

North Staffordshire Association
of
National Trust Members

Newsletter 82
and
January to April 2009
Programme



**Don't panic Mr Mainwaring. It's only Dad's Army
waiting to greet us at Kidderminster (see page 5)**

**Please look out for booking dates. Some are
sooner than you may think!**

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 £2. 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. so that you can enjoy the day to the full by being able to participate in all aspects of the outing. **If you have a problem with mobility or hearing, for example, please let the organiser know as soon as possible and we will try to arrange some help but we cannot guarantee to do so.**

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.

Supporters for Trips

Our coach trip organisers need sometimes to be in two places at once. We hope for each trip that there will be a supporter who can help them.

All our trips need a volunteer supporter. Please help if you can - speak to the trip organiser.

North Staffordshire Association of National Trust Members

NEWSLETTER No. 82

December 2008

and January to April 2009 PROGRAMME

A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR:

As I write, the weather forecast warns of the change to colder weather and suddenly the summer (such as it was!) seems a distant memory. However, I hope everyone enjoyed the various outings by car and coach to the many splendid locations which our hard-working organisers arranged.

This might be an appropriate place to remind members that we have a well-earned reputation for the efficiency of our outings, which depends in large part on the work put in beforehand by the organisers. We pride ourselves on departing at the stated time from School Street and we do rely on members of an outing to be aware of the timings during the day. When there is free time during an outing, it is important to return to the coach at the agreed time, or to make ones way to the designated pick-up point at the correct time. This ensures that as far as possible the programme of the day runs smoothly, although we are all too aware how problems on the motorway network can upset the most careful plans. Anyone attempting to reach School Street who is seriously delayed by last-minute illness or traffic problems should try to contact the organiser by mobile phone so that a decision can be made whether to wait or not. The mobile number is given in the booking form and will be available for at least 30 minutes prior to departure.

I wonder how far the current financial difficulties will affect the National Trust. Will people regard taking out or renewing membership as an unnecessary expense in belt-tightening times, or will the idea of so many places to visit in a year at the cost of one membership fee have a greater appeal than exotic and expensive foreign holidays? The Trust will certainly face some challenges in deciding how maintain its income and to allocate its finances.

I wish everyone a happy New Year and enjoyable visiting in 2009.

Anne Anderton

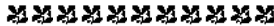


From the start of 2009 we shall charge £2.00 for non-members joining us for Association coach trips. Why not encourage friends to join the Association?

We have heard from HQ that the mail order catalogue service is currently unavailable (no reason given). They are "reviewing the possibilities of reintroducing a mail order service in the future".

On-line shopping is still available at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/shop, and of course people can still go to the shops at NT properties and in the High Street (tel 01793 817536 for details of shops in any area).

My thanks to Katie Forrest-Hay and Pat Wilson who have both contributed photographs to illustrate the visit write-ups.



NEWS FROM LOCAL NT PROPERTIES

LITTLE MORETON HALL The main season for the Hall is drawing to a close and as I write this the wind whistles through the garderobe tower and into my office - winter is closing in.

We have had what can be best described as a steady season; the weather has played a huge part in the highs and lows of the past few months, with the delightful weather of late September and early October bringing more visitors to wonder at the delights of the Hall. We did seem blessed with fine weather when we held our 70th Anniversary Garden party on the 15th September and it was a pleasure to see **Anne Anderton and Pat Bentley** help us celebrate with the donor family and key staff from the property and region. You may recall Peter Nixon as Regional Director and we were delighted that he was also able to join us and recount some of his memories of the Hall.

People often ask what we do when we are closed and do we spend two months with our feet up? It is a thought that really does appeal but in reality we seem to have a short rest over the Christmas period and then the in-depth cleaning and conservation work begins, alongside recruitment of seasonal staff and pre-season training.

Can I take this opportunity of expressing a huge thank you to **Pat Bentley** who has volunteered here at Little Moreton Hall for so many years and has decided, albeit reluctantly, to call it a day. Her contribution and enthusiasm for the Hall really does emphasise the importance of volunteers to the success of any property. Members may be interested to know that we are hoping to recruit more volunteers to help with our Education programme as well Garden Guides

and Conservation in Action Assistants. The former is fairly self explanatory while the latter needs a little more - we have been really successful at Conservation in Action; letting visitors see how we care for the Hall but we recognise that we are not able to do this all week and we hope that we can recruit and train volunteers to assist our Conservation Cleaner. Do give me a call if you are interested or pass on the details to friends and colleagues.

With best wishes David Watts.



Things have been going well this year at Downs Banks.

DOWN'S BANK

The new flail mower, an eight-foot wide monster we tow behind the Land Rover, has been worth its weight in gold. We now have the tool we needed to control bracken, bramble and thick scrub around the property. Birch trees up to 3/4 of an inch thick are turned to matchwood and light has been reaching the grasses and herbage below.

It has not all been plain sailing though. The wet weather has made it difficult to mow and we had to seize the opportunity whenever the ground was dry enough. Even then, enthusiastic use of four-wheel-drive was needed to get up some of the hillsides. One day saw me descending a small bank when a rabbit warren collapsed beneath the Land Rover, leaving the wheels pointing in different directions. Fortunately the steering rod was bent back into shape with creative use of a winch and a crowbar.

The other big success this summer was the introduction of the **dog bins**. Thank you for your help. Our new bins are shiny and green; and look like they are built from cast iron. Fortunately, would be metal thieves need not bother as they are actually made from fibreglass. The local authority already provides wheelie bins on the car parks, but dogs usually like to get a little way up the footpaths before they do their business. We sited the bins a couple of minutes walk from each of the car parks and I think we must have relieved the area of about 80% of the waste normally left on the ground (or sometimes wrapped up and hanging in a tree)

Now we have bins, most visitors do clear-up after their pets and use the bin. This is a fantastic result and we could not have done it without you.

Rod Whiteman

(Members will remember that our Association donated for the purchase of these bins. Anyone walking Downs Bank must have seen them and been impressed).



BIDDULPH GRANGE GARDENS Paul Baker , Property Manger at Biddulph Grange Garden , writes that the changeable summer weather resulted in sudden swings in the visitor patterns but the Geological Gallery has been popular with visitors. Work will start in November on restoring the Arboretum Pool, and the monitoring of the Wall of China has been completed prior to asking a consultant for recommendations.

Paul also writes: "The Association generously provided us with funds to develop educational links. We have held an activity day for local schools who are working towards achieving Eco-status. Pupils from three local schools in Biddulph and one from Stoke on Trent came to the garden and took part in a bulb-planting exercise in the Arboretum and an activity session in the Geological Gallery. The children were given 3 bulbs each to take back to plant at school or at home. We are planning to develop further activity days with schools to link to specific aspects of the curriculum such as literacy - using the garden to write stories - or further activity days linked to the Eco-status, including helping schools develop their own herb and vegetable plots."

Volunteers are always welcome - if interested, contact Helen Wilshaw, Visitor Services Manager, on 01782 375522



REPORTS ON RECENT TALKS AND VISITS

Saturday 28th June Coach Outing to Bridgnorth and the Severn Valley Railway

It was a stroke of genius to combine a visit to the town of Bridgnorth , and its medieval atmosphere, with the surreal atmosphere of a trip on the Severn Valley Railway on a special World War Two theme weekend. The coach dropped us right outside 'The Severn Arms', which is in the Low Town by the river, where we had refreshments.

We were joined by our local historian guide, Derek Crockson, who then led us gently up the very steep cobbles of the Cartway, which was the main way from the river crossing point, to the castle gate in the upper town. Bridgnorth was one of the busiest river ports in Europe. We immediately passed 'Bishop Percy's House', a half-timbered building, dated 1580, where Bishop Percy was born in 1729. He was famous for editing 'Percy's Reliques' in 1765 – 'The Reliques of Ancient English Poetry' is a manuscript of medieval ballads which were found in a house in Shifnal, Shropshire. As we climbed up the Cartway we

passed many houses, which were originally inns, and some of the 56 cave dwellings in the sandstone cliff-face.

We then reached a viewing point high above the Severn Gorge; a view which Charles 1st described as 'the finest in all my kingdom' and who are we to disagree? We continued up East Castle Street, with its handsome 16th-century and 17th-century houses, to reach the church of St. Mary Magdalene, which was designed by Thomas Telford and built in 1794.

We enjoyed a well-deserved rest while Derek gave us a talk on the part Bridgnorth played in the Civil War. We then wandered around the ruins of the Norman castle, which had been blown up by Oliver Cromwell. The keep was really all that remained, and that was precariously leaning at a 15 degree angle. We said our farewells to Derek, who had been excellent, and went our separate ways for lunch.



Derek holds his audience captivated

We reconvened at the railway station, which had been authentically decorated and camouflaged. People were jiving to live music and many were wearing every conceivable service uniform or wore civilian clothes with hats, fox stoles and nylon stockings etc. typical of 1941. We were issued with Identity Cards, which were checked by army personnel on the train. We travelled the 16 miles to Kidderminster, for the most part along the magnificent Severn Gorge. We stopped briefly at the four stations, which were decorated and had various displays. We were accompanied for part of the way by a Lancaster bomber. As we approached Kidderminster it became even more surreal to see elephants in the West Midland Safari Park!

Kidderminster station was amazing, with a Big Band, plus singer, playing Glenn Miller classics. There were mock-ups of air-raid shelters; home guard headquarters; 'dig for victory' garden, with privy; two rooms of a 1940's house and a display of vehicles, including Jones' the butcher's van from Dad's Army. This was a thoroughly enjoyable day. Many thanks to Richard Adams for organising the visit; his impeccable timing made it possible for us to see the last set of Andy Murray's match at Wimbledon when we reached home.

Iain Forrest-Hay

Sunday 27th July Coach Outing to Stokesay Court via Attingham Park.

On a glorious sunny day, the group set off for Stokesay Court, location of the film *Atonement*. Lunch en route was taken in the 18th-century parkland of Attingham Park (NT). A costumed narrator told us the history of the house and the Berwick family. Their motto, “Let wealth be his who knows how to use it”, is relevant today.

On arrival at Stokesay Court we were cordially greeted by the owner, Caroline Magnus. The house was built in 1892 by John Derby Allcroft, a wealthy glove manufacturer, whose business partner was Mr Dent. The design by Thomas Harris incorporated electric lighting, an innovation at the time.

We entered a Great Hall, which had impressive oak-cased columns and arches, the interior supports of which were pitch pine. The Hall was made at Hamptons of London, and assembled on site (original flatpack). Props used in the film, meant that the floral silk panels and wallpaper could be left in situ for the benefit of Stokesay.

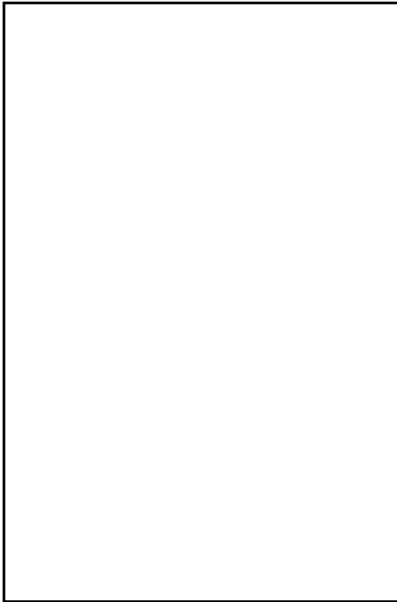
The billiard room was transformed into a library, and Caroline decided to keep the useful shelves. Certain gentlemen, who had seen the film, were keen to view the library!! On the landing was a large secular stained glass window, in the medieval style.

After tea Caroline encouraged us to explore the gardens. We walked past a fountain, down to a lake covered in yellow water lilies. The extensive views were of Shropshire Cleve Hills. All were loath to leave, and wished to thank Peter and his helpers for a perfect day.

Lynda Berrington

Tuesday 29th July Car Outing to Tamworth Castle

Peter Moxon was our leader for our car outing to Tamworth Castle, having enjoyed exploring it last year. This particular idea had apparently been the cause of polite amusement to some people, but this is a fascinating slice of history right on our doorstep. Once you've found Tamworth it is easy to find the Castle because it sits proudly on its 'motte' [mound] as it has for 800 years or more, overlooking its 'bailey' [lower ground] which are now very lovely gardens for public use leading down to the river Anker. Some 20 of us gathered in the Courtyard and were soon joined by our guide, Jane, resplendent in a medieval



Tamworth Castle

full-length gown with laced front and a rather nifty piece of head-gear made from a sort of scarf.

For the next 2 hours we were taken through eight centuries of the Castle's history with Jane's help; trying out the stocks, using a broad-sword and helmet and sitting down at a full size Tudor dining table complete with pewter plates for the 'gentry' and wooden trenchers for the more lowly! During its long history it has been occupied by many families but three stand out because of the length of their tenure. They were firstly the Marmions, who were Norman Lords; secondly the Ferrers, wealthy and influential during Tudor times and lastly the Marquis Townshends who re-fashioned the Castle at the end of the 18th-century. Having rescued it from dilapidation, the Townshends sold the Castle to Tamworth Corporation in 1897

to mark Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee and it was formally opened to the public in 1899.

In all honesty it is not an attractive building. It has been added to and altered so much it resembles a 'patch-work' quilt, but there is a very 'lived in' feel to its atmosphere. If this has whetted your appetite [and I hope it has], I would emphasize that there are plenty of 'hands-on' things available to involve children from brass rubbing; dressing up; quizzes and, of course, ghosts and dungeons!

Many thanks to Peter for spotting this as an interesting addition to our outings and for his organisation.

Katie Forrest-Hay

Tuesday 5th Aug. Coach Outing to Stonyhurst College and Browsholme Hall, Lancashire

Despite fairly unremitting rain throughout the day, our thanks go to Margaret Richards who had arranged a fascinating and most enjoyable day. First we visited Stonyhurst College, now a most imposing Catholic school, built around the core of an Elizabethan mansion belonging to the Shireburn family. They had strong Catholic sympathies, whilst making politically astute moves to offer allegiance to the Crown. Consequently they suffered alternately social preferment and then fines for suspected secret popery.

Nevertheless from 1537 - 1754 the estate was kept intact. The last inheritor was Mary Shireburn, Duchess of Norfolk, on whose death Shireburn passed through her daughter to the Weld family of Lulworth Hall in Dorset. When the Jesuit College in Liege was threatened by the French Revolution, the Welds, who had 3 sons there, offered Stonyhurst to the Jesuits. Thus began the alterations and extensions to the Hall, completed in 1810. Our tour was an interesting walk through the centuries, giving us a feeling of the gracious living enjoyed by the Shireburns, and then the originally fairly spartan existence of the first boys and priests. Today however, with girls also pupils, our guides gave us a feel for the purposeful and enjoyable educational experience of the students, and of their close links with and service to the local community.

In the afternoon we travelled a short distance to Browsholme Hall, a beautiful red sandstone house built by Edmund Parker when he inherited the lease from the Crown in 1507. This was converted to freehold in 1603. Over the centuries the Parkers made many additions, but always harmoniously. It was a joy to explore the house in the company of the present owner and a local lover of the house. It is full of mementoes of its various owners, and the most beautiful oak furniture and panelling - mostly by local craftsmen. Robert Parker inherited Browsholme from a distant cousin at the age of 19. The house had no electricity, an unsafe water supply and its sewage emptied into the river. His parents bravely moved from their comfortable home and life in Cambridgeshire, and set about restoring and improving the amenities of the house, and converting it into homes for two families. From the welcoming results it has obviously been a sheer labour of love, and we all felt privileged to have shared this with them.

Eunice Mortimer

Thursday 21st August Car Outing to Hawkstone Hall, Marchamley, Shrewsbury

Over 40 members visited Hawkstone Hall, the home of the Hill family from 1556 to 1906. Sir Rowland Hill, Lord Mayor of London, purchased the original manor for £700. However, in 1895 the contents were sold to meet the family's creditors and the house lay empty until 1906 when the 4th Viscount sold the Hall, bringing an era to an end as did the toast "May the Hills of Shropshire last as long as the Shropshire Hills".

The Hall was purchased by George Whitney MP and upon his death in 1913, the Hall was sold to William Cresswell Gray for his son who offered the Hall as a convalescent home for officers. In 1926 the Hall was purchased by the Redemptorists as a house for higher studies for students entering the priesthood and is now a pastoral centre.

By the time that the Redemptorists acquired the property it had fallen into a poor state of repair, but in the 1980s with a substantial grant from English Heritage the house was restored to its former magnificent state. The Hall stands proudly in an elevated position with outstanding views over Shropshire to the Welsh Mountains. Members toured the Reception Room, Venetian Saloon, Billiard Room, Winter Garden, Refectory Gallery, Ballroom, Library, the Plunge and the Chapel with a lively commentary by the Guest Mistress. The rooms are breathtaking in their generous proportions, with a plethora of coved ceilings carved fireplaces beautiful woodwork and many original paintings of the Hill family. The whole very much lived in and used for courses of study at the same time exuding an atmosphere of tranquillity and serenity.

After tea and pastries, members strolled around the gardens and grounds including formal terraces and lawns, leading to a more varied garden comprising a large lily pond, a stew pond for fish

Hawkstone Hall

for the table, a maze lawn, a rose garden, the azalea grove, and leafy woodland and rock garden. There was also a private cemetery of the Redemptorists including a series of scenes depicting Jesus' way to the Cross. Each scene or Station is carved in Flemish Oak and set in Carrara Marble.

The Hall is normally open to visitors during the last two weeks in August each year and a visit is recommended. Our thanks again to Peter for organising the trip.

Friday 12th Sept Coach outing to Ludlow Food Festival

As we sat in the warm autumnal sunshine sipping our sparkling rosé and munching our Welsh 'oggies' we were heartily glad to have chosen this trip. By then we had already 'grazed' amongst the many stalls offering samples of delicious food and exotic liqueurs and were keenly anticipating resuming our search for the perfect game pie, most alcoholic fruitcake and tastiest sausage (all in the name of research, of course). In addition to the numerous stalls offering edible delights, there were also a wide variety of kitchen implements, culinary

gadgets and colourful pottery for sale, enabling some of us to commence our Christmas shopping a bit early for once. Entertainment and education were provided by the cookery demonstrations which went on throughout the day and were well attended by both enthusiasts and those who needed to rest between forays into the food tent. The setting, within the grounds of the castle, was ideal and tea and cakes in the moat (drained!) rounded off our day nicely. Some of our more cultured fellow travellers ventured to the church to pay their respects at the final resting place of Arthur, Prince of Wales, elder brother of Henry VIII, and as no doubt you are aware from the current TV series, first husband of Catherine of Aragon. Now there's one of the great `what ifs' of history, certainly had he lived the history of England could have been very different and a lot of people would have kept their heads!

All in all, this was a most enjoyable day and many thanks to Penny Moore for organising it with her customary efficiency and cheerfulness. Just one word of warning – don't bother with lavender liqueur, it's `orrible.

Rose Wheat

Sunday 5th October 2008 Ramble "A Cheshire Ringlet".

We all woke up that Sunday morning to torrential rain and flooded roads, but National Trust walkers are a stout-hearted band and all but one of us (who still joined the party later for lunch) arrived for the start of our walk. We were rewarded by the sun appearing just in time, and fine autumn weather for the rest of the day. Some 20 walkers and 3 exuberant dogs set off across the Cheshire fields and on into the woods around Lawton Hall. We stopped to admire the fishing pool with its raging sluice at Lawton Hall, remembered by several as a school in the 1970s and 80s, and at the ancient Church of All Saints, where we learnt the legend of the Bleeding Wolf and heard of the terrible storm in 1652, when 11 church-goers died when the bell-tower was struck by lightning. Onward to the canal, and a pit stop at the Red Bull pub. From there, it was a shortish stretch back to the Bleeding Wolf pub where a sociable lunch was enjoyed by all. Thanks to Richard for organising both the walk and the lunch.

Nikki Adams

Wednesday 8th October 2008, Talk by Sheila Morten: "I Remain Your Son Jack"

Sheila read from letters written to his parents by her father-in-law Jack Morten during his service in the first world war. He had enlisted in September 1914 together with the rest of his lacrosse team, and served in the Manchester

Regiment. Initially he was sent to Khartoum, and in 1915 he took part in the Gallipoli campaign and was involved in heavy fighting. While there, he was commissioned, and after being wounded, returned to Britain. The letters were clearly meant to be reassuring and did not dwell on the grimmer aspects of the war, although he had to refer to the many friends who had been killed or wounded, and in separate letters to his sister he was more explicit. They were quite gossipy, talked a lot about comfort and food, and were often quite funny. They also showed that there was an excellent postal system which brought the troops comforts from home.

An hour passed very quickly, and there was no time to cover the rest of Jack's service, which was on the Western Front. That, as Sheila said, remains for another time.

Keith Walker

Friday 10th October Car Outing to the Anson Engine Museum, Poynton, Cheshire.

The museum took its name from the Anson Colliery, which closed in 1926, and in turn commemorated the marriage of a member of the local Vernon family to an Anson of Shugborough. In 1947 the site was bought by the late Les Cawley as a base for his tree felling and timber business. We were welcomed with coffee and biscuits and an introduction by Geoff Challinor telling how he met Les at a steam rally in 1973 and thereafter was treated by him and Ena as the son they never had. Together they built up the collection, which was formed into a Trust in 1986.

Many engines were running and as we went round, Geoff set others going. This was quite dramatic for the largest 1877 Crossley atmospheric engine, which he lit with a gaslighter and when up to temperature, it started with a loud bang. A ratchet ejects at high speed from the top of a single vertical cylinder as the gas inside ignites then, as it cools, atmospheric pressure forces the piston back into the cylinder with the ratchet engaging and turning a cog on the flywheel. The first Crossley engine from 1869 was nearby.

Even more impressive was the huge 1925 4-cylinder Gardner engine started by four noisy blow-lamps playing on the bulbous cylinder heads until hot enough to ignite the compressed oil vapour inside, as it was turned over by compressed air. Next was a bus engine of only a few years later far smaller in size, much quieter and more efficient, yet with twice the power output. Other exhibits were modern, like the engine from the 2006 record-breaking 350mph-diesel car, on loan from JCB. There were hundreds more machines, many outside awaiting

Geoff explains the Exhibition

restoration. They are hoping to expand their collection to include car and aero engines.

Sadly it turned out that many of their exhibits are on loan from other museums, who now see themselves as part of the entertainment industry rather than educators and guardians and exhibitors of our scientific, technological and industrial heritage. Fortunately there are private individuals whose enthusiasm and enterprise allow the public to continue to see such treasures. We are greatly indebted to Geoff and his staff who made this visit so stimulating and to Peter Moxon for organising it.

Pat Wilson

Tuesday 21st October 2008. Outing to Gloucester Cathedral.

We have come to expect interesting and stimulating trips planned with calm efficiency from our organiser Peter Thompson and we were not disappointed when 40 members visited Gloucester Cathedral in October.

Despite the closure of the M6 and congested side streets, we arrived only one hour late thanks to our resourceful coach driver. Forewarned, our chief guide , Dr

Jeremy Barnes, assisted by guides Sue and Barbara, skilfully re-scheduled our day so that we still enjoyed an excellent relaxed lunch and refreshments without missing out on the programmed lecture and walking tours

For 500 years Gloucester Cathedral was a Benedictine monastery known as the Abbey of St Peter. At its height the community numbered 54 monks and 200 lay officials and servants. Dr Jeremy Barnes' informed talk and extensive knowledge of the history and growth of the Benedictine monasteries from 400 AD, when the monastic community developed, to the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII in 1540 held us all fascinated as was evident from the number of questions it provoked.

After lunch in the beautiful old Parliament Room, we enjoyed a guide-led walking tour in the sunshine around the precincts of the old Abbey, discovering the remains of the monastery's buildings including the Infirmary, the well stocked Herbarium and the Abbey Mill. We then moved indoors to the present day Cathedral and were taken around by our guides to see how it worked as a place of worship for the medieval monks. This included admiring their stalls in the Quire, their places of work in the Cloisters and the Chapter House, a visit to the Crypt, and the history of some of the impressive tombs in the Cathedral and the many beautiful stained glass windows.

The Cathedral itself is fascinating enough to fill another complete trip but we were able to get a taster of its splendours and impressive history before saying our warm thanks and farewells to our guides and making a more direct route home.

Thank you Peter for a delightful day.

Marion Lycett

Wednesday 12th November Talk - The County Air Ambulance Service

Our scheduled speaker was unavailable but Ian Walley, resplendent in his red Air Ambulance uniform, was an effective replacement. He worked as a paramedic in central Birmingham before joining the County Air Ambulance service and he explained how it began in 1991 as a very part-time operation but now has 3 helicopters which operate from 3 bases all the daylight hours every day of the year. These Eurocopter 135 machines cost £4M each and it needs £24 per minute or £5.6 M per year to keep them flying. Almost all of this money comes from voluntary donations.

Ian emphasised the team work which this service depends on, involving the paramedics like himself who do the navigating and are experienced in trauma work, the doctors on the flights who are volunteers, the fire brigade who often attend incidents, and the pilots - many ex-RAF - who have amazing skills. About half their work is attending road accidents but they are increasingly being called to injured walkers or horse-riders in rural areas. He described some of the hazards of the job, the problems of finding the location or seeing people on the ground, and the sense of satisfaction when lives are saved or they receive grateful thanks. His pride in his work was evident and his message to everyone was 'Drive Carefully!'

After the talk, Sue Corlett presented him with his fee, explaining why the Association was particularly grateful for the services of the County Air Ambulance. The rather small audience generously donated a further £150 during coffee time.



SPRING PROGRAMME

**Wednesday 14th January 2009 North Staffs Conference
8.00PM**

Reginald Mitchell and the Story of the Spitfire

Jon Honeysett, our speaker from Talke Pits, has made a lengthy study of this subject and will give us the benefit of his years of research. He will talk about the man and especially about his part in the creation of one of the most enduring icons of World War II. He will illustrate his talk with many slides and will explain how even now he is still uncovering parts of the whole story of the Spitfire and those who flew her, women as well as men! Please remember that non-members are always welcome (£1 entry) so do encourage your friends to come and hear this talk which will be of great local interest.



Saturday 17th January. Ramble “Danebridge to Allgreave and return”

We will go from Danebridge to Nettlebeds and then gently uphill to Longgutter, and Cessbank Common. We will return to the start by going down to Hammerton, Knowl Farm, and Allmeadows. This is a walk with moorland scenery. It may be muddy in parts.



Park at the roadside in Danebridge for a 10.00am start; (share cars where possible).

Distance about 5 1/2 miles.

Bring a drink for a mid-morning break. There is a pub in Danebridge for refreshments on return.

The walk will suit the averagely-fit walker with a good pair of boots.

Cost £2 for members, £2-50 for guests (pay on the day).

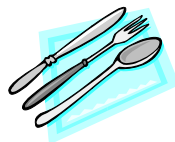
Please apply to Peter Corlett, 24 The Covert, Clayton, Newcastle, ST5 4BL. Tel: 01782 719075 enclosing a Stamped Addressed Envelope.

Thursday January 22nd 2009 Lunch Club Meeting

The Wayfarer (A34 towards Stone) Max 20 12.30-12.45pm

Formerly the Filleybrooks, this roomy pub has connections with the Holly Bush at Salt and this is reflected in the extensive menu - starters from £3.75, main courses from £8.95, desserts from £4.25 - OR the Bar Menu has sandwiches and jacket potatoes. Order and pay at the bar.

Please book by January 15th. Phone Mary Malcolm 01782 613451 giving your name and phone number.



Tuesday 17th February 2009 North Staffs Conference 8.00PM

Talk by Andrew Dobraszczyc: Trentham in the Edwardian Period

Andrew needs no introduction to most people in North Staffordshire as he is well-known and widely admired for his extensive knowledge of the history and geography of the area. His talks and walks are enjoyed by many and we are fortunate to have the benefit of his interest in the history of Trentham Hall for this talk. He will explain how the Hall was abandoned by the Duke of Sutherland, and describe the

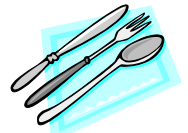


opening of the gardens to the public, the attempts to dispose of the Hall to Staffordshire County Council and finally the demolition of the Hall in 1911.

This will undoubtedly interest many members and friends are welcome to attend.

Friday February 20th 2009 Lunch Club Meeting The Greyhound, Yarlet (A34 beyond Stone) Max 20 12.30-12.45pm

A return visit to this pleasant pub with its heated conservatory. £7.95 for main course and pudding: Roast beef/ham/salmon hollandaise AND apple crumble/Treacle Sponge/cheesecake. Vegetarian option. Tea/coffee 50p. Please book by February 13th. Phone Mary Malcolm 01782 613451 giving your name and phone number, and choice of meal.



Wednesday 18th March 2009 Coach Outing: Two Birmingham Attractions

We shall arrive at Birmingham's Council Offices in Victoria Square at 10.30am for a guided tour lasting approximately 1 hour. Outside is a statue of Queen

Victoria and the late 19th century Italianate building was designed by Yeoville Thomason. We shall see the grand staircases, interior rooms and some of the Council regalia. Coffee will be available at the next-door Art Gallery, or other nearby places, at own cost, either before or after the tour.

There will be time for everyone to purchase their own lunch nearby then at 2.00pm we shall rejoin the coach for a short journey to the Museum Collections Centre, in Dollman Street. This Centre, only open to private guided tours, contains nearly half a million fascinating objects which are cared for by museum staff but are not on permanent display in any of the Birmingham City Museums. It is in effect the 'back room store' of the museums service, where you may see anything from a teapot to a tram or a stuffed rabbit to a steam engine. It contains also the only machine that both slices and butters bread – truly an Aladdin's Cave of mostly unseen treasures!

We shall finish with tea and biscuits, when the 'Small Collections' room will be open especially for us, before leaving at 5.00pm.

Supporter needed please

Depart School Street 8.45am; returning at approx. 6.30pm

Cost, including coach, driver's gratuity, guided tour of Museums Collections and tea will be £20.00pp (non-members £22.00)

Please apply to: Anne Anderton, 14, Berne Avenue, Newcastle, Staffs. ST5 2QJ Tel: 01782 613024 enclosing a cheque and Stamped Addressed Envelope.

Closing date Friday, March 6th 2009

Tuesday 24th March 2009 North Staffs Conference 8.00PM

Talk by Dr. Brenda King: Thomas and Elizabeth Wardle and the Textiles of the Arts and Crafts Movement

Dr. Brenda King is a textile historian with a Doctorate in Indian silks. She is an expert on Thomas Wardle and is at present writing a book on him.

During the Industrial Revolution, the towns of Leek and Macclesfield became major centres for silk production and played an important role in the Arts and Crafts movement. William Morris produced his first block-printed fabrics in collaboration with Thomas Wardle using wool and silk threads

dyed with natural dyes from the Wardle firm based in Leek. The famous Leek Embroidery Society used local fabrics, silks and braids in work for churches, most notably a stole made by Lady Gaunt and designed by Thomas Wardle.

This year (2009) marks the centenary of Wardle's death and there will be major exhibitions in both Leek and Macclesfield to celebrate this occasion. This talk should be of great interest to local history enthusiasts and to those with an interest in the design and artistry connected with the textile trade. In her illustrated talk, Dr. King will focus on both the life and work of Thomas Wardle with especial reference to the production and use of silk in Leek.

Tuesday 31st March 2009 Lunch Club Meeting

**The Claret Jug, Wychwood Park, Weston, Crewe Max 20
12.30-12.45pm**

(Go through Betley and at large roundabout Wychwood Park is on your left.) This lounge-bar and brasserie is styled as a golf clubhouse in a fine setting. It offers home-made food and traditional beers. Choose on the day from the menu with a wide range of courses e.g. Mussels in cream and white wine



£5.75, pasta with goat's cheese - red onion marmalade, £6.95 and the Claret Jug sandwich! Poached chicken, grilled bacon, tomato, lettuce and egg £6.25. Please book by March 24th. Phone Mary Malcolm 01782 613451 giving your name and phone number.

Wednesday 15th April 2009 10 30 a.m. Car Outing to Belmont Hall, Great Budworth, Northwich, Cheshire Maximum 40

Mr. R.C.Leigh has kindly offered to show a party of members around his house, Belmont Hall

The Hall features in Simon Jenkins' Book "England's Thousand Best Houses". It is currently rented to a school, hence this visit has to take place during the school holidays.

Simon Jenkins advises that "The house was designed by James Gibbs C. 1750 for a scion of neighbouring Marbury, John Barry Smith, as a 'very convenient small house,' the chief feature of the house is Gibbs' forte, plasterwork, the loveliest of which is on the staircase "

The house is said to be full of surprises about which members will learn more during Mr Leigh's guided tour lasting about two hours

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

Cost £7.00 per member to include coffee on arrival

Please apply to Peter Moxon Millstone House Butterton Newcastle-under-Lyme Staffordshire ST5 4EB Tel. 01782 616337 enclosing cheque and Stamped Addressed Envelope

Closing date for applications Wednesday 25th March.

Thursday 23rd April 2009 Coach Outing to The Evesham Blossom Trail

The Vale of Evesham is wonderful in the Spring-time as the apple, pear and plum trees burst into glorious blossom. Our coach takes us, via Evesham Town Centre, on a guided tour around many of the pretty villages and some of the best orchards.

This is St George's Day, the official start of the new asparagus season, so we have a chance to sample this delicacy in the NT's historic Fleece Inn at Bretforton at lunch-time, taking our meal in their medieval barn. (see picture) We then proceed to the small Wayside Farm Shop (featured by Ben Fogle on BBCTV's *Countryfile*) where we will be offered free samples and will have the opportunity to purchase local farm produce and home-made preserves.



Then on to our final stop, via the picture-postcard village of Broadway, to a delightful Country House Hotel in a glorious setting, where we will have cream tea.

This should be really enjoyable day out, in celebration of Spring and the new produce which grows so well in the fertile Vale of Evesham.

Depart from School Street at 9.30 am and return by 7 pm approx.

Cost £19.50 (non-members £21.50) to include the coach fare, services of a guide, the cream tea and gratuities. Lunch not included but two light options are available: Soup of the Day with crusty baguette and tea/coffee £4.50 pp or Large Bowl of new-season Asparagus with Hollandaise Sauce and crusty bread and tea/coffee £9.50 pp. Some may choose to take sandwiches and advice will be included with the booking.

Please apply to David and Cynthia Dumbelton, 32 The Lea Trentham Stoke-on-Trent ST4 8DY Tel: 01782 641765 enclosing a cheque (to include your lunch choice, if required) and Stamped Addressed Envelope.

Closing Date for applications is Friday 27th February.

COMING SOON.....

PLEASE NOTE these forthcoming trips will need a quick reply when the next Newsletter is published:

Friday 8th May 2009 Coach Outing to the Malvern Spring Show

August 2009 Coach Outing: International Festival of Gilbert and Sullivan at Buxton.

We hope to attend an afternoon talk, then to see an evening performance by one of the amateur entries at the 16th International Festival of Gilbert & Sullivan, finishing our evening by hearing the adjudicator's remarks after the evening performance. The Festival Programme will be published early in 2009 and we will have more information in the next newsletter. The festival runs from 1st August to 21st August and we shall be aiming for a midweek performance of one of the more popular shows.

Summary of 2009 Spring Programme

Wednesday 14th January	Talk by Jon Honeysett: Reginald Mitchell and the Spitfire
Saturday 17th January	Ramble: Danebridge to Allgreave
Thursday 22nd January	Lunch Club Meeting - The Wayfarer
Tuesday 17th February	Talk by Andrew Dobraszczyk: Trentham in Edwardian Period
Friday 20th February	Lunch Club Meeting - The Greyhound
Wednesday 18th March	Coach Outing: Two Birmingham Attractions
Tuesday 24th March	Talk by Dr Brenda King: Thomas and Elizabeth Wardle and the Textiles of the Arts and Crafts Movement
31st March	Lunch Club Meeting - The Claret Jug
Wednesday 15th April	Car Outing: Belmont Hall
Thursday 23rd April	Coach Outing: The Evesham Blossom Trail
To Come in our Summer Programme	
Tuesday 5th May	Car outing: the Leopard Inn, Burslem
Friday 8th May	Coach Outing: Malvern Spring Show
Tuesday 12th May	AGM
Thursday 11th June	Car Outing: Castern Hall, Ilam
Wednesday 24th June	Coach Outing: Port Sunlight and Lady Lever Art Gallery

COMMITTEE 2008 - 2009

CHAIRMAN

*Anne Anderton

14, Berne Avenue, Newcastle ST5 2QJ 01782-613024

Audrey Aubrey (Talks and Bookings)

10 Paris Avenue, Newcastle ST5 2RQ 01782-623214

*Peter Moxon (Car Outings)

Millstone House, Butterton, Newcastle ST5 4EB 01782-

616337

VICE-CHAIRMAN

*Penny Moore

26 Parkway, Trentham, Stoke on Trent ST4 8AG

01782-657645

Bernice Mulliner (Minutes Secretary)

67 Chester Crescent, Newcastle ST5 3RR 01782-617211

Keith Walker (Membership Secretary)

49 Stockwood Road, Newcastle ST5 3LQ 01782-613813

HON. SECRETARY

*Richard Adams (Rambles)

Gables End, Holly Bank, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 8FT.

01782-646054

*Peter Thompson

'Westerly', 220 Seabridge Lane, Newcastle, Staffs, ST5 3LS

01782 613397

HON. TREASURER

Madeleine Hopley

5 Sedbergh Close, Newcastle ST5 3JQ 01782-618821

Sue Pitt - Co-opted Member

196 Dimsdale Parade West ST5 8EA 01782-566871

John Beaumont (Newsletter Editor)

4 Barnsdale Close, Trentham, Stoke on Trent ST4 8TT

01782-642618 email ajbeaumont@talktalk.net

* Member of the Programme Planning Sub-Committee