

# North Staffordshire National Trust Association

**Newsletter No. 131**  
**Summer 2025**

[www.northstaffsnt.org.uk](http://www.northstaffsnt.org.uk)



Halfpenny Green Winery – come and visit in August!

© Halfpenny Green Winery

## 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 NT Assoc". Cheques are normally not cleared until after an event. We will give notice if we need to do otherwise.

Refunds on cancellation are entirely at the discretion of the committee depending on the circumstances but will normally only be made if a booking can be transferred to another on the 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 National Trust makes insurance arrangements, including public liability insurance, for Supporter Groups that carry out volunteering/activities for the benefit of the National Trust.

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.

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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.

The Newsletter is published in April, August and December. Copy and correspondence for each issue should be addressed to [NSNTA.newsletter@outlook.com](mailto:NSNTA.newsletter@outlook.com) (01782 791360) by the 15th of the preceding month at the absolute latest (but earlier if possible!)

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# **North Staffordshire National Trust Association**

## **Newsletter No. 131**

### **Summer 2025 Programme**

#### **A Note from the Chair**



You lucky people reading this! For you the clocks have changed, temperature and light levels increased, and a joyful Spring is about to turn into an idyllic Summer.

Confine your attention to this programme and you could become quite optimistic about some very pleasant days ahead.

The events listed remind me of our glory days: an invigorating walk, local history, splendid houses and gardens and sites of special interest. Even a coach trip.

Do you remember when “luxury travel” meant comfort not marginal affordability?

You will want to go on all the days out. Soon we may need you to go on all of them because our numbers are dropping. Ten per cent didn’t renew this year.

There are only 222 specimens of a rare breed like you left. We can’t blame climate change for everything, we have to study your requirements and help you prosper in the environment.

A proportion of our loyal supporters don’t like meeting on dark, cold nights. Should we meet in the afternoon? Would an affordable lunch club and talk be popular?

More people would join us if they knew about us and others, short of time in the week, would welcome more events at weekends.

Do tell us what you think and tell your friends.

Best Wishes, see you out and about this Summer,

*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.

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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 book up very early, 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 change details or booking arrangements, availability etc. or there are other matters which may be of interest. 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 27<sup>th</sup> April: Walk: Little Moreton Hall and Scholar Green.**

Hopefully this Newsletter will reach you in time to remind you of this easy four and a half mile walk starting at 11 a.m. from Little Moreton Hall. Details in the last Newsletter.

Please book your place with Richard Adams, [rjadams@doctors.org.uk](mailto:rjadams@doctors.org.uk), particularly if you wish to participate in lunch.

### **Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> May: Social Event at Biddulph Grange.**

This event advertised in the last Newsletter is now fully booked with a waiting list. A reminder that if you have booked but cannot attend to let Ralph know asap so your place can be reallocated. [ralph@ralphwhitedesign.com](mailto:ralph@ralphwhitedesign.com).

### **Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> May: Car Trip: Blists Hill, Open Air Museum.**

Details of this exciting visit were in the last Newsletter and with no limit on numbers there is still time to book within the next few days. Tea and coffee available from 10:00, introductory talk 10:30. Cost £17pp for admission and the talk. Parking and refreshments at own expense. An additional booking form is included in this issue.

Enquiries: Phil Alcock, [phil.alcock@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:phil.alcock@yahoo.co.uk) or 01782 502919 / 0781 402 8828.



Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 7.00 pm: AGM and Talk: Joe Perry: 'Reginald Mitchell'

THE NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE  
NATIONAL TRUST ASSOCIATION

FORTY-FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
NORTH STAFFS CONFERENCE CENTRE  
HARTSHILL

TUESDAY 20th MAY 2025 at 7.00PM

AGENDA:

1. Apologies for absence
2. Chairman's Opening Remarks
3. Approval of Minutes of the 44th AGM
4. Secretary's Report - Matters Arising
5. Treasurer's Report - Matters Arising
6. Setting of Subscription Level for 2025 – 2026
7. Approvals for re-election to committee \*
8. Nominations for Officers and Committee \*\*
9. Election of Officers and Committee for 2025 – 2026
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 Richard Adams, Secretary, 79 Whitmore Road, Newcastle ST5 3LZ.

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The minutes of the 2024 AGM were published in Newsletter 129, and a copy is available on-line in the Events archive.

**Reginald Mitchell & The Tale of Spitfire RW388:** Joe Perry's talk follows the AGM at 7:30.

In 2023 Joe gave us a guided tour of the Spitfire Gallery in the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, where he is the curator of local history. He will discuss North Staffordshire's link to the Supermarine Spitfire through its designer, Reginald Mitchell, who was born in Kidsgrove in 1895.



- How did Mitchell's life and career lead him to design the iconic aircraft?
- How did the Spitfire evolve?
- And how and why did one such Spitfire become an exhibit at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery?

### Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June: Car Trip: Tatton Park Japanese Garden.

The history of Japanese gardens is rooted in prehistory; patches of gravelled forest or pebbled beech were dedicated to natural spirits. The principles were introduced to Japan from China in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries and became central to the Shinto religion.

Wealthy Samurai who were not only formidable war lords but often intellectuals, established many of the most significant gardens in Japan, many of which survive to this day.

Japanese gardens come in many different styles but principally, dry gardens, rock gardens, tea gardens and courtyard gardens. The most familiar style in the West is probably the dry or Zen garden, of which an iconic example is the Peace garden in Coventry, designed by the children of Coventry with guidance from the Chairman of the Japanese Garden Society, Robert Ketchell, a holder of the Order of the Rising Sun and Gold Rays with Rosette. The garden was built by the J.G.S. and opened by His Excellency the Japanese Ambassador Hayashi to commemorate Hiroshima day, on July 2nd 2021.





In the 1900s Britain became fascinated with all things Japanese and in 1910 an exhibition was staged at White City, visited by over eight million people. It was this exhibition that inspired Alan de Tatton to commission the Tatton Park garden to be built by a team of Japanese workmen who brought with them many of the garden's artefacts. Unfortunately after the first world war the garden fell into disrepair until it was rescued in this century by the National Trust under Sam Youd the head gardener with the help of the J,G,S.

The Garden at Tatton Park is basically a Stroll Garden, the least disciplined style. It incorporates mythical and factual scenes but most importantly it harmonises with nature.

It is set in a small valley with a stream running through it from a grassy Mount Fuji into a lake, under a bridge and to the tea house. The garden is best described as Anglo Japanese as it incorporates many plants not used in Japan such as Ferns, Rhododendrons and some of the maples . When we visit the garden the foliage will be at its best, and I am sure that our guide will be only too willing to show us a

garden of which Tatton Park is justly proud.

We will meet in the stable yard at 1.30 p.m. for the short walk of about 15 minutes to the Japanese Garden where we will meet our guides. The Tours of the garden itself, not usually open to visitors, will involve some slopes and mossy pebbles so please wear suitable footwear. Those who feel they cannot cope will be able to walk around the perimeter of the garden, which affords excellent views into the garden, and will also be accompanied. The ethos behind the formation of a Japanese Garden is fascinating and provides an insight into the importance of nature and the meaning of the symbolism involved.

A limited number of mobility scooters are available to prebook for Tatton Park but cannot be used in the Japanese Garden. Please ask Marion or Phil ASAP.

Tatton Park is open from 10am till 6.00 pm, so there will be time for members to visit the house and other gardens at their leisure prior to the tour and lunch. Members will be responsible for the cost of parking and for lunch which is available on site. The postcode is WA16 6SG. The cost of this visit is £8.00/pp to cover the cost of the tour. This is a National Trust property. Guests who are not NT members will also have to pay for entrance to Tatton Park gardens

Please apply to Phil Alcock with application form and cheque. Enquiries: phil.alcock@yahoo.co.uk or 01782 502919 / 0781 402 8828.



## Friday 6<sup>th</sup> June at 2.00pm: Planning Meeting.

No booking form to complete for this, just a phone call or email to our event co-ordinator to say you will be coming to bring new ideas or to help arrange an event or two. If you don't have anything in mind there are a few suggestions around that could be brought to fruition. Plenty of help available if new to the task, and all reasonable expenses paid to recce and arrange a visit. We really do need more support for our dwindling band of organisers, and ideas to boost our dwindling membership. Contact Helen ([helenmansell@gmail.com](mailto:helenmansell@gmail.com), 07866352927) or Marion ([marionlycett@hotmail.com](mailto:marionlycett@hotmail.com), 01782502919)

## Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> July: Coach Trip: Kelmarsh Hall and Gardens, Northants.

Grade I listed Kelmarsh Hall is an elegant, eighteenth century country house designed by James Gibbs for William Hanbury, a noted antiquarian in 1732. Successive owners and tenants have left their mark on the hall, including, in the twentieth century, the famed interior designer Nancy Lancaster, known as the 'doyenne of the country house style'. The ground floor has many magnificent rooms, with a ballroom, dining room, saloon, Great Hall, library, Chinese Drawing Room and Yellow Drawing Room and if you become sated by the luxury, you can always experience the stories of the servants 'below-stairs'. The upstairs bedrooms contain a reconstruction of Nancy Lancaster's own bedroom as well as exhibition space. The Grade II listed gardens offer herbaceous borders, a rose garden, woodlands, a lake and impressive topiary plus other features, to entertain you on a relaxing walk. Please note that many of the paths are loose gravel.

Tours of the house are free-flow and self-guided though friendly and knowledgeable guides can be found in each room. Ramps and platform lifts are in place in the Hall to provide almost complete access though first floor rooms are approached via a staircase.

On arrival we shall be welcomed with a short talk, followed by tea/ coffee and biscuits. Lunch will be served in the Sweet Peas Tearoom where you will have a choice of two menus (please indicate on booking form). There are picnic areas in the grounds but indoor seating is reserved for people who have purchased lunch from the official caterers. There is also a stable-yard gift shop.

We shall depart from Brunswick St. at 8:45am and hope to be back in Newcastle by 6:30pm, traffic permitting. Cost: £49 (£51 non-members) includes coach fare, driver's tip, entrance to Hall and Gardens, lunch and contribution to the National Trust. If you want to bring your own picnic lunch, the cost will be £37.

Please apply to Rose Wheat by Friday 30<sup>th</sup> May at the latest, enclosing the booking form, choice of lunch, cheque and SAE. Enquiries to Rose Wheat on 01782 616113 or [rosewheat@virginmedia.com](mailto:rosewheat@virginmedia.com).

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> August: Car Trip: Halfpenny Green Wine Estate, Bobbington. DY7 5EP.



A thirty-two year old vision to produce highly regarded wines in Staffordshire, brought to fruition and run by the Vickers Family. You will be welcomed in the Wine House, a purpose built function room, and then expertly guided round the vines with their many grape varieties on the sheltered, south-facing, slopes. There will then be a presentation in the amazing space of The Winery of the wines and the wine making process. This includes a tasting of four award winning wines.

A half hour breather follows when you could visit The Wine Shop, The Butchers and Delicatessen (Cheese and Wine), or the Craft Village, after which you will be ready for The Cream Tea (scone, jam and cream, tea or coffee).

Before leaving you will still have time until closing to catch up on features you want to explore further.

Programme for the day. (Times after 12.30 are approximate).

12 noon Meet in The Wine House.

Tea and Coffee on arrival.

12.30. Expert-led Tour of Vines.

Presentation of Wines and Winemaking in The Winery.

2.30. Wine Tasting.

Break.

3.15 ish. Cream Tea.

3.45 - 5 pm Free Exploration of features on estate.

Cost of event £22.50 pp. (Non-members £23.50). Numbers are limited to 48.

Please apply to Ralph White with booking form, cheque and SAE. Enquiries: Ralph@ralphwhitedesign.com



Thu 28<sup>th</sup> Aug - Mon 1<sup>st</sup> Sep 2025: Coach Holiday: 5 days in Douglas, Isle of Man.

This holiday is fully booked with a waiting list. A reminder to participants that the final balance needs to be paid by the 17<sup>th</sup> July.

## Monday 8<sup>th</sup> September: Car Trip: Wollerton Old Hall Garden, Market Drayton.



Monty Don, who filmed here recently, says it is one of his favourite gardens in the world, and it's on our doorstep.

The site is an ancient one, but the three acre garden is modern and formal, featuring contrasting "rooms". Colour, form and scale have been used cleverly to evoke contrasting moods of calm or excitement.

The borders are richly planted with perennials growing in what is called "controlled exuberance"! The garden is renowned for salvias, clematis and roses. I would mention the absolutely gigantic dahlias.

Programme of visit.

Please park in the field opposite the entrance and meet in the tearoom at 11.am where tea and coffee will be served.



A tour of the gardens by Mr. Jenkins, the joint owner, will begin at 11.30 until about 12.45. Lunch, included in the cost of the day, will then be served in the Tearoom (See booking form for choices).

There will then be free time for you to explore the gardens at leisure and visit the excellent plant sales area.

At 2.45-3pm home-made cake and refreshments will be served in the Tearoom. If you have to leave earlier, your cake can be boxed.

This is an exclusive opening for us so the tea room will be catering for our prearranged requirements. This means that the day is all inclusive. The owners don't allow picnicking in the garden and it won't be possible to have sandwiches in the field with ad hoc purchases from the tea room.

Cost of event £32.00pp (Non-members £33.00). Please apply to Ralph White with booking form, cheque and SAE. Enquiries: [Ralph@ralphwhitedesign.com](mailto:Ralph@ralphwhitedesign.com)

### *Other events that may be of interest*

We have been contacted by Biddulph Grange, our local NT property whom we are keen to support, with a list of activities for the rest of this year, starting with the Easter Trail. This is included at the end of this Newsletter.

## ***Talks in the Autumn***

These will include some familiar speakers as well as some new ones: Rob Pointon local artist, Catrin Jones from the V&A Wedgwood collection at Barlaston and Peter Thomas, the tree expert from Keele University. If you have heard a good local speaker on a topic of interest to National Trust members, please let Anthea Bond know the contact details.

The talks will continue to take place in the North Staffs Medical Institute (Wade Conference Centre) in Hartshill Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 7NY at 7.30 on the third Tuesday of the winter months excluding December.

## ***Heritage Open Days***

These interesting events are held every year in September, organised centrally by the National Trust and locally in England and Wales by very many volunteers. In 2025, the dates are Friday 12 September to Sunday 21 September. The theme will be "Architecture", including buildings, bridges, beehives and more. Details will be available online in August with highlights in our Autumn Newsletter.

## ***We need your help***

We continue to seek more support towards organising events to augment our dwindling number of organisers who have been doing so for many years and cannot go on for ever. You will see that some organisers are having to arrange two events in the same season, which gets very complicated! And as Ralph says in his introduction, do let us know if you would like to see different types of event, or at different times.

## ***Membership***

We have pleasure in announcing and welcoming the following who have joined since we last welcomed new members: Liz Martindale, Linda Ross, Heather Gardner, Mrs. L and Mr. G. G. Haywood. Current membership is 222.

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## ***Booking / Enquiry Forms***

*It is preferable that organisers hold emergency contact details for members on trips should a situation arise. You are therefore invited, particularly if travelling without a companion, to provide the name and number of someone who can be contacted in emergency, along with any critical medical conditions that might be relevant, or whether (and where) you carry ICE (In Case of Emergency) details. We also request that you provide your own mobile number so that you can be contacted should you fail to appear at a rendezvous.*

## *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 11<sup>th</sup> December: Christmas Lunch at DoubleTree Hilton Hotel.



This was a lovely central venue in Festival Park for the 50 Members able to attend, demonstrating the friendliness and the togetherness of our local National Trust Association. The size and layout of the lunch tables allowed easy conversation and space for food and drink. The ample

choice of menus available to pre-order enabled a smooth but unhurried lunch to take place, with opportunity for discussions and suggestions for future talks and visits to be planned. Easy car parking and the opportunity for car sharing proved very suitable for the occasion.

A big thank you to Marion and Phil for their organisation.

*Richard Mayer.*



## Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January: Talk: Catrin Jones, Chief Curator at the V&A Wedgwood Collection.

This was unfortunately cancelled at short notice due to illness of the speaker but has been rebooked for the autumn.

## Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February: Car Trip: Moorcroft Pottery Heritage Visitor Centre.

It was a sparkling and crisp morning on Feb 6<sup>th</sup> as a group of about 30 N.T. members gathered in the car park of the Moorcroft Heritage Centre in Burslem to visit the showroom, the Museum and to see demonstrations of the processes involved in the production of these famous and unique pieces of pottery which are vibrant in colour and fabulous in design.



Set up by William Moorcroft in 1897 and inherited by Walter Moorcroft on William's death in 1945 the factory was awarded several prestigious medals over the years, including 'Potters to the Queen' in 1928. Despite their excellent reputation the 1980's found them in financial

difficulties due to rises in wages and fuel and in 1993 were taken over by Mr. Hugh Edwards who manages it to this day. The business has survived, in a very harsh environment which saw many factories closing down, by focusing on hand made quality and introducing a 'Collector's Club' and a Design Studio employing six designers led by Rachel Bishop. These innovations generated huge interest amongst collectors because now every piece was stamped on the base with the year; the designer; the tube- liner and the painter and this led to collectors collecting a certain designer or a particular year etc, making them more desirable and personal. Occasionally, only 5 pieces would be produced, thus creating a frenzy of excitement amongst collectors!





Dawn, our very knowledgeable guide took us through the various stages involved in the production of these hand-made pieces of art, starting with the design; the transfer of the design; tube-lining; painting; glazing and finally the firing. She cheerfully confessed to having no skills whatsoever, which, in



her opinion, made her more appreciative of them! As we moved slowly through the various rooms it became obvious to me that we were witnessing something very special. They made it all look so easy but, quite rapidly, I felt there was some sort of magic going on. It started with the mould maker. He was able to tell by the sound of simply tapping the mould exactly when the correct amount of liquid

clay had been absorbed to produce the required thickness of the piece, before the liquid clay was poured away! Moving on to the 'transfer of the design'.. how did she bend that piece of celluloid round a sphere? Next was the tube-liner, if she uses too much or too little it's a disaster. The painting inside these boundaries demands such accuracy and dexterity of the painter, and, finally, on to the glazing, where the glaze is judged OK by the 'feel' of it on the fingers of the glazier! At any of these stages the margin for error is Nil. The expertise of these employees flies far above any training or experience. They also use other senses such as touch; instinct; texture, smell and hearing. What a joy to witness such talents! In this mechanised; digitalised and over-processed world is this not something we can and should appreciate and treasure?



Many thanks to John Pedrazzini for organising this visit which was truly fascinating.

*Katie Forrest-Hay.*

## Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> February: Talk: Stuart Haywood, Victorian Migrants from Wales to North Staffs.

Despite chilly weather, this talk was well attended and included members of the local Welsh Society, who knew about it from their Facebook page.

Using maps, census forms and photographs, Stuart introduced us to the various Welsh communities in North Staffs. They started mainly in Hanley and spread to Mow Cop, Silverdale, Chesterton, Cauldon and Froghall. He explained that this migration started in 1846 and by 1895 included many children. In 1900 there were 5000 Welsh here, the migration was rooted in the poverty of many Welsh towns and encouraged by the offer of employment in the collieries and steelworks of North Staffordshire.

Welsh chapels were built because the Welsh migrants did not always understand services in English, the chapels were thought to be a means to counteract 'the torrent of wickedness in the townships'. The building of these chapels was an important goal for many migrants and we were introduced to the locations of these chapels, including many in Hanley. The accommodation was good, but they were not too big for evening services. We heard about the influence and impact of certain Welsh preachers: Rev. Jenkyn Edwards, Rev. Richard Conway and Rev. Moses Ellis, who addressed the problem of drunkenness in the Welsh pubs established here. One Reverend Ellis Lloyd was sent from Wales to Talke O'th Hill as a "Missionary".

Stuart's book, "The Welsh in North Staffordshire", was on sale. We left having gained an understanding of the Welsh colonies in our area and an awareness of the Welsh Society here today. The North Staffs Welsh Society was formed in 1967 and meets in the Courtyard Hotel at Keele University. The meetings take place on the same day as our NSNTA talks, the third Tuesday of the month, but they are at 2.30 pm

*Chris Bell*

## Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March: Car Trip: V&A archives and reserve collection at Wedgwood in Barlaston.

We enjoyed this visit to 2 areas in Barlaston not normally open to the public.

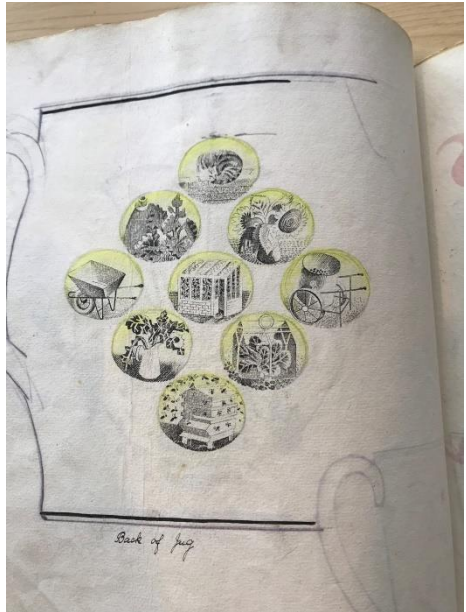
The Archives of papers has been described by UNESCO as one of the most complete ceramic manufacturing archives in existence. It has business records including pattern books, shape books, orders, ledgers, catalogues, and correspondence





relating to the Wedgwood factory as well as family correspondence. It records the lives and times of the people linked to Josiah Wedgwood and his family and to the people employed by Wedgwood since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Archive collection is more than 250 years old. It was held at Keele University 1960-2008 but is now in purpose-built storage. Archivist Lucy Lead gave us the background, she flies to Australia soon to accompany the pieces which will be on display there for 3 months.

I was interested in seeing the pattern book with a design of garden implements by Eric Ravilious.



The letter from Charles Darwin to his friend Charles Lyell about his engagement to his cousin Emma Wedgwood was charming. It was such a large and talented family. Charles' sister Caroline married Emma's brother Josiah Wedgwood III and they became the grandparents of the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Assistant Curator Michael Ruddy showed us the Reserve Collection of items which have been stored in cardboard boxes and tissue paper. They are being unwrapped, catalogued and placed in new cupboards with glass fronts, so that they can easily be seen by the public on request. Volunteers help with this long process.

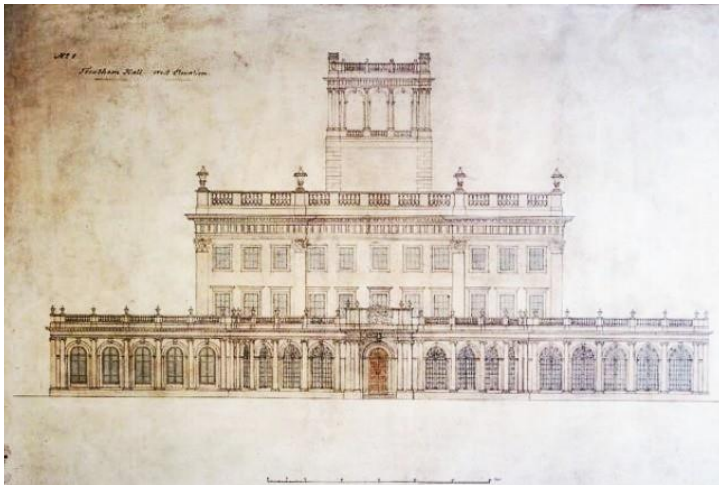


Afterwards we ate lunch on china with the beautiful Parklands pattern. It is made in Barlaston and is available to buy only in Barlaston, a teapot costs £205.

*Anthea Bond*

## Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> March: Talk: Steve Booth: The Dukes and Duchesses of Sutherland after 1833 and their local impact.

Steve took a near capacity audience on a journey from the statue of the first Duke of Sutherland, overlooking his Trentham domain, to Rosemary Ednam Close, just a few yards from where we were sitting. We learned that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke, whose deafness affected his political aspirations, married Harriet Howard, daughter of the Earl of Carlisle, when she was 16 and he was 20 years older. She was a great friend and confidant of Queen Victoria and supported the Queen in her widowhood. She held the official position of Mistress of the Robes. When her husband succeeded his father and she became the Duchess of Sutherland in 1833, they quickly commissioned the eminent architect Charles Barry to draw up plans to renovate and extend Trentham Hall and gardens into something palatial, befitting their wealth and status.



Their son, George Granville, succeeded to the title in 1861. He was less interested in Trentham Hall. In 1849 he had married Anne Hay-MacKenzie, Countess of Cromartie. She was also Mistress of Robes to Queen Victoria, but they became estranged and he carried on an open adulterous affair with Mary Blair. He created a scandal by marrying her in Florida, within weeks of his wife's death. Mary was commonly referred to as Duchess Blair, rather than the Duchess of Sutherland.

The fourth and final Duke of Sutherland to live at Trentham Hall, and prompted its demise and demolition, was Cromartie Sutherland Leveson Gower. He married Millicent St Clair Erskine, when she was 17. Meddlesome Millie, as she was later dubbed, was given pride of place in Steve's talk and we heard about her beauty and good works. These included founding the Holiday Home at Hanchurch and the North Staffs Cripples Aid Society and Cripples Guild Workshops in Trentham and, not least, her campaign against lead paint glazes in the pottery industry. She drove cars, and was the first president of the Ladies Automobile Club, which later became the RAC. Her legendary war service, in Belgium and France in WW1, earned her the Prix de Guerre.

Information about Millicent's daughter, Rosemary, completed the talk and brought us to our final destination. A beauty like her mother, Rosemary nursed alongside her mother in France. A proposal from Edward Prince of Wales was vetoed, but she married Viscount Ednam. She began a campaign to raise funds for the Hartshill Orthopaedic Hospital in the 1920s, but she was tragically killed in an air accident in 1930. When the hospital was opened the following year, it was named the Rosemary Ednam Memorial Hospital in tribute. The buildings were demolished in 1997, but her name now lives on in Rosemary Ednam Close, built on the site.

Steve's talk included some rare images, in addition to the salient facts and the odd salacious detail. It was an enjoyable journey.

*Marilyn Vigurs*

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## Biddulph Grange Garden programme of events 2025.

This Newsletter might just arrive in time to draw your attention to the Easter Trail (12th- 27th April) bringing guaranteed family fun as well as a chocolate treat! Details on their website.

Other events scheduled for the year are:

### **June:**

Jurassic June.

- Three weekends of fossils, dinosaurs and all things geological.

## **July:**

WordsFest.

- A celebration of words, spoken word, writing and reading throughout July.
  - Outdoor theatre- 4 July – Romeo and Juliet, 2pm and MacBeth, 6.30pm.
  - Poetry workshop with Nick Degg – 5 July.
  - Childrens' writing workshop – 6 July.
  - Adult creative writing workshop – 12 July.
  - Outdoor theatre – Twelfth Night, 6pm.
  - Spoken word – What Ho Wodehouse, 25 July 6pm.
- Booking and information details on the website.

## **August:**

Summer of Play.

- The annual Summer of Play returns with games on the tennis lawn, keeping you fit and entertained.

## **September:**

Heritage Open Day.

- Working with our partners at the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, Town Council and local Church we will be opening the gates for the Bateman Walk through to the church and the long walk into the country park, Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> – Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September.  
Entry is free on those 3 days.

## **October:**

Halloween.

- The spooky Halloween trail is back magically re-appearing around the garden for two weeks at the end of October. Trails £3.50.

## **December:**

Christmas at Biddulph Grange

- Christmas wreath making workshops, first week of December
- Festive Christmas Lights trail every Friday, Saturday and Sunday throughout December and 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> December.
- Father Christmas, various dates and times throughout December.
- Booking essential for all Christmas events, please see the website for details and prices.

| <b>NSNTA Committee 2024-5</b>                                                        |                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Ralph White</b><br>Chairman<br>ralph@ralphwhitedesign.com                         | Thyme Cottage, 20 Upper Green, Wolverhampton<br>WV6 8QH<br>01902 752833             |
| <b>Vacant</b><br>Vice-chairman                                                       |                                                                                     |
| <b>Richard Adams</b><br>Secretary and Membership Secretary<br>rjadams@doctors.org.uk | 79 Whitmore Road<br>Newcastle ST5 3LZ<br>07599 912938                               |
| <b>Huw Davies</b><br>Treasurer<br>huws.family@gmail.com                              | 2 Vicarage Crescent<br>Newcastle ST5 1NJ<br>07825 475382                            |
| <b>Marion Lycett</b><br>Programme Coordinator<br>marionlycett@hotmail.com            | Millstone House, The Green, Bagnall<br>Stoke-on-Trent ST9 9JR<br>01782 502919       |
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| <b>Cynthia Dumbelton</b><br>dumbeltoncynthia@gmail.com                               | 32 The Lea<br>Stoke-on-Trent ST4 8DY<br>01782 641765                                |
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| <b>Sue Till</b><br>st.till@icloud.com                                                | 6 Kingsfield Oval, Basford,<br>Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs ST4 6HW<br>01782 405415 |
| <b>Bob Winter</b><br>robert.winter14@btinternet.com                                  | 15 Robinson Road<br>Stoke-on-Trent ST4 8ED<br>01782 642942                          |
| <b>Other Posts</b>                                                                   |                                                                                     |
| <b>Kay Williams</b><br>Archivist<br>williakay@gmail.com                              | 3 The Spinney, Madeley Heath, Crewe, CW3 9TB.<br>01782 751018                       |
| <b>Anthea Bond</b><br>Talks Organiser<br>antheabond@hotmail.com                      |                                                                                     |

| Programme Summary                           |                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>April</b>                                |                                                          |
| Sun 27 <sup>th</sup>                        | Walk: Little Moreton Hall and Scholar Green.             |
| <b>May</b>                                  |                                                          |
| Thu 1 <sup>st</sup>                         | Social Event at Biddulph Grange.                         |
| Sat 17 <sup>th</sup>                        | Car Trip: Blists Hill, Open Air Museum.                  |
| Tue 20 <sup>th</sup>                        | AGM and Talk: Joe Perry: 'Reginald Mitchell'.            |
| <b>June</b>                                 |                                                          |
| Thu 5 <sup>th</sup>                         | Car Trip: Tatton Park Japanese Garden.                   |
| Fri 6 <sup>th</sup>                         | Planning Meeting at Marion's 2pm.                        |
| <b>July</b>                                 |                                                          |
| Tue 8 <sup>th</sup>                         | Coach Trip: Kelmarsh Hall and Gardens, Northants.        |
| <b>August</b>                               |                                                          |
| Thu 21 <sup>st</sup>                        | Car Trip: Halfpenny Green vineyard, South Staffordshire. |
| Thu 28 <sup>th</sup>                        | Coach Holiday: 5 days in Douglas, Isle of Man.           |
| <b>September</b>                            |                                                          |
| Mon 8 <sup>th</sup>                         | Car Trip: Wollerton Old Hall Garden, Market Drayton.     |
| Fri 12 <sup>th</sup> – Sun 21 <sup>st</sup> | Heritage Open Days.                                      |
| Tue 16 <sup>th</sup>                        | Talk.                                                    |
| <b>October</b>                              |                                                          |
| Tue 21 <sup>st</sup>                        | Talk.                                                    |
| <b>November</b>                             |                                                          |
| Thu 6 <sup>th</sup>                         | Car Trip: Repeat visit to Stafford History Centre.       |
| Tue 18 <sup>th</sup>                        | Talk.                                                    |
| <b>December</b>                             |                                                          |
| Sun 14 <sup>th</sup>                        | Christmas Lunch at Double Tree.                          |

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