

North Staffordshire National Trust Association

Newsletter No. 109
Winter - Spring 2018
www.northstaffsnt.org.uk



On our Nantwich walk

Arrangements for Trips

Coaches now depart promptly from **Brunswick Street** at the front of the Jubilee Baths. **The car park on School Street is now short stay.** The nearest long stay car park is the public car park next to the Borough Arms Hotel. We do not pick up members en route.

Please send a separate cheque, with the event name on the reverse, and a stamped addressed envelope for each event applied for, even if it is with the same organiser. People wishing to sit together should complete one form.

Non-members travelling as members' guests pay an extra £2 for Coach Outings and £1 for car trips. If circumstances dictate they have lower priority booking.

Please make cheques payable to "North Staffs National Trust Association". Cheques are normally not cleared until after an event. We will give notice if we need to do otherwise.

Refunds on cancellation are possible only if there is a waiting list. Please do not find your own substitute travellers: people on the waiting list have priority.

The Committee reserves the right to cancel any event that is not viable.

The personal accident insurance arranged by the Association through the Trust does NOT cover members over 80 years of age. However, our public liability insurance covers members at any age.

Whilst participating in an event please make sure that you carry the organiser's mobile phone number from the booking acceptance form in case you get lost. Please DO NOT MAKE alternative arrangements to get home without first telling the trip organiser.

This Newsletter is published by North Staffordshire National Trust Association to provide members with information on the forthcoming programme, reports on recent events, and other membership issues. The text and images are copyright and may not be reproduced without the owner's permission. Any views expressed by individual contributors are their own and not necessarily of the NSNTA or the NT.

We are always delighted to welcome new members – see further details on Page v in the centre of this Newsletter.

The editor welcomes items of direct relevance to Association activities, and thanks all contributors, with apologies for failure to acknowledge any, particularly if sent by post.

Copy and correspondence for the next issue, due for publication in April, should be addressed to Newsletter@jspriggs.com (01782 791360) by the **15th March 2017** at the absolute latest (but earlier if possible!)

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North Staffordshire National Trust Association

Newsletter No. 109

Winter - Spring 2018 Programme

A Note From The Chair



A Happy New Year to Members, old and new. The Committee and I hope this varied programme will act as a springboard, pun intended, to an enjoyable year. I am hoping to meet you at more events than I managed last year. My New Year's Resolution is to memorise additional new names and faces. You will have no trouble in recognising some of the extrovert personalities we have engaged for talks, and I am excited by some fascinating visits and country walks, with and without snowdrops.

In a bold move I am now going to mention two Committee members who work hard and do not seek personal publicity. Firstly, see if you can guess which one was born in a stately home we are due to visit.

Secondly, I hope you are as delighted with the look of this Newsletter as I am, thanks to our editor, John Spriggs. There are so many beautiful photographs showing exactly what the Association is about: thank you to all those who have contributed.*

Best Wishes for the new season,

Ralph.

**The editor acknowledges and thanks the following for photographs included, in the order they appear:- Marion Lycett, Richard Ayling, Katie Forrest-Haye, Munroe Blair, Cynthia Dumbelton, Julia and Huw Davies, and Bob Winter, with apologies for any mis-attributed, and thanks also for any photos sent but not used.*

Forthcoming Events

All talks commence at 7:30 p.m. at the North Staffordshire Conference Centre (the Medical Institute), Hartshill Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 7NY unless otherwise stated.

Tuesday 23rd January: Talk: A Staffordshire Find - Flavia Swann

Professor Flavia Swann graduated from the Courtauld Institute in 1967. For the last 7 years, she has been a research consultant at Staffordshire University.

Flavia discovered a hoard of Chinese and Japanese ceramics over 40 years ago and was shocked to learn of plans to sell a Ming Dynasty stem cup in order to raise funds to build a new secure museum and study centre.

Do come and find out exactly what happened.

Tuesday 20th February: Talk: Derek Poulson on Dialects

It's not what you say but the way that you say it. Or - "It inner wot thee sey, but its wey thee sez eet. Duck."

Derek will use his acting skills to take us on an entertaining and whimsical tour around the British Isles.

He hails from a South Yorkshire mining village; not what you would expect for an aspiring actor. Derek spent several years on the stage before turning to teaching. He came to North Staffordshire to teach drama at Stoke-on Trent Sixth Form College but more recently he has gained a reputation as an entertaining speaker on the local circuit.

Wednesday 21st February: Car Trip: Attingham Park, Atcham, Shrewsbury, SY4 4TP.

Built in 1785 by the 1st Lord Berwick, Attingham Park was bequeathed to the National Trust in 1947 and has recently been extensively restored. The lush Regency rooms and luxurious ornate decorations are stunning and particular delights are the exquisite wall panels in the Boudoir and the sumptuous Dining Room. Whilst there is clearly a marked contrast between the 'downstairs' world of the servants and that of their employers 'upstairs', further contrast is provided by the rooms in the 'masculine' and 'feminine' sides of the house.

The magnificent classical exterior is set in parkland landscaped by Humphrey Repton and hopefully, at the time of our visit, a walk through the woodlands should have the additional charm of thousands of snowdrops.

We shall have a private guided tour of the basement and ground floor and members will be able to return to the House afterwards to explore its many treasures at their own leisure. Tea, coffee, cakes etc. can be enjoyed in the Mansion Tearoom and a range of tasty hot lunches, sandwiches and cakes is available in the recently refurbished New Carriage House Cafe (all refreshments and meals are at own cost).

Meet at the main Visitor Reception at 10.15am, tour to begin at 10.30am. The car park is approximately 25 yards from Reception. Attingham Park is situated on the B4380, 4 miles S.E. of Shrewsbury.

Cost: £5 (£6 for non-members plus £11.50 admission charge for those who are also not members of the National Trust) to include entry to the House and Park, private guided tour and donation to the National Trust.

PLEASE BRING YOUR N.T. CARDS WITH YOU.

Please apply to Rose Wheat, 12, West Avenue, Newcastle, Staffs, ST5 0NB, tel. Number 01782 616113, including cheque and SAE **by January 30th as numbers will be restricted.**

In order to assist the catering staff please indicate on the booking form if you intend to stay for lunch (at own cost) in the New Carriage House Café.

Thursday 8th March: Car Outing to the Spode Visitor Centre, Elenora Street, Stoke. ST4 1QQ

Since the closure of the factory in 2008 the historic collection of Spode pottery was in storage until the opening of the Visitor Centre in 2012. The Centre now houses the largest collection of Spode pottery in the world.

At 10.30am we will be met by the Curator of the Centre, Michael Escolme, and served with tea or coffee and cake (included) before we will go upstairs (17 steps) and be given an introductory talk on the history of Spode. We will then be split into two groups to view in turn the Blue Room, which houses a large collection of blue ware and some of the hand-engraved copperplates from which inked tissue paper was used for the under glaze transfer printing, while the other group visits the museum which tells the story of the factory through displays, films, photographs and objects from the collection. The archive includes the old pattern books showing watercolour drawings of the patterns used over the centuries. There will also be demonstrations of transfer printing and painting or gilding by former employees. There will be an opportunity to have a guided tour round the old factory site including the mould room. On the site are some studio potters which small groups can visit. The recent extension includes a shop selling antique and vintage Spode and Copeland ceramics and art prints reproduced from the original copper plates.

Numbers are limited to 50. Priority will be given to those who applied for the cancelled February 2017 trip provided applications are received by 12th January.

Cost: £6.00 members, £7.00 non-members including donation to the Centre and tea/coffee and cake on arrival.

Directions will be sent with the acknowledgements. There is free parking for visitors but as this is limited please car share where possible.

Please apply to Jane Mayer, 16, Shaldon Avenue, Stockton Brook, ST9 9PU enclosing cheque and S.A.E. Tel. 01782 533476

Tuesday 20th March: Talk: Charles Hanson, Auctioneer

Yes, THE Charles Hanson, auctioneer, chartered surveyor and antiques expert on various television programmes, including 'Bargain Hunt'

Charles started his career in 1999 at Christies as a valuer in the European ceramics and glass department. He then worked for several antiques houses before founding Hanson's Auctioneers and Valuers in Etwall, Derbyshire in 2005. Many of you will have watched Bargain Hunt and Flog It on TV and will know Charles as a very animated and likeable character. I'm sure that we will not be disappointed tonight, even though there will be no camera crew at the Medical Institute.

Saturday 24 March: Walk around Scholar Green and environs

This generally level walk will take in parts of the Macclesfield and Trent & Mersey Canals, an area of industrial heritage, and some pleasant Cheshire countryside. Covering about 5 gentle miles, over about 2.5 hours, the walk will start and finish at the Bleeding Wolf PH, 121 Congleton Road North, Scholar Green, ST7 3BQ, where a traditional pub lunch can be obtained (www.thebleedingwolf.co.uk, tel 01782 782272).

Starting in the car park in front of the Bleeding Wolf at 10.30 am, we will follow the canal as far as the entrance to the famous Harecastle Tunnels at Kidsgrove. Retracing our steps for part of the way, we will then continue towards Church Lawton, then through woodland back to the Bleeding Wolf, well known for its thatched roof (and successive fires, not we hope, before or during our visit). We will need to cross the busy A34 in Scholar Green and A50 at Church Lawton, with care; otherwise we avoid roads.

Suggested donation for the walk is £3.00 for members, £3.50 for guests, payable on the day.

Children and dogs are welcome, the latter to be kept on leads please (only guide or assistance dogs inside the pub).

Please book your place(s) with Peter Wilson at peterwilsonendon@btinternet.com, or by post to Greenbank, Church Lane, Endon, ST9 9HF (with SAE if you require an acknowledgement please).

Tuesday 17th April: Talk: Martin Gee, Head Gardener at Weston Park

Weston Park is located on the Staffordshire / Shropshire border and is the only country house in Britain to offer an internationally acclaimed indigenous art collection. It boasts first class accommodation, fine dining and, of course beautiful Capability Brown gardens. Its history can be traced back to the Domesday Book.

Martin Gee will be talking about the history of Weston Park and his role looking after 1,000 acres of natural beauty with three centuries of garden design.

Thursday 19th April: Coach Outing to Liverpool : Western Approaches Museum, lunch at the Adelphi Hotel, guided tour of Liverpool & Speke Hall

We have employed the services of a professional guide, Rodger Burgess, to take us on an action packed tour of Liverpool. We will pick up Rodger in Holmes Chapel before going to the Museum of Liverpool at the Pierhead where we will have a comfort stop and coffee (own expense). There is a short drive or 10 min. walk, depending on the weather, to our first visit to the Western Approaches Museum. This is the bunker from where the Battle of the Atlantic was directed during WW2. Rodger will have given us the background to this on our way to Liverpool. Glimpse the documents and tools used to monitor enemy convoys. See where Commanders, WRNS and WAAF personnel worked in the Map Room, the nerve centre of the battle, monitoring convoy routes and endeavouring, with the help of Bletchley Park, to protect allied shipping from enemy destroyers and U boats. Had we lost this battle we would have been starved into an agreement with Nazi Germany.

We will then drive to the Adelphi Hotel for a 3 course carvery lunch (included).

After lunch we will be taken on an hour's coach tour of Liverpool, guided by Rodger, whilst on our way to Speke Hall (NT).

Speke Hall is a Tudor mansion which fell into disuse. It was restored during the Victorian era in the Arts and Crafts style. We will stay there for 2 hours during which time members can have a self-guided tour of the house and wander round the gardens and woodlands. We will leave for home at 5pm.

PLEASE BRING NT CARDS

Depart Newcastle at 8.00am. Return c.6.30pm. Cost £31.00 (£33 non-members) to include admission to W.A. Museum, lunch at the Adelphi, guide's fee, coach and driver's gratuity.

Please apply to Richard Mayer, 16, Shaldon Avenue, Stockton Brook, Stoke-on-Trent, ST9 9PU enclosing cheque and S.A.E. Tel 01782 533476

Thursday 10th May: Car Trip to Adlington Hall, Macclesfield, SK10 4LF

Adlington Hall dates back to the early 13th century and has been continuously lived in by the Legh family since 1315. It has been altered and added to over the years, the Great Hall now being the oldest part which was built between 1450 and 1505. This room contains the great organ, England’s most important 17th century musical instrument and played by Handel when he stayed at the Hall. The main part of the Hall was built in the Georgian period.

On arrival at 10.30am we will be served tea or coffee and biscuits (included) before being taken on a guided tour of the Hall. After the tour we will be free to wander in the gardens which are some of the finest examples of a Rococo garden in the UK. Amongst its features are a moat garden, a maze of English yew and a wildlife garden. The bluebells should be out in the Wilderness which is approached by a lime walk and features a Temple to Diana and a Shell Cottage.

Cost is £13 (£14 for non-members) which includes tea/coffee and biscuits, a guided tour of the Hall and entrance to the gardens. Directions will be sent with your acknowledgement.

Please apply to Jane Mayer, 16, Shaldon Avenue, Stockton Brook, Stoke on Trent, ST9 9PU enclosing cheque and SAE. Telephone 01782 533476

17th – 21st May 2018: London Holiday

David and Cynthia will once again be running a holiday to London, but as of the date of publication of this Newsletter this is now fully booked.

Should you wish to know further details or enquire after the unlikely event of a cancellation contact David or Cynthia, 01782 641765, dumbeltoncynthia@gmail.com

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Once again we thank Jane and the various event organisers for such a varied and attractive range of activities. We welcome more ideas for a future trip or event – some location that impressed you that you think other members might appreciate, or some NT milestone that should be marked – please pass on your ideas. If you are able to actually organise the visit as well, even better still – there are others experienced in arranging activities who are always willing to help and advise if required.

Contact: Jane Mayer, janemayeruk@yahoo.co.uk, 01782 533476, or jot your ideas down and post to 16 Shaldon Avenue, Stockton Brook, Stoke-on-Trent ST9 9PU, or to any member of the committee.

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New Members

In past Newsletters we have listed new members to the North Staffs NT Association, however for technical reasons over the last couple of years this has been omitted. We therefore have pleasure in announcing and welcoming those who joined since this was last done, in order of joining. This takes our membership to 374.

John and Hazel Spriggs	Michael Daniels	Helen Sugrue
Carol and Michael Rowley	Andrea and Peter Gaunt	Annette Woodcock
Glyn and Pat Farrington	Elizabeth Forster	Angela and John
Chris and Linda Spicer	Janice Sapsford	Hardwicke
Menai Roberts	Mary Bateman	Joy Williams
Kath Rhodes	Pam Wilshaw	William and Pauline
Judith Shaw	Kaye Fearn	Hodgkinson
Barbara Hall-Petite	Celia Renaudon	William Walshaw
Margaret Ward	Kay Ong	Michael and Maureen
Sandra Shephard	John and Vicky Skinner	Malyon
Munroe Blair	Kath Pollock	Barry Pollitt
Gwen Paget	Marie-Claire Billard	Mrs C J Edmondson
Mrs Margaret Jones	Phyllis and Peter Brammer	Ivan and Rosemary Smith
Mrs Kathleen Cooper	Cynthia Goodfellow	Gillian Small
Judy Carder	Chris and David Fowler	Rosamond Unwin
Irene Emms	Fiona Boulton	Margaret Rowlinson
Hilary Slade	Valerie Hiles	

Photographic Archives

A reminder that Kay Williams, our archivist, has been managing a collection of photographic prints and other material dating back to the start of the Association. She would be grateful for some photos/leaflets from visits when she is not there herself; prints or digital images are equally acceptable. Kay's email for sending photos is williakay@gmail.com (note the spelling!) and her address for posting is 3 The Spinney, Madeley Heath, Crewe, CW3 9TB. Telephone 01782 751018.

On the subject of photographs, we also welcome them for the Newsletter, particularly when the editor is not present at an event. Just a reminder that photographs taken on private or NT properties should not be used for commercial purposes, and should only be taken with permission of owners or trustees. Any photographs submitted will also be passed on to Kay for possible use in the archives, and may be used on the NSNTA website for record or publicity purposes. Copyright (which must be owned or obtained in writing by the submitter) is acknowledged for all images even if not stated in the magazine. Please contact the editor if more details of any item are required.

Reviews of Recent Events

Tuesday 18th July 2017: Coach Outing: Barber Institute and Winterbourne House, Birmingham.

Many thanks to Ann Anderton for the idea and research, and to Rose for so ably taking on the organisation on the day – and what a day it was! The fantastic weather certainly helped our enjoyment of the beautiful gardens at Winterbourne House. But to start at the beginning – we left Newcastle at the relaxing time of 9.00 and made exceptionally good time to Birmingham where we were booked into The Barber Institute of Fine Arts for refreshments – lovely cakes! – and a tour around the impressive collection of works of art displayed tastefully in the elegant 1930s Art Deco building. Our guide was so exceptionally enthusiastic that it was a real pleasure to listen to her describe the details of some of the major works on display. Not surprising that the gallery has been described as “one of the finest small picture galleries in the country”.



With Ian’s usual skill we were transported the short distance to Winterbourne House where we enjoyed a splendid buffet. The itinerary allowed plenty of time to visit the pleasant Edwardian home, built by the Nettlefold family in 1903, and to wander amongst the extensive gardens. We were able to relax in the sunshine on the terrace – enjoying a cream tea? – and reflecting on a lovely day with

friends before heading home.

Both venues are now part of the University of Birmingham and function successfully as centres for study and research for many University departments.

Marion Lycett



Tuesday 8th August: Car Trip: Wollerton Old Hall Gardens

What a “Hidden Gem” this garden is! All thanks to Sue Till for a great “find”.

It’s located a couple of miles south of Tern Hill not far from Hodnet Hall and Hawkestone Park. It’s only a few hundred yards along a lane off the main A53 road. It’s discreetly signposted but otherwise well hidden from view.



Both garden and hall, which dates from the 16th century, are privately owned but the garden, of about four acres, is open to the public on certain days and between certain times. It has a tearoom, toilets and a nursery where you can buy plants. About thirty of us gathered for the visit and, despite a gloomy weather forecast, we

were not disappointed. For us, the forecast was wrong – it didn’t rain and the sun even shone at times.

We were met at 10:30 by Phil, the head gardener, who gave us a short introductory talk about the hall’s history and then took us on a conducted tour of the garden which lasted for a couple of hours. Phil was a very



knowledgeable, personable and engaging guide who answered all our questions readily. The overall design of the garden was created by the owners who brought their artistic experience to bear in creating vistas and perspectives – and with good effect. The result is a delightful series of “separate” gardens each with its own style incorporating the formality of past centuries with elements of the “Arts and Crafts” movement. Many of the plants are changed according to season so that a visit is enjoyable throughout much of the year.

We had an excellent lunch at 12:30 in the tearoom then visited the plant nursery before departing for home

after a most delightful visit. If you like formal gardens you'll love this one. Don't wait for another NT visit – just check opening times and go!

You can find all the information you need, with photos, on their website at <http://www.wollertonoldhallgarden.com>. Phone 01630 685760. Satnav TF9 3NA.

Bruce Beard.

Wednesday 23rd August: Coach Outing: Welbeck Abbey and Creswell Craggs, Notts.

The day was organised by Ralph White like a military operation, taking account of the thirty-nine visitors, the two sites to see, and to fulfil the strict criteria of the Abbey security staff (only 14 people at any one time.) After an early start our coach arrived in the Dukeries, Nottinghamshire, where the two sites are situated. The tours took place at 2 hourly intervals and after visiting the Abbey the members were transported to the Craggs.

We began our visit at the Harley Gallery, built in the ruins of the 5th Duke of Portland's Victorian gasworks situated about a mile from the Abbey and a couple of miles from the Craggs. The gallery houses part of the fine and decorative arts collected by the Dukes of Portland who have been at Welbeck since 1607.

To amuse and refresh us while not on a tour was a farm shop, garden centre and cafeterias.

We were not permitted to take pictures in either the extensive grounds or the house. The tour took place in the grand state rooms of the Abbey and lasted an hour and a half. All were richly decorated and beautifully maintained. The soaring plasterwork ceiling in the Gothic Hall was breath-taking. The Red Tapestry room displayed works that must have taken years to complete, and the state Dining room was huge and the food transported there by a tram from the kitchens to keep the food hot. The soft furnishing and the pictures added to the opulence of the place. Mention was made of the 5th Duke who was famous for building extensive underground rooms and tunnels which can be accessed from within the Abbey and outside.

Creswell Craggs is a prehistoric gorge featuring Ice Age rock art in the form of etchings – scratches in the cave walls. The guide was knowledgeable and to assist us seeing the images, provided a torch and paper illustrations of what we could see. Some members were impressed and others, myself included, found the scratches rather stretching for the imagination.

Well done Ralph who had been trying to arrange this visit for over two years.

Anne Plant

Continued on page 13

Booking / Enquiry Forms

Wednesday 21st February: Car Trip: Attingham Park

Cost: £5 (£6 for non-members plus £11.50 admission charge for those who are also not members of the National Trust) to include entry to the House and Park, private guided tour and donation to the National Trust.

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Wednesday 21st February: Car Trip: Attingham Park

Name(s)	Association number	Cost: £
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Address	Total
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Telephone No. email

Number staying for lunch:



Thursday 8th March: Car Outing to the Spode Visitor Centre

Name(s)	Association number	Cost: £
.....
.....

Address	Total
.....
.....

Telephone No. email



Saturday 24 March: Walk around Scholar Green and environs

Suggested donation for the walk is £3.00 for members, £3.50 for guests, payable on the day.

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Saturday 24 March: Walk around Scholar Green and environs

Name(s)	Association number	Cost: £
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Address	Total
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Thursday 19th April: Coach Outing to Liverpool

Name(s)	Association number	Cost: £
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Address	Total
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Thursday 10th May: Car Trip: Adlington Hall, Cheshire

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Please apply to Jane Mayer, 16, Shaldon Avenue, Stockton Brook, Stoke on Trent, ST9 9PU enclosing cheque and SAE. Telephone 01782 533476

North Staffordshire National Trust Association: Membership Application

We are always delighted to welcome new members. **Note:** you must first be a member of the National Trust or a National Trust Volunteer.

Annual subscription, for the first member £10.00. For each additional member at the same address £7.00.

Please complete the form overleaf or download one from www.northstaffsnt.org.uk and send, with your cheque, payable to "North Staffs NT Association", to the Membership Secretary: Richard Adams, Gables End, Holly Bank, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 8FT, Email: rjadams@doctors.org.uk Tel: 01782 646054. Thank you very much.

Thursday 10th May: Car Trip: Adlington Hall, Cheshire

Name(s) Association number Cost: £

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Address Total

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Telephone No. email



North Staffordshire National Trust Association: Membership Application

I/We wish to apply for membership of the North Staffordshire National Trust Association.
I/We are NT members or volunteers.

Name(s) Association number Cost:

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Address Total

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Telephone No. email



Sunday 10th – Thursday 14th September: Holiday in Bristol - Shipshape and Bristol Fashion.

10th September 2017 – Berrington Hall and the Royal Mint

Our 5 day mini-holiday to Bristol started with a splendid day, despite the weather's attempts to dampen our spirits. Our first stop was at Berrington Hall, near Leominster, and what a treasure this turned out to be; a perfectly preserved Georgian gentleman's residence, modest in size but very elegant. We had time to explore Capability's Brown's gardens, which are being restored to how they were originally, and then to see round the house with a mini lecture from a great guide. For me, there were two highlights; firstly the stunning exhibition in the dining room, called 'War and Pieces'. This consisted of a perfectly set dining table but down the centre were some military figures, brilliant white and coated in sugar (a sign of wealth in that period), surrounded by a huge amount of shattered white pottery. The general opinion seemed to be that it represented the shattering of many lives involved in the slavery of the sugar trade. Very thought provoking and visually striking.



The second highlight lay upstairs where there was an exhibition of needlework by a group of people with a various disabilities. The standard of work was amazing and I found this inspiring.

Leaving at 3pm we travelled onwards through the beautiful (and wet!) Severn Valley. We arrived at our next destination, The Royal Mint in Pontypridd, to be met by our



excellent guide, who took us through the methods involved in producing those coins in our pocket or purse. Security was obviously very tight and the rolled barbed wire surrounding it lent a slightly sinister feel to the place. The Mint is active 24/7 and also produces coins for many other countries all over the world. The risk of corruption in some countries means that they receive their currency in unmarked black oil drums!

This visit was absolutely fascinating and we all left examining our own coins for those rare ones and wishing there were free samples!

We reached the Mercure Holland House in the centre of Bristol, around 6.30. The buffet supper gave us chance to get together and compare impressions of our busy first day before retiring to our comfortable beds.

Katie Forrest-Hay

11th September 2017 - Bristol Cathedral and Harbour Cruise

On a sunny morning we travelled to Bristol Cathedral. Our guide was a fellow North Staffordshire man. He's lived in Bristol for many years and certainly knew and loved the cathedral built in the Gothic Revival style. The nave choir and aisles are all the same height giving the cathedral a huge sense of space. The original stained glass windows in the south choir were destroyed during the Second World War and the replacements are a wonderful tribute to the armed services.

We then took a short walk to our group's boat for a harbour and river cruise. We sailed through a lock onto the river Avon, it was like a little bit of heaven in a bustling city. On board we also enjoyed a delicious buffet lunch.

Suzanne Simpson

11th September 2017 - Isambard Kingdom Brunel's SS Great Britain



The impression formed when visiting the SS Great Britain was of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's creative genius. He established his engineering expertise in railway, tunnel, and bridge design and participated in the engineering design team who built the SS Great Western in 1838. Brunel's engineering reputation assured his appointment to control the team commissioned to design and build the SS Great Britain.

The client's design brief called for a wooden ocean-going paddlewheel liner with secondary sails for fuel economy. Seeking the latest marine developments Brunel researched iron hulled technology and propulsion by stern propeller. Evolving iron hull principles provided vessels with larger cargo and passenger space than



wooden ships. When paddlewheel vessels rolled the paddles alternately flailed clear of water becoming ineffectual. The result was loss of forward movement and a zigzag course. A stern propeller remains efficient being fully submerged, without affecting the vessel's course.

A further unique feature, shown above, was designed by Brunel to raise the six bladed propeller into the hull. This eliminated any drag when the vessel was under sail.

These contours of the beautifully streamlined red hull would have been below the waterline.

Munroe Blair

12th September 2017 - Tyntesfield

How can one confine the joys of a visit to Tyntesfield to 250 words?!

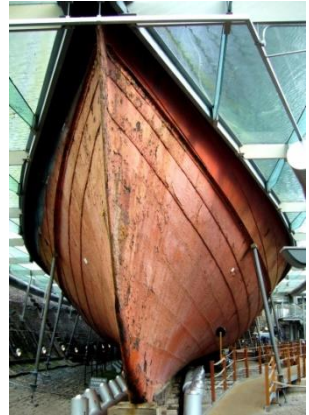
Imagine a fairly typical, solid Country Mansion, set in rolling countryside, with carefully mown grass and colourful flower beds set around the house. Wider vistas of woodland and copses, as well as mighty, single trees, catch the eye.

Four generations of the GIBBS family lived here, and the National Trust has made the wise decision to focus each year on just one generation.

2017 sees the family of ANTONY GIBBS (1841-1907) taking the limelight. Antony, we are told, was "an ordinary man with an extraordinary fortune. A man of vast riches but simple pleasures." This was borne out by all we saw in his family home. I was struck by almost every room holding a selection of books, while the Library, with its thousands of leather-bound volumes, was impressive.

Antony was a talented painter, while his skills in fashioning objects of beauty were revealed in two exquisite ivory candle-holders, prominently displayed. Whether he or his male relatives were responsible for the demise of the 14 antlered deer whose noble heads "decorated" the walls of the Billiard Room was not clear.

Who would have thought that trading in Peruvian guano could make a family such a fortune! The beauty of curtains and upholstery, the exquisite tables, chests and chairs, as well as the superb ornamentation of walls and ceilings, confirm their business success.



Visitors exit via the Chapel. This superb building with its fine stained glass and pristine interior is, sadly, rarely used. The real reason lying behind: "It was never consecrated" remains obscure, but one thing is certain: the National Trust has another gem waiting for you to explore at Tyntesfield, situated in easy reach of Bristol.

Enid Nussbaum.

13th September 2017 – Bishop's Palace, Wells

Our driver took the scenic route, in torrential rain, to Wells. The previous evening's "foodie" experience at Za Za Bazaar (Neon Lights and Chocolate Fountains) was a hot Topic.



On arrival at the palace the Town Crier warmly welcomed us in rhyme. We then took coffee in the 13th century vaulted undercroft.

The palace, home of the bishops of Bath and Wells, was built 800 years ago on a swamp and surrounded by a Moat. We viewed portraits of bishops in the Long Gallery and magnificent ceremonial capes of damask and silk embroidery.

The modern maple altar and presidential chair in the chapel were of superb craftsmanship.



Pristine gardens were a riot of colour, each dahlia was named after a bishop. We walked over a Bridge to St. Andrew's well fed by rainwater from the Mendips.

Linda Berrington.



13th September 2017 – Wells Cathedral

The present cathedral dates from the 12th century. When one arrives at the West Front, it is the array of carvings which is so impressive – scenes from the Old and New Testaments, knights and ladies, kings and queens, bishops and saints.

Internally, the most striking features are the “scissor” arches in the nave erected in the 14th century to brace the tower which was beginning to crack, and the Quire screen.

The 1392 24 hour clock is the second oldest clock of its type in Europe. It is a marvel of medieval craftsmanship. At each quarter, four horsemen ride round a tower above the clock, two appearing from



each side. Above the clock on the right is a figure, Jack Blandifer, who strikes the bells to mark the hours and the quarters with his heels and hits a bell in front of him with a hammer, on the hour.



The Quire has the most beautiful range of embroideries on kneelers and seats that I have ever seen, all worked by a guild of needle-workers in the twentieth century. The carvings on the misericords are among the finest in the country.

The east window, (“golden” because of its glowing colours), is of beautiful 14th century glass, probably saved from destruction by 17th century Parliamentary troops because of its inaccessibility.

So much more could be said about this wonderful cathedral which more than 300,000 people visit each year.

Sue Corlett

14th September 2017 – Slimbridge Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust

Scott of the Antarctic told his wife to make sure "the boy" loved nature. "The boy" was Peter Scott, founder of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, the earliest of whose centres we visited on the way home from Bristol. How brilliantly Peter filled his father's wishes!! He realised the importance of conservation of nature, besides that of man-made wonders.



On arrival we went our separate ways, and no-one could have missed the flamingos!! Some of us had a brisk walk around the reserve while the rain held off, looking at the collection of birds, mainly endangered species which are encouraged to breed to restore shrinking numbers in their homelands. After all, the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust raison d'etre is about sharing its knowledge of conservation, which it does worldwide. Others stayed indoors to enjoy the displays of history, environmental education, paintings and the gift shop. And almost everyone found some lunch at the new Kingfisher Kitchen - perhaps not quite as good as National Trust cafes, though maybe we are biased!!

A trip to the top of the tower showed the whole reserve. We usually come later in the year when the Bewick's swans and various geese bring their new families for a winter respite from the cold of the Arctic regions, so it was interesting to see trees still in full leaf, lakes dotted with ducks and open fields and marshland stretching away to the Severn.

A truly enjoyable visit to end the Bristol holiday!!

Christine Francis and Jenny Wright

Tuesday 26th September: Talk: "The Potteries' Parks." Mervyn Edwards.

Mervyn Edwards is a local author, broadcaster and Sentinel columnist and delivered an interesting and well-illustrated talk on the history of Parks in the Potteries.

Before 1888, the only way to escape the grime of the Potteries was to seek out such green spaces as Wolstanton Marsh, Mow Cop, the Finney Gardens Market at Bucknall, open spaces at Trentham or even to just walk across farmland. The first Municipal Park to be created, largely thanks to the Duke of Sutherland and John Aynsley the Potter, was Longton in 1888, comprising the large green area we have today with later additions including the lake, a bandstand, the Pavilion and an aviary as well as recreational and sporting facilities. The large Annual Fete at Longton was always well attended.

Burslem Park, constructed in 1894 on poor former colliery land, featured a bandstand and aviary as well as the usual recreational and sports facilities. Subsidence proved a problem: in 1921 the lake disappeared down an old mine shaft! Recently restored to its former glory it is once again well used by young and old alike.

In the year 1894 Hanley Park was opened on two sites straddling what is now College Road. The designer Mawson had both the road and the Caldon Canal to incorporate although he tried to 'hide' the then murky canal. In 1934 a six-lap motor cycle race around the grounds attracted a huge crowd. In addition to the usual recreational facilities there was an impressive large Pavilion, an ornate Bandstand and a boating lake complete with boathouse. Hanley Park hosted huge events including a five-day Historical Pageant. In May 1930 25,000 people attended the Wedgwood Bicentenary Celebrations. A very popular annual event was the Parade of Heavy Horses.

Tunstall Park was next in 1908 and was actually an early land reclamation project. Its landmarks included the huge Boulder at the entrance, the Clock Tower funded by the Adams family and the lake and children's paddling pool. The impressive Floral Hall, a most popular event venue, had been badly vandalised in more recent years but has now been restored to its former glory being re-opened in 2008. The traditional annual August Carnival is also still a very popular event.

The last large Municipal Park to open was Fenton in 1934 and is the third largest at 35 acres. However, demand grew for smaller local neighbourhood Parks with recreational and sporting facilities and these include Northwood, Cobridge, Middleport and Etruria Parks.

The one I will mention last is my boyhood Park at Bucknall created on land comprising the aforementioned Finney Gardens and the site of the former Bucknall Sewerage Works. It included a good range of recreational facilities together with mini train rides and a pets corner. The opening ceremony was performed in front of huge crowds by the Lord Mayor in 1956 – I can vouch for that as I was there!

Roger Cartlidge

Thursday 28th September: Coach Outing: Charlecote Park & Stoneleigh Abbey



I went to Charlecote when I was ten years old, only recalling the deer in the park, so I was really looking forward to our trip. Although the rain clouds hung heavily, the sun came out which made for a very enjoyable day. We arrived and made our way down the avenue of trees to the gatehouse, a lovely old building which, when looking through the

arch, framed the house to perfection. Our guide gave us a very informative introductory talk. The Lucys had owned



the house for 800 years, gradually improving and modernising over the centuries by advantageous marriages to wealthy heiresses. From the roof of the Gatehouse we viewed the land-



scaping done by Capability Brown who had worked his magic on the park and gardens. We were thrilled to see the deer, and stags who had grown enormous antlers ready for the rut.



On entering the house we were met by the many Lucys gazing down on us from the walls, all in costumes worn over the centuries. The house itself had a lovely feel to it, homely rather than imposing. The stained glass was interesting as the oldest glass was much more muted than the later bright, and almost garish ones.

The wallpaper, too, was very pleasing, heavily patterned and dark adding to the ambiance of the place. The guides were very helpful and together with the information boards in each room, we could wander around at our own pace. This lovely red brick Elizabethan house was a delight to visit and this was reflected by the comments of our fellow trippers.



We then reboarded the coach for the trip to Stoneleigh Abbey. Our first sight was of the Gatehouse which was part of the original Cistercian Abbey, and was the oldest inhabited one in the country.



The mansion itself was seen from the side, a great stone building with too many windows to count, benefiting from the abolition of the old window tax. There was no resemblance to an Abbey remaining. Over the years this had been turned into a huge imposing pile which had been partly converted into private dwellings. We were split into two groups to ease the congestion inside, and we were lucky enough to have Paul who was funny and informative which made the visit enjoyable. We entered below stairs into the tea room, not a grand entrance. However we were delighted, on going upstairs, to see the very large, light filled rooms, but what most amazed was the cream carpets throughout. However did they keep it clean, we

asked. The family crest contained the Unicorn, and one room had over 40, hidden in the ceiling mouldings and light fittings. It was hard to believe that the house had been devastated by fire in 1960. After completing the tour, and a well-earned cup of tea and cake we wandered outside to lean over the balustrade and watch the Avon flow serenely by, and in due course headed back to the bus and home.



Many thanks to Richard and Jane for organising this trip for us which, with the lovely weather, made for the most wonderful National Trust outing.

Julia and Huw Davies

Wednesday 18th October: Coach Outing: Bolsover Castle and Hardwick Hall

Bolsover Castle

As one drives up the M1 nothing catches the eye quite like Bolsover Castle, perched high above the Vale of Scarsdale -- this medieval fortress dominates the landscape for miles around.

The building within the outer walls is in ruins, but you can still imagine the magnificent building it must have been originally. The inner castle is very much intact with fabulous panelling, wall and ceiling paintings. We spent some considerable time in the beautifully restored Riding House, reading up on the illustrated history of the castle. The adjacent building now houses an indoor riding hall where equestrian events take place during the summer months.

Built in the 17th Century by the Cavendish Family, the castle was used by Bess of Hardwick's son, William Cavendish for entertainment and cultural pursuits. He was once reputed to have spent his entire annual income of £14K on a lavish feast and entertainment for Charles I and his royal entourage.

Over the centuries the castle fell into a state of disrepair and became uninhabited, until in 1833 it was rescued from the threat of demolition by a local vicar. Its future was finally assured when it was given to the state in 1945 and is now in the hands of English Heritage.

The castle now has the dubious reputation of being the spookiest English Heritage site. Visitors have reported seeing various apparitions including a small boy who tries to take the hands of female visitors, bright lights and phantom footsteps. Fortunately, we all escaped onto our next destination of Hardwick Hall without being accosted by the castle's other-worldly inhabitants.

Ann Winter

Hardwick Hall

At first sight Hardwick Hall is a magnificent mansion and beside it is the first Hardwick Hall, now a ruin where Bess of Hardwick was born and raised. After a series of rows, her fourth husband, the Earl of Shrewsbury, turned her out of their home at Chatsworth, and she decided to return to the old Hardwick Hall and build the new one beside it.

The later one, built of sandstone in the 1590's, has six turrets with Bess's initials ES (Elizabeth of Shrewsbury) emblazoned on the top of each one. Inside, the Great Hall has many beautiful pieces of furniture and deer heads and antlers on the walls. Upstairs are the State Rooms. I had never seen so many tapestries, particularly in the Long Gallery, hanging from ceiling to floor, now with Velcro! Many came from Belgium and one was returned there recently for cleaning at a cost of £100,000!



In the Long Gallery, besides the tapestries, embroideries and paintings, there is a beautiful canopy made in the 17th century. In all the bedrooms are more tapestries and wonderful hangings round the beds. Besides Bess buying many of the original furnishings, quite a lot were brought later from Chatsworth.

The gardens and estate are well worth seeing. There are four walled courtyards full of shrubs and herbaceous plants, as well as ancient woodlands and wildlife habitats in the parkland area.

Hardwick Hall passed down through the generations to Bess's descendants and then to the National Trust in 1959, which then had the enormous task of conserving the precious contents of this magnificent site.

Thank you Bob, for organizing such an interesting visit for us.

Sue Corlett

Tuesday 24th October: Talk: "A Laugh on the Ocean Wave"- Brian Price.

Brian commenced his entertaining talk by outlining his move from banking to a career spanning 44 years on cruise liners. His first interview for the position of Assistant Purser culminated with a question about his ballroom dancing ability which apparently was a prerequisite to a successful application. Having assured them of his non-existent prowess, he then practised dancing two hours a day with his mother during the eight weeks prior to his appointment.

The need for such dancing ability soon became apparent when he was required to partner SMLs (Single Mature Ladies) on the dance floor each evening. However he and a fellow officer were so outnumbered that it became necessary to employ an additional twelve crew members specifically to fulfil this demanding role. Brian progressed to the position of Cruise Director and recounted a number of humorous incidents involving wealthy ladies and these professional dancing partners.

He also related that on one occasion a liner was delayed from the scheduled sailing time for four hours due to two important guests being delayed and only set sail upon the arrival of Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. On another occasion Frankie Howard was a passenger and he insisted on giving a free performance on the last night. Brian also organised charity events with the first expected to raise £10k but reached £35k. His last event many years later achieved a massive £250k.

Peter Jones

Sunday 29th October: Walk: Nantwich countryside with NO stiles

A fine autumnal morning was duly arranged, and 26 of us met up on Welsh Row in Nantwich for a spot of healthy fresh air and exercise. We started off through riverside parkland, very popular with local walkers and their dogs, along with many ducks, moorhen, coots, and other waterfowl I couldn't name for you. Leaving the town behind, we strode out across the fields and lanes, over the railway and canal to Acton.



Sadly, the village pub here was under renovation, or we might have popped in for a quick one halfway round the walk. On to the canal again for our photo stop overlooking the site of the 1644 Battle of Nantwich, then we followed the canal towpath back towards town. The last section of the walk was along Welsh Row, a fascinating street of half-timbered houses, the old police station, alms-houses and more.

We all enjoyed a substantial Sunday lunch at the Black Lion in a private upstairs room before heading home for a lazy end to the day – except perhaps for two of us who were on their way to a children’s Hallowe’en party!

Nicky Adams

Thursday 9th November: Car Trip: Macclesfield Silk Museum & Paradise Mill

On arrival we were welcomed with a cup of coffee and biscuits plus a complementary mince pie; most welcome on a rather cold November morning.



We started off with a visit to the top floor of Paradise Mill and, after a brief introductory talk on the origins and beauty of silk, we split into two groups of 10. Our group was led by Daniel who was just into his third week as guide. He was excellent, knowledgeable, good-humoured and really brought to life how the silk industry started in Macclesfield with demonstrations of how the machinery worked and the working conditions of the time.

The top floor of this mill is a real time warp and has been laid in such a way as to illustrate how hard our forebears had to work for their living. Paradise it was not!

After this we had plenty of time to explore the ground floor Silk Museum with its fascinating display of intricate machinery, incredible designs, innovative methods including Jacquard which is a forerunner to the punched card system.



A great morning, thoroughly recommended. Many thanks Peter for organising this trip.

Mike & Maureen Malyon

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Summary of Winter/Spring Programme January to May 2018	
January	
Tuesday 23 rd	Talk: Flavia Swann: A Staffordshire Find
February	
Tuesday 20 th	Talk: Derek Poulson on Dialects
Wednesday 21 st	Car Trip: Attingham Park
March	
Thursday 8 th	Car Trip: Spode Visitor Centre
Tuesday 20 th	Talk: Charles Hanson, Auctioneer
Saturday 24 th	Walk: Scholar Green and lunch at Bleeding Wolf
April	
Tuesday 17 th	Talk: Martin Gee Head Gardener at Weston Park
Thursday 19 th	Coach Trip: Liverpool: War Museum, Adelphi lunch & Speke Hall
May	
Thursday 10 th	Car Trip: Adlington Hall, Cheshire
Th. 17 th – Mo. 21 st	London Holiday – fully booked
Dates for your Diary 2018	
Tu. May 22 nd	AGM & Talk: Andy Beer, Director for the NT in the Midlands
Tu. June 19 th	Coach Trip: Mr Pickford's House, Derby & Kedleston Hall
Th. July 12 th	Coach Trip: Chester
Th. August 9 th	Coach Trip: Blenheim Palace
Tu. September 18 th	Talk: Louise Adams - A Century of Creative Ceramics

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If required additional copies of booking forms can be printed
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