

THE NORTH STAFFS NATIONAL TRUST ASSOCIATION

Newsletter No. 101

**SUMMER 2015 PROGRAMME
Our Web site-northstaffsnt.org.uk**

Bourton House Garden, Coach Trip June 10th



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 stairclimbing 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. There is an induction loop at the NS Conf. Centre.

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. However, at any age you are covered by our public liability insurance. Please ask a Committee Member for an explanation.

THE NORTH STAFFS NATIONAL TRUST ASSOCIATION

Newsletter No. 101

SUMMER 2015 PROGRAMME

A Note from the Chair



Welcome to the Summer Programme. The Committee and The Programme Organising Group hope you enjoy the varied events they have organised. The attendance at Talks and events so far this year has been encouraging, so we hope to continue finding experiences in which you will want to take part.

Writing of participation, this Newsletter contains the Agenda for The A.G.M. I am sure you will want to be there to thank longstanding Committee Members who are retiring and to support those who want an opportunity to continue. We hope to give news of our

fundraising efforts too.

A further encouragement to come to the A.G.M. is that after the formal part, Harry Bowell, Regional Director of The Trust in The Midlands, has accepted our invitation to discuss topical issues concerning The Trust. We have asked for a flexible discussion instead of a set lecture.

We hope an outline of his role, the work and policy of the Trust in the Midlands, will spark an informative exchange of views.

We do not see many of the upper echelons of the Trust amongst us very often, so I hope your welcome to Harry will encourage closer ties and mutual

understanding. April and May with the summer stretching ahead, what better time to be more optimistic than realistic!

Ralph

THE NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE
NATIONAL TRUST ASSOCIATION

THIRTY FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
NORTH STAFFS CONFERENCE CENTRE HARTSHILL

TUESDAY MAY19th 2014 at 7.00pm

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Chairman's Opening Remarks
3. Approval of Minutes of the 34th AGM
4. Secretary's Report - Matters Arising
5. Treasurer's Report - Matters Arising
6. Setting of Subscription Level for 2015 – 2016
7. Approvals for Re-election to Committee *
8. Nominations for Officers and Committee **
9. Election of Officers and Committee for 2015 – 2016
10. Any Other Business

7.30pm approx. We will invite our guest, Harry Bowell, Regional Director of the National Trust, to give us his insights into the activities of the Trust in the Midland Region.

The evening will finish as usual with tea/coffee and biscuits, or wine from the bar - all available to purchase on the night.

* Under our constitution, committee members should normally stand down after 5 years. Richard Adams, Madeleine Hopley and Rose Wheat have served 5 years or more, and wish to continue in post. They therefore require the approval of the AGM to stand for re-election this year

** Members will be invited to submit nominations for the Committee and Officers (Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer). Each nomination should be signed by the proposer, a seconder and the nominee, all of whom must be paid-up members of the Association. Please send nominations in advance of the meeting to Richard Adams, Secretary, Gables End, Holly Bank, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 8FT.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS
OUR 4TH LONDON HOLIDAY
1ST TO 5TH MAY 2015

It's not too late: there are still a few seats left on our coach for this Spring break in Hampstead.

Visits are planned to Fenton House, Nuffield Place, Henley-on-Thames, Kenwood, Spencer House, The Museum of London, and much, much more, including Bentley Priory, the Battle of Britain Trust in Stanmore. We'll even have a cruise on the Thames to Windsor from Runnymede (where the Magna Carta was sealed 800 years ago)!

For this 5-day break the cost is £485 per person sharing a room. For details and a booking form, please send a stamped addressed envelope to Cynthia Dumbelton at 32, The Lea, Trentham, ST4 8DY. For queries, please ring her on 01782 641765.

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

There are still a few places left on the coach and for the Bridgwater Hall concert. The guided walk around Manchester is now fully booked but you will be free to explore the city's many museums and art galleries, historic buildings or even do a little shopping.

For full details of the concert please see the Spring Newsletter and apply to Mrs Penny Moore, 26 Parkway, Trentham, ST4 8AG enclosing a cheque for £36 (£37 non-members, friends welcome) and SAE. Cost includes coach travel and driver's gratuity, centre stalls ticket, programme (subject to availability) and refreshments at the Bridgwater Hall on arrival.

Depart School Street at 9.30am. Return for 5.30pm (subject to traffic).

Tuesday 2nd June: Car Outing: An Historical Walk around Nantwich.

Following the success of April's much oversubscribed event it has been decided to repeat it this summer.

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 2.00pm 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 and priority will be given to those who were unable to get on the visit in April but you must apply again in order to confirm your previous application.

Cost £5 (£6 to non-members).

Please apply to Rose Wheat, 12, West Ave, Newcastle, Staffs ST5 0NB, Tel: 01782 616113, enclosing a cheque and SAE.

Closing Date: 18th May.

Wednesday 10th June: Coach Trip to Bourton House Garden and Sezincote , Moreton in Marsh , Gloucestershire.

The House at Bourton has been remodelled many times in its history, the adjacent Elizabethan Tithe Barn reached a state of perfection at an early date , but it is only in the last thirty years that the garden has been brought up to match them in splendour. The new owners, who took it on five years ago, continued with the established garden team and are pledged to maintain and develop its beauty. The design and the planting of this garden make it one of the best in the country.

There are ever widening herbaceous borders, knots, parterres, natural springs, inspirational planting for winter and summer and unusual plants. Tender exotics are a feature of the garden as are creatively filled containers. Our visit coincides with them being placed outside, but so much depends on mild weather. The Garden is three acres with a ten acre arboretum.

Refreshments, (included), will be served on arrival. There will then be two and a half hours to tour the garden and have lunch. (The House is a private home and not open).

At 1.30 we shall drive round the corner to Sezincote. This is the 'Home of The Oaks' in mangled old French. It is now the home of Dr & Mrs Peake who are opening exclusively for us. Please practice saying " Seezincut". The owners in the 1790s were relatives of Samuel Pepys called Cockerell. They were also called 'nabobs' because they had amassed a fortune in The East India Company. They were, however, genuinely interested in the Mogul culture of Rajasthan and wanted to be reminded of their time there. The architect was the owner's brother. However, nabobs' business methods were coming to be regarded as questionable and decadence was suspect, so, as if to demonstrate domestic respectability, the interior is chaste Greek Revival. One person who visited as the house was being finished in 1807 was The Prince of Wales, later George IV. Decadence beyond suspicion appealed enormously; he altered his plans for Brighton Pavilion at once. The grounds are as sensational as the house. At 4.15 we shall return to Bourton Tithe Barn for refreshments, (included), prior to departure at 5 p.m.

Notes which will make your visit to Bourton & Sezincote more enjoyable.

The day is topped and tailed with visits to Bourton because it has a tea room and comfort facilities which are not available at Sezincote. The Barn at Bourton is let to a tenant who runs the tea room independently.

The Garden is open to the public on the day of our visit, so the total numbers at certain times could put pressure on space and service in the Barn.

In order to ensure that you are served quickly and your preferences are available it would be a help if you could complete the refreshments part of the booking form.

Unfortunately for those bringing their own picnic neither the owners of Bourton or Sezincote allow picnics in the gardens; the coach and parking paddock will be available. After your picnic you are welcome to return to the Barn for refreshments, but it would not be fair to deny other, paying customers, the table space or to burden the staff with resetting the table.

The Coach will leave School Street at 8.30.a.m. returning for 7 p.m. Cost £40.00 per person, (non-members £42.00), to include coach travel, driver's tip, entrance to both properties and special private visit to Sezincote,tea/coffee,morning and afternoon.

Please see booking form for lunch and afternoon tea arrangements.

Please apply to Ralph White, 20 Upper Green, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton, West Mids. WV6 8QH enclosing cheque and S.A.E.

Closing Date Saturday 9th May

Thursday 25th June: Car Outing: Behind the Scenes Tour at Alton Towers

This is an “after hours” tour starting at 5.30pm. We will begin with a cable car ride over the area of Alton Towers and then have a guided tour of the beautiful gardens, some of which are steep but visitors can sit on seats at the top of the valley and look down below if they wish. We will then visit parts of the mainly Pugin-designed house which has a long history. We should be able to see the recently restored conservatory, chapel and one or two of the main rooms.

The estate started to be turned into a tourist attraction in the 1890s by the Earl of Shrewsbury.

Refreshments in the form of sandwiches, cakes and tea coffee or cordials will follow in a room set aside for us after the tour. Directions for reaching the starting point will be given at the time of booking.

Cost: £13.50 members, £14.50 non members

Please apply to Sue Corlett, 24 The Covert, Clayton, Newcastle, Staffs, ST5 4BL enclosing a cheque and stamped addressed envelope

Closing Date: 25th May

Sunday 12th July: Walk – Consall Nature Park, Pub and a Picnic 5 miles, or an easy option available



This walk explores Consall Nature Park and the delights of the Churnet valley, where the Cauldon Canal and the Churnet Valley Railway compete with each-other and with the River Churnet itself for space on the narrow valley bottom.

We will meet at 10.45am at the Visitor Centre (ST9 0AF). Our circular walk starts with a section through the wooded hillsides of the Nature Park, mostly good surfaces courtesy of Staffordshire County Council. There are some steep parts,

with steps to help us, and there are about six stiles to cross. We then descend to the valley bottom, and it's flat from then on. We cross the river, the railway and the canal, then along the towpath, passing by the old forge, an RSPB reserve, and the lovingly restored railway station.

There will be time for a well-earned break at the Black Lion pub, which has to be in one of the finest locations for any pub, anywhere. From here, its about a mile back to our cars, passing by Lawn Pool and Heron Pool. The visitor centre has a picnic area adjacent, and I suggest we bring our own hampers for an al fresco feast here, at around 2pm. The shop sells hot and cold drinks, a few sweets, and ice creams. There is also a small wildlife exhibition.

Those who wish to are welcome to opt out of the first part of the walk, and meet the group at the Black Lion at 12.30.

Dogs and children are welcome. The former should remain on leads throughout.

Cost £2.00 for members, £2.50 for guests (pay on the day). Book your place with Richard Adams: by email to rjadams@doctors.org.uk or, by post to: Gables End, Holly Bank, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 8FT, enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Telephone: 01782 646054. No Closing Date.

Tuesday 28th July: Coach Outing to Kenilworth Castle and Packwood House.

This is an opportunity to combine a visit to a spectacular castle (English Heritage) and a lovely National Trust house, (Packwood).



*Kenilworth
Castle*

Leaving School Street at 8.30am we should arrive at Kenilworth around 10.00am. From the coach park we walk for several minutes along a path, formerly the tiltyard, at the end of which we get a truly impressive view of the castle. We then head towards the 16th century stable where we have tea/coffee and biscuits (included in cost). We are then split into suitable groups to be taken on both the Fortress to Palace tour and the Elizabethan Garden tour. Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester, who owned Kenilworth, had the garden created in an attempt to impress Elizabeth I sufficiently to persuade her to marry him; however this did not happen but he always remained one of her favourites. The garden has been restored to what it probably looked like in July 1575 at which time it would have been at its peak for Elizabeth's fourth and final visit to Kenilworth. The layout has been recreated from eye-witness accounts and by reference to similar gardens of the period. The upper storeys of the castle buildings can now be reached via secure metal staircases which lead on to viewing platforms from which the extent of the former pleasure grounds outside the castle walls can be seen. The staircases are very safe but also very steep and anyone not wishing to climb the stairs can get an excellent overview of the garden layout from the first-level gravel walkway.

Following the guided tours it is time for lunch, either a prepaid lunch in Leicester's Gatehouse (please see menu choice below) or if you

prefer to bring a picnic there is ample provision within the grounds. After lunch you have some free time when it is recommended you explore the Gatehouse which contains some interesting exhibits and has a lift to the upper floors.

We leave at 2.00pm. for the short journey to Packwood House. You may be relieved to note that our time there is spent at your leisure! Full details of the house are in the N.T.Handbook but I would mention that the gardens here are also superb.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

Sensible walking shoes are essential. National Trust membership cards must be carried as well as English Heritage cards (if appropriate).Coach departs from School Street at 8.30am. arriving back in Newcastle at approximately 6.30pm.

Total Costs: For NT members: £31 (For NT/EH members £24.

The costs include coach fare, admission to Kenilworth Castle, refreshments on arrival, guided tours and driver's gratuity.

Please see booking form if you would like to add your choice of lunch at additional cost.

Please apply to: Shirley Timmis, 3 The Mount, Scholar Green, Stoke on Trent, ST7 3HY. Telephone 01782 851436 or 01782 777513 enclosing a cheque and a stamped addressed envelope.

Closing Date : Monday 15th June.



A corner of the Gardens at Packwood

BOOKING DETAILS

Tuesday 2nd June: Repeat of Historical Walk around Nantwich

Numbers are limited to 30 and priority will be given to those who were unable to get on the visit in April but you must apply again in order to confirm your previous application.

Cost £5 (£6 to non-members).

Please apply to Rose Wheat, 12, West Ave, Newcastle, Staffs ST5 ONB, Tel: 01782 616113, enclosing a cheque and SAE.

Closing Date: 18th May.

BOOKING DETAILS

Wednesday 10th June: Coach Trip to Sezincote and Bourton House Garden.

Cost £40.00 per person, (non-members £42.00), to include coach travel, driver's tip, entrance to both properties and special private visit to Sezincote and Tea/Coffee morning and afternoon. For lunch and cake/cream tea options, see over.

Please apply to Ralph White, 20 Upper Green, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton, West Mids. WV6 8QH enclosing cheque and S.A.E.

Closing Date Saturday 9th May.

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

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

For booking details see reverse of this form

Coach Trip 10th June to Bourton & Sezincote.

Name(s)	Assoc. No.	Cost £.
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In addition I/We would like to order A selection of home -made sandwiches, four different fillings and salad £6.00 per person. *		£
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I would like a Ploughman's Platter lunch at £7.50 per person. butter, two cheeses salad,pickle.*		£ bread,
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*Please indicate number of veg. options in right hand margin.

Afternoon Tea

Slice of Home-made cake at £2.50.pp.	£
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Cream Tea, two scones, strawberry jam & clotted cream at £4.00.pp.	£
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(These are a supplements, the beverage cost is included in your ticket).

TOTAL £

BOOKING DETAILS

Thursday 25th June: Car Outing to Alton Towers for a "Behind the Scenes Tour".

Cost £13.50 for members, (£14.50 for non-members), to include an overhead cable car ride, a tour of the gardens and parts of the house and refreshments of sandwiches, cakes, tea/coffee or cordials.

Apply to Sue Corlett, 24, The Covert, Clayton, Newcastle, Staffs, ST5 5BL, enclosing a cheque and stamped, self-addressed envelope.
Telephone: 01782 646054

Closing Date 25th May

BOOKING DETAILS

Sunday 12th July: Walk with Richard Adams Consall Nature Park, Pub and a Picnic

Cost £2.00 (non-members £2.50) pay on the day
Please apply to Richard Adams, email rjadams@doctors.org.uk or by post to Gables End, Holly Bank, ST4 8PT enclosing a stamped, self addressed envelope. Tel: 01782 646054.

Name(s)	Association number	£
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Address		Total

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

For booking details see reverse of this form

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Name(s)

Association number

£

Address

Total

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

For booking details see reverse of this form

BOOKING DETAILS

Tuesday 28th July: Coach trip to Kenilworth and Packwood House

Total Costs: For NT only members: £31 (or £37 with optional cold lunch). For NT/EH members £24 (or £30 with optional cold lunch). Please add £2 to the costs above if you are not a member of NSNTA.

The cold lunch options are:

(a) Local 2 Cheese Platter, chutney, celery, crackers & salad.

(b) Cumberland Sausage Platter with crusty roll, crisps & salad.

The costs include coach fare, admission to Kenilworth Castle, refreshments on arrival, guided tours and driver's gratuity.

Please apply to: Shirley Timmis, 3 The Mount, Scholar Green, Stoke on Trent, ST7 3HY. Telephone 01782 851436 or 01782 777513 enclosing a cheque and a stamped addressed envelope.

Closing Date : Monday 15th June.

BOOKING DETAILS

Sunday 23rd August: Car Outing to Abbeywood Gardens.

Cost: £5 [non-members £6] includes admission to the Gardens and Plant Fair and donation to the National Trust.

Apply to Rose Wheat, 12, West Avenue, Newcastle, Staffs, ST5 ONB.
Tel: 01782 616113, enclosing cheque and SAE.

Closing date: July 23rd.

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

No. of Cheese Platters @ £6.00 each.....

No. of Cumberland Sausage Platters @ £6.00.....

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 -----

For booking details see reverse of this form

BOOKING DETAILS

Wednesday 26th August: Coach trip to Fulneck Village and Oakwell Hall

Cost £26 (non-members £28) to include coach, tea/coffee on arrival, tour of Fulneck and entrance to the museum and Oakwell Hall. Please apply to Rose Wheat, 12, West Ave, Newcastle, ST5 ONB, tel. 01782 616113 enclosing a cheque and SAE.

Closing date: 27th July

North Staffordshire National Trust Association

We are delighted to welcome new members.

Please note: you must first be a member of the National Trust or a National Trust Volunteer.

To join the Association, please complete the Application Form on the reverse, and send it, with your cheque, to the Membership Secretary:

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

Email: rjadams@doctors.org.uk

Tel: 01782 646054



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

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

For booking details see reverse of this form

North Staffordshire National Trust Association
Membership Application

I/We wish to apply for membership of the North Staffordshire National Trust Association

Name(s)

NT membership number(s)

Address

Post Code

Telephone

Email

Annual subscription, for the first member £ 8.50

For additional member(s), at the same address (£5.50 each) £

Total enclosed £

Cheque payable to "North Staffs NT Association" please

Sunday 23rd August: Car Outing: Abbeywood Gardens, Delamere, Cheshire, CW8 2HW.

Plant Hunters' Fairs come to Abbeywood Gardens in Cheshire just as the gardens reach their peak in August and provide an ideal opportunity for plant lovers to re-stock their gardens or search out a new or unusual plant from the many expert stall holders and nurseries who will be there.

The gardens have plenty to see and enjoy with six acres divided into separate garden areas, each with its own distinctive character and themed planting. The gardens are all set against the glorious backdrop of the Utkinton Hills. You can also walk around the rest of the estate's 40 acre arboretum and enjoy the delicious seasonal menu in the Garden Cafe which uses the soft fruit, vegetables and salad grown in the vegetable garden [lunch and other refreshments at own cost].

We will assemble at 10.30am in the cafe area which is close to the car park and the entrance to the gardens. After we are admitted to the gardens you will then be free to wander at will for the rest of the day until the gardens close at 5.00pm.

Abbeywood Gardens are on the A556 between Northwich and Chester just north of the A54 or via the A49 from Tarporley. Cost: £5 [non-members £6] includes admission to the Gardens and Plant Fair and donation to the National Trust.

Apply to Rose Wheat, 12, West Avenue, Newcastle, Staffs, ST5 ONB. Tel: 01782 616113, enclosing cheque and SAE.

Closing date: July 23rd.

Wednesday 26th August: Coach Outing to Fulneck Moravian Settlement & Oakwell Hall.

Fulneck, south of Pudsey, was established in the mid-18th century as a settlement, centred on the church. As well as houses for families there were woollen and lace workshops and accommodation for single men, women and widows, and schools catering for both locals and missionaries children, also a bakery, shop and inn. After tea/coffee we will have a tour of the settlement, which will include a visit to the museum housed in two of the old cottages with artefacts including an early fire engine and items from around the world brought back by the missionaries.

Lunch (at own expense or bring your own) can be taken at the Bankhouse Inn after which we move to Oakwell Hall, built in 1583 by John Batt. In the 18th century this somewhat notorious family was succeeded by a series of absentee landlords and in 1840 it became a school run by the Cockill sisters. They had been introduced by Ellen Nussey to the Bronte sisters who were considering opening a school of their own. Thus the description of 'Fieldhead' in 'Shirley' was based on Oakwell.

On the return journey, Pat Wilson, a former resident of Fulneck and relative of the Cockills, (Pat is also a longstanding member of this Association) will point out a number of places associated with the Brontes and the Cockills.

The coach will leave School Street at 8.45 am and will arrive back in Newcastle around 6.30 to 7.00pm.

Cost £26 (non-members £28) to include coach, tea/coffee on arrival, tour of Fulneck and entrance to the museum and Oakwell Hall.

Please apply to Rose Wheat, 12, West Ave, Newcastle, ST5 ONB, tel: 01782 616113 enclosing a cheque and SAE.

Closing date 27th July.

Reports of Recent Activities

North Staffs NTA Christmas “DO”

December 10th and over eighty of us gathered at The Madeley Centre for our Christmas get-together. A chat, some relevant background music, provided by Philip Harrison on his keyboard, and a welcoming drink in the foyer ensued before we filtered through to the very festive dining hall. It set the scene for the evening. The candelabra, trees and fairy-lights looked delightful. Supper was served by Just Jane catering and the music continued in the background.

With everyone well fed and in the Christmas spirit we were then treated to an audio-visual tour of the 2014 programme. It's hard to believe that so much was packed into the year.

Special thanks must go to Anne Anderton for organising the evening; to Paul and Rose for the post dinner entertainment and to Ralph for the decorative effects.

Many mince-pies later, I find myself looking forward to next year's calendar of events.

Sue Till



**Tuesday January
20th Neil**

Collingwood

Unseen Newcastle

What a good turnout on such a cold, wintry evening for an excellent presentation. Those who braved the weather found it to be well worth the effort.

Neil's talks on

Newcastle and surrounding area are very popular and tonight's presentation was well received by the audience.

The talk included photographs not seen before from the collection of the late Jim Wain of Newcastle Chemists, many taken from rooftops and unusual angles. Mr Wain donated his collection to the Newcastle Civic Society and it is now in the Newcastle Museum where it can be seen on request.

Thanks to Brian Wilson for arranging a most interesting and informative evening.

Gwen Dilks

Tuesday 17th February: Talk: Cathryn Walton, 'Hidden Lives: Leek's Extraordinary Embroiderers'.



Cathryn (centre) with her book

Following our successful outing to Leek in the summer of 2013 to the exhibition of embroidery created by the

Leek Embroidery Society, we invited Cathryn Walton, co-curator of that exhibition, to talk to us about the women who actually sewed the altar pieces and tapestries with such consummate skill. In a superbly illustrated talk, Cathryn explained how Lady Elizabeth Wardle had founded the society, probably with the encouragement of William Morris and, with the help of relatives and friends, usually the wives and daughters of Leek's professional class and mill owners, had established 'Leek Embroidery', recognized by its patterns throughout the country and overseas.

In addition to these volunteer embroiderers, the society also employed two professionals who taught young girls from the 'lower orders' of Leek society, the daughters of trades people and craftsmen. Using only four stitches, the embroiderers created exquisite work which they displayed in their shop and which encouraged sale of their patterns and silks both locally and by mail order.

The extent of Cathryn's research was admirable as there is no archive of the Society and only two documents which related to its work.

Despite this, she managed to trace 88 of the women involved and she has now written a lavishly illustrated history of these talented women.

Rose Wheat



Tuesday 24th March: Car Trip to Newcastle Fire Station

We were welcomed at the plush new fire station with tea and biscuits before splitting into two groups. My group were taken to the fire

engine bay via the kit room which also contained a computer printer on which incoming information on incidents is fed to the crew as they are donning their equipment.

The modern fire engine is far removed from a horse pulling a bowser and contains a myriad of firefighting and rescue gear. It is easy to understand why a modern-day fire fighter has to undergo an extremely comprehensive training programme. There is clearly as much emphasis on rescue as there is on fire fighting. The vast range of synthetic materials used in 21st. century construction demands a knowledge of the products of combustion in these structures so that the most appropriate form of tackling the blaze can be utilised. However, water still remains the predominant fire extinguisher.

The Great Fire of London in 1666 was the catalyst for keeping a watchful eye on buildings but it was not until 1847 that local fire stations were formed but, even then, there was no cooperation or amalgamation among fire companies as they were assigned to individual insurance companies. Our guide then took us through a series of landmark dates in the history of fire brigades, the most significant being 1938 when the Fire Brigade Act was introduced which made it mandatory that each brigade helped one another, especially for large fires, leading to the formation of the National Fire Service in 1941. Since then there have been several re-organisations, many related to geography.

What was abundantly clear was that a modern fire fighter has to be fit (the gear alone adds 3 stone to a person's weight), brave and very knowledgeable. From in-cab computers to complex equipment to the vast range of materials used in modern life, coupled with a high level of fitness and commitment – a very demanding career requiring total dedication.

The visit was informative, enlightening and most enjoyable. Mick Wheat

Wednesday 4th March: Talk by Carole Williams: Mysterious China

We welcomed the Chinese New Year appropriately with fire-crackers (one party-popper actually) and already the mystery began – is it now the year of the goat, sheep or ram? The same Chinese character can be interpreted as any of these.

Carole introduced us to the basic principles of Chinese thought, starting with the “acceptance of paradox”, finding the contrasting yin and yang, light and dark, in any situation, and how the Chinese people will always take their time assessing a problem before acting upon it. We took a whistle-stop tour, from the great cities of Beijing and Shanghai, taking in Jingdezhen, the porcelain-producing city which has been rivalling Stoke since 1700 and Xian with its terracotta army, and on to the less-populated central and western regions, with mountains and forests. Here we found the giant panda, and the even cuter golden snub-nosed monkey – aaah!

Chinese gardens are symbolic landscapes of rocks, trees and pathways. Water (yin) is always present to balance the yang of the rocks. The few flowers have special meanings – the chrysanthemum, for example, representing longevity.

Empress Dowager Cixi was a contemporary of Queen Victoria. She was selected as a teenager to be a concubine for the emperor, bore his son who became the next emperor, then chose her nephew to succeed when the son died. A woman of enormous influence over 50 years, she is known as the concubine who launched modern China. Carole took on the challenge of presenting a country with a quarter of the world’s population, 56 distinct languages, and a 5,000 year dynastic history to us, all within an hour and a bit. She succeeded admirably, and will have whetted many appetites to visit China to find out for ourselves.

Thank you to Jane for arranging this treat for us all.

Richard Adams

Get to know your Archivist Kay Williams

Though brought up in Birmingham, my parents both came from the Potteries and I was actually born in Stockton Brook. After my very academic school, I read German and French at Nottingham University, where I accidentally came across librarianship as a profession, which I decided would suit me. It did, so I spent an enjoyable career in Keele University Library, ending as Head of Acquisitions and Cataloguing, so clearly destined to also become this society's Archivist!



Apart from the National Trust group, I suppose my main interests are choral singing with Keele Bach Choir, music, cinema, my garden, where I dabble in veg growing, and my lovely family in Nottingham, now including 4-year-old twins Mollie and Sam. For 10 years, I worked as a volunteer for the Iraq Body Count project, which seeks to record details of all civilians killed in the ongoing conflict which began in 2003.

I think a society archive is valuable for the memories it can give to members – of wonderful excursions, holidays and concert trips, with interesting and congenial company. Where else would you be reminded of your chairman under a road-safety placard in the pouring rain, one member being escorted to the coach by an inebriated gentleman from the Prospect of Whitby in London, and even yours truly trying to look suitably imposing in the robes of the Lord Mayor of Belfast! The archive can also remind us of friends from the past, sadly no longer with us and of course all the amazing buildings, gardens and people we have met. I enjoy assembling the photos and leaflets which remind us all of such occasions and people, so it would help me if members could email or send me any photos or leaflets from trips, especially when I am not there in person with my camera. The Archive is for you all. Kay Williams



New Members since the last edition

We would like to extend a warm welcome to

Michael and Margaret Hewitt, Keith Mayoh, Jean Brassington, Susan Renwick, Kath Moran, Frances Paget, Mr M and Mrs R Cooke, Christine and Christopher Weatherby



I hope Ralph has put this pond on the Sezincote Risk Assessment !

Donations From North Staff National Trust Association for 2015 In accordance with the Association's Constitution, by simple majority The Committee has decided to make the following donations.

Down's Bank

For Pedestrian Gates & Picnic Benches £1,700.00. **Biddulph**

Grange

More Stumps for Stumpery & 'China' £ 750.00.

Purchase of Scaffolding for Hedge Cutting and Conservation Work £ 1,500.00.

Little Moreton Hall

Contribution to Repair and renewal of Lime Ash Floors £ 1,000.00.

Enterprise Neptune Coastal Repair Fund £ 1,000.00.

Total £ 5,950.00.



Biddulph Grange

The scaffolding will be safer than the ladders they use at present.

COMMITTEE 2014-2015	
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Summary of Programme May to August 2015

May Fri-Tue 1 st – 5 th	London Coach Holiday One or two spaces left.
May Weds 13 th	Manchester and Bridgewater Hall (Halle) Some seats left. Walk full. See Newsletter 100
May Tuesday 19 th	AGM followed by Talk by Harry Bowell. Director of National Trust Midlands Region
June Tuesday 2 nd	Car Outing: Historical walk around Nantwich.
June Weds 10 th	Coach Outing to Sezincote and Bourton House Garden.
June Thursday 25 th	Car Outing to Alton Towers.
July Sunday 12 th	Walk: Consall Nature Park, Pub and a Picnic.
July Tuesday 28 th	Coach Outing to Kenilworth Castle and Packwood. House.
August Sunday 23 rd	Car Outing to Abbeywood Gardens and Plant Fair
August Wednesday 26 th	Coach outing to Fulneck Village and Oakwell Hall.

Dates for your diary

October 2nd –6th Visit by TGV to explore Art Nouveau in France!

Tuesday 10th November: Talk at NS Conference Centre-David Brown

Tuesday 17th November: Coach Outing to BBC studios at Media City, Salford
and Lowry Museum/Imperial War Museum North

Contributors to the next Newsletter are asked to send their copy to Ralph White, Acting Editor, contact details previous page, by 1st July.

Photographs welcome.

Unfortunately, due to travel and family commitments, Trevor Plant has had to relinquish the Editorship.

If you have the necessary skills, please get in touch.

The compilation can be done entirely online via wi fi on your cruise ship or private island. Think “Editor-at-Large” on an upmarket magazine!