

**THE NORTH STAFFS
NATIONAL TRUST
ASSOCIATION
100TH EDITION**

SPRING 2015 PROGRAMME

OUR WEBSITE .WWW.NORTHSTAFFSNT.ORG.UK



MYSTERIOUS CHINA TALK 4TH MARCH

ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRIPS

Coaches depart promptly from **SCHOOL STREET**, Newcastle, behind the Jubilee Swimming Baths. Nearby there is long-stay parking. Should a member cancel a 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 replacements. Non-members taking part in our trips pay an additional £2 for coach outings and an additional £1 for car outings. 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.

It will greatly help organisers if you will make cheques payable to the “**The North Staffs National Trust Association**” and note that normally cheques are not cleared until after an event. Please send a **separate cheque** and a **separate self-addressed** envelope for each separate event even when these go to one organiser. People who wish to ensure that they **sit together** on a coach should use one booking form.

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.

SPECIAL NOTE Please note that the insurance carried by this Association through the National Trust does not provide Personal accident cover for members aged over 80, or for children under 10.



**THE NORTH
STAFFS
NATIONAL
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NEWSLETTER
No 100
SPRING
PROGRAMME
2015**

**A NOTE FROM
THE CHAIR**

On behalf of everyone in The Association, I should like to wish you a “Happy and Healthy New Year”. The Committee and the Programme Organising Group hope you thoroughly enjoy the events mentioned in this issue. So the aim of the next hundred editions, like the first, is to give members a good time and support the Trust’s work. We still have founder members in our number who probably recall the first five Gestetnered pages which comprised the first Newsletter in July 1980. The accounts of trips and talks have not changed much, though there are fewer coffee mornings and cheese and wine parties.

The greatest difference between Newsletter Number one and the present one is the number in the membership who saw it. In April 1980 there were 350 members and 670 by July. This growth is attributed to the enthusiasm, humour and first class administrative ability of the founding Chairman , George Betteley. In my case, like poverty , chastity and obedience , I can only attempt two out of three. On my watch we have 416 members. I am obliged to the hardworking Committee on the inside back cover who keep the Association lean and fit, ready to fill the next hundred issues.

I hope we are all spared to see a good many of them.
Ralph.

NEW MEMBERS SINCE NEWSLETTER 99

Welcome to;

**P. and S. Allman. Sheila Berrisford . Sheila Cowburn . Jenny Hattersley.
Madeleine and John Kempsey. Geoffrey Crook and Hilde Skett .
Mary Synott . Mary and Steve Tomkinson . Geoffrey and Patricia Warrington .
John Whieldon .**

MEET THE COMMITTEE

Sue Corlett

I was born and brought up in Nottingham where I had a very happy childhood. I went to Ockbrook School near Derby, a Moravian school of which hardly anyone has ever heard. Some of the missionaries from Moravia came to the UK in the 18th century and built two schools next to a church, one in Derby and the other in Bedford. I then went to Nottingham University and took a degree in Social Administration.

After this I went to Maidstone in Kent and Croydon in Surrey to work in a Child Guidance Clinic and a psychiatric hospital respectively, to gain some practical experience before going to the London School of Economics to do a postgraduate course in psychiatric social work. I then took a joint post at Southwark London Borough and Maudsley Hospital for two years before leaving London and coming to Staffordshire. I worked in the mental health services provided by Staffordshire County Council going frequently to St Edward's Hospital and visiting families where one member had a psychiatric problem. I also visited other families with children or adults who had severe learning difficulties. All changed when Social Services came into being in 1971 and social work became far more general. I was fortunate enough eventually, to obtain a specialized post as a social worker in the Child Assessment Unit at the City General Hospital working with families who



had children under 5 years of age with severe development problems.

After my first husband died, I returned to work as a ward clerk at the NSRI. However ward clerks were going to be phased out so I went to work at Staffordshire University as a receptionist in the School of Arts and Social Sciences until I retired.

Peter and I have been married for twenty six years. Peter has three extremely nice children and six grandchildren who mean a lot to me. He and I have several interests in common such as learning French, walking and visiting historic buildings. I also go to the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust head office from time to time to work as a volunteer.

Sue Till



Living at my Nannie's house in Dresden at the southern tip of The City, I skipped out of the gate, crossed the road and found myself in school in less than thirty seconds .A world of books and friends which continued as I passed my 11+ and carried on my education at Thistley Hough High School for Gals, Penkhull.

Sport and athletics played a major part of my secondary school life, being a member of most of the teams and from fourteen onwards a member of The City Athletics club. This opened up a new world to me and for the next four years took me to many events and venues ,the most memorable being The White City, after which we saw the original casting in

West Side Story and were taken to a Lyons Corner House!

As a result of all this activity I spent the next three years at Avery Hill Physical Education College , Eltham, just outside of London.

The Big Smoke was an exciting place to be in the 60's, even without money. It was a carefree three years. We worked hard and played harder and thought nothing of hitching rides up and down the country, even going as far as Italy.

I had met John at the local jazz club when I was but seventeen and was rather crestfallen a few years later to find that his first job was back here in Stoke at British Ceramic Research Association. Ostensibly I had flown the nest! However I soon realised that by returning home I re-found many of my school friends and acquaintances; an extended family really. Stoke is like that.

We went on to have three daughters and world events at that time prompted me to join the local branch of The Save The Children Fund . Over thirty years, we enjoyed the many fundraising activities.

John now has the satisfaction of three grandsons as well as three grand-daughters, three of which live on the far side of the world, in Tasmania.

In recent years I have ditched the sport in favour of arts and crafts in which I dabble enthusiastically. About four years ago, through Rose, we learned about The North Staffs Association and now enjoy taking an active part.



Another lesson from life, learned on Fairfield Mill Trip 14/10/14, led by Sue Till

Forthcoming Events.

Tuesday 20th January: Talk: Neil Collingwood. 'Unseen Newcastle' North Staffs Conference Centre 7.30p.m.

Neil is the popular author of several books on the architecture and history of Newcastle and the surrounding area. The talk is illustrated with previously unpublished photographs.

Neil welcomes questions on his researches and observations the photographs will prompt.

Autographed copies of his latest book will be on sale after the talk.

Tuesday 17th February: Talk : Cathryn Walton.'Hidden Lives': Leek's Extraordinary Embroiderers. North Staffs Conference Centre 7.30. p.m.

Cathryn Walton has been researching and writing Leek's history for over thirty years. In July 2013 she curated , with Dr Brenda King , a special exhibition of embroideries stitched by the Leek Embroidery Society .Many of our Association members enjoyed a trip organised by Anne Anderton to see it. The talk reveals the lives of the women , from all walks of society ,who stitched the exquisite works of art. This is the first time that the women rather than the embroideries have been researched. Cathryn's recently published book 'Hidden Lives' will be on sale on the night. She also writes regularly in the press and presents talks on Leek and Staffordshire Moorlands throughout the country.

Wednesday 18th February: Car Outing : Visit To Newcastle Community Fire Station.

Tuesday 24th February : Car Outing: Repeat Visit to Newcastle Fire Station. Knutton Lane , Newcastle, ST5 2SL (maximum 30 persons per visit).

The above dates have been reserved for identical visits by car to Newcastle Community Fire Station. Please arrive just before 10 a.m. when Tea/Coffee, (included), will be served. The conducted tour of the Fire Station, its appliances and equipment begins at 10.30 a.m. Later the pleasant Community/Meeting Room is the venue for a talk by our host Pete Hall on the history of the Newcastle Brigade from its early days of horse-drawn carts to its present role as part of the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service. This will be followed by advice on Fire Safety in the Home and an opportunity for you to ask questions.

It is envisaged that the visits will last approximately two hours. There is adequate secure on-site parking, but car sharing is encouraged. This newly- built Fire Station is specially adapted for disabled visitors with a lift to the first floor and wheelchair

friendly door access.

Please Note: Places will, as usual, be allocated according to arrival date of the booking form. The first 30 applicants will be placed on the 18th February visit and remaining applicants booked on the 24th February visit. Please let Roger know on the booking form if you have a preferred date or if it happens that you miss the list for the 18th that you are available for the 24th. Cost £4.00. (non members £5.00.) To include refreshments on arrival, contribution to N. Staffs NTA funds and donation to Fire Brigade nominated charity. The guided tour and talk are free of charge. Please apply to Roger Cartlidge 3. The Mount Scholar Green, Stoke-on-Trent ST17 3HY enclosing cheque and SAE. **Closing Date For Applications, for both dates ,10th February.**

Wednesday 4th March : Talk: Carole Williams. ‘Mysterious China’.
North Staffs Conference Centre 7.30.p.m.

Carole has been fascinated with many aspects of China since childhood. Having begun with coolie hats, dragon encrusted roofs, pictorial writing and enchanting plants, later in life she undertook a Phd focussing on different aspects of Chinese culture. As a frequent visitor to China Dr Williams has immersed herself in a wide range of topics from politics , economics ,psychology, Chinese society, international relations and the cultural legacy, gardens and historic sites. We have asked for a heady blend to be mixed, concentrating on the stunningly visual. Like gunpowder tea the images will blow your socks off! Carole hopes you will not be too stunned to ask questions.



Tuesday 10th March: Coach Outing : The Lancastrian Heritage Organ Centre , Eccles and The Stockport Hat Museum.

The visit to the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Heritage Centre will be a nostalgic trip to the cinema of the 1920's. They have four fully restored organs, including a very large Wurlitzer, which rises out of the floor. The first half of the visit includes a guided tour of the organs , a short film or two and a visit to the museum. Budding organists will be invited to play.

Following tea/coffee and biscuits (cost included) we will commence the second half of our visit which usually includes and old black and white films , such as Laurel and Hardy , accompanied by music on the Wurlitzer.

Lunch at The Plaza Cinema , Stockport (at own cost). Built in 1932this restored Grade 2 Listed Art Deco building was both a cinema and a variety theatre. Following lunch , we hope to make a short tour of the building, noting particularly the fine embroidered curtains.

There then follows a two minute post prandial walk to the Stockport Hat Museum. There are two floors of inter active exhibits, taking us on a journey through the history of Stockport's once thriving hatting industry. The displays feature over 20 working hat making machines and 400 hats from around the world.

The museum is a centre of excellence, creativity and innovation for milliners ,crafts people and those interested in haute couture and textile design.

The Coach will leave School Street at 8.30 a.m. and will arrive back in Newcastle by 6.00. p.m.

Cost £22 (non members £24) to include coach fare ,tea/coffee and biscuits at the Organ Centre, driver's tip and entry fees.

Please apply to Bob Winter, 15 Robinson Road, Trentham ,Stoke on Trent ST4 8ED, Tel: 01782 642942 , enclosing a SAE .

Closing Date 1st February.

Sunday 22nd March: Walk: Norbury Junction.

Please note the revised date above.The date in the printed edition had to be changed.

Meet Gwen Dilks in time for a 10.30.a.m. start for one of her popular walks beginning at the Junction Inn, Norbury, ST20 0PN.

The walk of a gentle 3.5 to 4 miles will take in canal side ,woodland and lanes.

No Styles to climb, but stout walking shoes recommended.

There is an optional lunch , which must be pre booked , at The Junction Inn.

Menus available on request.

Cost of Walk £2.00. (non members £2.50.).Payable on the day.

Please apply to Gwen Dilks 16 Dicky's Lane , Woodseaves, Staffs ST20 0LB
Tel 01785 284368.

Please enclose an SAE for booking confirmation and optional menu details.

Tuesday 14th April: Car Outing: An Historical Walk Around Nantwich.

Even if you are familiar with Nantwich's shops and hostelrys, how much do you know about its often turbulent past and wealth of stunning buildings? Conquest, fire and siege destroyed the town at various points in its long history, but its reconstruction has left an abundance of beautiful timber-framed buildings and it retains much of its ancient character.

Join Rose Wheat for a walk around the town and learn about the disasters that have befallen it and the people who shaped its history.

Meet at 2.00 p.m. in the churchyard of St Mary's Church, our starting point for this gentle walk of one and a half to two hours.

Numbers are limited to 30 so early application is advised.

Cost £5.00. (£6.00 for non members).

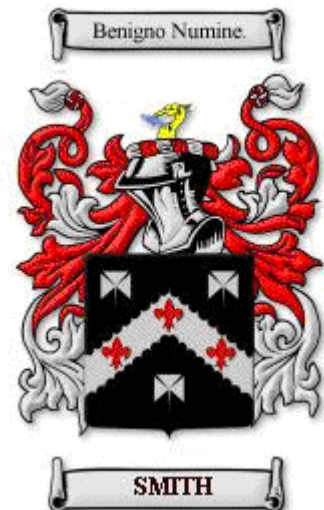
Apply to Rose Wheat, 12 West Avenue, Newcastle, Staffs ST5 0NB.

Tel 01782 61611, enclosing a cheque and SAE.

Closing Date: 14th March.

Tuesday 21st April : Talk: Malcolm Smith. "Heraldry : 850 years of Colourful Iconography Still In Use Today". North Staffs Conference Centre 7.30.p.m.

Members of The Association will have noticed many coats of arms in National Trust Properties and perhaps pondered their significance. This talk will surely help us to understand and appreciate them more. It will start with an explanation of how heraldry came about and why it 'stuck'. We will then look at a number of modern coats of arms and run through the basic rules - metals, colours, charges and the like before examining the differences between the coats of various 'degrees' within society, culminating in Royal Heraldry. The role of the College of Arms in regulating the entire procedure will also be discussed. Malcolm will bring his copy of 'Papworth's Ordinary' if anyone is interested in attributing a pre-Victorian coat of arms.



Thursday 23rd April: Coach Trip to Waddesdon Manor ,nr Aylesbury , Bucks.

Waddesdon Manor is considered by many to be ‘The Jewel in The Crown’ of the National Trust. Built in the 19th Century by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild to display his superb collection of art treasures and entertain his High Society friends, it has been in the hands of the Trust since 1957. In addition to the splendid interiors, the Victorian Gardens are considered to be amongst the finest in Britain.

Admission to the house is by timed ticket only , so entry has been reserved for us at 2.00.p.m. We should arrive at Waddesdon by 12.noon and so members will have a couple of hours to stroll round the gardens and take lunch at one of the licensed restaurants or coffee bar kiosks in the grounds ,at own expense.

Members may take a picnic if they prefer. The house closes at 4.p.m. and further time will be available to explore garden features and/or shop.

enclosing a cheque and SAE.

The Coach will leave School Street at 9.am. returning for 7.30. to 8 p.m.

There will be no comfort stops on the journeys, but the coach has on board facilities.

Cost: £20. (non members £22) to include coach travel , driver’s tip and entrance.

Please apply to Rose Wheat, 12 West Avenue , Newcastle, Staffs, ST5 0NB enclosing cheque and SAE.

Closing Date 23rd March.



Waddesdon Manor

Friday 1st May to Tuesday 5th May: Our 4th London Holiday.

This time we'll stay in the four-star Hampstead Britannia Hotel. Visits are planned to Fenton House, Nuffield Place, Henley-on-Thames, Kenwood, Spencer House, and many more. These include The Museum of London, Bentley Priory, The Battle of Britain Trust in Stanmore. We will even have a cruise on the Thames from Windsor to Runnymede to commemorate the sealing of Magna Carta 800 years ago.

Cost For This 5 Day Break : £485 per person , based on two people sharing.

For Details and a Booking Form

Please send a SAE to Cynthia Dumbelton ,32 The Lea,Trentham, ST4 8DY.

For queries Tel 01782 641765



Spencer House , Green Park , London

The View From Your Centre Stalls Seat Will Be Very Like This



Wednesday 13th May : Coach Outing to The Bridgewater Hall , A Day out in Manchester.

Join us again for a visit to the award winning Halle Orchestra in their Manchester home , the Bridgewater Hall. Following refreshments (included), you are free to explore the city's many museums and art galleries .historic buildings or even a little shopping. Alternatively , you may prefer to join us in a leisurely walk in the area around the Hall in the company of our ever popular guide, Andrew Derbyshire.

Andrew's theme this year is 'Cotton, Canals and a Castle'. The tour begins in Little Ireland , once the scene of great misery as recorded by Engels and Marx, but now the home of Sir Mark Elder and the Anthony Burgess Foundation. The walk will move on to Castlefield , where the Romans set up camp, the Bridgewater and Rochdale Canals terminate and pop songs were recorded in a Congregationalist Chapel.

Concert Programme

Glinka. Overture 'Russlan and Ludmilla'.

Beethoven. Piano Concerto No.4.

Rachmaninov.Symphony No.2.

Jamie Phillips Conductor /**Andrew Tyson** Piano

Jamie Phillips is the Halle's youngest ever Assistant Conductor.

Andrew Tyson was the winner of the Judd- Halle Orchestra Prize at the 2012 Leeds International Piano Competition.

Ruslan and Ludmilla , the opera is rarely heard outside Russia, but its thrilling overture is one of the world's most popular concert-starters.

Piano Concerto No.4 The soloist is famous for his ability to bring out its limpid beauty.
Symphony No. 2. First performed in 1908 the composer was regarded as a glorious anachronism . It is now heard as a timeless magnificent achievement , the melodies will be with you all the way home.

Depart School Street at 9.30.a.m. Return for 5.30. p.m. (subject to traffic).
Cost £36.00. (£37.00. for non members). To include Centre Stalls ticket,programme (subject to availability), refreshments at the Bridgwater Hall on arrival ,coach travel and driver's gratuity.(Apart from a priceless experience , this outing is something of a bargain as the face value of the ticket and programme is £25.00.without being chauffeured there and provided with refreshments !).

Additional £5.00. for optional guided walk (limited to 25 members).

Early Booking Essential. Please note all cheques will be cashed at the end of January.

Please apply to Mrs P. Moore, 26 Parkway, Trentham ,ST4 8AG.enclosing a cheque and SAE . **Closing Date 27th January.**

Andrew Derbyshire our Guide for the Optional Walk



Dates for your Diary and Situation Vacant ART NOUVEAU HEAVEN!

Would you like to join us on a journey to NANCY in October?

We're going to travel by Eurostar and TGV to visit this wonderful Art Nouveau town in Lorraine in Eastern France from Friday 2nd to Tuesday 6th October 2015.



We will see fabulous collections of furniture, fabrics, jewellery, also Gallé and Daum glassware. We'll stay near the Place Stanislas, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

**Further details from Cynthia Dumbelton 32 The Lea ST4 8DY. Tel. 01782 641765
e.mail dumbeltoncynthia@gmail.com**

Situation Vacant

At the AGM Rose Wheat will stand down from being Programme Organiser .

She has done a superb job in this key role and we are looking for someone who will take up the challenge and seek out new frontiers where no coach has been before.

You will have lots of support from fellow Committee Members and the camaraderie of the Programme Organising Group.

The weight of the burden has been significantly reduced because in future we will have a Talks Coordinator , we think we have a volunteer, and the Programme Organiser who finds car and coach trip arrangers, walks leaders and plans the diary of events. Please contact any member of the Committee for more details.

Many Thanks to all those who sent us photographs for this edition

Cynthia Dumbelton,Ralph White,Shirley Timmis and Deborah Johnston,
Kay Williams , Enid Nussbaum and Richard Adams.

Wednesday 13th May: Coach Outing to The Bridgwater Hall, Halle Concert and Optional Guided Walk

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Wednesday 18th February :Car Outing to Newcastle Community Fire Station Repeat Visit Tuesday 24th February

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Cost £4.00. (non members £5.00.) To include refreshments on arrival, contribution to N. Staffs NTA funds and donation to Fire Service nominated charity. The guided tour and talk are free of charge.Please send cheque and SAE to R. Cartlidge,3The Mount, Scholar Green ,Stoke-on-Trent ST7 3HY.

Closing Date For Applications, for both dates ,10th February.

Name(s)	Association number	£
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Address		
	Total	-----

Tel. number ----- Email address -----

For booking details see reverse of this form

Name(s)	Association number	£
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Address		
	Total	-----

Tel. number ----- Email address -----

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Tuesday 10th March: Coach Outing to Eccles and Stockport



The Coach will leave School Street at 8.30 a.m. and will arrive back in Newcastle by 6.00. p.m.

Cost £22 (non members £24) to include coach fare ,tea/coffee and biscuits at the Organ Centre, driver's tip and entry fees.

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No Styles to climb, but stout walking shoes recommended.

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Menus available on request.

Cost of Walk £2.00. (non members £2.50.). Payable on the day.

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Meet at 2.00 p.m.in the churchyard of St Mary's Church , our starting point for this gentle walk of one and a half to two hours.

Numbers are limited to 30 so early application is advised.

Cost£5.00.(£6.00.for none members).

Apply to Rose Wheat, 12 West Avenue, Newcastle ,Staffs ST5 0NB.

Tel 01782 616113 , enclosing a cheque and SAE.

Closing Date : 14th March.

Thursday 23rd April : Coach Outing to Waddesdon Manor , Buckinghamshire

The Coach will leave School Street at 9.am. returning for 7.30. to 8 p.m.

There will be no comfort stops on the journeys, but the coach has on board facilities.

Cost: £20. (non members £22) to include coach travel , driver's tip and entrance.

Please apply to Rose Wheat, 12 West Avenue , Newcastle, Staffs, ST5 0NB

enclosing cheque and SAE.

Closing Date 23rd March

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Address		
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Tel. number ----- Email address -----

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Address		
	Total	-----

Tel. number ----- Email address -----

For booking details see reverse of this form

Reports of Recent Talks, Walks and Visits

July 6th 2014 Woodseaves Walk

On a lovely sunny day twenty-four of us gathered at the Village Hall .We set off on a five mile walk along country lanes , fields and woods over Loynton Moss.

Along the route we passed the Old Smithy, Knighton Hall and temptingly out of reach, fields of strawberries. Peering over a high walled canal bridge, friendly greetings were exchanged with the crew of a narrow boat.

Part way round our leader thought that the scenery was so good we ought to see it twice, this certainly gave us an appetite for reaching the cars or taking lunch at The Royal Oak ,Eccleshall.

Many thanks to Gwen Dilks for organising such an enjoyable day.

Brian Wilson

August 12th 2014 Coach Outing to Blackwell House and Kendal

Blackwell House is a shrine for lovers of the Arts and Crafts movement and deservedly so as its architecture, interior design and furnishings are amongst the finest examples of that short lived style. The location of the house is stunning, overlooking Lake Windermere and the hills and fells beyond; it is one of the most delightful houses I can recall visiting and the cakes were delicious too! We then proceeded to Kendal for lunch in one of the many pubs and cafes the town offered before visiting Abbots Hall Art Gallery and the Lakeland Museum. The finest painting in the gallery was of particular interest to members as it portrayed several of the children of the 2nd Earl Gower of Trentham Hall.

Many of us also visited the parish church of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, one of the largest in the country ,which contained some beautiful stained glass and a staggering font cover. The nave dates back to 1201 and the porch contains a list of vicars showing an unbroken succession since 1190.This impressive church is a microcosm of Kendal's history and the families who held power there.

Our thanks are due to Gwen and Brian for their fine organisation of this terrific day out- they even provided a quiz to keep us amused on the way back!

Rose Wheat

August 27th 2014 Car Outing to Ingestre

An ancient settlement in the water meadows of the Trent , Ingestre was the home of the Chetwynd family ,later Earls of Shrewsbury , from the 13th Century until the 1960s when it was sold .It is now owned by Sandwell Council , used as stipulated by the Earl, as a residential Arts, Education and Conference Centre.

The current house dates from the 17th Century but in spite of largely being rebuilt after a disastrous fire in 1882 , the interiors retain much of their grandeur. Some impressive portraits are on display as is the paraphernalia of its current use.

After welcome refreshments, we moved on to Ingestre Stables.

Horses were sent here to be trained for The Great War. The Riding School is still internationally renowned today.

In contrast to the mostly restored Stables , The Orangery is in the early stages of restoration for community use. Designed by James ‘Athenian’ Stuart it had become entirely overgrown.

Finally, after a very full afternoon, we entered the Church and sank into some rather uncomfortable pews. This architectural gem was said to have been sketched by Sir Christopher Wren for Walter Chetwynd , a Cambridge friend. Having been threatened by death watch beetle it has recently been restored. The work to save the church with its amazing plasterwork brought the village together and increased the congregation.

Many thanks to Cynthia for arranging this event.

Anne George.

September 30th :Talk: Sue Beesley:” From Computers to Compost”

Prior to entering the horticultural world six or seven years ago Sue was joint owner , with her husband of an IT company. She did not go into detail as to what persuaded her to enter BBC Gardener of the Year in 2006, but much to her surprise, she won, in spite of being inexperienced in the arcane methods of TV miracle makeover shows.

This success changed her life. Within a year she had acquired a 2 acre wilderness and a run- down nursery near Warrington. She arrived in February to discover the garden was due to open in April under the National Gardens Scheme and all there was to show at the time was far from exciting, overgrown ,narrow borders and an adjoining nursery full of thousands of dead plants she could not identify. Susan is not one to be phased.

She has energy, enthusiasm and entrepreneurial organising ability which makes the air round her crackle. It was three years of hard graft before results began to show.

Bluebell Cottage Gardens and Nursery is now redesigned, replanted and restocked from mostly home propagated material which show clearly what they need to thrive and how to display them. In conclusion I should mention that in the meantime Susan has gained a Diploma in Horticulture ,set her sights on Chelsea having exhibited at the other RHS shows, and runs triathlons in her spare time.

We are so glad she could spare the time to entertain us so energetically.

Ralph White

September 26th and 27th 2014: The Burnley Break

Friday 26th September

We made a prompt but slightly damp start ,but by the time we reached our first stop at Townley Hall the sun was out and all was fine .Our two groups enjoyed a private tour as the Hall is not open to the public on Fridays .One of the first things we learned was that generations of family occupation came to an end in 1902 when Alice Townley, Lady O'Hagan sold the Hall to Burnley Corporation. It was transferred as an almost completely empty shell so generations of benefactors have been occupied reacquiring the original contents and returning them.

The Great Hall has plasterwork by Vassalli and Quadri circa 1730 .The Long Gallery has four bedrooms ranged down one side which would have been used by servants.

At one point we were in a space between one ceiling and the bedroom above.

In just such a space was a priest hole entered by means of a removable staircase.

On display in the Chapel in dimly lit cabinets are the Whalley Abbey High Mass Vestments brought to Townley at the dissolution of the Abbey in 1536.

They are breath taking, being of Italian cloth of gold with a pattern of strawberries and portraying the life of Christ. There is also a beautiful altar piece from Antwerp. The Chapel is still used for a private Mass on All Hallows Eve .On the other hand, the last room we visited, the kitchen ,has not been used since 1901. There was just time for a turn round the gardens before we re-joined the coach.

Queen St. Textile Museum.

It is a very short coach trip from the genteel surroundings of Towneley Hall to Harle Syke village but it takes you to a very different world—a world of noise , clatter and not a little danger; a world with it's own language, such as pirns, healds and tacklers—this is the world of the cotton weavers.

We were at the Queen St. Textile Museum, the only mill in the world to still be producing calico with the original boilers and machines, although full production ceased in 1982. The mill is in the village of Harle Syke in the parish of Briercliffe just north of Burnley. It was built in 1894 with money raised by selling 4,000 £5 shares to local people who formed a co-operative. At the opening ceremony in 1895 the vicar and a cornet player climbed the 120ft chimney and played ‘ ‘ Nearer my God to Thee’ ’!

Our guide took us first to the boiler house where we watched the fireman ‘feed’ one of the two original Lancashire boilers, installed in 1901, when they would have consumed 6 tons of coal a day producing steam to power the whole mill. Directly above the boilers was the amazing 500hp Horizontal Tandem Compound steam engine—an awesome sight in action. Originally named ‘Prudence’, the name was changed to ‘Peace’ after WW1 to honour the local men who had died. Our knowledgeable guide talked us through the complicated processes of weaving and the machines involved were all so ingenious it made us appreciate the sheer inventiveness of the Victorians. On to the

weaving shed where 308 looms were in action—a sight and sound to behold! In its hey-day there were 900 looms. The noise was horrendous and it was sometimes difficult to hear the information but it really made you think how dreadful it must have been to work in that environment all day. Many of the workers lost fingers or hair in accidents and most suffered from deafness and/or lung disease from the cotton fluff. We left with ringing ears but full of admiration for the people involved.

To follow this, Cynthia had arranged a walking tour of the village with local historian, Roger Frost, [an apt name as we all got a little chilly listening to him!] He took us to visit St. James' Church where, incidentally Cynthia was christened and her uncle was choir-master. Then we wandered through the streets with an anecdote at every corner. We appreciated our nice, warm coach waiting to whizz us to our hotel. A convivial dinner plus some challenging quizzes finished a day packed with interest and contrast.

Katie Forrest-Hay

Saturday 27th September.

Gawthorpe Hall

Another sunny morning saw us on our way to Gawthorpe Hall, a somewhat sombre Jacobean house, but in the sun it took on a lighter hue. The house has evolved over many years, its origins being a peel tower, then an Elizabethan house. The Kay family, latterly the Kay-Shuttleworths, have owned this prominent site on the banks of the Calder since 1388.

There is a five year plan to renovate the stonework on the house and to restore the gardens, whose original outlines are revealed in dry conditions.

Both Sir Charles Barry and Pugin were involved in the renovation work of the 1850s and next year it is hoped to replicate Pugin's wallpaper for The Long Gallery. Our impression of the house is that it is rather dark, but the oak staircase

is beautiful. It was on our ascent that we were shown a great curiosity called the Davy Automatic Fire Escape. It enabled a person to jump from a window.

It probably meant that on reaching the ground one was taken to the osteoplasty department rather than the burns unit.

The highlight of this tour was seeing the exquisite examples of lace, embroideries, samplers, quilts and WW1 silk postcards collected by Rachel Kay-Shuttleworth the last resident family member and herself a gifted needlewoman.

Charlotte Bronte, family friend, was a frequent visitor, and the dark green sofa on which she sat is still there. James Kay-Shuttleworth fancied himself as a novelist, we wonder what tips she gave him!

Haworth Art Gallery



The largest Tiffany glass collection in Europe is housed in a 1909 Arts and Crafts house built for the Noble family. It came to Accrington in the will of a local lad who had emigrated to America. He had the great stroke of luck to meet Louis Comfort Tiffany with whom he had a wonderful working relationship for over forty years and managed to rescue many items when Tiffany died and the factory closed. In the collection displayed, vases predominate rather than the famous lamps. There are also mosaics, tiles and jewellery. The colours and effects are amazing. We were absolutely astonished at the number of delicate and time consuming processes each item went through. Tiffany glass has survived changing fashions and is now widely esteemed .A case in point is large vase seemingly filled with weed fish and water. This is the gallery's crowning glory and valued at more than a million pounds. This visit concluded our thoroughly enjoyable two day break in the Burnley area.

Thank you to Cynthia for her wonderful organisation.
Shirley Timmis and Deborah Johnston.

The Million Pound Tiffany Vase



2nd October : Car Outing to Chillington Hall

Perhaps the most pleasing feature of this visit was the very obvious continuous family in residence in a building with a history stretching back to the days of William the Conqueror.

We were left in no doubt that Mrs Giffard has taken personal control of restoration and redecoration necessitated by subsidence in the 1970s .This involved supervising the painting of The Saloon, choice of carpets and even making curtains. The core of the house is Elizabethan but improvements were carried out in the early 18th Century and after a 60 year gap in the late 18th and early 19th Century. Sir John Soane was involved in much of this later work .

We had seen another example of his style at The Bank of England and his own home on our London Holiday last year.

Today the grandeur of the house has made it an ideal setting for weddings of all faiths which take place in Soane's Saloon.

We saw grazing sheep and rare breed cattle in the Capability Brown designed Park and visited the impressive range of period farm buildings before

enjoying the very welcome afternoon tea served in the marquee.

Thanks to Peter Moxon and Rose Wheat for a wonderful day.

13th October : An Evening with Gerald Mee

Gerald Mee from Leek has been involved in photography and film-making for more than 60 years from stills to cine-film, video and modern digital images. He presented us with an interesting montage from his vast collection concentrating on the Potteries and Newcastle. Whilst billed as a 'Talk, Gerald allowed the screen to speak for him.

On the Cultural theme we saw in some detail the refurbishment of the Victoria Hall and its renowned pipe-organ together with the construction of the modern glass and steel extension to the Hall. We had a close-up view of the crafts people at work on the old Gaumont Cinema in Piccadilly restoring the beautiful dome, ceilings and other art deco features to create the new Regent Theatre. This was followed by 'live' footage of The Queen performing the opening ceremonies. The new Repertory Theatre and other venues were also captured on film. There were breathtaking shots of the refurbished Golden Angel being put back in place atop Burslem Old Town Hall.

Turning to the Industrial heritage of the area there were images of the demolition of iconic local landmarks including the A-Frame headgear at Hem Heath Colliery; the high water tower at the Hospitals complex; the tall chimney at Shelton Bar and numerous others. On the plus side we saw film of the formation of the Apedale Country Park and Mining/Railway Museum on the site of the old Silverdale Colliery. There were moving scenes from the pottery industry, from Moorcroft relocating to Royal Doulton closing.

There was also much nostalgia including scenes of leisure, steam fairs, football grounds closed and opened and the last dance at Trentham Gardens Ballroom. There was evidence of a dance of a different kind with the 'Civic HQ hokey-cokey'. With left and right legs in and out of Stoke and Hanley and back again. The six Victorian former town hall facades looked as if they did not know whether to laugh or cry.

Thank you Gerald for the visual record you have compiled over the decades and the pictorial history you leave for future generations.

Roger Cartlidge



14th October : Coach Outing to Fairfield Mill and Sedbergh

After a good journey up the M6, with views of Morecambe Bay, our great driver, Tim, successfully negotiated the narrow road to Sedbergh and on to Fairfield Mill. The delicious cakes and coffee were followed by a fascinating talk about the history of the mill and its restoration, the whole process amazingly begun by Maureen, our speaker, who managed to encourage others to save the mill and convert it to its present use. We then saw the craftspeople at work – I was fascinated by the lacemaking and weaving, which the ladies were only too willing to explain. After a very tasty lunch, we had time to see the beautiful results of the

artists' work, some of which were I am sure bought by people in our group. I walked along the river to the bridge, for a view back to the mill.

We then returned to delightful Sedbergh, at the foot of the spectacular Howgill Fells. I chose to briskly explore the town – loved the embroidery in the church and what a wonderful situation for a school. I was able to explore some of the little alleyways like the Folly and walk all through the school grounds and back via the Bull for a coffee. We were extremely lucky with the weather and the greyness really enhanced the autumnal colours of the trees and hills.

Thanks to Sue Till for organizing this great day out.

Kay Williams



Fairfield Mill Nr Sedbergh

2nd November: Wrenbury Walk

We set off on a fine morning from the Bhurtpore Inn in Aston. This is not far from Combermere Abbey and was named after a famous victory led by an owner of the abbey in India in the 1820s. We passed through villages with buildings spanning the centuries and crossed fields of winter wheat and cut maize. We followed the Llangollen Canal to Wrenbury Mill, passing the elegant lift bridges on the way. The one by The Dusty Miller closes the road to let canal traffic pass. We were allowed to stop in the beer garden at the pub on the pretext of watching it work. We followed our leader back to Aston but in spite of striding purposefully and deliberately steadily, we must have slackened the pace because all were not the same side of the level crossing when the barriers came down. There was a difference between the nice chat we had with some cyclists similarly caught and what was said to us the other side.

We ended with a lovely meal at the Bhurtpore where there is a wide choice but they specialise in curries.

Thank you to Richard Adams for his patience and canal side manner.

Crossing Paradise Bridge on Wrenbury Walk



4th NOVEMBER : VISIT TO BURLEIGH POTTERY

As we stood in the clear autumn sunshine outside the factory buildings and alongside the canal, it was difficult to imagine the area when the air was filled with black smoke, grit and cinders from many factory chimneys in the area. The firm of Burleigh began in mid-19th century and the present buildings were designed to make production ‘flow’ in an efficient manner. By the end of the 20th century the firm had become so small that closure seemed imminent, but Prince Charles’ Regeneration Trust stepped in with a £9 million grant for renovation.

After coffee, we viewed a model of the whole site as it was originally then toured the many workshops still in production. We watched the only mould-maker, John, still working there, and the casting shop where items for Denby and Poole pottery are made

alongside all the Burleigh ware. Pierced plates and bowls of Leeds ware were being finished by hand, a task requiring great eye and hand co-ordination. Flatware is produced at the rate of about 1200 plates per day and the whole enterprise employs between 50 and 80 workers.

The skilled job of under-glaze transfer decorating was described by our guide as “wallpapering teapots”, but he acknowledged that the women were extremely dextrous and quick, as were those who did the over-glaze slip transfer decorating of Fortnum and Mason mugs, for example. Finally we saw the remains of the old bottle oven before doing some early Christmas shopping and having lunch.

Many thanks to Cynthia for arranging such an interesting visit.

Anne Anderton

11th November: Talk: “Lest We Forget”

I can now admit that I was not at all keen on attending this presentation. However everyone who went was so glad that we marked the actual anniversary of World War One in this way.

Since his retirement Howard Bagshaw has spent many hours travelling to sites all over the world where the fallen in conflicts are commemorated. He has then spent many more hours blending his photographs with images from other sources to create themed digital moving montages accompanied by elegant and apposite voice over commentary.

Every element is of the highest quality, it is moving, beautiful and terrifying by turns.

I had seen the recreation in brown paper of a trench in the Somme at Dudmaston, but the photograph of it was even more atmospheric, everything coated in mud, even the rats.

We really appreciated the artistry with which each segment was choreographed.

We were shown the memorials to centuries of conflicts in India, South Africa, (including a beautiful conundrum of seeming scrap iron which resolved itself into a portrait of Mandela), Belgium and the National Memorial Arboretum. The segment on the latter featured ‘The Ride to the Wall’ by a huge number of Hells Angels honouring fellow chapter members who had died defending their country. A sincere expression of loss and appreciation. It teaches one not to judge by appearances, or a ‘talk’ by its title!

Ralph White

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Summary of Programme January to May 2015	
Tuesday 20 th January.	Talk at NS Conference Centre – Neil Collingwood, ‘Unseen Newcastle’.
Tuesday 17 th February.	Talk at NS Conference Centre - Cathryn Walton, ‘Hidden Lives: Leek’s Extraordinary Embroiderers’.
Wednesday 18 th and Tuesday 24 th February.	Car Outing to Newcastle Community Fire Station
Wednesday 4 th March.	Talk at NS Conference Centre-Carole Williams, ‘Mysterious China’
Tuesday 10 th March.	Coach Outing to Eccles and Stockport.
Sunday 15 th March	Walk: Norbury.
Tuesday 14 th April.	Car Outing: Historical Walk around Nantwich.
Tuesday 21 April.	Talk at NS Conference Centre – Malcolm Smith, ‘Heraldry: 850 Years of Colourful Iconography Still in Use Today’.
Thursday 23 rd April.	Coach Outing to Waddesdon Manor.
Friday 1 st – Tuesday 5 th May.	London Holiday.
Wednesday 13 th May.	Coach Outing. Manchester and the Halle Orchestra.
Tuesday 19 th May.	AGM.

Dates For Your Diary	
Wednesday 10 th June.	Coach trip to Bourton Hill Garden and Sezincote
Tuesday 28 th July.	Kenilworth Castle and Packwood House

Contributors to the next Newsletter are asked to send their copy to Trevor Plant, the Editor, by 1st March. Photographs welcome. Trevor’s contact details on previous page. In this issue, all the errors were my idea, a sort of New Year Quiz Ralph.