

# North Staffordshire Association of National Trust Members

## Newsletter 73

and

December 2005 to March 2006

## Programme



The start of another trip.  
This time off to Ironbridge

# ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRIPS AND MEETINGS

**Coaches** depart promptly from SCHOOL STREET, Newcastle, behind the Swimming Baths. Nearby long-stay parking. Should a member cancel their booking it is regretted that reimbursement is only possible if there is a waiting list. There will be a £2 per cheque handling charge. Members are requested not to find their own replacement. Non-members taking part in coach outings pay an additional £1. The committee has agreed that with rising numbers it is only fair that members should have priority when booking trips and holidays.

Members are asked to note that it is not possible for the coach to stop at places other than School Street to pick people up or drop them off on the outward or return journeys. The coach will not wait for members who are late, either at School Street or at other pick up points. Members are advised to take careful note of when or where they will be picked up. Anyone missing a coach will have no claim on the Association.

**Cheques** to be made payable to the “**N. Staffs. Association of NT Members**”. Due to current banking procedure, please note that cheques are not cleared until after an event. Members are asked to write a separate cheque for each event they book.

**Note:** The committee does not consider it proper that an event should incur a loss and therefore reserves the right to cancel should there be insufficient support.

## PLEASE NOTE

1. Starting in January, we shall ask members and any visitors to SIGN IN when attending talks at the Medical Institute. This will be a very simple procedure but it is required by Fire Regulations.
2. From 2006 The Medical Institute will be renamed North Staffs Conference. We will continue to call it the Medical Institute for clarity until the new name is generally known.
3. The talk on Wednesday, March 14th begins at 7.30 p.m. The speaker has a long way to travel and has requested the earlier starting time.
4. Georgina Pritchard's address is now 3, The Thistles, Newcastle ST5 2HL, for any archive items.

# North Staffordshire Association of National Trust Members

**NEWSLETTER No. 73**

**DECEMBER 2005**

**and DECEMBER 2005 to MARCH 2006 PROGRAMME**

## **A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR:**

By the time you read this we shall be busy filling our new diaries with dates for 2006 and I hope you will have some spaces on your calendars for our Spring Programme of visits and talks; please also include the advance dates we have given for the summer outings.

In the autumn I attended a Regional Conference at Styal where many Associations from the North West were represented. Fiona Reynolds, NT Director General, stated that membership continues to rise and now stands at well over 3 1/2 million but she also spoke frankly of the NT's current financial situation with a large backlog of urgent repairs and restoration work needed. Referring to Heelis, the new H.Q. building at Swindon, she explained that the building costs had not been borne by the Trust, that it is environmentally friendly, and that the carpets are woven from wool from the Trust's Herdwick sheep!

From a lengthy discussion on donations, it emerged that almost all Associations like to do as we do: support projects in our own locality, except for emergency appeals; provide most or all of the funding required for a project (and therefore are reluctant to offer money towards a request for many thousands); and we like to have the freedom to donate when there is an urgent appeal for such as the purchase of the Snowdonia land or give smaller amounts when we have enjoyed a visit to an NT property. This means that some of our funds need to be available throughout the year so that decisions about donations can be made as and when requests or suggestions arise.

The committee members look forward to seeing many of you at forthcoming events.

A Happy New Year to you all!

Anne Anderton

## **NORTH STAFFS ASSOCIATION WEB-SITE**

Members with access to the internet might like to know that our Association has its own website.

To visit it, log on to [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk) and follow the links "Get Involved with the National Trust", "Supporter Groups", "More About Member Centres and Associations", and "Find an Association in Your Area", when a search on counties will produce the link to our site. We're sorry this route is so complicated, but it is National Trust policy that all Association sites should be accessed in the same way.

At the moment the site just contains details of membership, a membership application form which can be downloaded, and our current programme. If you have any comments or ideas on how we can make more use of the site, please tell any member of the committee.

## **TALKS**

### **Smaller English Country Houses and Gardens**

**by David Brown Monday October 17<sup>th</sup> 8.00pm. at Medical Institute, Hartshill.**

"Stunning", "cracking", "charming" were only three of the many enthusiastic adjectives used by David Brown to describe the house interiors we were privileged to view whilst watching his collection of slides.

Time and time again, simple exteriors hid glorious interiors. Wealth coupled with good taste produced elegant staircases, delicate moulded ceilings, classic furnishings, colourful, comfortable - looking armchairs and settees together with a sleeping dog, a half read newspaper and a switched on TV. Attractive mirrors and eclectic paintings hung on walls out of choice, not because of being simply family heirlooms.

Owners may at times have had to resort to opening their doors to corporate functions and civil weddings in order to pay for the upkeep of the property, but these small country houses were obviously much-loved homes.

David's expert knowledge together with abounding enthusiasm accompanied by personal anecdotes, gave members an evening of great pleasure.

Pat Bentley

## **From Ship to Shore - the Sea in Our Lives to celebrate 'Sea Britain' Wednesday, November 9<sup>th</sup> 8.00pm at Medical Institute, Hartshill**

The sea completely surrounds us here in the British Isles, giving us a wonderfully varied coastline to be guarded from enemies, cherished and cared for. Anne Anderton gave us an excellent talk illustrated by slides, covering all aspects of the way in which the sea has influenced and shaped our culture over the years. We heard about the building of ships, the development of trade, the construction of canals and the development of navigation methods. We saw pictures of lighthouses and defensive installations such as castles and bunkers. We enjoyed hearing the exploits of famous navigators, seamen and explorers. Portraits of many of them are to be found in our National Trust properties, along with other artefacts.

In our time, the National Trust has a major task ensuring that our coastline is cared for properly, and Enterprise Neptune is of great importance in this respect, raising much needed funds to carry out this work. We heard how erosion caused many problems, and in some places the opposite is happening, the sea has receded creating new tracts of land for wildlife to colonise, and a war to be waged against unwanted invaders such as bracken and gorse! A Raffle was held at the meeting raising £61 for Enterprise Neptune. The first prize was a bottle of rum, and the second prize pictures of Nelson — very appropriate!

Colin Brassington

## **TRIPS**

### **Monday 28th July - Longner Hall & Attingham - Car Outing**

Although the entrances are almost opposite each other in Atcham, Longner Hall is about as far from its entrance as Clayton is from the centre of Newcastle. Its imposing, castle-like, red stone exterior is an early C19 addition by John Nash to a family house going back over 700 years. We were met by Mrs Jill Burton, wife of the owner, whose family had connections with the House of Lords and a number of items of furniture had this provenance. She showed us around the house and the outbuilding round the back where the original brickwork remained exposed. In addition to the interesting octagonal combined game store and ice-house we learned that another building, not looking quite right for an orangery or summer house, had in fact been built as a laboratory for a Burton ancestor with scientific interests. The interiors of the Hall were rather sombre in the gothic style with woodwork painted in wood-

grain. The two highlights of the interior were the fan-vaulted staircase with magnificent stained glass window, and the light and airy loggia running round two sides of the house. This had been recently restored after controversy with the conservation officer who wanted the stone flooring repaired with the "correct" stone rather than one that matched the remainder. Maintenance and restoration seems to be a very long term commitment. Mrs Burton clearly enjoys showing parties round but was less enthusiastic concerning the statutory twenty-eight public open days.

The visit to Attingham was optional following the all too familiar long delay in the tea-room. One's own sandwiches in the car park seem to be a more attractive option than the overcrowded, uncleared tables in noisy environments (owing to lack of acoustic treatment) so common these days in NT catering. Attingham Hall, however, is a magnificent property with willing and knowledgeable volunteers to explain the fabric and furnishings. It was built by the 1st Lord Berwick in 1785 to a design by George Steuart, but also incorporating an imposing picture gallery by John Nash. Many of the fine paintings and silverware were acquired during the "grand tour" and duty as ambassador in various countries. We finished with a pleasant walk along the banks of the river Tern. We thank Keith and Judith Walker for arranging a most enjoyable day, blessed by good weather.

Pat & Gillian Wilson

*Editors' note: Sorry to read about this tea-room. We have been in some excellent NT tea-rooms this summer. We can all perhaps help by filling in a comments slip when the service is either exceptionally good or bad. I am sure that the tea-rooms would welcome the feedback.*

## **Thursday, 11th August. Harlaxton**

At 11:30 sharp we were at Downtown's huge warehouses near Grantham, looking at acres of retail therapy; how to deal with all that choice? We plunged in amongst clothes, furniture, electrical goods, garden supplies and books and had a good rummage, followed by lunch.

If this was OTT, so in its different way, is Harlaxton, first glimpsed from the end of the mile long drive, from that viewpoint a symmetrical forest of stone pinnacles and mullions.

The excellent guides summarised the history of the original estate which was inherited by Gregory Gregory, so named because the conditions of inheritance

required the heir to take that surname; the line of descent was indirect because there had been few sons.

Mr. Gregory was a bachelor who spent some years planning the new house and collecting ideas and objects for it. Several architects were involved including Salvin who, it is thought, designed the central part of the house. This is on a grand scale and encompasses many architectural styles.

There is exuberant plaster work, particularly in the formal entertaining rooms. Trompe l'oeil features include the intriguing ropes and tassels on the landing; these were dipped in plaster and appear to be part of the solid decor, but still swing free as ropes. Putti, a favourite emblem with Mr Gregory, abound on ceilings and walls and at improbable angles over a fireplace. Salvin has included a number of concealed doors, and one fireplace feature, slide-out hinged metal panels which fold across the grate to provide the draught when lighting the fire.

After Mr Gregory's death the estate was acquired by the enterprising, expensively litigious and psychic Mrs Van der Est, and then via the Jesuits and Stanford University became the cherished British campus of Evansville University.

Georgina Pritchard

### **Wed. 24th August - Visit to Melbourne Hall and Church.**

We drove along the A50 in atrocious weather but the rain eased as we arrived in the charming village of Melbourne. A short walk brought us to the Parish Church of St. Michael with St. Mary - one of the finest Norman churches in Britain built around 1120, possibly for Henry I. In 1135 it was given by the King to the Bishop of Carlisle and has been in use ever since. We were given a most interesting talk by the Vicar, Dr. John Davies, who, amongst other things, pointed out the medieval wall painting and the gallery - most unusual in an Anglican church. Queen Victoria's first Prime Minister was Lord Melbourne who lived at Melbourne Hall and after whom Melbourne in Australia was named. The Australian flags presented by the City hang in the Church.

The Hall is situated just across the road from the Church and after a pleasant lunch in the Tea Room we were divided into two groups for a tour of the house. We were fortunate enough to be in Mrs. Gill Weston's group - she is the Curator and a most charming and informative lady. The Hall was built by the Coke family in the 17th Century, eventually passing through the distaff side into the Lamb family.

The present owner is Lord Ralph Kerr whose elder brother is Michael Ancram, now the Marquess of Lothian. The Hall is very much a family home - not very large as stately homes go - but with a warm and lived in atmosphere, even to the extent of a drum kit in the drawing room! We were very privileged to be shown some of the bedrooms - not usually seen by the public. Lady Kerr is an accomplished artist and several of her paintings are on the walls. After viewing the house we went into the garden which is the best surviving early 18th century English garden in the style of Le Nôtre. There is important lead statuary and the crowning feature is the wrought iron arbour known as the "Birdcage" which was made by Robert Bakewell in 1706 costing £120. Another important feature is the yew tunnel which was probably planted in the mid 17th Century.

We paused awhile in a little summer house beside a stream whose banks were planted with hydrangeas and other plants in various colours - a pleasant contrast to the formality of the garden as a whole. After this we were ready for a cup of tea in what used to be the Washhouse and Bake house with laundry upstairs which was part of Thomas Coke's plan for modernising in 1708!

Our grateful thanks to Mary Malcolm for organising such an interesting day out.

Heather Baxter.

### **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> September Visit to The Whitworth Gallery and The Victoria Baths Manchester.**

The Whitworth Gallery was built with money given to the City of Manchester by Sir Joseph Whitworth. He was a rich engineer who gave his name to the famous Whitworth Screw threads. The museum has now passed from the City to Manchester University. The curator gave us a few minutes introduction in which she enthused about the collections and then let us loose to look at our leisure.

There were a number of temporary collections. The Wages of Sin and Virtue's Reward had a range of Moral Prints from the age of Dürer and van Leydon. Aura and Authenticity explored the way that visitors' response to art works was affected by the interpretation and display methods. Works by William Blake, Matisse and Picasso were included along with a video exploring art and modern life taken from street scenes , shops etc..

One of the more striking collections was the Point of No Return a collection of coastal photographic scenes from various eastern Atlantic sites by photographer Thomas Joshua Cooper. These range from stunningly beautiful shots of rock, water and water movement to a couple of unusual shots one of which was nearly uniform black - 'Madeira by Night' and the other was uniform grey 'Sea Fog'.



The resident art works on display included some lovely water colours by such as Turner and some modern works that were not to my taste. Then again I am an engineer and I don't think Whitworth would have liked them either.

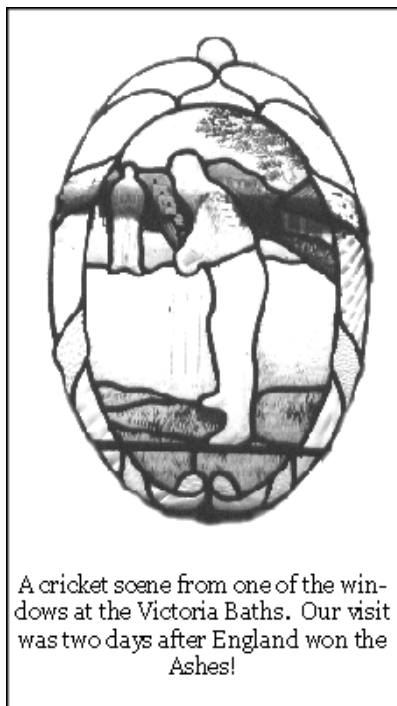
After lunch we moved to the nearby Victoria Baths now famous since they won first prize in the televised competition for lottery funds called 'Restoration' in 2003. Sadly most of the £3.5M has yet to be released and work is expected to

start in late 2006.

We entered through the imposing doorway headed 'Male 1<sup>st</sup> Class'. Inside is not in good repair but there is enough left



to get the feel of luxury from the surrounding tiles, banisters, mosaics etc. As our guide Di talked through the way it worked we were all taken by the unashamed hierarchy of the Edwardian era – the baths opened in 1906. Males 1<sup>st</sup> class had the ornate entrance, a large gala sized swimming pool, clean water twice a week, doors on changing cubicles; Males 2<sup>nd</sup> class had a much less ornate entrance, a smaller swimming pool, water changes re-using water filtered from the 1<sup>st</sup> class male pool and no door on the changing cubicles. Females had the smallest pool, the least decoration and their water changes were from the 2<sup>nd</sup> class male pool. Throughout the tour I heard people saying 'I remember swimming in a pool like that' and yet we all agreed that the scale of the Manchester baths is impressive. The best part of the Baths is the Turkish Baths where again the luxury is obvious and the state of repair is quite good. This is in the front part of the Baths that will ultimately be restored for use along with three of the Aerotones (a sort of Jacuzzi designed for therapy to the war wounded in WW1). Who knows, in a few years time we could visit again and take our swimming costumes. Many thanks to Penny Moore for organising the trip.



A cricket scene from one of the windows at the Victoria Baths. Our visit was two days after England won the Ashes!

John Beaumont

## Wednesday, 5th October. Jackfield Tile Museum and Coalport Pottery

On a glorious late summer day, we arrived on the banks of the Severn at the Jackfield Tile Museum at the eastern end of the Ironbridge Gorge. The buildings were formerly the Craven Dunhill Tile Works, the architect Charles Lynam, who in 1870 designed the then modern factory where the flow of production followed logically through the buildings, ending with dispatch of the products. The semi-derelict Craven Dunhill site was bought by the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust in 1983 and restoration and development is still proceeding. 4000 Craven Dunhill tiles from the 1870's were rescued from Palace Chambers, Westminster, to form the core of the display in the new museum in 1986. On the day we visited, in the former Trade Showroom there were displayed wonderful tiles from all over Europe, including Belgium, France and Germany. Many others were permanently displayed in panels on the walls. I particularly liked the sumptuously decorated Director's Washroom. There was also a large display of pottery and we were able to see the current tile production reintroduced on the site, as well as children making use of the educational facilities.



Some of the tiles on display

After a very good lunch, we drove the short distance to the Coalport China Museum, on the

site of the original works, where production ceased in 1926. The site is splendidly restored, with various workshops demonstrating glass-blowing, or showing individual potters at work, with shops selling the products still made on the site. A restored bottle kiln showed the stacked saggars and extensive exhibitions showed examples of the pottery made on the site by John Rose and his successors. I am always interested in the social history of places and the museum did this well too, giving some idea of the living and working conditions of the Coalport people – I was particularly struck by the descriptions of the stench from the burning bones and the belief that beer prevented lead poisoning, which was prevalent, as was pneumoconiosis. Near the site is the

remarkably well-preserved Hay Inclined Plane, rails still intact, where teams of men and horses used to haul goods up the 305m long track up 61m vertical rise from one canal navigation to another. All in all, a fascinating day of our industrial history, enhanced by lovely weather. Many thanks to Anne Anderton for organising the trip.

Kay Williams

## **SPRING PROGRAMME**

### **TALKS**

**Monday January 23rd Medical Institute, 8.00p.m.**

#### **Ron Scholes: Around Switzerland**

Why go to the expense of a 'Winter Wonderland' holiday when you can visit the wonderful mountain scenery of Switzerland from the warmth and comfort of the Medical Institute? You can enjoy the scenic pleasures as you travel by train or on foot through magnificent alpine areas in the company of Ron Scholes, a former teacher in Leek, who has travelled extensively in many countries and will illustrate his talk with some of the many photographs he has taken. This tour will include the cities of Zurich, Luzern and Bern and travels on the Glacier Express and the Jungfraubahn. This should be a spectacular treat for us all!

**Wednesday February 22nd Medical Institute, 8.00 p.m.**

#### **Mr. Stevenson: From Quarry to Quoins - the work of a stonemason.**

Mr. Stevenson, a local stonemason, will explain and illustrate all the processes involved in using stone in building construction and decoration. From exploding, excavating and cutting the stone in the quarry, through shaping and dressing the stone, to putting the finished pieces in place, he will enlighten us on the many aspects of his craft. He has worked on some well-known buildings in London and been heavily involved in the renovation of many of our well-loved NT buildings. He has spent his lifetime carving intricate memorials, many of which he will illustrate in what will be a most unusual and interesting lecture.

**Tuesday 14th March Medical Institute, 7.30 PM**

**Richard Tuffrey: The Heritage-led Regeneration of Buxton**

**PLEASE NOTE THE EARLIER TIME**

### **Joint Meeting with the Historic Buildings Trust**

Anyone visiting Buxton in recent years will have been saddened by the increasingly forlorn and dilapidated appearance of the once-gracious Crescent buildings. However, it has become clear that something is happening there - albeit slowly - and now we have a chance to see and hear what this programme of regeneration is all about. Richard Tuffrey, Conservation Business Manager of High Peak Borough Council, who is the Project Co-ordinator for the Buxton Regeneration Programme will explain and illustrate this ambitious scheme - a talk which will surely appeal to all of us who have an interest in architecture, history, aesthetics or conservation. We may follow this talk with a visit to the town and the project later in 2006.

## **VISITS**

### **Saturday February 25th 2006 NOTTINGHAM and HOLMEPIERREPONT HALL Coach Outing**

A day to enjoy town and country! We shall go by coach to the entrance to the Castle Museum and Galleries in Nottingham. Members may wish to visit the museum or go into the town (5 mins. walk). There is a restaurant at the museum and there are eating places nearby in the town for lunch. At 1.00pm PROMPT we shall leave for the short journey to Holmepierrepoint Hall where we shall have a private guided tour by the owners, Mr Brackenbury and his son. The building is noted for its architecture and after viewing the exterior we shall be shown the rare examples of English oak furniture and the interesting collection of family portraits. This is very much a family home, so some of the rooms are private, but after tea and biscuits we shall have time to visit the winter garden and see aconites, snowdrops, hellebores and perhaps early daffodils. Stout footwear and warm clothing are needed for the outside tour.

Please apply to Mrs. A. Anderton, 14 Berne Avenue, Newcastle Staffs. ST5 2QJ  
Tel: 01782 613024 enclosing SAE

Cost: £18.50 (Non-Members £19.50) Dep. Newcastle 9.30am Return approx 6.00pm Cost includes coach, gratuities, entry to hall, tea & biscuits. Booking closes on Feb. 13th

## **Tuesday March 28th 2006 STOCKPORT, The STAIRCASE HOUSE & TOWN HALL Coach Outing**

The recently opened Staircase House is a beautifully restored medieval town house situated in the historic market place in Stockport. After coffee and biscuits (included), explore the house and its period rooms with the aid of an audio guide - from its origins as a cruck framed building to the splendour of a 17th Century town house - and on to WW2 (Note - lift access is available).

As Tuesday is Market Day in Stockport, there will be an opportunity to browse in the Victorian covered market and in the street stalls in the Market Place.

After lunch (at own cost), there will be a guided tour of Stockport Town Hall - This monument to civic pride was built in 1908 in the renaissance style and features a number of ornate rooms including a beautiful marble Staircase and magnificent Ballroom complete with a Wurlitzer Organ. This will rise from the floor and play! The afternoon concludes with tea/coffee and biscuits (included).

Depart 9.00 am, School Street, returning to Newcastle at approximately 6.00pm.

Cost: - £18.00 (non-members £19.00), including coach, admission costs, audio tour and guided tour, refreshments on arrival and before departure and driver's gratuity.

Apply to Dr A Davies, 15 Berne Avenue, Westlands, Newcastle ST5 2QJ (Tel. 01782 611711) enclosing SAE. Booking closes on 20th March.

## **Wednesday April 5th 2006 STOKE-ON-TRENT Waste to Energy Plant (Incinerator) Campbell Road, Sideway, Stoke-on Trent (Max 20 places) Car Outing**

By courtesy of MES ENVIRONMENTAL LIMITED the Committee has been able to arrange a visit to the Waste Disposal and Incinerator Plant. Members

will be able to see the Operations room, Waste Delivery, the Turbine House, and the whole process of waste disposal from start to finish and to see the use to which the waste is put.

Members will have to negotiate some stairs and gratings and should wear flat, firm, sensible shoes, suitable clothing and will be required to wear hard hats and yellow waistcoats (provided). Members will be offered coffee upon arrival. The tour will take between one and two hours. Toilets are available.

Members should arrive not later than 10.30am Directions on application; Adequate car parking. Cost £5 per head including coffee on arrival. Apply to Peter Moxon, Millstone House, Butterton, Newcastle ST5 4EB Tel 01782 616337 Enclosing SAE. Booking closes Tuesday 21st March 2006.

## **Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2006 BLETCHLEY PARK —World War II Secret Intelligence Establishment**

Thank you to the many members who have expressed interest in this trip.

At Bletchley Park the German Enigma code was broken, as well as several other enemy codes, and an immense contribution was made to the Allied victory. The wooden code-breaking huts are still there, as well as Enigma machines and Turing's "bombe", the world's first electronic computing apparatus and the prototype of modern computers. There is an excellent WW II exhibition, a wartime garage, and there are also spectacular gardens.

There is ample scope for picnics, or, if preferred, lunches and light snacks can be obtained on the site. There is full access for disabled visitors.

Depart 8.00 am, School Street, returning to Newcastle at approximately 6.30pm.

Cost: - £25.00 (non-members £26.00), including coach, admission, audio tour, refreshments on arrival and before departure and driver's gratuity.

Apply to Mr K.Walker, 49 Stockwood Road, Newcastle (tel.01782 613813) enclosing SAE. Booking Closes April 1st. Early booking is strongly advised.

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2006**

Tues 16th May .....AGM

Wed 24th May ..... Car Outing to Henbury Hall and Adlington Hall

Tues 6th June .....Car Outing to Barlaston Hall

Thurs 15th June .....Coach Outing to Oundle & Elton Hall

Fri 30th June .....Car Outing to Clifton Hall & Memorial Arboretum

Thurs 20 July .....Car Outing to Pradoc

Tues 25th July .....Coach Outing to Ledbury and Eastnor Castle

Thurs 10th Aug. ....Coach Outing to Heelis (NT H.Q.) and Railway Museum at Swindon

## **COMMITTEE 2005 - 2006**

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