

OAK LEAVES

MID-WARWICKSHIRE ASSOCIATION of the NATIONAL TRUST

Autumn 2015

No. 86



In 2015 the Mid-Warwickshire Association donated £1000 to the Neptune Coastline Campaign, £1000 towards the conservation of Breugel's Massacre of the Innocents and £300 to buy a bench at Charlecote Park.

Photo: National Trust

**THE NATIONAL TRUST
MID-WARWICKSHIRE ASSOCIATION**

*A Voluntary Association of
National Trust Members*

PRESIDENT
Sir Edmund Fairfax-Lucy

VICE PRESIDENT
Graham E. Cooper

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: Norman Pratt Tel: 425639

VICE CHAIRMAN Vacant

HON.SECRETARY: Julia Johnstone Tel: 424841
57 Almond Avenue, Leamington Spa CV32 6QD

HON.TREASURER : Marianne Pitts Tel: 885532

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Valerie.Grimmer Tel: 492226
62 Foxes Way, Warwick, CV34 6AY

COMPUTER CO-ORDINATOR: Archie Pitts

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Chris Rhodes Tel: 330057
chriscdmrhodes@aol.com

PROGRAMME SECRETARY: Nanette Rooney Tel: 430701

PRESS & PUBLICITY: Marianne Pitts Tel: 885532

WEB SITE: Jill Rooney

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Gerry Rooney, Margaret Tomlinson, Richard Munday;

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

The ensuing months since being elected as your Association Chairman have personally proved to be extremely interesting and rewarding. It is a pleasure to be a member of such a dedicated, hardworking and knowledgeable Committee.

I have found that the two main activities of the Association, the speakers and trips, to have been excellent. Speakers ranging from the Court System from 1066, an insight into the life of a world life photographer, styles of architecture, and an evening of entertainment. The next speaker in October will talk on how the people of Birmingham coped during the war years. Our speakers for the next year have already been arranged and look to be equally as interesting.

A number of trips have been arranged and having been on two, the tour of Bath and the Theatre Royal, and a visit to the Botanical Gardens at Kew, I found, apart from the venues themselves, to have been extremely well organised and excellent value for the cost involved. As all the trips have been fully booked I think this supports my feelings. As the person in charge of the trip to Henley in September I hope I can maintain the high standard of the other stewards.

It is pleasing to report that there has been an increase in new members to the Association during the year, and the Committee is actively examining a number of ways the benefits of being a member can be brought to the public. I have personally spoken to a number of National Trust members who have not heard of this Association's existence, and I feel National Trust literature should include details of Association's such as ours.

As a result of giving a donation towards the provision of bulbs for the gardens at Charlecote a number of members were invited to plant an oak tree in the gardens, and in March we were taken around areas of Charlecote by the Area Ranger, Adam, which are never seen by the usual visitor. As commemorative plaques are not allowed it will, unfortunately, be an anonymous, but no less a benefit to the garden's future appearance.

It has been possible to make several donations to National Trust properties including Charlecote, Upton House, and Neptune to counter the effect of erosion of our coast line. Many of the points made above will be covered in more detail in this edition of the Oak Leaves.

I would again thank the Committee for all its hard work, and also the volunteers who help in so many other ways.

In closing I would like to give you early notice of the Association Annual General Meeting which will be held on the 4th November at the Spa Centre.

Norman H Pratt
Chairman "

NATIONAL TRUST: SUPPORTER GROUP CONFERENCE, CALKE ABBEY, MARCH 26 2015

They wheeled out the Big Guns for us: Helen Ghosh, National Director, opened this conference by talking about the National Trust's original mission: what would the founders think of the present position and achievements of the group? They would certainly be impressed by the FOUR MILLION membership and amazed by the 350 valuable properties in the portfolio: the NT was founded more for the preservation of the countryside than architecture. That change in emphasis was triggered by the great threat to historic houses of the First World War, punitive Death Duties and the death of eldest sons and heirs. The most successful national campaign has been Neptune to save the coastline (again not part of the original vision). This has raised £65 million so far and money is still coming in.

What now? The NT continues to conserve and repair and improve its properties and aims to set a good example

- in energy conservation and climate change, using renewable resources (biomass and water power),
- through its 1,500 tenant farmers on sustainable and wildlife-friendly agriculture
- in cooperating with other agencies such as Local Authorities, RSPB, Woodland and Wildlife Trusts and the Sports Council to share problems and promote best practice
- by the use of IT: there is to be a new NT website this summer. Scannable membership cards mean that individuals can be encouraged by email to make repeat visits to themed events programmes at specific properties near their home. (It would be good if each property website also linked to the local supporter group websites but this is unlikely to happen.)

All these plans have multi-million pound budgets for the next 10 years. A local example of a successful venture is the new Café Restaurant at Packwood: predicted to raise visitor numbers from 60 to 80 thousand, they have doubled to 120 thousand.

The Trust relies on its 60,000 volunteers as much as on its 10,000 paid staff. Volunteers man (woman?) the shops, ticket offices, restaurants and cafes, provide gardeners and room guides, often part-time and in shifts, which must require considerable organisational skills from the (paid) Property Managers. Each property is different and they have considerable autonomy. Many employ staff who are good speakers, but there is no national or regional list available – we have to find them by enquiry. Supporter groups are more distant than volunteers and communication between them and the local properties they support may be a problem. Managers can be obstructive by taking down or moving noticeboards advertising local events, not replenishing leaflets when the last is taken and so on. It is worth cultivating this relationship.

Recruitment of new members of local supporter groups is also a problem for all of us. Address lists of new NT members used to be sent to supporter groups as routine and is no longer – ours not to reason why. New members could be (but are not) sent details of local supporter groups with their new membership cards – again, no reason was given for this omission. Several supporter groups have designed and printed colourful leaflets of their

own and persuaded their local Managers to stock and display them, leading to new members, and this is something our Committee will consider carefully.

The money provided by the Supporter groups is significant to each property. Some groups have links with local Managers and discuss their needs and wishes directly, which must lead to more satisfying and satisfactory results for all concerned, though by-passing the central administration is not approved! Biddulph Grange is seeking funds to restore its Geological Gallery: the discovery of a complete set of dinosaur bones not only provides an excellent press and media release but will also attract lots of local funding, from parents of small boys in particular. Publicity for donations is important for raising morale and recruiting new members. Local dignitaries and celebrities such as TV personalities might be persuaded to attend a photographic session – it is good publicity for them as well, after all.

Altogether a very interesting and thought-provoking day, ending with a tour of the property, which is unique, in that parts of us are unrestored.

Marianne Pitts

National Trust Mid-Warwickshire Association website

As some of you may be aware, a National Trust Mid-Warwickshire Association website has been set up - <http://nationaltrustmidwarks.org.uk/>. The Programme of Events, latest and past newsletters, our Constitution and useful links to other local places of historical interest can all be found here. Please do go and have a look. If there is anything you would like to see on the website that is not already there, please let us know by emailing us at ntmidwarks@gmail.com

Digital Newsletter Option

We would like to offer members the option of receiving their newsletter digitally. If you would like to receive your newsletter by email in future, please email us at ntmidwarks@gmail.com and we will get this set up for you.

EVENING MEETINGS Autumn 2015- Spring 2016

Our meetings are held on Wednesday evenings, normally the first Wednesday of the month in the Avon Hall of the Royal Spa Centre, and start at 7.30pm **Guests are welcome. The admission price for non-members of the Association is £3**

Wednesday 7th October 2015

Andrew Lound – “When the Lights went out”: Birmingham goes to war. Birmingham people during the Second World War, with music, images, sound effects and animation.

Wednesday 4th November 2015

Annual General Meeting, to be followed by a talk by Jennifer Bell: "Banking for Victory - A Country House at War"

Wednesday 20th January 2016

Alan Rooney: “Legend of Napoleon” Napoleon was demonised by his enemies, vilified by his own people in 1813, soundly defeated in 1815 and isolated in the last years of his life, and yet he orchestrated one of the greatest PR campaigns of modern times.

Wednesday 3rd February 2016

Ted Watson “Music and Shakespeare”. The talk will be illustrated with instruments used in the production of Shakespeare’s plays to the modern instruments of today.

Wednesday 2nd March 2016

Captain William Wells. “London’s Liquid History”. The story of the River Thames from its source to the sea, bridges, weirs, locks, islands, ferries, tunnels and docks are discussed. We see how the River has been used by royalty and commoners, politicians and sailors and most importantly why it is known as ‘Liquid History’.

Please detach these four pages and bring to the

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THE NATIONAL TRUST

MID-WARWICKSHIRE ASSOCIATION

From the Honorary Secretary, 57 Almond Avenue, Leamington Spa CV32 6QD

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 4th November 2015 at 7.30pm

You are invited to attend the Forty Second Annual General Meeting of the Mid-Warwickshire Association of the National Trust, which will be held on Wednesday 4th November 2015 at 7.30pm in the Avon Hall of the Royal Spa Centre, Newbold Terrace, Leamington Spa CV32 4HN.

You are requested to submit nominations for next year's officials. The nominations should be lodged with me no later than 22nd October 2015 on a separate sheet of paper, giving all necessary information – i.e. Name of Nominee; Name of Proposer; Name of Seconder; Signature of Nominee agreeing to be proposed. Send to Hon. Secretary, 57 Almond Avenue, Leamington Spa CV32 6QD.

Please make every effort to attend this important meeting.

Yours sincerely,

J. Johnstone (Miss) Hon. Secretary
Mid-Warwickshire Association of the National Trust.

The consent of the member to be nominated must be obtained

MID-WARWICKSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF THE NATIONAL TRUST

WEDNESDAY 4th NOVEMBER 2015

AGENDA

1. Opening address from the President
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of AGM held on 5th November 2014
4. Matters arising from the Minutes
5. Correspondence and Announcements
6. To receive accounts for the year ended 31st August 2015
7. To receive the Management Committee Report for the year ended 31st August 2015
8. To elect Officials:
 - a) President
 - b) Vice President
 - c) Chairman
 - d) Vice- Chairman
 - e) Honorary Secretary
 - f) Honorary Treasurer
 - g) Membership Secretary
 - h) Programme Secretary
 - i) Excursions Secretary
 - j) Press and Publicity Officer
 - k) Newsletter Editor
 - l) Not more than six Committee Members
9. To elect an Honorary Financial Examiner
10. Any Other Business: Please inform the Honorary Secretary not later than 22nd October 2015 of any item you wish to raise.

Minutes of the forty second Annual General Meeting of the Mid-Warwickshire Association of the National Trust, held at the Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, on Wednesday 5th November 2014.

The President Sir Edmund Fairfax-Lucy opened the meeting by giving an up to date report on the happenings at Charlecote Park, during the year.

Apologies were received from Mrs Valerie Douglas, Mr C. Rhodes, Mrs Margaret Watkins,

Minutes of the forty-first Annual General Meeting have been circulated. The adoption was proposed by Mr Roy Nabbs, seconded by Mr Gerald Rooney.

The Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st August 2014 were presented by the Hon. Treasurer Mrs Marianne Pitts. All were in favour that the accounts be adopted. Proposed by Mr C. Beadle, seconded by Mrs V. Davis.

Marianne reported that she hopes that the Gift Aid will bring in a further income of approximately £3000 to £4000 next year.

Annual Report - this has been circulated. Proposed by Miss N. Pope, seconded by Mr C. Beadle.

Chairman's Observations.

Richard Munday thanked Sir Edmund for continuing as our President. He thanked Graham Cooper for chairing the meetings also the committee meetings. He also thanked the Secretary and Treasurer. Membership is slightly down and we could do with more new members including younger ones.

Election of Officers. Sir Edmund took the chair.

The Management Committee proposed and seconded the following Officers who may be announced as elected in accordance with the Association's Constitution.

President - Sir Edmund Fairfax-Lucy

Vice-President - Mr Graham E. Cooper

Chairman Mr Norman Pratt

Vice-Chairman -

Honorary Secretary - Miss Julia Johnstone

Honorary Treasurer - Mrs Marianne Pitts

Membership Secretary - Mrs Valerie Grimmer

Computer Co-Ordinator - Mr A. Pitts

Distribution Office

Programme Secretary Mrs N. Rooney

Newsletter Editor - Mr Chris Rhodes

Web-Site - Miss J. Rooney.

Not more than six committee members: Mr Richard Munday, Mrs Margaret Tomlinson.

Election of Inspector of Accounts - Mrs Ruth Calvert - proposed by Mr Norman Pratt, seconded by Mrs Marianne Pitts.

Mr Norman Pratt the newly elected Chairman said a few word as an introduction.

Amendment to the Draft N.T. Constitution.

The matter was put forward to the meeting that the Membership proposed change should be as follows:

- 1 Membership of the Association shall be open to any person who:
 - A) is interested in furthering the objects; and
 - B) is admitted to membership having completed any application procedures Required by the Committee and
 - C) pays any relevant subscription within 60 days of its falling due.

Proposed by Marianne Pitts, seconded by Roy Nabbs. All in favour.

Any other business – nil

The meeting closed at 8.00 p.m.

After the Interval members enjoyed watching a Silent Film, "Buster Keaton -Sherlock Junior.

Management Committee Report 2014-2015

The Management Committee has pleasure in presenting to the Annual General Meeting, this the forty-third Annual Report which covers the period to 31st August 2015.

We were pleased to welcome Norman Pratt as the Association's new Chairman. We also welcome Richard Munday to the committee.

We are indebted to Mrs Nan Rooney for once again arranging an excellent and interesting programme of Speakers. Ranging from The realities of Wild Life filming, Bath, Dorchester and Margo Cleary an entertainment comprising a series of recitations and monologs.

The Annual General Meeting in November, was followed by a Silent Film – Buster Keaton – Sherlock.

Instead of a meeting at the end of November, there was a visit to the Birmingham Hippodrome to see the Nutcracker Ballet.

Excursions organised by different members of the committee and Association were to Buckingham Palace and the Queens Gallery, Bath, Royal Botanical Gardens Kew, Renishaw Hall, and Henley-on-Thames and Greys Court.

A special visit to the Fairfax-Lucy family wing at Charlecote Park took place on 23rd and 25th June.

The raffle remains popular. Our thanks go to the members who sell the tickets at the monthly meetings.

On 18th March the Area Ranger at Charlecote Park, Adam Maher, invited committee members to attend a tree planting ceremony.

Membership is slightly down. Our sincere thanks go to the Membership Secretary Mrs Valerie Grimmer, and to Archie Pitts who acts as computer co-ordinator.

Our thanks also go to Chris Rhodes the Newsletter Editor who does an excellent job twice a year. Thanks also go to the members who kindly help to deliver the envelopes, and to Miss Jill Rooney who deals with the website.

Finally, our sincere thanks go to Mrs Marianne Pitts the Hon. Treasurer for very ably dealing with the Associations Finances. Marianne also deals with the Press and Publicity.

We look forward to another successful year ahead

Julia Johnstone.

LUNCH

17 October 2015

12.30 for 1.00 pm

At Alderson House, The Masonic Rooms, High Street, Warwick.

Followed by a talk by David Howe

Prime Ministers and their other halves

£25.00 per person

Please use Booking Form A to select your choice of main course and desert. Forms must be returned by October 2nd. Further details from Julia Johnstone: 01926 424841. There is ample parking to the rear of the building.

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EXCURSIONS 2016

Visit to Leicester: Richard III Visitor Centre, Leicester Cathedral and New Walk Museum

March 17 2016



Leicester has been in the news since the finding of the bones and the City Council has converted the Victorian Gothic home of the former Leicester Grammar School to a Visitor Centre, which includes the site of the original grave and is near the Cathedral.

Please inspect the websites: <http://kriii.com/> for details of the visitor centre: a technologically sophisticated display of the finding of the bones and their identification. <http://leicestercathedral.org/about-us/richard-iii/> for the tomb of Richard III.

Leicester New Walk Museum and Art Gallery is a fine early provincial museum with the usual assortment of exhibits. It also houses two unique collections:

Picasso ceramics (given by the Attenborough family) and

German 20th century Expressionist Art (given by Jewish refugees in the 1930s).

The website address is long – search for Leicester and Museum.

Our first stop is the Visitors Centre where we have a cup of coffee / tea on arrival. You can then explore the Centre and the Cathedral and have lunch (in the Visitors Centre or in many alternative downtown cafes) before going on to the Museum by coach.

The cost of travel, admission, coffee / tea (but NOT lunch) and including the usual driver's tip and a donation to the Cathedral is **£26.00**.

We leave Newbold Comyn at 09:30 and hope to arrive at 11:00. At 14:00 we board the coach to Museum, and leave for Leamington at 16:00. ETA back in Leamington 17:30. There will be no stops on the journeys, but the coach has a lavatory on board.

Photo: King Richard III Visitor Centre

THERE ISN'T A WAR ON, YOU KNOW!

There were sandbags against the main entrance, tape criss-crossed the windows to prevent glass shattering in case of explosions, a Morrison shelter was provided and a wartime mobile cinema tent projected public information on to a white sheet. Was it 1939? No, it was May 2015 and Upton House was commemorating the part it played in the Second Great War 70 years after VE-Day.

Under the title "A Country House at War", Upton House was furnished for the season in much the way it must have been when Lord Bearsted arranged for his family's merchant bank, M.Samuel and Co., to move from air-raided threats in London to the Warwickshire countryside at Upton House. The contents of the mansion were moth-balled and offices and accommodation for staff were set up. Lord and Lady Bearsted played their own vital part in the nation's war effort and Lady Bearsted helped to run and finance mobile canteens in the East End of London. When the RAF obtained the green light to build an airfield nearby this place of sanctuary looked under threat, so arrangements were made to ship Upton's master-works to places of safety underground.

The visit began unusually with an explanation of war time film clips projected on to the ceiling. This surprisingly worked well, especially when German and Allied bombers flew overhead. Later, it was interesting to see once again an office furnished with manual typewriters, account ledgers, a mechanical adding machine and not a computer or calculator in sight.

"No space left idle" was the direction of the Ministry of Agriculture and in the spring of 1940 it instructed large landowners to plough and cultivate every scrap of their land and plant food crops. The elegant pre-war borders were abandoned as their work force left to take up arms.

The atmosphere created by the transition was very realistic with tea chests and packaging



left about and copies of old newspapers. However, while the house's treasures were sent away in the war, for the present exhibition the staff had very skilful managed to leave on display the majority of the interesting exhibits for those who might come to see them rather than the wartime preparations.

Regretfully, the prices at the excellent restaurant were at 2015 levels!

GRAHAM E.COOPER.

Photo: Tim Jones. National Trust

NEWS from our local NATIONAL TRUST PROPERTIES

Details are correct as we go to print, but it is advisable to check before making a special journey.

COUGHTON COURT:



Coughton's exclusive black tie event, the Fawkes Feast, will be returning this year with a champagne reception followed by a tour of the house and a seven course evening meal served in the Throckmorton family dining room.

This is followed by the Winter Festival; a Christmas market with local gifts, crafts and sweet treats and Christmas at Coughton where

visitors will be able to take a stroll around the house which is decorated for a traditional family Christmas with floor to ceiling Christmas trees and a roaring fire.

To close the season join us for our long established traditional Christmas Wassail with stories and carols in Coughton's beautiful double height Saloon. Enjoy mulled wine, a roaring fire and mince pies and get into the festive spirit at this truly special event for all the family.

BADDESLEY CLINTON:

Join us for an Evening Supper Lecture every Thursday throughout September with a talk on a variety of interesting subjects from a live falconry display to a talk on our local canals. This is the perfect chance to enjoy an evening with friends and a delicious two course supper in the Barn Restaurant.

In November come along to our first Winter Fair with traditional market stalls lining the barnyard selling gifts, seasonal food and crafts. From December the house will be decorated for a traditional Christmas with trees, flower displays and a roaring fire to relax in front of in the Great Hall.

PACKWOOD HOUSE: This year John Richards, Packwood's Kitchen Gardener, intends to grow Warwickshire's biggest pumpkin and has dug an enormous pit in the school plot; definitely one to look out for in the autumn months.

The Fetherston Room has been transformed into an exhibition space outlining how the house you see today was created. Through the collection of old photographs, watercolours, maps and plans, visitors to Packwood House will be able to find out more about the architecture of the house and the families and individuals who were responsible for its creation and subsequent development.

CELEBRATION TREE PLANTING

Members of Mid –Warwickshire Association visited Charlecote Park on March 20th to plant a celebratory oak tree and see the bulbs purchased for the property by the Association

It was a beautiful spring day. We were shown round by the Area Ranger, Adam Maher, who talked with infectious enthusiasm about his work on the 260 acre site. He explained how Charlecote was engaged in a long term project to take the tree planting back to the original ideas of Capability Brown. He explained about 'phoenix regeneration' in which the low branches on some of the oak trees were allowed to touch the ground, root and grow into a new tree. Ant hills and molehills were welcomed because they supported the whole ecosystem of the wood pasture area.



Norman Pratt, Chairman of the Mid-Warwickshire Association, planted the Celebration Tree. Other members followed him with a spade-full or two of earth, and the tree was given a good start with a thorough watering.

Twenty celebratory trees have been planted so far. Some are to celebrate a particular memory or person; others –such as ours- to act as a lasting mark of the link between local bodies and Charlecote Park. Our Association has donated around £20,000 to Charlecote over the past few years.

Each tree is protected against the appetites of the deer by a substantial tree guard and from rabbits by a plastic sleeve. A new sapling is watered several times during its first year. It is to be hoped that many of these trees will still be here in their old age in five hundred years time.

Photographs: C.Rhodes