BIRMINGHAM National Trust Association

A voluntary Association of National Trust members founded in 1991 to promote and prosper the work of the National Trust

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** STOP PRESS **

Seats are still available on some coach outings. See Page 7 and then Phone Maureen on 0121 475 7933

Newsletter

Issue 31 Spring 2007

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From the Chairman

Over the past year we have continued to enjoy a full programme of lectures, outings and social events. This year two of our three lecture series have moved to new venues: our evening lectures are now held on the last Monday of the month at the Friends Meeting House in Cottonbridge; and our morning lectures are held on the second Tuesday at the Northfield Baptist Church. Our afternoon lectures are still held on the third Thursday at Carrs Lane Church Centre, where we hope to move into a slightly cosier room for next year's lectures. Lunches are available at both Northfield and Carrs Lane.

As ever we owe a major debt of thanks to Mary Parker for organising all our lectures. Topics this year have ranged from a splendid "Who Dunnit" on the authorship of Shakespeare's plays, via several talks on Midland themes, to two very different accounts of involvement with communities in East Africa.

It is a pleasure to report that, following the talk by Eugene Schellenberg on the Ifakara Bakery Project in Tanzania, we received a delightful letter of thanks for the individual donations some of our members made that will help provide loaves of freshly baked bead for distribution within the Ifakara community.

Closer to home, on the day this Newsletter is being published, in place of our usual Thursday afternoon lecture, a group of those who were alert to the enclosures in our previous mailing will be visiting the City's "Museum Collection Centre" in Nechells. This houses many items that cannot readily be displayed in the normal manner. We hope this visit proves as exciting as the one by car to the corresponding outpost of the London Science Museum at Wroughton. You may recall that this featured in our Autumn 2005 Newsletter.

Members will wish to join me in thanking all those of have helped organize our social events, and our many outings (whether by coach, car or walking boots). Elsewhere in this issue you will find reports on examples of these activities. You will also find enclosures giving details of this year's Anniversary Lunch in October, and of
our June Garden Party to be held at the home of Joyce and John Briggs. We thank them most warmly for agreeing to host this occasion.

On the back page you will find the list of recommendations of the Committee for Donations to be made to local projects from our profits on last year's activities. I am confident that this list will be ratified at the AGM on 21st April. But there is one item on the list that may be unfamiliar to many of our members. It is one of the Trust's smallest properties - Knowles Mill on Dowles Brook in the Wyre Forest (photos below). This deserves to be better known. Some of us stopped by to visit it on our ramble back in June 2004. Our donation is for an Interpretation Board to catch the eye of passing visitors and to explain the mill to them.

I was invited as your Chairman to an event held at the Back to Backs on 23 February to celebrate the award of a grant of £497,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to the West Midlands Region of the National Trust for a project known as "Whose Story?" This money will help to launch a four year programme of work to foster partnerships between the National Trust in the West Midlands and black and minority ethnic people who live here. I expect we will hear more about this in Anna Russell's report at the AGM.

And finally, the coming AGM will mark the end of an era with the retirement of our President Grace Darby after many years of service in
Mildenhall Holiday 2006

Our 2006 holiday was based at Mildenhall in Suffolk opposite a large American airbase. Any fears that it would be noisy were groundless; we only heard the aircraft a couple of times.

A group of 34 set forth on a dismal Monday morning. We had our "coffee stop" at Houghton with the opportunity of seeing Houghton Mill, the clock, boats on the river and the church. Then on to Wimpole Hall, where the light drizzle was replaced by brilliant sunshine for the rest of the day. Wimpole has extensive gardens and a farm. The walled garden had lots of "joke scarecrows" which made us laugh: they had been made for a competition held over the weekend.

We try to have some choices on our holidays; on the Tuesday morning some people explored Thetford while others visited - Grimes Graves - site of ancient flint mines in the care of English Heritage.

We were given a very informative talk in the Grimes Graves Visitors Centre before descending almost 30 feet to the foot of a re-excavated mine shaft. Tunnels and galleries radiate outwards showing where the flint was dug out. The landscape is pot marked with the remains of flint mines from which partially shaped flints were exported all over England about 5,000 years ago. The present landscape contains masses of special wild plants.

Then on to Oxburgh Hall, a delightful Elizabethan moated manor house, with a display of embroidery by Mary Queen of Scots. Some joined the garden tour and saw the well planted gardens and the
by Christine McCauley

French Parterre. The chapel had an exhibition of heraldic crests (which fit on top of a knight's helmet) which had belonged to Knights of the Garter.

On Wednesday some spent all day at Blickling Hall while others had short visits to Blickling Hall and Felbrigg. The volunteers at Blicking came in early to give us private tours of the house. Blickling was wonderful, and very much a highlight of the holiday. Those who spent the whole day were able to have a second look around at their own speed and to enjoy the fabulous gardens with the Sitooteries - a Scottish term for seats to "sit oot" on and enjoy the view - or the art work.

The wet Thursday morning had three options: West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village, Bury St Edmund's and Lavenham.

At West Stow the remains of an Anglo Saxon village had been preserved for centuries by sand deposits. Serious excavations started in 1974 and 76 buildings have been revealed on this unique site. There are many reconstructed buildings made to test various ideas about how the original buildings were constructed, truly experimental archaeology.

The Guildhall museum in Lavenham had displays of the medieval cloth trade, farming and the history of Lavenham. The village is beautiful and rich with crooked houses.

In the afternoon we all visited Melford Hall, a small property and were given an introductory talk before our tour of the
Mildenhall Holiday (cont’d)

hall and a visit to their new tea room.

On our final day, we visited Anglesey Abbey with its mill and wonderful gardens. The rose garden was delightful, the weather kind and the Abbey interesting.

Some members also had a morning visit to Wicken Fen - the oldest nature reserve in the country.

Five of them took the Nature Trail walk 2.5 miles long, while others took the shorter walk round the boardwalk provided for disabled visitors.

The National Trust is doing its best to make its properties accessible: at Wimpole and Anglesey many scooters were available; lifts were available at Blickling and Melford, and videos, photographs and special routes available at other properties. These facilities greatly enhanced the holiday for several of our members.

As our holidays are arranged by Woodlands Travel Club any member going on one of their other trips can specify that their share of the profit should go to BNTA. This year we have received £923 which will allow us to support more National Trust Properties.
Ifakara Bakery Project

COTTERIDGE TALK - 22 January 2007 By Eugene & Margaret Schellenberg

'Our Daily Bread' was the underlying theme of Eugene's presentation regarding the Ifakara Bakery Project in Tanzania. On a holiday, visiting their missionary son and his family in Ifakara, Eugene and Margaret were asked by the local religious community to help in providing a bread bakery - good quality fresh food being in short supply. Back in England - they set about raising the necessary funds and purchasing the equipment. Eventually - their container left England and the Bakery was built and commissioned in the centre of Tanzania.

The Bakery has transformed the life of the village and the surrounding area. The venture is financially viable but it affects other aspects of the community -- especially in feeding children at the start of the school day (which helps both attention-span and resistance to malaria) and in the feeding of leprosy patients.

So donations are still needed and

Sauce, Tea & Custard

NORTHFIELD TALK - 9 January 2007

Given by Mr. Kenneth Hughes

Kenneth gave an very informative Talk detailing some of the history of food manufacturing in Birmingham over the last 150 years - especially HP Sauce, Typhoo Tea and Bird's Custard.

Having followed a career as a medical scientist (pathology) for 40 years, Kenneth took up city guiding as a retirement occupation - later developing his lecture/talks interests.

This talk shed an interesting light on some of the well-known food products associated with 'Old Brum'. Sadly, the above foods are no longer manufactured in Birmingham.

However, Kenneth stirred many a memory in the appreciative audience.

A pleasant morning, indeed. Don F.

Coach Outing News

Please note that there is a waiting list for the visit to 'Heelis' and Lacock on Friday 11 May, but there are still plenty of places on other dates at the time of going to print.

The visit to Tyntesfield on Easter Monday 9 April is open to anyone to book as we need a minimum number for this to be viable. Booking for this event can be made with Maureen Hill (Tel 0121 475 7933) or using the form enclosed with January mailing.

The cost of the visit to Wedgwood on 16 June has now been reduced to £18. Anyone who has already booked and paid £20 will be refunded £2 on the day of tour. Maureen Hill
Visit To Carding Mill Valley, Church Stretton

In December we received an invitation for representatives of BNTA to attend a day for Volunteers and Associations who had supported work being done in the area and to see the steps which had been erected to the small reservoir.

Four of us Andrew Atton, Graham McCauley, Audrey Randall and myself travelled by car arriving just in time for a welcome coffee. Then everyone was invited to either walk or go by Land Rover to see the steps, which had been made using locally quarried stone, leading up to the reservoir. After walking up the steps, we learned how this work had been undertaken with help from local volunteers and others. We then had the opportunity to walk around the reservoir with interpretation from the warden.

Then back to the Pavilion for excellent refreshments followed by illustrated presentations from the Trust’s staff on various aspects of the work being undertaken both by volunteers and employees. This included a ‘Visual Interpretation of the Valley & Hills’ which will be shown in the Pavilion for visitors to see, who are unable to walk onto the hills. Another presentation was about the work being done on Wenlock Edge.

Thanks were expressed to the Associations who have funded these projects. BNTA had made a contribution of £500 and other Associations Solihull, Shropshire and South Staffordshire had also contributed. (Thank you Andrew for
Old Brum Series

Summer 1950 and we are on the family holiday at Corton near Lowestoft. This was one of the highlights of the year as my father only got one fortnight a year as paid holiday (plus Bank holidays). Often, these holidays were extended family occasions - aunts, uncles plus older siblings with their spouses and children.

One of the greatest changes in my life was due to Rab Butler’s ‘1944 Education Act’ - which gave free places to Grammar Schools.

In September 1949 I had started at the George Dixon Grammar School in City Road, Edgbaston. This opened so many opportunities for me in later life. Education has changed so much since the 1940’s.

We lived in Winson Green which was a vibrant community dominated by local factories, the Lodge Road Mental Asylum and - of course - the ‘Prison’. Over-crowding in the ‘Prison’ was the norm then - and it was the last place in the Country to carry out ‘Hangings’. The family left Winson Green in 1967.

Don Fripp - March 2007

Anniversary Lunch

Once again, we have made a reservation for our annual lunch to take place at the Tally Ho! Sports and Conference Centre, Pershore Road, Birmingham

This year the lunch will be on Saturday, 6th October 2007 at 12.00 for 12.30. Our speaker will be Mr. David Howe and his talk is entitled "Laughter is the best medicine"

The cost for meal and speaker will be £18. A booking form is enclosed, please fill in your menu requirements and return with S.A.E to Joan Stoker as soon as possible.

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Llanerchaeron

Hidden in the Aeron valley of West Wales is Llanerchaeron estate, which has been in the same family for ten generations. The manor house was designed by John Nash for Colonel William Lewis and finished in 1795. Built of stucco and slate the villa has the principal rooms arranged around a central staircase hall; this gives a friendly effect. At the back, the domestic offices lead out to a service courtyard where dairy, cheese room, bake-house and smoke-house, salting room and brewhouse are arranged conveniently. The original cheese presses can still be seen.

Away from the house are two walled gardens with some magnificent old fruit trees and a fine array of vegetables. These and the farm are managed organically. The farm has Welsh black cattle Llanwennog sheep and Welsh pigs.

The visitor centre, sited discreetly across the road by the river, sells some of the produce. We bought some apples that were nearly 6 inches across, the variety was called Wonder. A visit.
Our AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Association will take place at 2.30pm on Saturday 21st April 2007, at Selly Oak Methodist Church Hall, Langleys Road, Birmingham.

AGENDA

1. Welcome and opening remarks from the Chair
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 8th April 2006
4. Matters arising from the last AGM
5. Report of the Chairman and Committee
6. Treasurer’s report and approval of Annual Accounts to 31st December 2006
7. Appointment of the Independent Examiner: Mr Edward Hall
8. Membership Fees: the Committee proposes to increase the Annual Membership fees from £5 to £6 for single members, and from £9 to £11 for households, with effect from 1st January 2008. The AGM is asked to confirm this proposal. (These fees were last raised at the AGM in 1999)
9. BNTA donations to the Trust from 2006. (see table on back page)
10. Electoral motion proposed by Graham McCauley, seconded by John Surtees, with the support of nine additional signatories: - "that for the elections being held at this AGM the requirement in clause G4 of the Constitution limiting the eligibility for re-election to the Committee be relaxed in the case of the following Members of the present Committee: Don Fripp, Mary Parker, Audrey Randall, Muriel Reay and Joan Stoker".
11. Election of Officers and Members of the Committee for 2007/8. (Nominations must be sent to the Secretary to arrive at least fourteen days before the AGM, using the enclosed slip, and must have the consent of the nominees.)
12. Anna Russell, NT Property Manager for the Birmingham Conurbation, will give an update for the West Midlands Region.
13. Any Other Business
14. Our Guest Speaker this year is David Brown who will speak on “30 Years with the National Trust”.
15. Tea (see enclosed slip to order afternoon tea) and a display of the BNTA Website.

* * * * * * * * *

Will anyone wishing to tender their apologies for this meeting please contact Audrey Randall on 0121 783 3774

NB Mary Parker has changed her telephone number. To get in touch ring 0121 420 3948
Sheep May Safely Graze!

As you can see in the table below our list of proposed donations to the Trust this year includes the purchase of ten sheep to graze the slopes at Carding Mill Valley.

If you apply your magnifying glass to the right you may just be able to spot some potential recruits for the job above the reservoir mentioned in Maureen’s report on Page 8.

Recommendations of Committee for 2006 donations

We agreed to spread the £5,200 available over 9 projects as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Back-to-Back Houses</th>
<th>Seating for Volunteers Room</th>
<th>£500</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Back-to-Back Houses</td>
<td>World War II Education Days</td>
<td>£500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baddesley Clinton</td>
<td>Curtains &amp; Sun Blinds for Chapel</td>
<td>£1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockhampton</td>
<td>Sculpture Repairs on Woodland Walk</td>
<td>£500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carding Mill Valley</td>
<td>10 Sheep to Graze Wildflower Meadows</td>
<td>£600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowles Mill</td>
<td>Interpretation Board</td>
<td>£750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kinver Edge</td>
<td>90th Anniversary Walk Trail</td>
<td>£500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Packwood</td>
<td>Repairs &amp; repainting of North Gates</td>
<td>£650</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upton House</td>
<td>Easels for Canaletto Exhibition</td>
<td>£200</td>
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