

OAK LEAVES

Mid-Warwickshire Association
of the National Trust



Summer 2023

No. 100

in support of **National
Trust**



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VICE-PRESIDENT'S THOUGHTS

The first issue of “Centre Oak Leaves”, the newsletter of the Association (then termed Centre) of the Mid Warwickshire National Trust, was distributed to members in Spring 1973. It was in foolscap and had articles on Hidcote Gardens and National Trust Houses in Warwickshire, besides arrangements for coach outings and the latest fund-raising news for garden vases on the balustrade along the river Avon at Charlecote Park. It was produced in typed stencil using Gestetner and was very well received. Since then the newsletter has evolved and lately we have had very well-produced and appealing issues embodying colour photographs. Latterly it has been produced by one of our members who enjoyed putting it together and was adept at its production. Now, we do not have a compiler who might enjoy bringing informative articles together and producing the newsletter via computer. This is just one function which we are trying to replace. There are others, too, where officers have decided to stand aside after many years’ contributions, including Honorary Secretaryship and Treasurership, Membership Secretaryship and Committee Membership. Fortunately, we have been successful in attracting volunteers to undertake these positions.

I am fond of quoting the saying “many hands make light work” because the more participation we can encourage, burdens on individuals will be that much lighter. So, if after reflection you might feel able to make your contribution, please contact me or any Management Committee Member so that we can talk about the best way forward.

We are now in a stronger position, since Andre Holmes has agreed to stand for the post of Honorary Secretary, Hilary Fittes as Honorary Treasurer, Pat Robinson as Membership Secretary and John Copping as Committee Member, which are all important positions. The vacancies have been occasioned by the retirement of long-serving and faithful members of the Committee.

Outside our organisation Restore Trust has been set up to “get the National Trust back to its true mission” since many members and ex-members maintain that the Trust is deviating from its founding principles. It would seem wise to sign up for its newsletters to keep an eye on its arguments and views, and, as necessary, to encourage the Trust to adhere to its founding principles in respect of any of its actions where we might disagree with its latest directions.

Meanwhile, let us look forward to a successful 2023-24 season, so please support us by attending events and persuading others to join as new members.

Graham

GRAHAM E. COOPER

Vice President

Data Privacy Policy

The Association holds contact details of its members for distribution and information purposes. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) stipulates that we should hold them for the purposes of the Mid Warwickshire Association only and with the agreement of the Members. By implication we maintain these details for circulation purposes, but if a Member has doubts about their inclusion they should please contact the Membership Secretary.

MEMBERSHIP

I am happy to report that Mrs Pat Robinson will be taking over as Membership Secretary at the November AGM - but actually acting from September, in view of renewal of subscriptions.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my 25 years in the post and thank you all for being so welcoming and helpful to me over the years. It was particularly nice to meet personally on holidays and trips.

I'm sure you will extend the same welcome to Pat and I send her every good wish in the job.

I will of course remain a member of the Association.

Kind regards to you all.

Valerie Grimmer

Appeal for past issues of Oakleaves

Our collection of the Oakleaves Newsletters is incomplete, both in terms of printed copies and on the website, so if anyone has any of the following editions which they would be prepared to donate (or lend, so we can scan them in), we would be pleased to hear from you.

Anything earlier than No.75, Spring 2010

No.77 – Spring 2011

No.91 - Spring 2018

December Christmas Supplement 2020

We will return any copy that you lend to us.

Evening Walk in Hidcote Gardens

Wednesday June 28 2023





Those of us who took advantage of our invitation to visit after hours enjoyed a magic evening – warm and dry. Birds were singing and the gardens were not crowded. We ate our picnics and counted ourselves and Hidcote lucky in having such a skilled, brave and dedicated Head Gardener. Lottie welcomed us, answered our questions and waved us goodbye.

Marianne Pitts Group Leader

Visit to Wightwick Manor, Tuesday 4th July 2023



A small group, after a number of late cancellations, went to Wightwick Manor on the western edge of Wolverhampton. Whilst the day was dull for much of the time, the forecast showers held off and the sun was out over lunchtime. The house is relatively modern being built in the late 19th century with the west wing being occupied in 1888 and the slightly later east wing from 1893. The house was built by the Manders family who built their wealth from their paints business in Wolverhampton.

The Manders were keen followers of the Arts and Crafts movement and this is seen throughout the house including William Morris wallcoverings and William de Morgan tiles.



The Great Parlour (pictured) is at the centre of the house in contrast to the more homely rooms elsewhere. Overall this felt like a grand family home.

The family were also keen collectors of pre-Raphaelite paintings which has been added to by the family and the National Trust following the Trust acquiring the house in 1937. Artists featuring in the house include John Roddam Spencer Stanhope, Lucy Maddox Brown, G F Watts and Burne-Jones. At the back of the house in the former Malthouse is a collection of artwork by Evelyn and William de Morgan.

Outside we were fortunate to visit just as fencing had gone up to allow scaffolding to be erected as part of a restoration programme over the next few years which will obscure at least part of the house. The grounds are not extensive by comparison with stately homes but nevertheless it has a formal garden, well stocked kitchen garden, lawns, two lakes and a woodland area. It was somewhat incongruous to have a quiet walk through the woodland only to realise that just over the boundary were modern houses!

John Levick Group Leader

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Mid-Warwickshire Association of the National Trust, held at the Kingsley School, Leamington Spa, on 7th November 2022 at 7.30 p.m.

Opening Address – The Vice-President Mr Graham Cooper opened the meeting by saying that the Association was formed fifty years ago. The first meeting was held at the Spa Centre then moved to Leamington College in Binswood Avenue, then moved back to the Spa Centre as the membership grew. He also said that Committee Members and Volunteers were required.

Apology for Absence – Mr Norman Pratt.

Minutes of the AGM held on 4th November 2019 had been circulated. Their adoption was proposed by Mr Clive Nelson, seconded by Barbara Fowkes and unanimously agreed. There was no AGM in 2020 owing the coronavirus pandemic.

Correspondence and Announcements – nil.

Treasurer's Report – The Treasurer Mrs Marianne Pitts submitted the Annual Accounts for the year ended August 2022. She pointed out that we were very well off financially, with £9,815 in Barclays Bank, due to the resumption of successful outings and savings on room hire for talks. Marianne was also hoping to organise a visit to Highgrove House in April. This will be expensive due to the high cost of hiring the coach. Adoption of the report was proposed by Mrs Beryl Broadbent, seconded by Mr Richard Munday and approved unanimously.

Report for 2019 - Graham Cooper gave a summary of the year's events.

The Annual Report for 2022 was read out by the Secretary Miss Julia Johnstone.

Election of Officers

The Management Committee proposed the following Officers. All were in favour that they be elected en-bloc as proposed by Mr John Levick, seconded by Mr John Copping and approved unanimously.

Vice- President – Mr Graham Cooper

Chairman – Mr Clive Nelson

Hon. Secretary – Miss Julia Johnstone

Hon. Treasurer – Mrs Marianne Pitts

Membership Secretary – Mrs Valerie Grimmer

Programme Secretary – Mr Tony Robinson

Honorary Auditor of Accounts – Mr John Copping, proposed by Mr John Levick, seconded by Mr Tony Robinson and carried unanimously.

Any other business – Nil

MID-WARWICKSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF THE NATIONAL TRUST

Members of the Association are invited and encouraged to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Association at 7.30 p.m. on Monday, 6th. November 2023 at Kingsley School, Beauchamp Avenue, Royal Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 5RD to transact the business in the agenda below.

AGENDA

1. Opening address by the Acting President
2. Receipt of any apologies for absence
3. Consideration of the minutes of the Annual General Meeting on 7th. November 2022
4. Consideration of any matters arising from the minutes
5. Correspondence and announcements
6. Reception of accounts for the year ended 31st. August 2023
7. Reception of the Management Committee's Report for the year ended 31st. August 2023
8. To elect Officials (*Where candidates have already expressed interest at the time of going to print, they are indicated accordingly*):
 - (a) President
 - (b) Vice-President (Graham Cooper)
 - (c) Chairman
 - (d) Vice-Chairman
 - (e) Honorary Secretary (Andre Holmes)
 - (f) Honorary Treasurer (Hilary Fittes)
 - (g) Honorary Membership Secretary (Pat Robinson)
 - (h) Honorary Programme Secretary (Tony Robinson)
 - (i) Excursions Secretary
 - (j) Press and Publicity Officer
 - (k) Newsletter Editor
 - (l) Up to six Committee Members (John Copping, Clive Nelson).
9. Election of Honorary Financial Examiner
10. Any other business

INTERVAL - Entertainment by the Spa Strummers

NOTE: If you think you might like to try your hand at any of the posts, but have doubts about it, please have a word with any of the present Committee members about what it might involve. Remember that usually, you will be able to do the job on your terms. For example, you might decide to take on a position for just one year and then expect to retire without any pressures to continue, or you might wish to undertake requirements from home, without having to attend Committee Meetings. There are usually about half a dozen committee meetings in twelve months, which are held in Members' homes, normally in the evenings.

Treasurer's Report This year was less successful than last year financially – for two reasons. Our excursions are more expensive, due to a sharp rise in coach hire costs since 2020, and therefore less attractive and we only managed to run two excursions - two others were cancelled due to low demand. Also, the very welcome return of “live” meetings in Kingsley meant we had to pay more than £1,000 for room hire. As a result, our only modest donation was to Hidcote Gardens – some customised planters, with our name engraved on them.

Marianne Pitts

Retiring Treasurer

Announcing our Evening Meetings for 2023-2024 - All Members and Guests are welcome

Our meetings are held on Monday evenings, normally the first Monday of the month, in the Kingsley School Hall, Beauchamp Road, Royal Leamington Spa CV32 5RD and start at 7.30 pm

The admission price for non-members of the Association is £5

2023

2nd October

Chair of The Lunar Society

The Lunar Society

The original Lunarmen gathered together for lively dinner conversations, the journey back from their Birmingham meeting place lit by the full moon. Erasmus Darwin, Matthew Boulton, James Watt, Joseph Priestley and Josiah Wedgwood changed the face of Birmingham and the World.

6th November

AGM and The Spa Strummers

Dave Jenkins

The AGM will be followed by a performance by Spa Strummer Ukulele Group, a truly amazing troupe of skilled musicians with a repertoire from George Formby to Rock.

4th December

Steve and Linda

Witley Court

Two talks in one! Witley Court is the most amazing Norman – Victorian Ruin, with fantastic gardens. Linda will give an insight into the history, and Steve is “Upstairs Downstairs”.

2024

8th January

Keith Holmes

Beguiling Bridges

From ancient and beautiful stone arches over the River Frome in Thomas Hardy’s Wessex, to magnificent bridges spanning the Thames, there are bridges designed to impress, or just as curiosities. We will also hear about the women designers and builders of our bridges.

5th February

Trevor Langley

Do Wall have Ears?

Trevor is a well known local historian – His talk is about the rich history of Warwick, told through the magic of its buildings.

4th March

British Motor Museum Team

Cars and the Crown

From Edward VII to Charles III, Britain’s finest car manufacturers have supplied the Crown with ceremonial and personal transport, many of which ended up in the Museum collections, including our new king's old Range Rover. Through these cars, and many others, we’ll be talking about the history of the Royal Family on the road. Along the way, you’ll hear all kinds of stories about the Royal Family, with cars at their heart. You might even find a few surprises along the way.

8th April

Charlecote

A Talk by the team

How the De Lucy family got here, and how they survived civil war and married well! There is much more to the story than we think.

13th May

Simon Gulliver

The Secret Life of Trees

Simon is a Gardens and Plants consultant to the Trust, but he is talking about trees and how wonderful they are. Find out about the tallest, most massive, oldest and broadest trees in the world. Explore how they evolved in an ever changing world, and how they can reveal the secrets of the past to us and possibly foretell the future.

(Rev 3)