

OAK LEAVES

MID-WARWICKSHIRE ASSOCIATION of the NATIONAL TRUST

Autumn 2016

No. 88



A donation from The Mid Warwickshire Association has been used to help to restore the Bruegel 'Massacre of the Innocents' held at Upton House Images: 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

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VICE CHAIRMAN Vacant

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS Margaret Tomlinson, Richard Munday;

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Our last meeting before the summer break was held at Kingsley School. This will be our venue for future meetings, now held on Monday evenings. Although the facilities may not be of the standard provided by the Spa Centre, the cost savings to the Association are such that it became clear that this decision was justified. Kingsley School have been extremely helpful in assisting in the changeover and, apart from a few minor problems, the move has gone well. The Committee are always open to suggestions from Members and are giving its consideration to those already made.

Although the move to Kingsley School will provide a significant financial gain to the Association, it is also a priority that our membership should not decline. This would adversely affect the benefits that are provided to Members, such as our regular planned and customised excursions and a wide range of speakers. The Association is also able to make significant donations to other National Trust projects, not only in our area but nationally. Recent donations have included the Breugel picture restoration featured on the cover of this newsletter. This year we are making donations to the Snowdonia appeal, Upton House and will buy ten trees for the new orchard at Baddesley Clinton.

In order to promote the benefits of joining the Association, which would in turn assist the Association's funds, a promotional leaflet was designed which it was hoped could be distributed to other organisations, libraries, and local National Trust properties. Unfortunately there was a lack of response from Members to assist in this project and it may have to be shelved for the present. This has highlighted the fact that despite having a strong membership, the number of volunteers is extremely small. The Committee would welcome any Members who feel they could give some support in this way.

I wish you all a very pleasant autumn and look forward to seeing you at our first meeting of the new season on Monday , October 3rd. October 15th is the Autumn Luncheon, details in this newsletter, which is a very pleasant occasion and I hope will be well supported.

Norman H Pratt
Chairman



A memory from our visit to the Thenford Arboretum in April 2016.

Image: Marianne Pitts

CHANGING TIMES

When the Association was established in 1972, National Trust membership was much smaller than it is now and visitors to its houses were usually shown their grandest rooms. Admission cost was much less - perhaps round about the five shilling mark. After several years of membership bringing with it "free" admittance it was surprising to learn how much the admission charges to non-members had risen.

As time proceeded there was a growing interest in those parts of the houses which would have been "behind the scenes" to their aristocratic occupants. So when Erddig was opened, visitors were, and still are, directed through the wood yard, before working their way through the laundry, then the scullery and kitchen, with the highlight being the state bed at the end of the tour. One of the attractions of these arrangements is the opportunity to compare one's own domestic arrangements with those of the grand house, where baking and roasting relied on the huge range and the large metal kitchen utensils hung around with the jelly and aspic moulds glistening on their shelves.



This arrangement took effect in due course at Charlecote Park, when its kitchen was opened to the public and baking started to take place using original recipes and procedures. After a while the kitchen chimney was swept

apparently for the first time in some sixty years, enabling real fires to be lit in the range. Often imitation pies, fruits and vegetables are placed to help to recreate the atmosphere of the old days.

The Trust had a reputation for presenting grand houses, but arrangements began to evolve and more modest establishments were brought under its umbrella. The old Workhouse at Southwell in Nottinghamshire is an example, where it is an education to see some of the conditions under which its residents had to live: it would be very difficult to reflect accurately original conditions because our visitor attractions are now shown in an ultra-clean and tidy twenty-first century way. Take a non-National Trust property, the museums at Iron Bridge: at one time great furnaces would light the sky and blast hot air; the noise would have been terrific, whereas today, these areas are presented in pleasant verdant surroundings suitable for picnics. Such has to be the case.

Then the Back-to-Backs opened in Birmingham, which one can visit and appreciate the advantages of modern-day living compared to over a century ago. The fascination with these properties is that they are presented as though the original residents still live there, but

have just left on some errand: that is probably a realistic scenario, since the owners would probably not have been in the habit of locking their doors during the day.



Today few visits to National Trust properties are complete without a visit to the tea room where dishes are available with particular reference to the property or its surroundings. (There are no refreshments at Southwell Workhouse and on this basis if there were, they would probably serve gruel!). It was fascinating to visit The Vyne in Hampshire where notices on the grass implored customers, not to place hot tea pots on the lawn since this caused round bare patches: this was obviously a reasonable request.

Exit from properties, whether National Trust or English Heritage, is usually via the gift shop where available merchandise has increased in recent times. Bottles of locally-brewed ale may jostle for position with soaps and aerosols together with postcards and guide books. However, almost exceptionally, Chastleton House has neither tea room nor gift shop, but the surrounding countryside makes up for this and in the summer the adjacent parish church serves welcoming teas in the churchyard.

Many of the grand apartments of our larger country houses were not lived in continuously, often being in use just at weekends when guests were entertained. However, the utility rooms would have been in constant use by the staff to maintain the property, since food preparation was always necessary and linen had to be laundered ready for the return of the ruling family. At Erddig it was also a tradition to hang paintings of the retainers, which are still there to be seen. It comes as a surprise to go into, say, a housekeeper's room and to find it small, yet then to realise that, on reflection, it is much larger than our modern rooms and the apparent smallness has been because of comparison with the large state rooms.

The fact that so many periods of history are represented in National Trust properties adds enormously to the richness of our inheritance since it enables us to imagine our predecessors living their lives in or next to those surroundings and as and when restoration takes place it is not unusual for the Trust to continue to give access to visitors to enable them to see the work taking place and perhaps to resolve to come back in due course to see the completed work.

We are indeed fortunate to be a small part of this work.

Graham E Cooper

Images: Charlecote Park and Birmingham Back-to-Backs. National Trust

Richard III, Leicester Cathedral and Leicester Museum March 2016

We were lucky – it was a warm bright day and the traffic was light both ways, even at Kamikaze Corner on the Coventry Ring Road. We therefore arrived in good time and were welcomed by the RIII staff with a cup of coffee/ tea before looking round the Centre.

The Museum ground floor showed what is known about Richard III's life and death with video and film and commentary; the upper floor told the story of the finding of the bones and their identification. It is a classic and uncanny instance of the truth being stranger than fiction.



Leicester Cathedral houses the tomb, which is beautiful and the church is in excellent condition. Richard III has brought great economic benefit to the city. Even their football team is successful.

The Museum houses two unique collections: one of Picasso pottery, given by the Attenborough family in memory of a daughter and granddaughter swept away by the 2014 Tsunami; the second of Expressionist German Art, which grew from purchases made during the War from local German refugees. It also boasts a good tea room.

Passengers left the bus, smiling.

Marianne Pitts

You are invited to an

AUTUMN LUNCHEON

Saturday 17 October 2016

12.30 for 1.00 pm

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

Followed by a light hearted talk by Graham Sutherland

“Cross Your Fingers”

£25.00 per person

MAIN COURSE Please choose one:

- Steak and Apple Pie with Mustard Mash.
- Salmon Fillet with spinach and white wine butter sauce
- Vegetarian option.

DESSERT Please choose one:

- Creme Brule with Red Fruits
- Apple Pie with Custard or Cream
- Cheese and biscuits.

Coffee and tea

Please use Booking Form A to select your choice of main course and desert.

Forms must be returned to Julia Johnstone, 57 Almond Avenue, Leamington Spa, CV32 6QD by 1st September.. Further details from Julia on 01926 424841.

There is ample parking to the rear of the building.

News from some of the local National Trust Properties

UPTON HOUSE

In 2016 we have been celebrating 70 years since the end of the Second World War, with our Victory Year interpretation theme. We will be continuing that as the year draws to a close, with the Dig for Victory Harvest, Remembrance events and the results of our Knitted Bunting World Record Attempt. We will also be looking at how the end of the war was celebrated at Upton with a special exhibition of Victory Fashions.

Christmas at Upton will be beautiful as ever, whilst still maintaining that 1940s theme. At the end of the war, festive treats and traditions would have slowly returned to people's lives. This Christmas will be more celebratory and less frugal than last year to make the return to peacetime.

But the big news for us is that this winter marks the end of the current exhibition. In the coming spring we will be moving on to our brand new interpretation. In 2017 you are invited to a very special house viewing. The new exhibition will allow visitors to view this property as the Bearsteds did, think about whether they would like to purchase it, and learn about the huge changes that the family made to it. Follow the renovations and witness the before and after as the Bearsteds create a "made to measure" family home and a spectacular feature garden.

COUGHTON COURT

2016 marks a very special anniversary for Coughton Court. April 9th marked 100 years since Courtenay Throckmorton, Coughton's lost heir, was killed fighting in the First World War, and 70 years since Coughton Court came into the care of the National Trust.

To commemorate both events Coughton commissioned a piece of work from local artist, Jennifer Collier, to grace the dining room table, and a farewell dinner party has been imagined for Courtenay and other soldiers from the estate. The team at Coughton gathered research from local libraries and regimental museums, and in some instances family members brought in photographs and letters they had kept from loved ones during the war. The world in which these soldiers lived started to materialise and details of their lives gave colour to the names and a sense of reality.

Panels in the dining room will tell the stories of these men, and the floral display from artist Jennifer Collier will serve as the centrepiece for the dining table. The paper flowers are made from different documents relating to the soldiers, including medal cards and maps of the battles in which they saw active service.

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 Christmas at Coughton; 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 with a Christmas market at the weekends with local gifts, crafts and sweet treats.

To close the season, join us for our long established traditional Christmas Wassail with stories and carols in Coughton's beautiful double height Saloon. New for this year, we are inviting visitors to join us for a Silent Night Tour, where they will be able to wander around the silent rooms, hear the clock ticking, listen out for the carol singers and enjoy some mulled wine by the fire in the Saloon, before heading to the Coughton Kitchen Restaurant for a festive buffet.

BADDESLEY CLINTON

This year at Baddesley Clinton take a closer look at the Tudor history of the property and learn all about the figures which helped to shape Baddesley during this turbulent time in British political and religious history. Baddesley has provided for its residents a haven from the modern world and a spiritual retreat. The dappled light from the stained glass and the water of the moat lapping against the walls below an open window provide a sense of safety and refuge.

Baddesley's story is one of gentle evolution, from medieval farmstead to modest Georgian status symbol and Victorian retreat. Much of the house you see today was built by Henry Ferrers in the late 1500s. Since then the relatively impoverished state of the family ensured much of the house and garden remained untouched by development and its surrounding parkland kept the modern world at bay.

Join us after hours in October for our first candlelit Ghost Tour of the moated manor house. Learn all about Baddesley's creepy tales and ghostly goings on with tea and cake in the restaurant. 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 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.

The Teddy Bears' Picnic and Pottering Shed which was opened by children from Lapworth School last Easter is still very popular with our younger visitors. Made by Packwood's Kitchen Gardener, John Richards, almost all of the materials used to make the pottering shed came from left over materials from Packwood's new build.

EVENING MEETINGS Autumn 2016 - October 2017

Our meetings are held on Monday evenings, normally the first Monday of the month in the Kingsley School, and start at 7.30pm **Guests are welcome. The admission price for non-members of the Association is £3.**

3rd October 2016 Keith Holmes A Taste of Cornwall

From the towering cliffs and surf of the north coast to the pretty coves and harbours in the south, this talk makes an epicurean journey through England's most westerly county.

7th November 2016. Mathew Morris "Richard III. The King under the Car Park".

An overview of the whole project's background. How the team knew where to look and what they found during the excavation through to how they were able to positively identify the skeletal remains as Richard III. **Please note that the evening will start with the AGM.**

5th December 2016 Dr. Gill White. "Chatsworth and the Cavendish family".

Since the middle of the 16th century, the Cavendish family has moved in and out of the pages of history, sometimes making a mark with scandal, sometimes with politics, sometimes with learning, and always with style.

9th January 2017 Paula Cornwell Mind your Motoring Manners

Paula will introduce us to the Hon. Mrs Victor Bruce, a truly inspirational woman. During the 1920s she was always in the newspapers, setting many records for racing and long distance challenges.

6th February 2017 Helen Larner "The Language of flowers."

With the help of slides we shall discover the symbolic meaning of flowers from the Ancient World to the Victorians.

6th March 2017 Steffie Shields Moving Heaven and Earth: Capability Brown

The life and work of Capability Brown- his natural style of landscape creation and his architecture. This will include some of Brown's work in this area.

3rd April 2017 Malcolm Kenwood Art Beat

An autobiographical journey from rural beat officer in the late 1970s, culminating as a specialist art and antiques detective. Tales of the criminal art underworld, their origins and methods,

8th May 2017 Dianne Mannering Born to Rule

There have been 42 monarch since William the Conqueror. Of these, 12 died unnatural deaths. A light hearted look at the Conqueror's descendents and how they came to wear the crown – or not!

2nd October 2017 Graham Short The Hands of Genius

How Graham, from very unlikely beginnings, developed the art of micro-carving. He has engraved The Lord's Prayer on the head of a pin. His client list includes the Royal Family.

THE NATIONAL TRUST
MID-WARWICKSHIRE ASSOCIATION

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

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
MONDAY 7th November 2016 at 7.30pm

You are invited to attend the Forty Fourth Annual General Meeting of the Mid-Warwickshire Association of the National Trust, which will be held on Monday 7th November 2016 at 7.30pm in the Kingsley School.

You are requested to submit nominations for next year's officials. The nominations should be lodged with me no later than 22nd October 2016 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

MONDAY 7th NOVEMBER 2016

AGENDA

1. Opening address from the President
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of AGM held on 4th November 2015
4. Matters arising from the Minutes
5. Correspondence and Announcements
6. To receive accounts for the year ended 31st August 2016
7. To receive the Management Committee Report for the year ended 31st August 2016
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 2016 of any item you wish to raise.

Minutes of the Forty Third Annual General Meeting of the Mid-Warwickshire Association of the National Trust, held at the Royal Spa Centre on Wednesday 4th November 2015.

In the absence of the President Sir Edmund Fairfax-Lucy the Vice-President Mr Graham Cooper gave the opening address and read out a message from Sir Edmund.

Graham Cooper said that due to the increase in the costs of hiring the Spa Centre, another venue has been considered from October 2016. The most promising being the Kingsley School in Beauchamp Avenue. A one off meeting will be held on 2nd December as a trial run.

The Chairman Mr Norman Pratt said that an excursions organiser is needed also a social secretary. The raffle helps to offset costs, more raffle ticket sellers are required. He ended by thanking the committee.

Apologies: Sir Edmund Fairfax-Lucy. Mr R. Nabbs, Mr C. Rhodes, Mr & Mrs G. Wilson.

The Minutes of the AGM held on 5th November 2014 had been circulated. Their adoption was proposed by Mr R. Hammon, seconded by Mrs V. Grimmer. All were in favour.

Matters arising none

Correspondence and Announcements: none

The Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st August 2015 were presented by the Honorary Treasurer Mrs Marianne Pitts. All were in favour that the Accounts be adopted. Proposed by Mrs V. Davis, seconded by Mr C. Beale.

The Annual Report had been circulated. All were in favour.

Election of Officers

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, Proposed by Graham Cooper, seconded by Mrs Marianne Pitts.

Vice-President Mr_Graham E. Cooper. Proposed by Mr N. Pratt, seconded Miss J. Johnstone

Chairman Mr Norman Pratt, proposed by Marianne Pitts seconded by Mrs S. Hammon..

All were in favour that the existing Officers and Committee be re-elected en-bloc.

Hon. Secretary – Miss Julia Johnstone.

Hon. Treasurer – Mrs Marianne Pitts.

Membership Secretary – Mrs Valerie Grimmer

Computer-Co-Ordinator – Mr A Pitts.

Press and Publicity – Marianne Pitts.

Programme Secretary – Mr Gerald & Mrs Nannette Rooney

Newsletter Editor – Mr Chris Rhodes.

No more than six committee members: Mr R. Munday, Mrs M. Tomlinson.
To elect the Honorary Inspector of Accounts –Mrs Ruth Calvert. Proposed by Marianne Pitts seconded by Norman Pratt. All in favour.

Any other business: The next meeting will be held at the Kingsley School on 2nd December. The Chairman thanked everyone for electing him, and thanked Graham Cooper and the Committee for their work.

A show of hand supported the idea to change the day of the meetings from a Wednesday to a Monday

The AGM ended at 8.00 p.m.

The AGM was followed by a talk by Jennifer Bell: “Banking for Victory” A Country House at War. Upton House.

Just a reminder that:

The 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.

Management Committee Report 2015-2016

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

The monthly meetings have been well attended. We are indebted to Mrs Nan Rooney, for again arranging an interesting and varied programme of speakers. Subjects ranging from Banking for Victory at a Country House at War, Napoleon, Music and Shakespeare and London's Liquid History.

In October we are moving to the Kingsley School, Beauchamp Avenue, to try it out we held meetings there on 2nd December and 6th June.

A very enjoyable luncheon was held at the Masonic Rooms, Warwick, on 17th October. The Guest Speaker was David Howe, who gave an amusing talk about Prime Ministers and their better halves. Unfortunately this event was very poorly attended.

Excursions organised by different members of the Committee and Association were to Leicester; Thenfold Arboretum near Banbury, the home of Lord & Lady Heseltine; Saville Gardens, Windsor; Stowe and Croome Park. A visit to Harlaxton Manor in Lincolnshire was also considered and may be arranged in due course.

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

Membership is slightly down. Our sincere thanks go to Mrs Valerie Grimmer, also to Mr Archie Pitts who acts as computer co-ordinator also to Marianne Pitta for all her assistance.

Our grateful thanks go to Chris Rhodes the Newsletter Editor, who does an excellent job producing the newsletter twice a year. Thanks 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 Marianne Pitts, the Hon Treasurer who very ably deals with the Association's finances, press and publicity.

We look forward to another successful year ahead.

Julia Johnstone.

The Leamington Society

September Thursday 15th 19:30

Gary Webb

Head of landscapes and gardens at Compton Verney and an excellent photographer

Capability Brown and Compton Verney

Dormer Place, Leamington Spa
CV32 5AA

Visitors welcome.

Admission £2

The coach starts at Newbold Comyn.....

It is an understandable error to assume that Newbold Comyn is an ancient spelling for Newbold Common. **Comyn** is, in fact, the family name of previous occupiers of the property.

Newbold is first mentioned in the Domesday Book [1086]. Ulwin, the owner at the time of Edward the Confessor, became a monk at Malmesbury Abbey and gave his estate to the monastery. The land was accordingly entered in Domesday Book as the property of the Abbey of Malmesbury. During the thirteenth century, the estate descended to the Abbot's ward Joan, who married Elias Comyn.

In 1539 two men, Richard Willes and William Morcote jointly purchased the land that was now a farm. When Richard Willes died in 1564, his son inherited the whole estate as Richard had married Morcote's daughter.



At the end of the 18th century, the Revd. Edward Willes built a new house on the estate in addition to the existing farm house. The Willes family held their land for over 400 years, but finally sold it to the Leamington Corporation in the 1960s. The main house was demolished in 1965, leaving only the farm, now a pub, and outbuildings.

Image; Warwick County Record Office 69/18732

And so, when boarding the coach, spare a thought for the 14 year old Joan, newly orphaned, and destined to be married to Elias Comyn.



Frederick Whitehead 1906. 'Leamington and Warwick from the Campion Hills' Image Peter Coulls