

North Staffordshire National Trust Association

Newsletter No. 125
Summer 2023

www.northstaffsnt.org.uk



Award winning ceramics from Nicky Lindo and Bill Brookes – see AGM

© Jenny Harper

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 of at least 8½" x 4" 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 no longer has an age limit. Our public liability insurance also 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. No liability will be accepted for errors or omissions.

We are always delighted to welcome new members – see further details on the inserts 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 August, should be addressed to NSNTA.Newsletter@outlook.com (01782 791360) by the **15th July** at the absolute latest (but earlier if possible!)

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North Staffordshire National Trust Association

Newsletter No. 125 Summer 2023 Programme

A Note From The Chair



Welcome to a Spring-fresh copy of our beautifully produced Newsletter full of promise.

The past Winter may not have been as severe as some but I am sure you agree it has gone on long enough and we are all looking forward to better days ahead.

In attempt to inspire an original piece about more than the weather, the Editor gave me advance notice of the programme. The Pipes in the Peak will be cheery, other features seem to involve dressing well; good boutiques in Shrewsbury, well dressing in Derbyshire, hardly dressing at all if Boughton is as hot as it was last year, and dressing suitably for two trips in the woods.

The striking feature of this issue apart from notice of the AGM and our Special Guest Speaker is the remarkable news that although there is no such thing as a free lunch, there is definitely a free tea for Association Members on June 9th at Brampton Museum.

I hope this review has given you an appetite for our varied offerings.

Keep safe and well,

See you soon,

Ralph



Data Protection Policy

The North Staffordshire National Trust Association (NSNTA) is a non-profit voluntary organisation which endeavours to comply with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998, and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of May 2018.

Personal data collected by us on membership forms, renewal forms and event booking forms will be limited to: names, addresses, email addresses and telephone numbers. It will only be used for: administration of membership, communication of information and organisation of events within and related to the NSNTA.

Personal data will not be shared with the National Trust or any third party, or to other members.

Membership lists are destroyed when 18 months old. Lists relating to specific events are destroyed when the event is complete.

Contact the Membership Secretary if you wish to view/amend/delete any of your personal data.

By providing personal data on our membership forms and event booking forms, you are consenting to this, our Data Protection Policy, and to our stated use of your personal data.



In order to comply with the terms of GDPR and to improve security and privacy the following policies are being adopted with particular reference to the publishing of details of members organising events. Full leaders' postal addresses will only appear on the booking forms and not in the main text of the magazine, which will just carry email addresses and telephone numbers. The booking forms are included in Newsletters distributed to bona-fide members of NSNTA but will not be contained in copies of the Newsletter posted on the website. Access to back copies of the Newsletter on the website which contain leaders' addresses will be restricted by password, available to members on request.

Attendees of NSNTA events are advised that they may be included in group photographs for publication in the Newsletter or on the website, but they will not be named without their specific permission. If anyone does not want to appear in such photographs, please let the organiser or the editor know.

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.

Some events need to be booked very quickly, some do book up quickly, others more slowly. You can check with the organiser or the STOP PRESS on the web site if events are full or are undersubscribed, or if it has been necessary to make changes. **Please also ensure the Secretary has your email address so you can be advised of events in emergency. If you did not receive one on 18th February advising of the Salisbury trip you are not on the list!**

Do let the organiser know if you are interested in an event but can't attend so the feasibility of repeating it on another date can be assessed.

Sunday 23rd April: Walk: The Bluebells of Parrot's Drumble.

There are still spaces available on this St. George's Day short stroll in this beautiful ancient woodland nature reserve near Talke Pits as advertised in the last Newsletter.

Please book your place with Richard Adams, by email to rjadams@doctors.com or by post with an SAE to 79 Whitmore Road, Newcastle ST5 3LZ. Directions to the meeting point and suggested parking will be given on application.

Thursday 27th April: Car Trip: Staffordshire Museum Collection Stores.

Fully booked, but will be repeated in October.

Thursday 11th May: Coach Trip: Shrewsbury guided tour and river trip.

This was advertised in the last Newsletter and at the time of publication the tours are fully booked but please check for cancellations, however there are additional spaces on the coach for those that would like a day out in Shrewsbury without the tours.

Cost £16.00 (£17.00 for non-members) for just the coach for a free day in Shrewsbury without the guided tour, river trip or refreshments.

If you are lucky enough to find a cancellation for the full tour the cost is £31.00 (£33.00 to non-members) to include the coach, driver's tip, coffee and biscuits, blue badge guides and the river boat trip.

Please apply by 19th April to Susan Till and include your cheque and SAE. Enquiries Tel. 01785 811794 or email at st.till@icloud.com.

Tuesday 16th May 7:00pm: AGM and Presentation by Clare Wood, Artistic Director and Chief Executive of British Ceramics Biennial.

THE NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE NATIONAL TRUST ASSOCIATION
FORTY-SECOND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
NORTH STAFFS CONFERENCE CENTRE, HARTSHILL

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Chairman's Opening Remarks
3. Approval of Minutes of the 42nd AGM
4. Secretary's Report - Matters Arising
5. Treasurer's Report - Matters Arising
6. Setting of Subscription Level for 2023 – 2024
7. Approvals for re-election to committee *
8. Nominations for Officers and Committee **
9. Election of Officers and Committee for 2023 – 2024
10. Any Other Business

* Under our constitution, committee members should normally stand down after 5 years. Nearly all of the current committee have served for at least this time, and wish to continue in post. They therefore require the approval of the AGM to stand for re-election this year.

** Members are 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. If possible, please send nominations in advance of the meeting to our Chairman, Ralph White, by mail or email (see back cover) to arrive before our AGM.

The minutes of the last AGM were included in Newsletter 123. A copy is on the website.

Following the meeting will be the **Presentation by Clare Wood.**

Instituted in 2009 and named to take place every two years the British Ceramics Biennial is the single largest contemporary ceramic event in the UK. This year's event takes place from the 23rd September to 5th November.

There are exhibitions, special events and activities across the city of Stoke-on-Trent. Artwork involves the UK's leading ceramicists, international artists and you! There are Artists' residencies, commissions, learning and valuable promotional awards.

Previous winners have seen their work purchased for the V & A collection at the Wedgwood pottery at Barlaston. There is also charity and community involvement.

Clare's presentation will illustrate the wide range of work and skills. There is something for every taste. As they say, Ceramics are coming home.

Tuesday 23rd May: Car Trip: Tissington Hall and Well Dressings.

This trip was publicised in our last Newsletter but as this issue goes to press there are still spaces available.

We have been fortunate in timing our trip to the early Jacobean Tissington Hall to allow us to visit the internationally famous Well Dressing, an ancient custom that is almost unique to Derbyshire. Tissington is known as 'the mother place of well dressing' and following our guided tour of the delightful manor house we shall have the opportunity to admire the intricate floral decorations of the six wells set around the picturesque estate village.

Tissington Hall is Grade II* listed as are its gardens, stables and outbuildings and has been inhabited by the FitzHerbert family since it was built in the early seventeenth century. The history of the family and the house will be explained to us by enthusiastic and knowledgeable local guides and you will also be able to visit the Church of St. Mary with its Norman tower and FitzHerbert memorials.

There will be no difficulty finding somewhere to lunch (at own expense), as in addition to Herbert's Fine English Tearooms, situated close to the Hall, there are apparently fifteen other places to eat within five kilometres of the village.

We shall meet in front of the hall in order to start our tour at 10:30 prompt. Car parking is available in a large field at the top of the village and will cost £3 per car, the money raised goes to charity. Separate disabled parking is situated in the middle of the village. Directions will be dispatched on booking. There will be some stairs in the Hall and traffic/trip hazards within the village.

Cost: £15 per person (non-members £16) for the tour of the Hall and the usual contribution to the National Trust. Please apply, using the booking form, to Rose Wheat enclosing SAE and cheque before May 1st. Enquiries: Tel. 01782 616116 or rose.wheat@virginmedia.com.

Please let Rose know if you are wishing to car share, either to offer or receive a lift.

Friday 9th June: Social Event at the Brampton Museum.

Those of you that are aware of The Brampton and The Brampton Museum will know that it had a major facelift during Covid. Those of you who don't, will surely be delighted to be invited to a Summer Social there. The roses should be blooming and hopefully we will be able to open the bi-fold doors onto the decking.

Put the afternoon of June 9th into your diaries and from 2pm until 5pm, come along for a cup of tea/coffee and a slice of cake or a scone. The delightful museum will be open for you to wander round and there is even a small shop if you are in need of a gift....think of a lovely pair of earrings crafted from a piece of bone china and other

gifts made by local people. It will also be a time to catch up with members that for one reason or another are unable to make our coach and car trips.

There is no charge to members and invited guests (who may be considering joining and wish to learn more) but we are only able to host 70 due to seating arrangements. Because of this limitation we ask that you email Susan Till on st.till@icloud.com to give us an idea of numbers. If without email please phone on 01785 811794 (leave a message if no answer) or text on 0770 817 2343.

We will need to know by the last week in May at the latest in order that the caterers can get baking!

This is a new venture for us and we do hope that you will enjoy the opportunity to meet up and have a lovely afternoon.

Sunday 11th June: Car Trip: Pipes in the Peak Organ Museum and Concert.



This is another opportunity to visit this unique venue where will enjoy a fabulous Sunday afternoon of music both old and new, provided by the wonderful sounds of the **Mighty Compton Cinema Organ**, originally installed in the ABC Derby. Mr. Jackson of Castle Donnington had purchased the organ in 1965 for £300. In 1990 the organ was bought from Mr. Jackson (in pieces!!!) by Dave Thorpe the

owner of Thorpe Garage, Ashbourne, and completely restored over the following 10 years. The first concert took place on 3rd October 1999, and it has been played regularly by the top organists in the country, and thousands of people from across the country have been entertained by its magnificent sounds.

On this occasion it will be played by the one and only Phil Kelsall MBE, resident organist at the Tower Ballroom, Blackpool for the past 46 years.

The venue opens at 2 pm and the concert starts at 2.30 pm. Tickets are £17 (£18 non-members). Please allow plenty of



time to park in the car park at the side of the garage and to take your seats, which will be identified with an A4 sheet bearing the name Joan Harvey, NT.

If you are planning to have lunch before the concert, I have provided information on a couple of very nice venues you can contact to book independently. I suggest that you book for 12.30 at the latest to leave enough time to travel to the concert venue.

The Old Dog (Tel: 01335 350990) – across the road from the concert venue. They do Sunday roasts (£16-19) and Light Bites/soup. Thorpe, DE6 2AT

Bentley Brook Inn (Tel: 01335 350278) Fenny Bentley, DE6 1LF. Sunday Carvery is £14.95 or choices off the A La Carte menu. This is 7 mins from the concert venue.

Please Note: The closing date for applications for tickets is 12th May 2023. Directions to the venue will be provided when your application has been received.

Applications please to: Joan Harvey using the Booking Form, including cheque and SAE. Any questions Tel: 07814918792 or email: joanharvey694@gmail.com

It is advisable to book your lunch once you have sent your application.

Thursday 15th June: Coach Trip: Boughton House, Kettering, Northants.

Two outbreaks of Covid and the hottest day ever recorded in UK history have meant that this wonderful trip has had to be cancelled on three separate occasions, so fingers crossed for 2023! Boughton House, sometimes known as the ‘English Versailles’, is one of the stately homes of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensbury. Modelled on the French style by Ralph, 1st Duke of Montagu, in the late seventeenth century, this magnificent mansion has featured in ‘Treasure Houses of Britain and in the Oscar-winning film ‘Les Miserables’. Its stunning art collection includes paintings by Van Dyck and El Greco and amongst its many treasures are the Sevres porcelain and Boule furniture. We shall be taking the ‘King’s Tour’, which encompasses twenty rooms over two floors, enhanced by knowledgeable and friendly guides.

The 18th century landscaped gardens and new 21st century garden offer a spell-binding series of waterways and stunning display of flower beds and herbaceous borders, together with a rose garden, walled garden and sensory garden. After lunch you will have time to explore the gardens and to venture further into the Park, if you so wish. There is also a well-stocked gift shop and café.

We shall be served coffee/tea and homemade biscuits on arrival and after the tour we shall sit down to enjoy a delicious cold buffet consisting of a variety of meats, fish, quiche and salad plus unlimited tea/coffee. You will then be free to explore the gardens and other facilities.

Our coach will depart from Brunswick street in Newcastle at 8.30am and we aim to leave Boughton at 4.30pm to arrive back in Newcastle by 7.00pm, traffic permitting.

Cost: £52 (£54 to non-members) to include the coach, driver's tip, refreshments on arrival, admission and the King's Tour, lunch and the usual donation to the National Trust.

Please apply by Monday 29th May to Rose Wheat and include a cheque and SAE.

Even if you were previously accepted for this trip you must re-apply and send a new cheque and SAE.

Further enquiries can be made by e-mail: rose.wheat@virginmedia.com or tel.01782 616113, or see www.boughtonhouse.co.uk for images and further details.

Please inform me of any special dietary needs.

There are some stairs to reach the Staterooms on the first floor, some cobbled areas in the Coach House and leading to the Gift Shop and some steep inclines in parts of the garden.

Wednesday 21st June: Coach Holiday: 4 nights/5 days Northumberland.

At the time of publication there was one single room available due to a cancellation, and there were still some double and twin rooms free: more members and friends will be very welcome. This was well publicised to members and details are on the website. Check with Regent Travel (01785 818202) before all the rooms are taken!

Thursday 20th July: Walk: Greenway Bank Country Park at Knypersley.

Greenway Bank Country Park is an area of 114 acres of old woodland surrounding two large Victorian reservoirs. The park was developed by James Bateman who later created the gardens at Biddulph Grange. The area is a little-known local gem incorporating the historical Greenway Bank Hall (1780 – 1973) and Knypersley Hall (originally documented in State documents in 1195).



There is a network of footpaths one of which circumvents both lakes and is approx. 4 miles. This walk includes some steep paths, but is the most interesting, the reservoir planned in 1823 and overseen by Thomas Telford. However there is a second walk around the lower lake of approx. 1 mile which is less demanding. There are several very informative sites on the park available on Google.

It is proposed that members meet at the lower car park at 10.30, and they can choose which walk suits them best. The longer walk will be led by Phil, whose family

used to live in the area. We suggest that afterwards those who wish to, meet up at Biddulph Grange, which is 4 miles away, for lunch in the drawing room, open also to anyone who just wants lunch, at 12.30-1.00. After lunch there will be the opportunity to explore the gardens, free to NT members. Dogs are welcome if kept on the lead on the walks and in the Biddulph Grange car park picnic area.

To give an indication of numbers for the walk (short or long?) and lunch – at own cost - at Biddulph Grange, please book your place and preferences with Phil Alcock by email: phil.alcock@yahoo.co.uk or by post with a SAE to: Millstone House, The Green, Bagnall, Stoke-on-Trent, ST9 9JR, or text to: 07814028828. Further information and directions to the meeting point and suggested parking will be given on application.

Thursday 10th August: Car Trip: Visit to a Woodland Craftsman.

This trip was originally arranged for July 2020 but cancelled due to Covid. Preference will be given to those who booked for the original trip but do please re-apply.

Michael Taylor will welcome us to his working coppice in Leighton, near Shrewsbury, where he has been restoring a neglected ancient woodland since 2010. His woodland is a haven of peace and inspiration for designing and making his handmade wooden products along with furniture (including Windsor chairs). Mike coppices a different area of woodland each winter for the benefit of the woodland plants, birds,



mammals and insects. Coppiced trees regrow over the following years, a sustainable form of woodland management which has been used for centuries. Each new area of coppice has its own special mix of native hardwood trees, such as oak, ash, hazel, alder and birch, which provide the raw material for his craft. Recently Mike has also been working with yew. Creating handmade unique wooden items supports the woodland restoration in a yearly cycle of coppicing. The area coppiced in the winter months really does dictate what can be produced.

On this outing, we will arrive at 2pm when Mike will give us a brief introduction and a cup of tea or coffee followed by a tour of his woodland. He will also lay on a pole lathe turning demonstration and show us some of the wares he has for sale.

He is keen to have visitors to his land but there are issues to consider as well as appreciating its beauty. The paths are rudimentary and the terrain can be difficult so

stout footwear is necessary. We should allow two hours for our visit. There is a very basic toilet but my plan is to avoid using it by visiting a hostelry nearby!

Michael has given talks in Werrington and Leek when he spoke to the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust group. Who knows, you may already have heard him speak?

Cost: £7.00 p.p., non-members £10. Please apply on the booking form with cheque and SAE. Numbers limited to 18. Enquiries: email: dumbeltoncynthia@gmail.com or tel: 01782 641765.

Advance Booking

Some events in the Autumn programme need to be booked before, or very quickly after, the next Newsletter is published:

Friday 8th - Sunday 17th September: Heritage Open Days.

Not NSNTA sponsored events, but we feel many members will be interested in these activities. We tried to keep them clear on our calendar but unfortunately there was a clash with the Dyrham trip. See Anthea's article below for more details, and further information will be published in the next Newsletter.

Wednesday 13th September: Coach trip: Dyrham Park^{NT}, Gloucestershire.

Dyrham, named for being an ancient deer enclosure, now features a magnificent baroque house. After recent renovation it is sparkling with 17th Century life.

Visiting Dyrham is a multi-sensory experience and considerable effort has gone into meaningful presentation and authenticity. You will be impressed by the architecture, painting tapestries and delftware. Outside are superb gardens and parkland.



Recently extra rooms have been opened and fascinating exhibitions installed. In addition, we have been given exclusive access to the Conservation Studio on the upper floor. There will be twenty minute tours for eight people at a time, every half hour from 11 am.

Even if you have never been to Dyrham, you may have seen it in *The Remains of the Day*, *Poldark*, *Sanditon* and *The Pursuit of Love*.

The Coach will depart from Brunswick St. at 8am. We will leave Dyrham at 4.15pm and hope to be back in Newcastle by 7pm, traffic permitting. The organiser apologises for the early start but we have to avoid congestion and allow time for a motorway comfort break before arriving at Dyrham before 11am. There will be another break on the return. To avoid the long walk down to the house we shall try to monopolise the electric transport by prior telephone call, with the first Conservation tour group having priority.

Cost £20 (£22 for non-NSNTA members) includes coach fare, driver's gratuity and donation to NSNTA. The coach has full on board facilities.

Non-NT members will be asked to pay £17.00 by card to the Trust at Dyrham on the day.

Please apply to Ralph White by Wednesday 9th August 2023.

Friday 13th - Sunday 15th October: Coach Trip: Mini Holiday to Salisbury.

An October 3 days, 2 nights break in central Salisbury.

Friday 13th October 2023 8.30 Depart Brunswick Street. Drive south to **Sudeley Castle** (Historic Houses), Winchcombe, Gloucestershire. We'll have a talk, coffee and biscuits and an opportunity to purchase lunch. Then continue to The Red Lion Hotel in Milford Street, Salisbury SP1 2AN for dinner (two nights dinner, bed and breakfast). For more information Google the 4* hotel plus all the venues; we're visiting some special places.

Saturday 14th October No coach today – we'll stay in the centre of Salisbury where we're a 5-minute walk from The Cathedral Close. Make your own schedule - the

choice is yours: All three venues are in the Close: there should be plenty of time and the venues are expecting us.

Visit '**Arundells**', Edward Heath's house, open from 10am-4pm. Self guided, no tours on Saturday but room guides are knowledgeable.

Mompesson House^{NT}, an impressive 18th-century townhouse with a tranquil walled garden. There is an introductory talk available throughout the day where you can learn more about the history of the house and the people who lived here. The garden you tea-room offers drinks and light bites and there is also a second-hand bookshop. Open 11am-4pm.

The Cathedral. Free tours: 1215 Magna Carta, Britain's tallest spire, World's oldest clock, largest Cathedral Close. Opportunity to attend Saturday 5.30 pm choral evensong,

Evening meal at our hotel, **The Red Lion.**



Sunday 15th October dep 9 am. Drive to **Avebury**^{NT} with the largest stone circle in the world. Part of the Stonehenge and Avebury NT World Heritage site. Circles Café for coffee if you wish.

Then on to **Witley Court and Gardens** (English Heritage). Lunch (at own cost) in their café and then a guided tour of the spectacular shell of a colossal Victorian country house mansion amid vast and beautiful grounds.

Cost per person: £280 each for 2 people sharing. Single room supplement £125. All rooms are double or twin. There's a discount for members of English Heritage and Historic Houses.

Note: The deadline for bookings to secure this trip has been extended to the end of April so please apply as soon as possible – your last chance to acquire a place on this value-for-money educational weekend!

Newcastle-under-Lyme 850

A series of events has been arranged to celebrate 850 years of the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme's incorporation in 1173. Many of the talks and films are in the Brampton Museum and Art Gallery in Brampton Park with a theme for each month, and where the NSNTA Committee are planning a social event in June.

For more details, look online: www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/850.

Anthea Bond

Heritage Open Days

The Heritage Open Days take place all over England for 10 days in September, soon after our summer newsletter, so here is some information to prepare you for the event.

The events are coordinated nationally by the National Trust and locally by thousands of organisations and individuals who share a passion for places, history and culture. It is a chance for communities to come together to learn, explore and have fun by sharing local treasures. The dates for 2023 are 8-17 September and the theme nationally is "The History of Creativity".

They were started in 1994 as a contribution to European Heritage Days which began 3 years earlier. Separate dates are used in Europe, London, Scotland and Wales. The aim is to open doors to historic monuments and buildings, especially those normally closed to the public. There may be free admission to those attractions that normally charge an entrance fee. Some events need pre-booking. Look for details of the many local events from July in the Sentinel or go to the Internet for details of dates and times: www.HeritageOpenDays.org.uk or www.stoke.gov.uk/heritage

In 2022, there were almost a million visits to 2,150 sites and events in England, many for the first time. A survey showed that almost all visitors would recommend their experience to other people and that visiting an event made them even more proud of their local area.

Anthea Bond

Help!

We **urgently** need to fill the position of **Talks Organiser** which will be vacant from May when Rose Wheat is resigning after many years of dedicated and valuable work for the Association. This is an interesting and essential post as the talks are well-attended and appreciated by our members.

Rose has already done much to ease a successor into this post in a timely manner – she has booked speakers up to April 2024, and has prepared a straightforward step-

by-step check list to guide anyone through the process, upon which she is always willing to give advice at any stage. She will pass on her extensive list of potential speakers on the 'circuit', and can provide contacts with other groups and organisations who book speakers, for the exchange of recommendations etc. (and there are others on the committee who arrange speakers for other groups).

The post could readily be split between two or more people so that if one was not at ease with a particular aspect, for example introducing and thanking speakers or being committed to attending every talk, there are others who are willing to take on that responsibility.

If you can consider taking this on please contact Rose on 01782 616116 or rose.wheat@virginmedia.com for a chat – she is more than willing to meet up with anyone to go through the entire process.

YOUR ASSOCIATION NEEDS YOU – if you are unable to help with the above there may be other ways in which you can help, with or without joining the committee.

Most members of the committee have served many years and would welcome more assistance in any aspect of supporting the association. You don't necessarily need to be a member of the committee to contribute. Marion, our Programme Co-ordinator, holds periodic Planning Meetings at which anyone is welcome to attend to present ideas for events. These are friendly informal discussions – do contact her (see back cover) for details, dates and directions. The next meeting is planned for Tuesday, 4th July 2.0pm, at Bagnall.

We are always anxious to know members' views on the activities of the NSNTA, which type of event could be more frequent, which less so and what could be added to our repertoire.

Website

Don't forget the website is there, not just for publicity, but to keep you informed of updates and activities, and to provide additional information not covered in the Newsletters. It includes the STOP PRESS of events that are full or are under-subscribed, or if it has been necessary to change details or booking arrangements, availability etc. or there are other matters which may be of interest. Remember also that it has copies of past Newsletters going back to 2002, and also a list of past events. The latter is fairly sketchy for the earlier days so if you can add more information, dates, corrections, photographs etc., or have good copies of earlier Newsletters that could be added, please get in touch with the editor.

Membership

We have pleasure in announcing and welcoming the following who have joined since we last welcomed new members: Lynn Jones, Marilyn Vigurs and Imelda Bennison. Current membership is 267. More wanted – tell your friends!

NT Membership Discount A reminder that a discount on the general National Trust membership subscription is available to eligible members – see Newsletter 110 or their website for more details.

Photographic Archives

A reminder that Kay Williams, would be grateful for some photos/leaflets from visits when she is not there herself; prints or digital images are equally acceptable. See inside the back cover for Kay's contact details.

The editor acknowledges and thanks contributors of photographs included in this issue, and also for any photos sent but not used. 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

Wednesday 21st December: Christmas Lunch at Crown Wharf.



On a Dismal Day in December we brightened the mood when 59 of us met for our annual Christmas lunch held at the Wharf in Stone. After meeting and greeting in the bar we went upstairs to the stunning Boardroom whose balconies look out on to the canal. We took our seats and proceeded to pull our crackers, don the hats and laugh at the silly jokes inside!

Most of us could remember what we had ordered previously from the menu and Cynthia was on hand to remind those who weren't sure! The food was delicious and the serving staff very helpful and friendly.



After our meal and whilst we were enjoying coffee and mince pies we listened to a talk by Philip Leason MBE JP, who is currently the Worshipful Mayor of Stafford Borough and is also a long term resident of Stone. He shared with us his vast knowledge of the origins of Stone and its diverse industries including a special interest in the growth and development of the Joules Brewery. In more recent times the "Joules" name has been bought from Coors by a new company which has converted the old brewery buildings into the impressive premises where we were sitting, and many original features, fireplaces and other woodwork have been incorporated into this new building. In conjunction with the Town Council the company are developing a Heritage Centre, an exciting project which will include a theatre.



After our meal we were invited to visit the annexe where the theatre is being constructed and the Project Manager explained more about its construction, the funding and proposals for future use. This has been a mammoth task but is clearly coming to fruition and will be a major asset for Stone and surrounding areas.

Perhaps it will be possible for our group to go and see a production sometime in the not too distant future!

Our thanks go to Cynthia Dumbelton for her work in organising such an enjoyable start to the Christmas season.

Hazel Glover

Tuesday 17th January: Talk: Sarah Moody - 'The Commonwealth War Graves Commission'.

Fifty-six hardy members braved the snow to listen to Sarah talk about the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and were rewarded with an excellent and, at times, a very poignant presentation. Sarah traced the origins of the CWGC back to the unofficial and voluntary work of Sir Fabian Ware, who kept records of marked graves from the beginning of World War 1 through to the continuing work of the commission, maintaining the numerous cemeteries and monuments and sadly, having to refurbish some which are situated in current conflict zones. The staggering number of the dead of both world wars was itself mind-blowing but even more upsetting, to me at least, were the hundreds of thousands who have no known grave. Amazingly, around fifty bodies a year are still being recovered; every effort is made to identify them and the remains are given a full military funeral.

Sarah also spoke of those decisions that were made about the uniform appearance of the gravestones, the approved wording that was engraved on those headstones and the landscaping of the cemeteries and planting appropriate to the climatic conditions.

I was delighted to discover after the talk that the commission do guided tours of the Commonwealth and German war graves on Cannock Chase and I hope to organise a car trip there next year.

Rose Wheat

Wednesday 1st February: Car Trip: Spitfire Gallery in the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery.

An evocative talk by curator Joe Perry, taking centre stage was Spitfire LFXVIE RW388, which has been in the custody of the museum for the last 50 years and recently restored by Medway Aircraft Preservation Society Ltd. Of course no discussion about the Spitfire can be made without mentioning its chief designer, Reginald Joseph Mitchell (RJM) and his connection to North Staffordshire.

RJM was born in Butt Lane, moved to Longton, educated at Hanley High and started work as an apprentice at Kerr Stuart Locomotive in Fenton, whilst studying at night school to improve his engineering and maths skills. RJM then joined Supermarine, becoming Chief Engineer and later Technical Director. Among his achievements were the designs of the Schneider Trophy winning racing seaplanes, numerous flying boats and the superlative Spitfire. Sadly, despite seeing his prototype fly, RJM didn't live to see the Spitfire go into service; however his design was so innovative, that members of his design team, including Joseph Smith, were able to continue its development.



Joe Perry talked about the 24 distinct marks of Spitfire that emanated from RJM's initial design. Some of these changes included the cockpit canopy, wing tip shapes, armament combinations, (or as in photo reconnaissance, cameras replacing armament) and the Merlin engine. Some differences were cosmetic, for instance camouflage colours and styles depending on the theatre of operations. Thus the Spitfire was able to maintain superiority over Axis aircraft. The Spitfire was the only British fighter plane to remain in production for the duration of WWII, over twenty thousand being produced until 1948.

The Spitfire Gallery contains other memorabilia connected to WWII, RJM and the Spitfire. Mention must be made of the valuable work of the Air Transport Auxiliary. Caroline Speirs spoke about her mother, Rita Baines of Trentham, who was recruited into the ATA, ferrying aircraft between manufacturers and squadron airfields; amongst the many aircraft types that Rita delivered was the redoubtable Spitfire.



Spitfire carrying beer barrels.

Photo: RV1864 CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

HIGH FLIGHT by John Gillespie Magee Jr.

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
of sun-split clouds,—and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of—wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air

Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
Where never lark nor ever eagle flew—
And, while with silent lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

John Gillespie Magee Jr. was a World War II Anglo-American Royal Canadian Air Force Spitfire fighter pilot and war poet, who wrote the sonnet "High Flight". He was killed in an accidental mid-air collision over England in 1941.

Richard Castille

Tuesday 21st February: Talk: Hazel Griffiths- 'Grace Kelly: perfect princess or consummate actress?'

Once again, Hazel treated us to a splendid talk on a beautiful, talented and controversial woman, who, unlike Eva Peron, the subject of her previous visit seemed to have been blessed from birth. Born into a wealthy Irish-American family, unfortunately she had a controlling father who seemed to believe that the best way to bring up his daughter, Grace, was to denigrate and belittle her. As a consequence, she took a string of lovers, usually much older than herself, in an apparent attempt to find the kind of father figure she lacked. Her beauty and talent led to Hollywood stardom, an Oscar and ultimately, marriage to a prince. Regrettably, she soon discovered that Rainier of Monaco was not the Prince Charming he had appeared during their brief courtship. Despite her public persona as the perfect princess, who revived the declining fortunes of the principality, and her unflagging charitable work, she was both bored and frustrated. Her children were 'challenging', as modern jargon would have it, and her death, following a fatal car crash in 1982, cut her life short at the early age of fifty-two. The romance, fame and privilege concealed loneliness and a sad private life. Hazel demonstrated this vividly in her fascinating and affecting talk.

Rose Wheat

Tuesday 21st March: Talk: David Skillen - "Pilots and Petticoats - Women Masters of the Sky".

In this fascinating talk, David introduced us to many intrepid women who were pioneers in the early days of aviation. From Elizabeth Thible, who flew a hot air balloon in 1784 through to the female astronauts who were killed in 1986 when the space shuttle Challenger exploded on take-off, all took tremendous risks and many lost their lives. Some names were familiar, Amy Johnson, Amelia Earhart, Valentina Tereshkova, others were lost to history: why is it that the achievements of so many women in all walks of life have been forgotten?

David also spoke about the work of the Air Transport Auxiliary in World War II when women flew aircraft from factories to air bases and from repair workshops back to their airfields. Armed only with an instruction manual, they flew all the airplanes the RAF had: Spitfires, Hurricanes and heavy bombers, with no extra training in between. In Russia, female aviators flew at night over the German lines to bomb petrol dumps etc. and were known as 'The Night Witches'.

Women also contributed to the design and engineering of prototypes, notably Beatrice 'Tilly' Schilling who invented a life-saving part which solved a recurring problem in the Spitfire. In the United States, women were trained the same as men for space flight but were not allowed into the space programme for many years. It was satisfying to learn that in the next moon landing, a female astronaut will definitely be included.

Rose Wheat

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*Der spring is sprung  
Der grass is riz  
I wonder where dem boidies is?*

*Der little boids is on der wing,  
Ain't dat absoid?  
Der little wings is on de boid!*

*Anon*

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## Programme Summary

### April

Sun 23<sup>rd</sup> Walk: The Bluebells of Parrot's Drumble.

Thu 27<sup>th</sup> Car Trip: Staffordshire Museum Collection Stores.

### May

Thu 11<sup>th</sup> Coach Trip: Shrewsbury guided tour and river trip.

Tue 16<sup>th</sup> AGM and Talk: Clare Wood, artistic director and chief executive of the British Ceramics Biennial.

Tue 23<sup>rd</sup> Car Trip: Tissington Hall and Well Dressings.

### June

Fri 9<sup>th</sup> Social Event at the Brampton Museum.

Sun 11<sup>th</sup> Car Trip: Pipes in the Peak Organ Museum and concert by Phil Kelsall.

Thu 15<sup>th</sup> Coach Trip: Boughton House, Kettering, Northants.

Wed 21<sup>st</sup>  
- Sun 25<sup>th</sup> Coach Holiday: 4 nights/5 days Northumberland and Treasures.

### July

Thu 20<sup>th</sup> Walk: Greenway Bank Country Park, Knypersley.

### August

Thu 10<sup>th</sup> Car Trip: Visit to a Woodland Craftsman.

### September

Fri 8<sup>th</sup>  
- Sun 17<sup>th</sup> Heritage Open Days.

Wed 13<sup>th</sup> Coach Trip: Dyrham Park, Gloucestershire.

Tue 19<sup>th</sup> Talk: Ross Underwood - "Kyrgyzstan".

### October

Thu 5<sup>th</sup> Car Trip: Staffordshire Museum Collection Stores, Beaconside Business Park, Stafford.

Fri 13<sup>th</sup>  
- Sun 15<sup>th</sup> Coach Trip: 2nights/3 days Mini Holiday to Salisbury.

### December

Tue 19<sup>th</sup> Christmas lunch.

*This Newsletter (and previous editions) is available on the website.*