

# OAK LEAVES

Mid-Warwickshire Association  
of the National Trust



Spring 2020

in support of **National  
Trust**

No. 95



Spring flowers at Baddesley Clinton

**THE NATIONAL TRUST**  
**MID-WARWICKSHIRE ASSOCIATION**

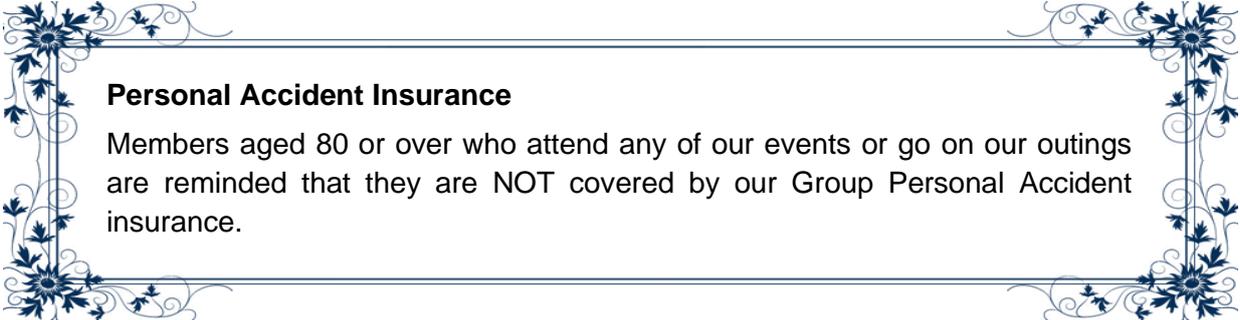
*A Voluntary Association of  
National Trust Members*

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VICE PRESIDENT  
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**MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

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COMMITTEE MEMBER:	Clive Nelson	



**Personal Accident Insurance**

Members aged 80 or over who attend any of our events or go on our outings are reminded that they are NOT covered by our Group Personal Accident insurance.

## THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

There are still a number of evening meetings before the Summer programme begins and it is encouraging to see how well these meetings are being attended, with members braving the winter weather, turning out on dark, cold and often wet evenings.

Inside this edition of Oak Leaves you will find details of the summer programme of excursions. These vary from local visits, for example, the trip on the Gloucester Warwickshire Steam Railway and a tour of the RSC backstage, to trips farther afield. Also included are the relevant Booking Forms and it is hoped Members will take advantage of attending as many of the trips as possible.

At the AGM in December the previous Committee was elected en bloc and I am pleased to confirm that Mr Clive Nelson has agreed to join the Committee. Even so, we still need more Committee members, so anyone who feels they could contribute to the effectiveness of the Committee would be very welcome.

As you will have seen from the Accounts presented by Marianne at the AGM, the Association is financially sound and a number of grants have been made to National Trust properties requiring funds for a variety of worthy projects. Although the majority of our income comes from Membership fees and outings, there are also very useful contributions from Gift Aid (please see Marianne if you feel you may be eligible and not yet signed up). The Raffle also boosts our income and thanks are due to the ladies who run this for the Association. We also gain income from the sale of the refreshments provided by the school.

Marianne and I attended a Supporters Group meeting which we both felt was rather disappointing. Marianne provides a more in-depth review on page 8. We have made our views known to Head Office and hopefully future meetings will be more productive.

Let us hope the Summer is a kind one, making our various outings pleasant as well as interesting ones.

*Norman Pratt*  
Chairman

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## REPORTS FROM PAST EXCURSIONS

Eastnor Castle and Ledbury visit, 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019



Our group of thirty-one travellers greatly enjoyed the visit to Eastnor Castle, where we were cheerfully welcomed by knowledgeable guides.

The Castle was built in 1812 in the Gothic style, overlooking a lake and is still occupied by the same banking family. A flight of 14 steps took us up from the entrance hall to the main hall, built as a 'double cube' and decorated with beautiful red/blue fabric wallpaper. The whole house was full of treasures, medieval armour and fine art - something for everyone, but still retaining the 'lived-in feel' of a family home.

We travelled on to the delightful market town of Ledbury, which has many interesting old buildings, a lovely church and a small museum and the weather was kind to us as we took in the sights.

## UPCOMING EXCURSIONS

### Excursion on Arbury Hall with lunch

[www.arburyestate.co.uk](http://www.arburyestate.co.uk)

**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2020**

Organiser: Marianne Pitts

**Cost: £51 per person**

Contact No.: 01926 885532

**Please note, this trip requires a minimum of 25 people signing up to go ahead**



Arbury Hall is a private house near Nuneaton, so this is a short journey. It is a Grade I listed Elizabethan Mansion, modernised in the 18th century to a Gothic style in a beautiful 18th century landscaped garden. It will be opened especially for us, provided 25 people come, for a 1 hour guided tour and a hot lunch:

Meat Platter or Vegetarian Quiche & Jacket Potato and Green Salad  
Raspberry and Rosewater Meringue roulade with Pistachios  
Tea or Coffee

We will leave Newbold Comyn at 10:00 (picking up at the Spa Centre some 5 minutes later) and arrive at Arbury Hall around 11:00. We leave for Leamington Spa at 16:00 to arrive back around 17:00.

The cost of the outing is £51 and includes coach travel, lunch, entry and a private tour.

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### Excursion on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway

[www.gwsr.com](http://www.gwsr.com)

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

Organiser: John Levick

**Cost: £40 per person**

Contact No.: 01926 423626 or 07825 334572



The Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway is a heritage steam railway running along the edge of the Cotswolds. It was built by the Great Western Railway as its main line from Birmingham to the West Country. The section between Stratford-upon-Avon and Cheltenham was closed as part of the Beeching recommendations. However, in 1984 work started to reopen the railway as a heritage line, starting at Toddington. Initially all extensions were to the south but in 2018 the line was extended northwards and now runs between Broadway and Cheltenham Racecourse giving a round trip of 28 miles.

We will travel to Toddington where we will join the train to Broadway. After a short break we will travel to Cheltenham Racecourse and then back to Toddington. The train fare for the round trip is included in the price. A buffet car serving light refreshments is usually

available, but payment is cash only.

We will leave Newbold Comyn at 10.00 (picking up at the Spa Centre some 5 minutes later) and arrive at Toddington at 11.10 to join the train departing at 11.35. We arrive back at Toddington station at 14.38 where we make the short journey into Broadway village. Broadway is often described as 'the quintessential Cotswold village', and the 'the jewel of the Cotswolds' because of its honey-coloured stone houses and *olde worlde* charm. There will then be time for afternoon tea or to explore say the Broadway Museum and Art Gallery before we leave for Leamington Spa at 16.00 to arrive back around 17.15.

The cost of the outing is £40 and includes coach travel and all rail fares, but no refreshments.

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### Excursion to Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/kedleston-hall](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/kedleston-hall)

**Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

Organiser: John Levick

**Cost: £25 per person (£38.10 for non-members)**

Contact No.: 01926 423626 or 07825 334572



Kedleston Hall was built to a design by Robert Adam in the 1760s for the Curzon family. It was built to impress and entertain. The National Trust has undertaken a programme of restoration to take the Hall back to 1766 culminating in the return of the state bed in 2017.

Within the Hall is the Eastern Museum containing artefacts from when George Nathaniel, Lord Curzon was Viceroy of India from 1899.

The Hall is set in extensive parkland and has Pleasure Grounds at the rear of the Hall. There are a series of four walks around the parkland and Pleasure Grounds. Next to the Hall is All Saints Church which dates back to Norman times.

We will leave Newbold Comyn at 09.30 (picking up at the Spa Centre some 5 minutes later) and arrive at Kedleston Hall around 11.15 in time for the Hall opening at 12.00. There is a restaurant serving breakfasts, lunches and teas. We leave for Leamington Spa at 16.00 to arrive back around 17.45.

The cost of the outing is £25 for NT members or £38.10 for non-members and includes coach travel and entry

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### Visit to Trentham Gardens and Shopping Centre, Staffordshire

<https://www.trentham.co.uk/>

**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2020**

Organiser: Norman Pratt

**Cost: £35 per person**

Contact no.: 01926 425639

Our trip to Trentham takes us to the beautiful gardens and the large precinct just outside the gates with shops and restaurants and cafes. The contemporary revival of the famous Italian Gardens was led by renowned designer and multi-Chelsea gold-medal winner Tom Stuart-Smith. To the east of the Italian Gardens are the Rivers of Grass and the adjacent Floral

Labyrinth. Both were designed by eminent Dutch plantsman and Chelsea gold-medal winner Piet Oudolf. In the garden there is a lake, designed by Capability Brown, offering boat trips and a miniature railway along one side.



We will leave Newbold Comyn at 09:00 (picking up at the Spa Centre some 5 minutes later) and arrive at Trentham around 11:00. We will leave for Leamington at 16:00. ETA back in Leamington 18:00

The cost of the outing is £35 and includes coach travel and admission.

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### Visit to RSC, Stratford, Backstage Tour of the Shakespeare Theatre and Lunch

<https://www.rsc.org.uk/>

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Organiser: Marianne Pitts

Cost: £29 per person

Contact no.: 01926 885532



We will make our own way to (and from) Stratford upon Avon Shakespeare Theatre meeting at 12:00 sharp for lunch.

You can travel by train (roughly 1 per hour each way) or bus or car. There are shuttle buses from Stratford Parkway. Car parks are scarce and expensive in town, but there is a Park & Ride facility available. You could car-share and Marianne will help organise this.

The lunch menu is short and must be pre-ordered because our guided tour starts at 13:00 at the cloakroom. The options are as follows and must be indicated on the booking form:

Coq au Vin  
Braised faggots, neeps & tatties, caramelised pearl onions, red wine jus  
Strozzapretti pasta with puttanesca sauce (v)

Choice of tea, coffee or a soft drink.

The tour starts with an overview of the theatre and the 2010 renovations. We will be divided into small groups of twelve people per guide as some of the backstage spaces (e.g. the lighting desk) are quite small. We will all see the same things, just in a different order: the changing space in the 'drum' around the main theatre, used as a quick change space for the acting company; inside the auditorium of the RST, to hear more about the history of that space; and then backstage. In the backstage areas there are the lighting room, dressing rooms, running wardrobe and laundry and with costumes along the way. We will learn how costumes are made and the current renovation to the workshops. Finally, we go to the inside of the Swan Theatre and out to the oldest part of the building, down the stairs with the stained-glass windows showing the seven ages of man and the installation For All Time. We may also see some scenery, depending on the set design.

At the time of our visit, *The Comedy of Errors* is running in the RST and *Peer Gynt* in the Swan; we might get a glimpse of the set for at least one of those.

There are narrow passages and stairs, so this trip is not suitable for everyone.

The cost of the outing is £29 and includes the tour and lunch.

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### Visit to Arley Hall and Gardens, Northwich

<https://www.arleyhallandgardens.com>

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Organiser: Carolyn Labrum

Cost: £35 per person

Contact no.: 01926 492062



Arley Hall is a Victorian House, standing on the site of the original house, built in 1469, and is still lived in by the Ashbrook family. It is a house of enormous character, charm and interest, with elaborate ceilings, oak panelling and intricate stained glass.

The gardens are amongst the finest in Britain, outstanding for vitality, variety and historical interest, particularly the magnificent double herbaceous border. Exploration of the Hall and gardens will be self-guided. The Gardener's Kitchen is available for meals and snacks.

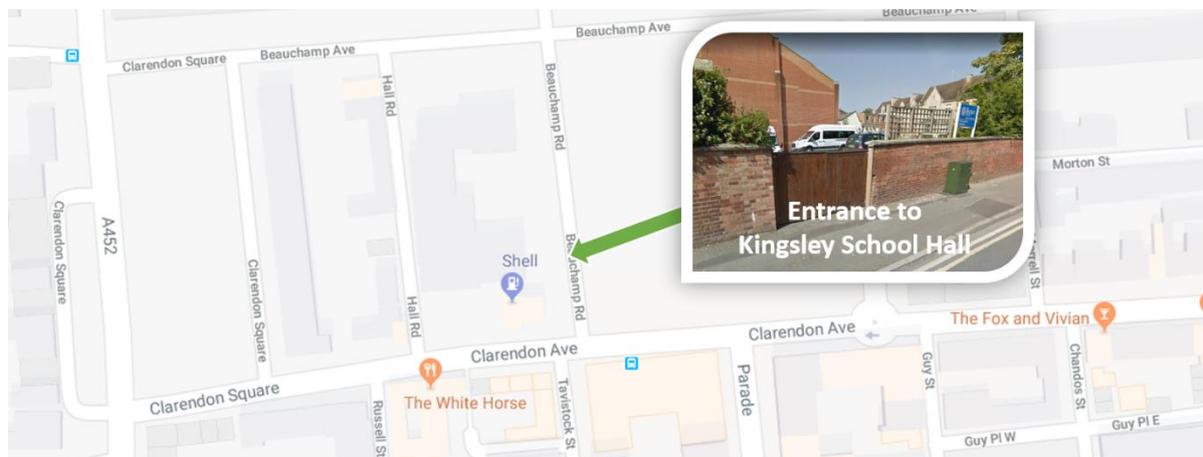
We leave Newbold Comyn at 09:00 (picking up at the Spa Centre some 5 minutes later). There will be a brief stop en route and we expect to arrive at 11:30. We will leave for Leamington at 15:30. ETA back in Leamington 18:00

Good mobility is necessary to appreciate the extensive gardens.

The cost of the outing is £35 and includes coach travel and admission.

## EVENING MEETINGS 2020

*Our meetings are held on Monday evenings, normally the first Monday of the month, at the Kingsley School Hall on Beauchamp Road, starting at 7.30pm.*



**Guests are welcome. The admission price for non-members of the Association is £3.**

**6<sup>th</sup> April**                      **Upton House Conservation Team**                      **Ceramics, Fabric and Stone**  
Upton House's Conservation Team join us to tell us about the work they do at both Upton House and Farnborough Hall. The Association has donated funds for the conservation of ceramics at Upton and the structure of the temple at Farnborough.

**11<sup>th</sup> May**                      **Richard Parker**                      **How Coventry Cathedral was built**  
Richard is a guide at Coventry Cathedral and has a wealth of knowledge on how the new Cathedral was envisaged and built as an iconic landmark of reconciliation.

**5<sup>th</sup> October**                      **Keith Muras**                      **The KGB and the Cold War**  
Keith is a retired diplomat with postings including Russia and the Caribbean. He will share his insights into the KGB and the Cold War.

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### **National Trust Supporter Group 'Get-Together' at The Firs (Elgar's Birthplace), Worcester, 27 November 2019**

This was a very different operation to the last 'Conference' we attended at Calke Abbey (see Oakleaves Autumn 2015 if you still have it!). No senior staff, no lunch (even the café was closed) and very limited opportunities for discussion between the nine local supporter groups who attended. So, it was not a 'Get-Together' but a wasted opportunity for us to compare notes and policies and identify good local speakers ... and ... and ...and.

We were told about the achievements of the National Trust which now boasts SIX MILLION members (can you remember when they were proud to announce their millionth?) and also about the NT's ambition to keep The Firs in their possession. The most relevant and useful lecture was the 'Digital Session' on how we should manage our website and social media, but as no Agenda was sent out beforehand, and in any case our webmaster Jill is a working woman, this was not addressed to the right representatives of our group at least.

Those of us who stayed after our dismissal at 12:30 were shown around The Firs, which is the small cottage where Elgar was born and lived until the age of two, when the family moved to above the Music shop in Worcester Town. It has a fine modern meeting / music room in the garden and the house is full of Elgar memorabilia, more a Museum or even a shrine. It seems to me more appropriate for the Elgar Trust and Worcester to administer as they used to, or failing that, English Heritage. Architecturally it is just not important enough for the National Trust, whose staff are working hard to generate big enough visitor numbers. So please visit it, if you can!

*Marianne Pitts*

## REPORTS FROM LOCAL PROPERTIES

### Coughton Court

This year's Secret and Sacred theme allows visitors to discover the unusual collection of objects the Throckmorton family gathered, kept and treasured throughout their 600-year history. Find out why locks of hair and an old ribbon are just as treasured as grand portraits and precious ivory.

New research into the experiences of the family and other Catholics during the turbulent years after the creation of the Church of England in the 1530s has been carried out with the support of volunteers and there will be themed events ranging from talks on the English Reformation to sketching and embroidery workshops.

There will be a number of outdoor performances during the summer months with The Lord Chamberlain's Men returning to perform Macbeth and Chapterhouse performing the literary classic Little Women. There will also be screenings of Bohemian Rhapsody and Downton Abbey on the back lawn in July.



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### Baddesley Clinton



This year is the National Trust's 125th anniversary and it is also 40 years since Baddesley Clinton came to the National Trust. Thomas Ferrers and Thomas Weaving-Walker were devoted to not only to return the house to good conditions, but also to ensure that it could be given to the National Trust to be looked after for ever, for everyone.

In the garden, new plantings of medicinal herbs and information about how they were used, food tastings to showcase Baddesley's production of fruit and vegetables and its use in the restaurant, guided tours highlighting the conservation of native flora and fauna and special plantings, will celebrate their Ruby anniversary.

The outcome of the Experience Design project begins in late Spring. This includes the improvement to the toilets. It will be a sympathetic evolution of the current building within the context of its rural, barnyard setting. The aim is to increase capacity and improve queue management.

This year's events include Bat Walks, Outdoor Yoga and Outdoor Cinema, with showings of Downton Abbey, Star Wars Episode 9 and Rocketman in the summer.

## Packwood House



Explore the history of Packwood and find out how successive owners and custodians have sought to enhance its unique spirit. Find out about the man who transformed Packwood into what we see today and how he restored the original Tudor farmhouse, saving furniture, panelling, floors and fireplaces from other country houses at risk of demolition.

Packwood's contemporary mingled garden with herbaceous borders, wildflower meadows and beautiful orchard is the perfect place to watch the seasons change. Walk out into the landscape and discover the Prospect Room, a space between inside and outside that explores the dynamic between house and garden. Filtering light and sound the installation plays with the senses, presenting new ways of looking at Packwood's ever-changing scenery.

During the summer months there will be outdoor theatre performances of Macbeth, Alice in Wonderland, HMS Pinafore and David Walliams' Mr Stink.

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## Charlecote Park

In early January, Charlecote welcomed film crews from the set of A Spanish Princess, an Amazon Prime TV series about Catherine of Aragon. It will feature in the second series which airs later this year.



*Image: Jana Eastwood*

New trees and hedges have been planted and seeds harvested from the ancient trees across the parkland to grow on. Wood from the ancient Judas tree, which had to be felled, is being crafted into bespoke products as a trial to sell in the shop and raise money and awareness about how the parkland is looked after.

The house team are preparing behind the scenes for work to start in late Spring to replace the antiquated Victorian heating system. The aim is to keep and refurbish many of the original and beautifully ornate radiators. The work will not be hidden so visitors can see what their visits, donations and raffle tickets have achieved. This work will help control the relative humidity within the property and combat the growing problem of mould and pests that thrive in the current conditions. In addition to this work a biomass boiler is being installed to reduce the property's reliance on fossil fuels.



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### The National Trust Mid-Warwickshire Association website

The current Programme of Events, latest and past newsletters, our Constitution and useful links to other local places of historical interest can all be found out the Mid-Warwickshire Association website - <http://www.nationaltrustmidwarks.org.uk>.

If there is anything you would like to see on the website that you think might be useful to our members or visitors, please let us know by emailing [ntmidwarks@gmail.com](mailto:ntmidwarks@gmail.com)



### The National Trust Mid-Warwickshire Association Facebook page

Our Facebook page lists all our upcoming events. The page can be found at the following address: <https://www.facebook.com/ntmidwarks/>.



### Digital Newsletter Option

A digital version of the newsletter is available in full colour. If you would prefer to receive your newsletter by email in future, please email us at [ntmidwarks@gmail.com](mailto:ntmidwarks@gmail.com) and we will get this set up for you.



*Image: Margot Rodomska*

Drawing Room, Eastnor Castle