

North Staffordshire Association of National Trust Members

Newsletter 84

and

October 2009 to January 2010

Programme



The Fleece Inn on St George's Day

“A quintessentially English day out” see page 6

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 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 two 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 by perhaps collecting tickets or escorting people to entrances.

All our trips this summer need a volunteer supporter. Please help if you can - speak to the trip organiser when making your booking.

North Staffordshire Association of National Trust Members

NEWSLETTER No. 84

August 2009

and October 2009 to January 2010 PROGRAMME

A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR:

I am sure many of you will have read with interest recently how the National Trust is right at the forefront of fashion in promoting allotments on some of its land. With the recession, many people are turning with new enthusiasm to the idea of growing some of their own food – even the Queen has apparently established an allotment bed somewhere in the gardens of Buckingham Palace! The Trust has always been noted for the beauty of its gardens and the introduction of new ideas, as well as the protection and redevelopment of some of the great gardens in its keeping.

How many members saw the TV programmes in spring about the changes at Sissinghurst, I wonder? They provided a fascinating insight into many aspects of the matters the Trust has to consider in the management of huge visitor numbers and what the visitors expect. Adam Nicholson and his wife Sarah Raven are now resident at Sissinghurst and wish to implement many changes. Sarah Raven, noted for her flower-growing, wished the gardens to be more natural, with the borders looking perhaps a little untidy at times. However, the head gardener emphatically rejected this idea, stating that the Trust was noted for its manicured gardens and that was what he had been trained to do and what the visitors expected. There was also tension evident between the chef who knew how to cater efficiently for huge numbers of diners and the Nicholsons who wished for menu changes and a new style that seemed not to be practical for such numbers. I know I felt a great sense of relief that I have only myself to please in designing my garden and Paul and I happily eat whatever is on the day's menu.

We have seen many wonderful gardens during this summer on Association outings, both at Trust properties and private venues. If members have photos of some of these gardens, please send them to Kay Williams so that the archive can reflect the warm days of summer and remind us of the joys of seeing beautiful

designs and plants, all of which of course reflect the hard work done by so many enthusiastic gardeners.

Members will read that Roy Chesworth has decided that he cannot continue with the printing of our Newsletters. We are most grateful to Roy for many years of work on our behalf, producing the Newsletters on time and at very minimal cost to the Association. We sent him a letter of thanks and a small token of our appreciation and made him a life member of the Association. We wish him good health and hope to see him at future events.

With all good wishes, Anne Anderton



WEB EDITOR NEEDED

We need someone to take charge of our Web site; this may involve helping with the initial design of the pages and subsequently entering the details of each new programme. If you are interested in offering this much-needed help to the Association, please contact either Keith Walker or Anne Anderton.

Roy Chesworth

Roy has been our printer for many years. His love of printing predates the modern technology age and his 'hobby' has been of great service to our Association as well as the South Cheshire Branch where he remains their publicity secretary. He has also over the years helped Betley Church with their magazine and a great many charities with flyers, tickets etc.

He is sad to ask us to find another printer at this time, but feels that now is the right time to stop.

For myself I thank him for his support as I settled into the role of Newsletter Editor as he has advised me on what will print well and what will not.

John Beaumont



APOLOGIES ALL ROUND

Despite many efforts to ensure that we give the best possible service, a number of things have gone wrong recently – nearly all outside our control – but we are trying to do better. So apologies to:-

Everybody – the last Newsletter was printed under great difficulty, our usual printer was not available. We found another printer at short notice. The new printer's machine broke down at the key time and so we barely managed to get the Newsletter out on time. The booking forms were printed back to back which, I know, caused some problems. Thank you for coping with this and we hope all will be well in future.

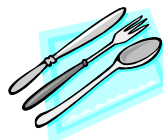
A few – some people did not receive their copy of the Newsletter at all. They were all posted at the same time and yet a batch with consecutively numbered member numbers was not delivered. Please inform Keith Walker if you know of someone who hasn't had their copy of this Newsletter soon after you got yours. You should also have the next issue by early January so again if it does not arrive please let Keith know.

Those who booked on trips that had to be cancelled. Sadly a small number of trips have had to be cancelled recently because they failed to attract sufficient support. The Malvern Spring Show, the evening visit to the new award winning Wedgwood Museum, and the Gilbert and Sullivan trip all seemed to the committee the sort of thing members enjoy. It would be interesting to hear why these weren't found to be attractive. And our apologies for those who were really looking forward to them and were disappointed.

Those who park in School Street – this now costs £4.70 which adds to the cost of a day out. There is a car park next to the Borough Arms which is only a short walk and is currently only £2.60 for the day. Hassall Street Car Park is temporarily only £1.

LUNCHEON CLUB MEETINGS

The popular Luncheon Club restarts in September



REPORTS ON RECENT TALKS AND VISITS

Wednesday 18th March Coach Outing: Two Birmingham Attractions

Thirty members, efficiently led by Anne Anderton, visited Birmingham on this mid-March sunny day. Birmingham's motto is "Forward" but we asked our tour guides in the city to take us back to the past.

After coffee in Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery's Edwardian Cafeteria we moved next door into the Council House. This imposing Grade II listed building was designed in the style of a Venetian Palace and completed in 1879 at a cost of £163,805. Carol Harris, a retired employee and one of the volunteer guides, led us through passages and into rooms not open to the general public, while imparting the history of the building, its major players and noteworthy visitors, including kings, queens, princesses and prime ministers. After viewing the rogue's gallery portraits of all the past mayors, we were welcomed into the Lord Mayor's Parlour - currently Councillor Chauhdry Rashid - by the Deputy Mayor. The interior design of the building is staggeringly beautiful, marble staircases, stained glass windows, chandeliers, mirrors, floor tiles and cornices; all conspire to lend an appearance of light. While we were there a ceremony of granting citizenship to people of many nationalities took place in the vast banqueting suite, and we saw them emerge proudly displaying their certificates. The semi-circular Council Chamber, where the business of the city is still conducted, is old fashioned but comfortable and has been up-dated with modern audio-visual systems to facilitate discussion and voting of the 120 members.

As we adjourned for lunch many of us took the opportunity to check out two of the visiting attractions in the art gallery - the Burne-Jones' Perseus pictures on loan from Stuttgart, and David Cox's Sun, Wind and Rain exhibition.

After a short drive to the outskirts of the city, we arrived at the Museum Collection Centre. Opened in 2002 it is one of the biggest museum stores in the country. It was designed to improve the storage conditions of unused exhibits, yet allow the public (limited) access to them. The warehouse is an Aladdin's cave crammed to the rafters with half a million objects. All are carefully marked and stored in the 1.5 hectare site. We saw vehicles, machines, stuffed animals, sculptures, objets d'art, handbags and shoes - in fact just about anything (except paintings) that any museum did, would or could display. The seven full time staff are assisted on open days by staff drafted in from the seven city

museums. The collection is open to the public two or three times a year, or by arrangement for groups like ourselves. After being treated to tea and biscuits we boarded the coach for the journey home.

Anne Plant

Tuesday 24th March Talk by Dr. Brenda King: Thomas and Elizabeth Wardle and the Textiles of the Arts and Crafts Movement

Dr Brenda King of Macclesfield is a leading authority on the subject of Thomas Wardle and his associates, especially in relation to their work and times in Leek. Their influence on the Arts and Crafts Movement was tremendous, and as she pointed out, very underrated. Thomas Wardle's achievements were legion. The leading silk dyer of his day, influenced by his travels in India, he produced the most beautiful colours and textures, some of which survive to this day. His wife Elizabeth founded the Leek Embroidery Society, and she with her Ladies produced the most wonderful ecclesiastical vestments and Altar Frontals which are largely still intact in churches in this country and abroad. Dr. King gave us an insight into Thomas Wardle's world, superbly accompanied by high-class slides, and reminded us of an important exhibition about the great man to be staged in Leek opening 4th July for six weeks, in conjunction with the events at the Silk Museum in Macclesfield.

Pam Jones

Wednesday 15th April Car Outing to Belmont Hall, Great Budworth, Northwich

Fifty members of the Association received a very warm welcome from our genial host, Mr R. C. Leigh, who nevertheless had a very acerbic view upon many aspects of the community which he expounded in a very amusing but remorseless manner.

Mr Leigh, who is the present owner of Belmont, was the last member of his family to occupy the Hall as his residence. He now lives in the converted stable block. The Hall has been leased to tenants over the last twenty five years for use as a day school for 200 pupils. The estate now comprises 100 acres.

The Hall, the estate and the contents have been decimated in the past years by the imposition of death duties and now has only a few paintings and none of the

original furniture. Mr Leigh recalls a sale of much of the contents following the death of his grandfather.

Mr Leigh speaks with great affection about the occupation of the Hall by his family and also recalls that the Hall at times was home to up to 40 people including staff who looked upon it as their home, providing security in sickness and in health. In particular he recalled one maid who lived at Belmont from the age of 12 until her early seventies and a farm labourer who spent the whole of his life at Belmont apart from 2 years military service.

The outstanding feature of the house is James Gibbs' plasterwork, now of national importance, particularly the ceilings and wall panels, most of which are in good condition and beyond the reach of school children.

Mr Leigh clearly relates to the neighbouring "landed gentry" whether they are in residence or absentees and explains how these large estates were the backbone of the English rural community in times past.

Although the house is littered with school furniture and embellishments, the affection which Mr Leigh holds for his family house is very real.

Members were privileged to have a glimpse of Belmont in times past. Thanks go to Peter Moxon for again finding somewhere that bit different.

Thursday 23rd Coach Outing to the Evesham Blossom Trail

The 23rd April - St George's Day, Shakespeare's Birthday and the official start of the asparagus season. What an appropriate day to embark on a tour of the Vale of Evesham in the heart of England.

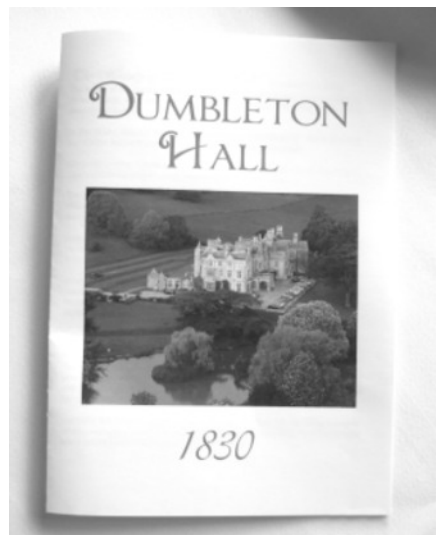
After a smooth run down the motorway on a sunny and warm day we drove to Evesham where we collected our tour guide, Paul Chitty. We passed the site of a former Abbey in the centre of town where there is now a large churchyard with, uniquely, two churches and a separate 100ft bell tower. The coach climbed up Main Street out of Evesham and the splendid Vale of Evesham then opened out before us with the higher ground of the Cotswold Way to the south-east and the long, brooding Bredon Hill with its associated myths and legends to the west. The orchards spread out all around us, some old, small and randomly planted with gnarled trees, others were several acres in size planted in more formal rows with many new varieties of apple, plum and pear. Some of these were mature trees whilst others were merely saplings. Paul told us that in the older neglected orchards, in the autumn one could be ankle deep in fallen rotten fruit. On the day of our visit most of the white plum blossom had fallen but the pink apple blossom was bursting through.

We passed through many picturesque villages with frequent pauses to admire the views. As we climbed out of the vale to the higher ground of "the lenches" - a series of villages - we stopped at Rous Lench and Church Lench which had numerous examples of black and white timbered houses. Paul explained that the medieval construction of long rectangular frames with many uprights gave way to the Tudor style of large square frames which used less timber. This was due to the huge demand for timber for use by the newly formed Navy. We saw several examples of both types of construction, many with thatches.

We then dropped our guide Paul back in Evesham and proceeded to the National Trust Fleece Inn at the pretty village of Bretforton for our chosen lunch of either fresh asparagus or soup which we ate in the thatched barn. After lunch we had a short talk from Nigel Smith the pub landlord and a N.T. tenant. The Fleece hosts the Asparagus Festival and Nigel had just returned from the annual asparagus run to Stratford to celebrate the first day of the season (it ends on midsummer's day) as well as Shakespeare and St George. A sort of "Beaujolais run of the Cotswolds".

We left the Fleece in early afternoon and after a brief stop at the Wayside Farm Shop we headed for our secret destination. This turned out to be Dumbleton Hall ! Could this be the ancestral home of our outing organiser David Dumbleton? I will leave you to guess!

There was one certain local connection in that a former vicar of the parish church, St Peter's, was one John Wedgwood a grandson of Josiah. Dumbleton Hall is now a country house hotel and we were led to the grand drawing room where we had a short introduction from the Manager Gavin Dron. We were told that Vice-Chancellor von Ribbentrop stayed as a personal guest of Eyres-Monsell and his love of the Hall led Hitler to demand it as his English residence when his victory in Europe was complete!



After enjoying our cream tea in sumptuous surroundings (the drawing room plaster frieze was said to be worth more than the Hall itself) we had time to wander the gardens and parkland complete with black swans on the lake. On our journey home we could reflect on a most rewarding and quintessentially

English day out. The whole day had gone very smoothly and generous thanks are due to David and Cynthia Dumbelton for choosing such beautiful locations and for their excellent planning and organisation on the day.

Roger Cartlidge and Shirley Timmis

Tuesday 5th May Car Outing to the Leopard Hotel. THE SAVOY OF THE MIDLANDS

In 2007 Neil Cox and Neil Crisp took on the lease of The Leopard with no idea that behind an old cupboard they would find a door leading to abandoned guest rooms last used sixty or more years ago, when the hotel was known as The Savoy of the Midlands.

On arrival at the hotel, we discovered that Neil Cox had been rushed into hospital, our visit taking the staff by surprise. However, they summoned Neil's mother to take his place and produced coffee while we waited for her in the Edwardian bar, with its stained glass and walls sporting an amazing collection of beer mats.

When Sharon arrived, she told us that what is now an eating area beyond the bar used to be the hotel reception, and today's "Ladies" was the left-luggage room. The ballroom, added at the back in the early 1800s, is frequently used for weddings and weekend functions which can attract 3-400 people. Especially interesting here are wall-paintings by a local artist, depicting people and incidents in Burslem's past, notably the multi-talented Arthur Berry; The Witch of Burslem, Molly Leigh; Clarice Cliff pottery; the Burslem Angel; the Chartist Riots and the famous meeting between Josiah Wedgwood and James Brindley, which led to the building of the Trent and Mersey Canal at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution.

Upstairs are the rediscovered areas of the pub where Marianne and Ptolemy, of T.V.'s Restoration, would have a field day! Sadly, pigeons have got in and made themselves at home, but happily, hand-painted early twentieth century wallpaper and rag-rolled corridor dadoes remain intact. Each of the numerous rooms has a wash-hand basin, and some even have an en-suite bathroom! We also saw one sitting room, where Charles Darwin and his family lived for a while.

In the dark cellars, where room opens out into room upon room, are chairs and tables with candles, where seances are sometimes held to contact the spirits which allegedly haunt the building, recently featured on T.V.'s Most Haunted

series. (Burslem's own Robbie Williams attended one of these seances a short time ago!) From the cellars, a currently blocked-up tunnel leads under the road, apparently to what was once the police station. It is said that local wrongdoers, kept in the cellars, were taken through the tunnel to be tried for their crimes.

"It'll come to life again," said Sharon - a belief confirmed by the motto on the "coat-of-arms" painted on the ballroom wall - "The Leopard can change its spots". Let's hope this will prove true.

Coffee and an admirable selection of sandwiches awaited our return to the bar - many thanks to the staff for providing these at such short notice, and thanks to Sharon for stepping in so effectively. We wish Neil a speedy recovery.

Thanks are also due to Peter for organising yet another fascinating visit.

Jenny Wright

Talk by James Rothwell of the National Trust on the Lyme Missal (following the AGM business).

James Rothwell began with the rather bold assertion that the Lyme Missal was 'the single most important book associated with any National Trust property' but demonstrated that this was so in a fascinating lecture in which he explained its significance in both printing history and the history of the Legh family of Lyme Park.

This copy of a Sarum Missal (to give it its proper title) led the way in printing technology: it is the work of our earliest printer, William Caxton; it is the first printed edition of the Sarum Missal in two colours utilizing the new production methods available in Paris and it was set out on the first wood blocks ever used in French printing.

At the personal level, this exceptional book has been associated with the same house and family since at least the 16th century and was retained by the Legh family when Lyme Park was acquired by the National Trust in 1946. With the assistance of the Heritage Lottery Fund and other bodies the National Trust was able to purchase the Missal and it will go on display at Lyme on 22 July 2009. Part of the Trust's remit under the terms of the grant is to restore the library at Lyme to its former magnificence so as to provide a worthy setting for the Missal and also to enable visitors to consult other books housed there. A facsimile of the Missal has been produced and it has also been scanned and will be available on a touch screen. The restoration work is being done in public and

will provide a wonderful opportunity for visitors to watch craftsmen and decorators in action.

I look forward to examining this beautiful work of art which will once again be the star of Lyme Park library. Additional inscriptions and corrections to the original text following the Reformation will be of interest to historians of that turbulent period and baser motives will be satisfied by reading the caustic comments of one member of the Legh family about the local vicar.

Rose Wheat

Monday 1st June Walk: “A Short Back and Sides of Betley” or “The Glorious 1st of June”

Although a number of people had cried off the walk because of the anticipated heat, 35 walkers and a dog set off for our walk round Betley. The early part of the walk had quite a number of stiles and we were all for a while in almost single file. There wasn't a naval battle in sight but it was for us a Glorious 1st of June. With

temperatures soaring and the sun overhead, this could be the start of the best summer for years. (By the time I write this we know better, don't we?)



We stopped for a break half way through the walk (see picture) and Richard gave us a brief history lesson of the Ice Age and the creation of Betley Mere and Betley Moss. Then across the main road and up past the lovely Betley Church, across the edge of the cricket ground and down some lanes back toward the Hand and Trumpet where we had left our cars. An unusual sight in the last field made me say to Richard “I can't do the write-up because I can't spell llama”. “That's all right,” he said, “they are alpacas” and that was worse.



The Hand and Trumpet did an excellent job of quenching various thirsts, as well as feeding the hungry. Thank you Richard for organising the walk and for being a wealth of knowledge as we went round. It was a lovely morning out.

John Beaumont

Thursday 11th June Car Outing to Casterne Hall Ilam Derbyshire

Nicholas Hurt, a younger son, inherited a 1000 acre estate near Ilam and decided to rebuild the house that had been built on the site of a Roman Villa, with Bronze and Iron age settlements nearby. When Nicholas died the property was let up to Victorian times and consequently suffered little change. In 1919, the house was sold, but was bought back and restored by the present owner's parents in 1951.

Though the front elevation of the Hall is of early Georgian design, there are Elizabethan and Jacobean features inside and even extensive Roman masonry in the cellars.



Mr Charles Hurt, the present owner, first showed us the entrance hall which has always served as a dining room: it was the only room that we were shown that was not panelled. In the small sitting room, the late-Elizabethan panelling had come from an earlier house. In the drawing room the white panelling was Georgian, and Mr Hurt pointed out the unblocked windows which made this such a light and pleasant room. Ascending the oak stairs, we saw two of the bedrooms. Then, passing through a door up a Jacobean staircase we came to the servants' quarters. The former servants' "common room" took up the full width of the house which made us realise that the house was quite small. This room had been used as a nursery when Mr Hurt as a child, but is now used as a studio.

Outside, at the rear of the house, we were shown more Roman masonry and the farm yard much as it would have been from the house's inception. This concluded a most interesting and successful visit to an impressive building in a rather remote but beautiful setting and Peter Moxon is to be thanked for his faultless organisation. (So many members wanted to join this trip that Peter persuaded Mr Hurt to do a second tour immediately following the first!)

Mary Yardley.

Wednesday 24th June: Coach Outing to Port Sunlight Garden Village, Museum and Lady Lever Art Gallery.

A beautiful sunny day welcomed us to the aptly named Port Sunlight Garden Village.

Coffee and biscuits were served on our arrival, at the Lady Lever Art Gallery tea room, after which we were shown a short film on the history of the village and factory in the museum, and then were able to see for ourselves a very interesting collection of memorabilia.



We then reboarded our coach to take a tour of the beautiful village. Our guide during the tour was Maureen Collins, who was a font of knowledge about Port Sunlight and the Lever family and she kept us enthralled with her amusing anecdotes.

Maureen painted a vivid picture of William Hesketh Lever, founder of the village in 1888. He was a man with ideas well ahead of his time. His every effort was to enrich the lives of his workforce, with working conditions and living accommodation second to none. Thirty architects were employed to design the houses, each block being entirely different from any of the others. A very young Edward Lutyens was so fascinated by the project that he wanted to be in on the act, and we were able to see the doors he designed. Whilst providing his employees with every conceivable amenity, Lever still found time to revolutionise the manufacturing of soap, replacing animal tallow, which had a tendency to become rancid, with vegetable oils and perfume.

At the end of this most interesting tour we each went our separate ways in search of lunch, after which nearly all of the members paid a visit to Christ Church United Reform Church and the Lady Lever Art Gallery.

The church was surprisingly large and very well maintained with several beautiful stained glass windows. The organ is believed to be the largest of its kind in its original condition and still in everyday use.

A stroll through the fragrant rose gardens, enabling us to have a closer look at this unique village, brought us back to the Art Gallery where we had begun our visit, but now we had time to look at the wonderful exhibits. Paintings by many

famous artists, the world's largest collection of Wedgwood china, as well as many sculptures, tapestries, figures from the Orient and so much more.

The time to return to our coach arrived all too soon. Thanks must go to Peter Thompson for once again organising a most interesting and long to be remembered day.

Barbara Amos

Tuesday July 21st – Evening Visit to Wilkins Pleck Garden, Whitmore.

Despite a wet and miserable July day, the weather cleared up in the evening for our visit to the wonderful garden created by Sheila and Chris Bissell at their home outside Whitmore. Wilkins Pleck, described some years ago by a local farmer as the most unproductive piece of land in the area, has been transformed into six acres of paradise. In just fourteen years Sheila and Chris have created a kaleidoscope of colour. The garden framework incorporating a strong structure of evergreens, consists of a series of elegantly proportioned rooms, contained within brick walls, tall yew screens, pleached lime avenues, hornbeam and low box hedges.



We wandered around the formal alleys, admired the classical busts, tumbling fountains, a ruined temple, lakes and graceful curved bridges over the koi-filled waters. In the summer house, we viewed the many photographs showing the extensive groundwork which had to be undertaken to achieve the amazing results. The whole garden is laced with brilliant colour – themed borders, from the ‘hot border’ overflowing with red, orange and yellow blooms to the cool colours in the ‘long border’. Chris and Sheila gave us a very warm welcome and were on hand to guide us through the many stages in the development of this wonderful spectacle and their plans for the future. The garden has recently been featured in various publications, including the Country House and Interiors magazine. In 2008, Carol Klein and film crew visited the garden, which was subsequently featured in the BBC Open Garden series.

Our evening concluded with refreshments served by Sheila and a chance to purchase plants for our own gardens. Our thanks must go to Anne Anderton and her helpers for a memorable evening.

Anne Thompson

AUTUMN PROGRAMME 2009

Wednesday 9th September 10.00am Car Outing to Sudbury Hall, Derbyshire: “Behind the Scenes” (Max 40) (From April Newsletter - a few places are left)

Members are invited to a “Behind the Scenes” tour of Sudbury Hall which will take in the Attic via the Oak Stairs, all public rooms on the ground and first floors, the Billiard Room, the Kitchen, the Beer Cellar and Wine Bins.

Although Sudbury Hall is a National Trust property, the “Behind the Scenes “ tour lasts two hours 10.00am to midday. The remainder of the Hall opens to the public at 1.00pm. Members wishing to visit the Hall at 1.00pm must show their N.T. Membership Cards.

Sudbury Hall lies at the junction of the A50 (Stoke to Derby) and the A515 and is well signposted. Ample car parking is available but members should note that the car park is approximately 500 yards from the Hall. A buggy is normally available if required so please allow plenty of time to park and walk or ride to the Hall for a 10.00 am prompt start.

Cost £7 per member.

Refreshments which include a good selection of light dishes may be obtained in the coach house at members’ own expense.

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

Please make immediate application.

Wednesday 16th September 12.30pm Lunch Club Meeting Wedgwood Visitor Centre Max 20

Meet for lunch and an opportunity to visit the award winning museum, either before or after lunch on an individual basis (£5 for seniors). There is a set menu - Roast Beef/ Fruit Salad or Victoria Sponge/ tea or coffee £9.95.



Please book by phone, before September 9th giving your name and phone number to Mary Malcolm 01782 613451

Saturday 26th September Walk: “Cop Mere and Jackson’s Marsh”

This is a fairly easy walk of about 5 miles, and 10 stiles, in the valley of the River Sow, near to Eccleshall. The route takes us past Cop Mere, which is an SSSI for the variety of flora and fauna it supports, Walk Mill, dating back to the thirteenth century but now sadly derelict, and on to Jackson’s Coppice and Marsh, a recent (2008) addition to Staffordshire Wildlife Trust’s portfolio, where we shall walk the boardwalk through the marsh. The way back to base is at first uphill, with a little treat possible however for those who like cute animals: a boar farm, complete with friendly and inquisitive baby boarlets.

As ever, well behaved dogs and children are welcome, walking boots recommended. We will meet at 11.00 am at The Star Inn car park.

Tables are reserved for us back at the Star Inn, Copmere End for lunch at 1.00. We have been asked to pre-order our meals if possible, so I will circulate a menu before the day.

Cost £2 for members, £2.50 for guests (pay on the day).

Apply to Richard Adams, Gables End, Holly Bank, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 8FT. Please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope. Telephone 01782 646054

Wednesday 14th October 8.00pm Talk at the NS Conference Centre by David Day: ‘A Modern Naiad’: Nineteenth Century Female Professional Natationists.

The speaker, a lecturer at Manchester Metropolitan University, will explain how women swimmers (or natationists) began to entertain huge audiences at exhibitions, races and endurance events and also demonstrated ornamental swimming techniques in glass tanks and on stage! Agnes Beckwith and her half-sister Lizzie were particularly well known and also taught many women to swim.

This is a subject almost forgotten today and Dr Day has unearthed many endearing photos and written records which he will use to illustrate his unusual topic. You will be amazed at the results of his researches.

Saturday 17th October 11.00am Car Outing to Claymills Victorian Pumping Station, Meadow Lane, Stretton, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire. (Maximum 40) (From April Newsletter - a few places are left)

The Pumping Station is run and managed by enthusiastic volunteers who love and devote a great deal of their spare time to the Pumping Station. Although the Station will be open to the public on this day (a private steaming is unaffordable) members will be given a guided tour in groups of approximately 15 and they will see the magnificence of the pumps working in all their glory. Their size is colossal. Other engines will be in steam.

The station includes 4 Beam engines by Gimson of Leicester 1885, 5 Lancashire boilers, a steam-powered dynamo house, a Victorian steam workshop and the blacksmith's shop.

During the second half of the 19th century Burton-on-Trent and its brewing trade grew rapidly with consequential increase in polluted waste. In the 1880s James Mansergh, an eminent engineer, was engaged to advise upon disposal of the waste and subsequently the Victorian steam-operated Claymills Pumping Station was built.

Members are strongly advised to wear stout and flat shoes and should be aware of the many trip hazards, uneven floors and ground, and oil and other spillages. Members should heed all advice offered by guides and observe any warning notes and avoid contact with all machinery.

The station is on five different levels with steep spiral stairs and grating type floors. For reasons of modesty, lady members may prefer to wear trousers.

Members should arrive not later than 11.00am and park their cars in the car park. Sharing cars would be helpful. Please indicate on the application form your willingness to share.

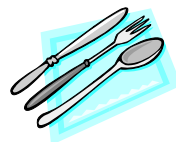
Cost £7.00 per member. The Stokers' Rest Cafe offers limited refreshment at members' own expense.

Apply Peter Moxon, Millstone House, Butterton, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 4EB Tel. 01782 616337 enclosing a cheque and Stamped Addressed Envelope.

Closing date for applications is Monday 21st September.

**Tuesday 20th October 12.30pm Lunch Club Meeting
Miller and Carter Harecastle Farm, Newcastle Rd Talke
Max 20**

This pub has been refurbished to a spacious design, and offers an extensive menu from which we can choose on the day, or from a fixed price menu - 1 course £6.50, 2 courses £8.50.



Please book by phone, before October 13th giving your name and phone number to Mary Malcolm 01782 613451

Wednesday 28th October, Coach Outing to the Church and Friary of Saint Francis and Dunham Massey (NT).

In the morning we shall be visiting Manchester and the Church and Friary of Saint Francis (known locally as Gorton Monastery). Built in the 1860s it is considered to be the finest example of High Victorian Gothic architecture any where in the world and was designed by Edward Welby **Pugin**. Gorton Monastery, along with Pompeii, the Taj Mahal and the Valley of the Kings, was placed on the World Monument Fund Watch list of the 100 most endangered sites in the world. The church and the associated buildings have recently undergone a £6 million restoration programme.

On arrival we shall enjoy refreshments and then be taken on an inspirational conducted tour of the monastery. This will be followed by a lunch of soup and sandwiches in the monastery.

After lunch we will visit Dunham Massey (NT). We have been fortunate enough to obtain the services of local historian Dr. Pamela Sambrook who will give us an introduction to Dunham Massey. Pamela has written many books on country houses, mainly concerned with the 'below stairs' aspects of country living, her most relevant book being: 'A Country House at Work – Three Centuries of Dunham Massey' which gives her the absolute authority to brief us knowledgeably on Dunham Massey.

There will be an opportunity to take a self guided tour of this elegant Georgian mansion and to wander around the beautiful avenues and ponds in the ancient park. There may also be time to visit the saw mill where a giant waterwheel has been installed. The Stables Restaurant will be open

for afternoon tea for those requiring refreshment or there is a kiosk in the car park if preferred. We will leave at 5.00pm.

Depart from School Street at 8.30 am and return at approximately 6.00pm.

Cost: £25 (non members £27) to include coach fare, driver's gratuity, guided tour of the monastery, refreshments and lunch at the monastery. Please bring your **National Trust Membership Card** with you. Please note: non NT members will also be charged an admission fee at Dunham Massey.

Please apply to Peter Thompson, Westerly, 220 Seabridge Lane, Newcastle, ST5 3LS Tel: 01782 613397 enclosing a cheque and Stamped Addressed Envelope.

Closing date for applications is Monday 12th October 2009.

Tuesday 3rd November 8.00pm Talk at the NS Conference Centre by David Fletcher: 'Life on an Antarctic Station'.

After plunging into the swimming pool in October, are you ready to brave the cold of the Antarctic? David Fletcher has spent a good part of many years at the South Pole and is an expert on many aspects of life there. His talk will be based on personal experience of life so far from the everyday comforts and conveniences we all take for granted and should be most interesting at a time when these regions are much in the news for their contribution to our understanding of climate changes. The venue will be heated as usual so thermal undies will not be necessary!.

Thursday 12th November 12.30pm Lunch Club Meeting The Swan at Woore Max 20

A return visit to this cosy pub, choose from Roast of the Day/ Salmon/ Pie of the Day - Jam Roly Poly/ Fudge Cake/ Creme Brulee. Tea or Coffee £9.95.



Please book by phone, before November 5th giving your name and phone number to Mary Malcolm 01782 613451

Tuesday 24th November Car Outing to Biddulph Grange 2.00pm to 4.00pm

You are invited to a private opening of Biddulph Grange Garden.

Take a walk through the garden and view the beauty of the holly and the ivy in the winter, or simply relax by a roaring log-fire in the Garden Room, and then enjoy a delicious cup of tea with cake or mince pies.

The National Trust Shop will be open for Christmas Shopping, offering a wide selection of cards and gifts.

Cost £5.00 (to include refreshments, garden tour and out of hours admission.)

Please apply to Sue Pitt, 196 Dimsdale Parade West, Wolstanton, Newcastle, Staffs ST5 8EA Tel: 01782 566871 enclosing cheque and SAE

Bookings close November 14th 2009.

Wednesday 9th December 7.30pm Talk at the NS Conference Centre by Eric Newton: 'The Life and Times of a Busker'

PLEASE NOTE EARLIER STARTING TIME

How often have you heard Eric's toe-tapping clarinet melodies cheering you on your way as you shop in town? He and his music are well-known and liked all over the Staffordshire/Cheshire area and his life story is an inspiring and romantic one, with tales of hardship and poverty and also a degree of fame and modest fortune as musician, fund-raiser and marathon runner! Several years ago the New Vic theatre presented a play based on his life, which demonstrated what an amazing story there is to tell. He will recount some of his adventures and illustrate his tales with his cheerful music – this should be a very unusual and enjoyable evening to set us in a party mood.

As this will be our pre-Christmas event, we shall have mince pies with mulled wine, fruit juice, tea or coffee after the talk. Cost £5.00 Members are asked to indicate whether they would like the mulled wine option when they book as this will be prepared in advance.

Non-members welcome.

Apply Miss A Aubrey 10 Paris Avenue Newcastle ST5 2RQ enclosing a cheque and Stamped Addressed Envelope.

Closing date for applications Friday 27th November

THERE WILL BE NO RAFFLE THIS TIME – PERHAPS SOMETHING MORE AMBITIOUS NEXT YEAR FOR OUR ANNIVERSARY

Sunday 13th December Coach Outing to the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester.

Enjoy an evening visit to the Hallé Orchestra without the problems of motorway driving or city centre parking!

Programme - Dvorak - The Water Goblin

Mendelssohn - Violin Concerto

Beethoven - Symphony No 5

Don't miss the chance to hear two young artists whose careers are poised to go places. "Britain's foremost young fiddler" (The Independent), Cheshire born JENNIFER PIKE, shows off her virtuosity in the magical melodies of Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto. The young Polish conductor, EWA STRUSINKA, Assistant Conductor of the Hallé, takes up the challenge of one of Beethoven's most revolutionary works. The grisly folk ballad involving a malevolent water goblin inspired some of Dvorak's most chilling and colourful music.



Depart from School St at 5.45pm returning 11.00pm approximately.

The cost is £30 to include coach travel, driver's gratuity and centre stall seats (face value £29.50)

Please apply to Mrs Penny Moore, 26 Parkway, Trentham, ST4 8AG. Tel 01782 657645 enclosing a cheque and Stamped Addressed Envelope.

Closing date for applications is Monday 28th September.

PLEASE BOOK PROMPTLY SO TICKETS CAN BE CONFIRMED.

Summary of 2009 Autumn Programme	
Wednesday 9th September	Car Outing to Sudbury Hall “Behind the Scenes”
Wednesday 16th September	Lunch Club Meeting: Wedgwood Visitor Centre
Saturday 26th September	Walk: “Cop Mere and Jackson’s Marsh”
Wednesday 14th October	Talk: Female Natationists
Saturday 17th October	Car Outing to Claymills Victorian Pumping Station
Tuesday 20th October	Lunch Club Meeting: Miller and Carter
Wednesday 28th October	Coach Outing to Gorton Monastery and Dunham Massey
Tuesday 3rd November	Talk: Life on an Antarctic Station
Thursday 12th November	Lunch Club Meeting: The Swan at Woore
Tuesday 24th November	Car Outing to Biddulph Grange Garden
Wednesday 9th December	Talk: Eric Newton and Music Mulled wine and mince pies afterwards
Sunday 13th December	Bridgewater Hall - Concert



COMMITTEE 2008 - 2009

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