hall. A Fenman to his fingertips, Ernie provided details on every imaginable topic, from local history and geography to current trends in agro-business, sustainable development and the lives and doings of local characters, past and present. Coffee and cakes having been consumed and a

few garden purchases brought discreetly on board, the tour proper began at All Saints, Moulton, whose roof was blown off in a hurricane in 2005. Numerous churches in Lincolnshire hold their annual flower festivals at this time, with each choosing a theme for its displays. All Saints' theme was **Professions**, from artist to undertaker, complete with a lady vicar mannequin in the pulpit: even her wig matched the hair colour of the original, standing at the foot of the church tower selling tickets for its ascent.

A hearty lunch in the church hall, prepared by the ladies of St. Mary's, Long Sutton, followed before we admired the ingenuity of arrangements illustrating **Musical Inspirations**, from Handel to Elton John. St. Mary's, Sutterton's theme was **Children's Books**, but a few scarecrows from a previous year's theme returned to join in. Two of the heavy Norman pillars of the nave leaned alarmingly, but without apparent ill-effect. The purchase of choice here was cauliflowers, freshly cut from a local farm.

The final church, St. Mary and the Holy Rood at Donnington, had chosen **Cities of the World**, Wellington to Reykjavik, (picture on the front cover is from their programme) with clumps of gypsophila, freesia and roses dotted around a wheel representing the London Eye. The church and village also have connections with Trim, the cat which circumnavigated Australia alongside his master, Matthew Flinders.

As we left **Donnington** the sun finally broke through and we travelled home in a warm, golden evening which seemed to reflect the beautiful flowers and churches we had visited on an enjoyable and different day out.

Waste to Energy Plant (Incinerator) Campbell Road, Sideway, Stoke-on Trent

Following the success of the visit last year there have been two further visits during this spring. We have not included separate repeated reports because of restrictions on space but we are grateful to Peter Moxon for organising the trips and to the Energy Plant for accepting them.

Wednesday 9th May 2007 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and talk by Chris Copp on Photographs of all kinds

A record number of members attended this year's AGM and talk. The Secretary's report reminded us all how full and varied had been this year's programme and the Treasurer's report showed how members' support for the programme had enabled over £2000 to be given to local NT properties (including £600 to Biddulph Grange Garden for lawn edging agreed at the meeting). Penny Moore who chaired the meeting in the absence of Anne Anderton thanked all members for their support during the year. Attending the trips and outings was not only fun but it also contributed to properties for items that were important but couldn't, for one reason or another, be budgeted. The committee was re-elected and was thanked from the floor for all their hard work and enthusiasm. The AGM was 'short and sweet' allowing our speaker to start on time.

Chris Copp, from the **County Museums Service**, based his illustrated talk on 100 years of photographs by the **McCann** family from Uttoxeter. This important collection of several thousand photos has been donated to the County Museum Service. Chris showed many local pictures old enough to be 'history' and recent enough to be remembered by members. Subjects ranged from people and places as well as agriculture and farming development. For those who had both the interest and the technology Chris recommended www.staffspasttrack.org.uk. At least one member has found this to be every bit as fascinating as Chris' talk.

John Beaumont

Sunday 13th –Friday 18th May 2007 Springtime in Cornwall holiday.

On the night before our departure young walkers had to be rescued off Dartmoor because of the bad weather. Was this an omen? As we assembled at 7.30 a.m. on a sunny if cold **Sunday** morning in School Street it seemed not. A prompt departure at 7.45 and light Sunday traffic saw us making good time. Comfort stops with refreshments at the Bristol Inn on the way down and coming back made a welcome change from Motorway Services.

We drove through rain, but as we arrived at **Knightshayes Court** the sun broke through and we were able to enjoy lunch and a stroll through the grounds to the newly restored kitchen gardens and house. In the house the bright new paintwork was positively dazzling. On again over Exmoor and Dartmoor with a brief stop at the



Jamaica Inn brought us to the **Greenbank Hotel in Falmouth**. This hotel occupies a prime position on the banks of the estuary and many of us had rooms with a view. We could wake up in the morning and lie watching the boats bobbing at anchor, seagulls fleeing past our windows and the occasional huge pleasure ship overnighting in the deep water anchorage. The hotel was nearing the end of a complete refurbishment so that the accommodation was excellent, the food was good, the staff friendly and helpful and although some people had minor complaints I would rate it as probably the best hotel we have stayed at in 26 years of association holidays. Congratulations Penny on finding it.

Monday was spent in and around **Falmouth**. Many of the party took the opportunity to be dropped off by the coach at **Pendennis Castle**. But the main visit was to the **National Maritime Museum**, a spectacular if controversial building, with its tower three stories up to give views over the harbour and the estuary and two floors underground so that at high tide viewing windows were covered, allowing sea life to be viewed in their natural habitat. The main area was filled with both models and real boats and wall size video screens to demonstrate the history of sailing. Some members even tried their skill at controlling sailing ships.(radio models, of course). After lunch we queued at the Customs House Quay for a trip on the 'Cornish Belle' around the harbour and up the River Fal to the **Smugglers Cottage** at Tolverne for a Cornish Cream Tea. Here were many reminders of the preparations for the D Day invasions and of Eisenhower's visit. The day was bright and sunny but the strong cold wind made us all thankful to get back into the warmth of the coach.



Tuesday our fears were realised. It was wet and windy. Nonetheless the majority of the party walked across the causeway to **St Michael's Mount**, some made the ascent to the castle and some came back by boat. In the afternoon we went



Gareth Jones
Head Gardener at
Trengwainton

round the bay by coach to **Trengwainton Gardens**. The rain had stopped and we enjoyed a guided tour of ‘backstage at the gardens’ from the Head Gardener, Gareth Jones, a man with a keen sense of Cornish humour. From the top of the gardens there was a panoramic view of the bay and St Michael's Mount.

Wednesday the coach and then a pair of mini-buses took us down the narrow streets to the entrance to **Tate St Ives** and the short walk to the **Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Gallery**. The sculptures are monumental and caused wonder at how they were sculpted and moved out of and into the garden, for many a highlight of the holiday. [The picture below shows two of the sculptures in the

garden.] After lunch crossing the peninsula we visited the **Cornish Mines and Engines** at Pool, Redruth, where two great beam engines reminded us of the industrial past of Cornwall.

Thursday saw us in the 500 acre estate of **Trelissick** in glorious sunshine. Woodland walks and sweeping parkland gave us views back to where we had been on the river trip and the sea beyond. The grounds were given to the Trust by the Copeland family who still live in the mansion and who gave us a private viewing of their fine Copeland Spode collection. An afternoon visit followed to the **Eden Project**. Love it or hate it you have to be awed at the sheer scale of this “world’s largest greenhouse”. The project is still developing; those who had been there before noted the increased greenery, the Core Centre, which was full of exciting hands-on machinery, and the new lift back to the exit.

Friday departure day and a visit en route to the final property, **Killerton House** near Exeter. This 18th century house has a well displayed and interesting costume collection and currently a special exhibition on quilting. The atmosphere of the house was brought to life when one of our members accepted the invitation to play the chamber organ and piano as we went round. In spite of being held up by road works in Cornwall and reports of heavy congestion in Staffordshire, we arrived back in Newcastle in good time after a very enjoyable six days. Our thanks to Penny and Sue for organising and looking after us, and to Dave our excellent driver.

Tuesday 22nd May 2007 Car Outing to Walcot Hall, Lydbury North near Bishop's Castle, Shropshire.

Set amongst the rolling hills of Shropshire lies **Walcot Hall**, a very lived-in home of the Parish family but once the home of Lord Clive of India. On a bright sunny morning we were welcomed by Mrs. Robin Parish and, before touring the house, we were treated to delicious cakes and coffee served in the Ballroom, a very elegant, well proportioned room added in 1800 by Clive of India's son Edward, Earl of Powis. Double doors opened from the Ballroom into the Arboretum which contains some magnificent trees and shrubs.

Walcot Hall is set in beautiful park-like country on the edge of Clun Forest. **Lord Clive of India** (see right) bought the estate in 1763. The original house dated from Tudor times and Lord Clive commissioned Sir William Chambers to redesign the house into a Georgian mansion with a splendid portico entrance, parapet walls and sash windows and with a stable block to match. On his death the property passed to his son, Edward, and remained in the family for nearly two centuries.



The Parish family moved to Walcot in 1957 and today the house is very much a family home. We enjoyed looking around elegant rooms on the ground floor, full of the family's belongings and it soon became apparent that this family did not like to discard anything. 'De-cluttering' is certainly not a phrase to be mentioned here! In the Chinese room a well-used carriage built perambulator stood next to the snooker table as well as many boxes of belongings. On the first floor, in one of the bedrooms, we were able to view a magnificent bed, built in 1665, used by Clive of India, and brought to Walcot from Powis. Another bedroom, now used as a Bridal Suite as Wedding Receptions are held in the Ballroom, was more spacious and much less cluttered.

It made a pleasant change to view a 'stately house' which is so very obviously, a much loved and lived in home. Thank you to Peter Moxon for organising a very worthwhile visit.

David and Janice Dawson.

Tuesday 5th June 2007. Coach Visit to Donington-le-Heath Manor House and Snibston Discovery Park, Leicestershire.

The coach arrived at **Donington-le-Heath Manor House** exactly on schedule at 11am on a beautifully sunny day and members were welcomed with coffee and



biscuits. The remainder of the morning and early afternoon were spent exploring medieval life at the superbly restored 13th century Manor House. An excellent audio guide directed us through the manor house giving us the full history of the building. In the period orchard there were apple, pear and medlar trees. (A medlar, according to my dictionary, is a rosaceous tree, *mespilus germanica*, bearing small brown apple-like fruits!).

After a picnic lunch in the grounds or a snack in the ancient barn, we took a short coach ride to **Snibston Discovery Park**, the award winning, hands-on museum. A fascinating afternoon was spent pressing buttons, pulling levers, dropping cars or participating in a cycle race with a skeleton in their interactive gallery. A tour of the historic colliery buildings with a real life miner to find out what it was like to work underground, proved to be very popular and educational. Our miner, Bryan, a humorous individual, considered himself to be one of the more lucky coal-face workers. He had survived six roof collapses, had not suffered from silicosis, pneumoconiosis or deafness, nor had he been chewed up by coal cutting equipment. To detect obnoxious gasses Bryan preferred the canary to the ten-foot long pole with a lighted candle at the end! In the dynamite store Bryan allowed a latent terrorist in our group to detonate a charge resulting in great sound effects not only once but twice. On a quieter theme members enjoyed visiting a fashion gallery housing over 1000 items from 1750s to the present day, the largest such collection outside London.

Our thanks go to Keith Walker for the organisation and to Angela and Alun Davies who undertook the original research for the visit.

Peter Thompson

Sunday 10th June 2007 Ramble Hidden treasures of Sandon Park

It was a misty morning when 30 of us and 2 dogs assembled at the **Greyhound Inn, Burston**. As we ascended and descended the gentle slopes of farmland and parkland forming part of the estate of Sandon Hall we were glad that it was not as hot as on previous days. Unfortunately the mist prevented us from taking advantage of the promised far-reaching views but through the trees we glimpsed Sandon Hall and the Doric column topped with an urn commemorating William Pitt the Younger. After a brief stop when the National Trust Animal Rescue Team leapt into action to rescue a lamb caught in metal fencing, we came to the Belvedere brought to the park from Trentham Hall, unfortunately in a dangerous state of neglect. We descended through woodland, took our life in our hands

crossing the A51 and then followed the **Trent and Mersey canal** back to Burston village and an excellent lunch at the Greyhound Inn. Thank you, Richard, for organising this interesting and varied walk.

Cath Hayes

Thursday 14th June. Car Outing to Peover Hall, Knutsford, Cheshire.

40 members were welcomed to **Peover Hall**, (pronounced 'peever') by one of our guides for the day, Ian Shepherd. Briefly, Peover Hall is a brick-built Elizabethan manor house built by Sir Randle Mainwaring in 1585. Ellen Mainwaring built the stables in 1654 and Sir Henry Mainwaring made extensive alterations to the property in the 1760s. In 1919 the property was sold to John Peel and in 1940 to Harry Brooks and his son, Randle Brooks the present owner of the estate. During the Second World War the War Office requisitioned the house, which was not released to its owners until 1950.

We were guided to nearby St Lawrence's church where there are several **Mainwaring** tomb monuments. We were free to explore the church by ourselves but were clearly warned by Royal proclamation to behave ourselves: "And whofoever will not doe the law of thy God and the law of the King, let judgement be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death or to banishment or to confiscation of goods or to imprisonment." (Ezra Ch 7 v 26) Points of interest were the American flag to commemorate **General George Patton** of the United States army who worshipped in the church whilst billeted in Peover Hall and an image of St Thomas Becket on a stained glass window, which must have escaped the notice of King Henry VIII's men during the reformation.

In the actual hall itself, we were welcomed by Hazel Hewitt who gave us the full history of the property and its occupants. We were then split into two groups and given an interesting tour of the hall. Finally a cream tea was enjoyed in the hall's superb **Carolean stables** which are architecturally more important than the house.

Thank you to Peter Moxon who organised the visit.

Peter Thompson

Tuesday 26th June 2007 Car Outing to Wollerton Old Hall Garden

A brief respite from the heavy rain of late June gave us a dry, sunny evening to visit **Wollerton**. Four acres around a 16thC house have been transformed by

Lesley and John Jenkins into a series of **garden “rooms”** within a formal structure of hedges and trees. Greeted by the striking combination of tropaeolum speciosum (Flamecreeper) on a yew hedge we moved into a more pastel area of pinks, blues and mauves created by clematis, roses and delphiniums among others. The roses, bedraggled but still colourful on trellis and arches, led us on to vistas of dahlias, alstromerias, poppies and achilleas planted with a definite Jekyll influence and bordered by clipped pyramid yews.

The **“hot” garden** managed to give off heat even on a cool evening from a kaleidoscope of lychnis, kniphofia and a splendid “Bishop of Llandaff”. A narrow gap in the hedge and the mood changed to calm in the white garden proving that imaginative planting does not need colour. An avenue of pleached limes standing like a guard of honour and a rippling rill took us back towards the house where our supper awaited us. A stunning garden with many plants competing for top billing but for me it was between the delicate, pretty clematis and the statuesque



AUTUMN PROGRAMME

Lunch Club Meeting

This autumn we are launching a Luncheon Club – an opportunity to meet friends and make new ones in convivial surroundings. Please:

Book by phone at least a week before the event

Give your name and phone number if you get my answer phone

Come with plenty of change! Cost of meal collected by me at the end of lunch. Drinks and coffee to be paid individually.

Mary Malcolm 01782-613451.

Wednesday 12th September 2007 1st Lunch Club Meeting

Dog and Doublet Sandon (A51). Max 20 12.30pm for 12.45pm. Carvery – 2 courses £7.95 drinks and coffee extra. A comfortable airy pub with ample parking. After lunch why not push on to Shugborough - for tea? See above for booking arrangements.



Wednesday 26th September 2007. Car Outing to Loton Park, Alberbury near Shrewsbury. 30 members.

Sir Michael Leighton has kindly agreed to welcome members to his family home at Loton Park Alberbury a few miles from Shrewsbury and either Sir Michael or his sister will give members a personal guided tour of Loton Park lasting approximately two hours.

The Park, which stretches down to the banks of the River Severn, comprises a garden and extends to ten acres and includes the ruins of Alberbury Castle. Simon Jenkins writes, "Everything about Loton is eccentric – house, history and owner. The last Sir Michael Leighton declares his Saxon ancestry and proudly points to three mediaeval Welsh princesses in the family tree."

Please note the property is not handicap friendly

It is hoped that the church will be open for members to visit.

Members should arrive at Loton Park no later than 10.15am Parking available. Tea/Coffee and biscuits on arrival. Directions on application.

Cost £8.50 per member to include tea/coffee and biscuits.

Apply to Peter Moxon, Millstone House, Butterton, Newcastle, Staffordshire ST5 4EB Tel: 01782-616337 enclosing Stamped Addressed Envelope.

Closing Date for applications Monday 10th September.

Wednesday 10th October 2007 Lunch Club Meeting

Hand and Trumpet Wrinehill, Betley (A531) Max 20. 12.15 for 12.30pm. Choose on the day from extensive menu – starters £4.95 to £6.95; main course £7.95 - £14.95; light meals £6.50 to £9.95. Drinks and coffee extra. This spacious pub was recently re-vamped and over looks an attractive small lake (pond?). We shall be in the library - probably at two tables. Please bring paper and pencil to jot down the cost of your meal orders. See previous page for booking details



Saturday 20th October 2007 Coach Outing to Manchester Art Gallery – *Art Treasures in Manchester 150 years on.*

Art Treasures in Manchester marks the 150th Anniversary of the ***Art Treasures of the United Kingdom*** exhibition in 1857, the largest art exhibition ever seen in Britain. Held at Old Trafford in a temporary glass

pavilion on the scale of London's Crystal Palace, the exhibition was opened by Prince Albert and visited by over a million people including Queen Victoria, Charles Dickens and John Ruskin. ***Art Treasures in Manchester*** will celebrate this great Mancunian achievement by bringing back to the city a selection of the great works of art originally on show alongside documentary information on the exhibition itself.

The display will be divided into various sections which will include Manchester in 1857, the organisation of the exhibition and what it was like to be a visitor. There will be a selection of outstanding pictures by British artists such as Stubbs, Turner, Constable, and the Pre-Raphaelites and such European Masters as Michelangelo and Rembrandt. Many of these pictures are from private collections and are being loaned exclusively for this exhibition. The paintings will be displayed alongside a selection of ceramics, notably early Wedgwood and English porcelain, Venetian glass, Limoges enamels and Renaissance metalwork from Italy.

Join us at what will be one of the most exciting exhibitions held in Manchester in recent years - and there will be time for shopping as well.

Depart School Street 9.30am, return 6.00pm approx. Cost £17 (non-members £18) includes coach driver's gratuity, donation to Manchester Art Gallery and coffee or tea with scone on arrival.

Please apply to Mrs P Moore, 26 Parkway, Trentham, Stoke on Trent ST4 8AG. Tel: 01782-657645 enclosing Stamped Addressed Envelope.

Closing date for applications Friday 12th October.

**Thursday 25th October
8.00pm**

N.Staffs Conference Centre

Talk by Geoffrey Smith: Behind the Scenes at the Chelsea Flower Show

The summer flowers may be over and the spring bulbs already planted but we can all enjoy hearing how the experts prepare for the world-famous show each summer. Geoffrey Smith from Long Eaton has been a **fuchsia grower** and judge for many years and has judged at **Chelsea** many times. He has even met his namesake there! He will tell us about the preparations and entertain us with anecdotes and amusing tales as well as showing his slides, which might give us an idea of the effort and the 'tricks of the trade' that go to making a prize-winning display at Chelsea.

Saturday 3rd November Ramble “Country Parks and Biddulph Grange”

A walk of two halves. We will meet in the morning at **Greenway Bank Country Park**, with two pools and a dam, then a gentle climb up the edge of the Staffordshire Moorlands for views of Mow Cop and Jodrell Bank, and descend through **Biddulph Grange Country Park** to the Grange itself, where we will stop for lunch and a chance for a brief look around the gardens. The afternoon walk back to Greenway Bank will be easier, shorter and on mostly level ground.

Estimated timings are:

Meet at Greenway 10am - Morning walk 6 miles-2¹/₂ hours

Lunch break 12.30-1.30 (Some may choose to phone a friend for a lift back to their car now)

Afternoon walk 4 miles-1¹/₂ hours Arrive back at Greenway 3pm

This walk will suit the averagely-fit walker with a good pair of boots. Dogs are welcome, but will not be allowed into the restaurant or Biddulph Grange gardens.

Cost £1 for members, £1.50 for guests (pay on the day).

Please apply to Richard Adams, Gables End, Holly Bank, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 8FT. Tel 01782-646054 enclosing a Stamped Addressed Envelope.

Wednesday 7th November 2007 N.Staffs Conference Centre 8.00pm

Talk by David Watts: From Blackboard to Black and White

Many of us have already met David, the enthusiastic Property Manager at **Little Moreton Hall**, who welcomed us last December and who has been so grateful for the donations we have made to the property. We gladly took up his offer to come and talk to us about why he changed from teaching to the NT – and why he didn't do it earlier! David spent 28 years in education, many of them in Staffordshire High Schools, teaching history. He began work for the NT at Quarry Bank Mill in 2004 as Education Officer. He is therefore very well qualified to talk on his chosen subject – though probably there will be more about his NT experiences than about schooldays.

Wednesday 14th November 2007 Lunch Club Meeting

The Bleeding Wolf, Scholar Green (A34) Max 20. 12.30 for 12.45 Carvery £6.50 (£7.95 main course and sweet). Drinks and coffee extra. We shall be in the Oak Room in this well-established pub with distant views of Mow Cop, and not far from Little Moreton Hall (NT) – early Christmas shopping perhaps? See inside front cover for booking details.



Monday 3rd December 2007 Christmas Shopping at Little Moreton Hall - Car Outing

See Little Moreton Hall in the winter in another exclusive afternoon visit. After a welcome by David Watts, the Property Manager, there will be plenty of time to enjoy what David Dimbleby, in his recent TV series, describes as "one of the finest timber framed manor houses in Britain" dressed for a traditional Tudor Christmas. Home-made mince pies and tea/coffee will be served in the Great Hall. The National Trust Shop will be open all afternoon with a wide selection of cards and gifts for the festive season.

Cost £5.00 per member (to include refreshments and out of hours admission charge). Please apply to Mrs P Moore, 26 Parkway, Trentham, Stoke on Trent ST4 8AG. Tel: 01782-657645 enclosing Stamped Addressed Envelope.

Closing date for applications: Monday 26th November.

Please Note – this is a MEMBERS ONLY event.

Monday 17th December 2007 N.Staffs Conference Centre 8.00pm

Talk by Barbara Foster: An Edwardian Christmas

As a different kind of pre-Christmas social occasion we have arranged a most appropriate seasonal talk by Barbara Foster, an accredited NT speaker who has worked at **Dunham Massey** for many years on the education programme.

Appearing as Lady Stamford, and using documentary evidence, she will talk about the Christmas preparations when the family returned to the house in 1906, after it had been empty for 50 years. She will also describe some of the present-day 'behind the scenes' activities and will entertain us with stories of

some of the more amusing aspects of her work with school children visiting Dunham Massey.

The evening will conclude with mulled wine, mince pies, coffee or tea and our usual RAFFLE. Please bring raffle contributions and you will have a very good chance of returning home with a Christmas present!

Cost £5.50 (non members £6.50) Apply Miss A Aubrey 10 Paris Avenue Newcastle ST5 2RQ Tel 01782-623214 enclosing Stamped Addressed Envelope.

Closing date for applications 3rd December

Wednesday 30th January 2008 Coach Outing to the Bridgewater Hall

The Hallé Orchestra: 150th Anniversary Concert

On 30th January 1858 the first of “Mr Charles Hallé’s Grand Orchestral Concerts” took place in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester. Tonight, this special Gala Celebration introduced by **Dame Janet Baker** echoes moments and figures from the orchestra’s long history.

The programme includes works by Verdi, Tchaikovsky, Berlioz, Vaughan Williams and Elgar, many of which were premiered by the Hallé and will be conducted by the current Music Director, Mark Elder.

Dmitri Hvorostovsky, one of the finest lyrical baritones of his generation and star of Last Night of the Proms, will sing three of his signature arias and there will be contributions from the Hallé Choir and the Hallé Youth Choir.

We have been fortunate in obtaining a limited number of centre stall seats (face value £40) so please join us for this unique celebration of Britain’s oldest symphony orchestra.

Please note the early booking date and payment details essential as this concert is a sell out.

Depart School Street at 5.00pm, returning to Newcastle by 10.30pm approximately. Cost £39.50 (non-members £40.50) including coach, driver’s gratuity and Centre Stalls seats.

Apply to Mrs P Moore, 26 Parkway, Trentham SOT ST4 8AG Tel 01782-657645 enclosing Stamped Addressed Envelope.

Summary of 2007 Autumn Programme	
Wednesday 12th Sept	Lunch Club Dog and Doublet
Wednesday 26th Sept	Loton Park
Wednesday 10th Oct.	Lunch Club Hand and Trumpet
Saturday 20th Oct.	Manchester Art Gallery
Thursday 25th Oct.	Talk - Behind the scenes at the Chelsea Flower Show
Saturday 3rd Nov.	Ramble - Country Parks and Biddulph Grange
Wednesday 7th Nov.	Talk - From Blackboard to Black and White
Wednesday 14th Nov.	Lunch Club - The Bleeding Wolf
Monday 3rd Dec.	Christmas Shopping at Little Moreton Hall
Monday 17th December	Talk - An Edwardian Christmas
Wednesday 30th Jan 2008	Hallé Orchestra at the Bridgewater Hall <u>note need for early booking.</u>
Dates for Your Diary in 2008	
Monday 11th Feb.	Repeat Visit to CCTV Centre Hanley.
11th - 15th May	Spring Holiday (see separate flyer)
Wednesday 21st May	Willey Park, Broseley

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* Member of the Programme Planning Sub-Committee

Please note change of Secretary