

Oxford Centre of the National Trust

Newsletter August 2022

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Slowly but surely, getting better ...

This newsletter brings details and booking forms for 3 Visits, 3 Lectures, a Walk and an Afternoon Tea in our Autumn Programme alongside 2 Group Holidays for 2023. We are delighted to report a steady increase in our membership numbers as 2022 unfolds and that we have, together, so far enjoyed successful visits to heritage estates and gardens, a lunch with our President and a garden tour with afternoon tea at an Oxford college alongside several guided walks on local Trust estates.

We extend a very warm welcome to **Pam Lee**, a member since 2013, who has joined Committee in the role of **Holidays Co-ordinator**, working closely with friends and allies **Plastow's Travel** and **Airedale Tours**, their booking agent. This highly effective collaboration has enabled us to re-introduce Group Holidays to members. A similar, most welcome association with **Guy Rogers**, Oxford Centre's Auditor, made it possible for bookings and ticketing in Summer to proceed when **Ticket Secretary Rupert McNeile** was suddenly unavailable. Rupert and Guy are now a team of two – a third person is actively sought. Additionally, **Ashley Castelino** kindly took on the role of **Website Manager** earlier in the year and is both very helpful and highly competent – a reminder that his regular updates to [http://oxfordcnt.co.uk/](http://oxfordcnt.co.uk) bring you all the information you might need, on screen.

Regular readers will know that page 8 of the newsletter always lists everyone involved in organising all that we can offer. For the very first time, Executive Committee is outnumbered by our **Friends & Supporters** who kindly offer their time and talents in different ways. We couldn't manage without them and hope to attract more by the end of the year to further share the workload.

We have designated 2022 our '**Year of Recovery**', working out how a smaller Committee can still arrange visits, events and manage Oxford Centre's affairs. Venues are themselves 'in recovery' from the ravages of Covid and often struggling. I call this "Mind The Gap" syndrome: nothing is quite what it was BC (that's Before Covid!) – we can only accept that, adapt accordingly, be very flexible. For Committee, that means keeping things as simple and straightforward as possible; recognising what we can and can't do; sourcing the extra help we need. You'll read in the pages of this issue how that applies to **Bookings & Ticketing**, reviewed and simplified with input from Rupert & Guy.

We have learned valuable lessons from running the **Grantham holiday** in June, and we very much regret disappointing those who had booked for the mini break "**Christmas at Chatsworth**" in November because those numbers just weren't viable at the booking deadline. We've applied new thinking when planning for 2023 holidays as you will see on pages 7 and 8.

Whilst we are all doing rather well, Committee struggles with no Membership Secretary in place (that 'gap' jointly covered by Treasurer & Chair pro tem) and no-one to help with Publicity which is why our literature is not on public display in local libraries, or anywhere else – more 'gaps'! We're doing all we can to fill these roles: **Membership Sec** as a Committee role, **Publicity** easily covered by a small team of 2-3 perhaps, working in their own time as Friends & Supporters?

We KNOW that our growing membership has the very people to help us. We're seeking you out – YOU know who you are! Please get in touch if you think you could spare a little time, enjoy meeting new friends, all in support of The National Trust. Thank you, in anticipation

Buscot & Coleshill Estate and “Hands On History”

Growing Team

I would like to introduce myself, new to the team here. My name is **Beth Whiteley** and am the new Visitor Operations & Experience Manager looking after the West Oxfordshire Portfolio – I will be working closely with General Manager **Christian Walker** on the strategic direction of the Heritage & Rural Skills Centre as well as the programme of courses and events it hosts. I am also delighted to introduce **Lucy Caesar**, our new Welcome Manager who will be the operational lead on site at the Centre, and **Sarah Hannis** who is our new Senior Volunteering and Community Officer, who will be leading on community and partnership working. We look forward to meeting you all.

New Courses



The Coleshill team is working hard to develop its new and unique Heritage & Rural Skills Centre. The aim is to address the decline in specialist building skills and rural crafts (putting heritage properties at risk) by offering a range of courses in a partnership between the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and the National Trust.

The focus will always be on promoting and giving an introduction to estate-related endangered skills alongside other creative skills including Weaving, Printmaking and Fabric Dyeing.

Changing Spaces

The Cart Horse Stables, the new lecture/event/exhibition room is revealing itself. It was partly converted to a house in the 1970s/80s so sadly some historic interior may have been lost, but we have kept what we could, including the old kicking boards.

Following planning permission being granted for car parking in 2021 work commences in September to create space to welcome visitors and course students to the centre and parkland.

We are also clearing long held building stock from areas of the home farm to make room for the expansion of our lime plaster training bays – and a newly designated space for collection items that have been unearthed and sorted. We hope to get plenty of this collection on display in new exhibition spaces in 2023.



Above: Cart Horse Stables taking shape preserving what remains of the old kicking boards.

Beth Whiteley, Visitor Operations & Experience Manager

Bookings & Ticketing, what's changed, why?

Back in May, 2021, Government regulations were eased around the gradual relaxation of COVID-related lockdown. We saw a window of opportunity to take a small party of just 25 members out for coffee and cakes to the Carpenters Yard Café on the beautiful Coleshill & Buscot Estate. Whilst there we viewed the site of our sponsored planting scheme at Middleleaze Paddock. We were rigorous in complying with the rules: personalised tickets, controlled boarding and disembarking with allocated, distanced seating in a Plastow's coach (thoroughly sanitised); identical, distanced seating allocated in the café; everyone wore face masks and we all delighted in each other's congenial company and delicious cakes!

Since then we have continued to manage our own ticketing, as the rules relaxed with face masks now a matter of personal choice. And members have been increasingly supportive of the visits and events we've been able to arrange, which is wonderful. Thank you. However, the sheer volume of tickets we now issue makes it no longer practicable to produce our own. That's why Ticket Secretaries Rupert McNeile & Guy Rogers are, as of now, reverting to pre-printed and standardised tickets. What does this mean to you, when you apply?

- ✓ As usual, complete and submit your Booking Form **but by post** (and no longer by email) to the nominated Ticket Secretary **enclosing a stamped addressed envelope**
- ✓ As usual, make your payment by **enclosing a cheque** with your Booking Form OR **by bank transfer** if you prefer (this is certainly easier for us)
- ✓ **Be an early bird?** Please submit your Booking Form as soon as you possibly can, to help the organisers with essential planning – after all, your booking fee is fully refundable up to the published booking deadline, should you need to cancel
- ✓ Once you receive your ticket/s, please **contact the Visit Leader** (full details on each ticket) with any queries

From now on, all pre-printed tickets will be posted out (as was the case in pre-Covid days). This should be seamless for you as a member and significantly reduces our workload.

Waiting Lists? We should clarify, for the avoidance of all doubt, that where we have a Waiting List, such places are allocated **only once all applications are received at the booking deadline, not before.** You must submit your Booking Form, with payment, to be on a Waiting List. Your payment will be promptly refunded if we're unable to offer you a place. It's ALWAYS worth applying – inevitably, sometimes last-minute, there are cancellations.

News from the Walking Group

The final walk in this year's series will be based at Chastleton; and will take place on Wednesday, 21 September. We hope to offer monthly walks again next year, from April to September. Each will be based on a National Trust house, or National Trust farmland, within easy reach of Oxford. Please email oxfordcnt@gmail.com with a request to be put in touch with Jonathan Anelay if you would like to be added to the list of those who receive details of each walk: or if you have any comments on the arrangements as they have evolved since the launch last year; and/or suggestions for how we might do things differently.

Autumn Lectures 2022

This winter season we are continuing to offer a mixture of “live” lectures at Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street, and lectures recorded via Zoom available to members in their own homes. Over the six months, October to March, there will be three lectures at Magdalen and three via Zoom. You are welcome to bring a friend to any of our lectures at Magdalen Auditorium. There is an entrance fee of £5 for members and £6 for non-members to cover costs. We regret that we will not be serving coffees and teas before the lectures.

We would be very grateful if members could continue to support our zoom lectures via an “honesty donation” of £5 for each Zoom lecture watched. Payment welcomed by Bank Transfer to our account, Oxford Centre of the National Trust, account no 33248968, sort code 20-65-20 (please use the reference ZOOM), or by cheque sent to the Treasurer, 2 Cot’s Green, Kidlington OX5 1UX.

There’s a theme of conservation and preservation within the National Trust in many of our lectures this season.

Tuesday 18 October, 11am at Magdalen Auditorium: Peeling back the layers, the art of conserving paintings



This lecture will be given by **Rebecca Hellen**, Specialist Advisor for Paintings at the National Trust, who will describe the Trust’s new in-house studio on the Knole estate in Kent. She will shine a light on how the technical analysis of paintings informs the way we devise conservation treatments and helps art historians and curators understand and interpret these works.

14 to 20 November via Zoom: Greys Court through the Ages

April Thompson, experienced volunteer at Greys Court, explores the varied history of Greys Court, from William the Conqueror to the present. This includes an Archbishop, a soldier whom no one can trace, connections with Elizabeth I, a governor of the Leeward Isles, revelry, a widow who bought Greys Court as a weekend retreat, and finally the Brunners, who turned the house into their family home. An email to members will give you the link to watch this lecture a few days in advance.



Tuesday 13 December, 11am at Magdalen Auditorium: Insects – the Canary in the Collections-care Coalmine?



Hilary Jarvis, Assistant National Conservator at the National Trust leading on Integrated Pest Management for Collections, describes how they monitor pests in National Trust houses, which species are of most concern, what their varying levels can reveal and **why** it’s so important to take full advantage of this.

Advance notice of 2023 lectures:

16-22 January via Zoom Romantic Decline: Preserving Chastleton House

Ruth Peters, Senior Collections and House Officer for the National Trust’s West Oxfordshire portfolio

20–26 February via Zoom Oxford Botanic Garden at 400

Simon Hiscock, Director of Oxford Botanic Garden and Harcourt Arboretum, Professor of Botany in the Dept of Plant Sciences at Oxford University

Tuesday, 21 March, 10.45 am Magdalen Auditorium: AGM, followed by lecture

Colonial Photographic Collections at the National Trust

Rebekah Hodgkinson, DPhil student in Archaeology at the University of Oxford in collaboration with the National Trust

Felicity Peacock, Lectures co-ordinator, assisted by **Karin Eldredge** and **Di Lynch**

Holiday in Grantham, 2022

Members of Oxford Centre of the National Trust set off in lovely sunshine for our adventure to Grantham. Our first stop on the way there was **Calke Abbey** – a place which had been left as it was when the Trust took it over. I think most people do not wish to see another glass case filled with stuffed animals and birds or stags' head on the walls. The State Bed was found in cardboard boxes and then assembled by the Trust. The 18th-century Chinese silk bed hangings are very vibrant.



Kedleston Hall

The next venue was the home of the Curzon family at **Kedleston Hall**. Such a contrast, as it was so well kept. The Robert Adam house, with vibrant blue and gold-leaf furniture, was beautiful. We met up with the lady who was dressed up as Mrs Garnett, housekeeper during the 18th and 19th centuries, who was so fascinating to speak to. After a long journey on Wednesday, we reached Gunby Hall, a smaller family home. The last member of the Massingberd family founded the Pioneer Club in Kensington for ladies only. The pianist in the Music Room was very accomplished. The extensive gardens were superb – and the dovecote had doves in it. We

visited Tattershall Castle on the way back to the hotel.



*Newton's Chamber
at Woolsthorpe*

Isaac Newton's birthplace at Woolsthorpe Manor, our destination the following day, was a typical farmhouse. We found the apple tree in the orchard and also the sapling grown from a pip sent into space with Tim Peake. The afternoon was spent in Lincoln. I think most people went to the cathedral where there is so much to admire including modern wooden Stations of the Cross.

On the way home we visited Packwood – a fascinating house with items collected by Graham Baron Ash. The gardens and yew trees are always spectacular.

Wherever we went, the Trust's volunteers were all so knowledgeable, informative and helpful, especially on accessibility. The hotel staff were particularly friendly. A huge vote of thanks must go to our coach driver and leader, Diane, who was an excellent driver and dealt with all problems with efficiency and great sense of humour.

Betty Fathers

Oxford Centre NT Holidays for 2023

Following the holiday to Grantham in June and bearing in mind some of the suggestions passed to me, I am planning two holidays for next year, 2023.

17–21 April, based in Plymouth (5 days, 4 nights, dinner bed and breakfast) staying at the 4-star New Continental Hotel situated in the city and just a 10 minute walk away from the Hoe. As usual we shall visit a property on the outward journey and on our return – hopefully, **Kingston Lacey** and **Killerton**. Plymouth is a good centre for us to visit National Trust properties and we plan to see **Buckland Abbey, Cotehele and Saltram** whilst still leaving time for you to get to know Plymouth or just relax.

Although the main purpose of the holiday is to visit Trust properties, participants are free to make their own arrangements while we are away. The holiday is open to anyone who is not a member of the National Trust on payment of a £10 annual subscription to OCNT, with the additional payment of entrance fees to Trust properties visited.

A Booking Form and itinerary are enclosed with your Newsletter. Please book early.

2–6 October, based in Chester (again 5 days, 4 nights, dinner bed and breakfast) using a hotel already known to OCNT members – **The Queen at Chester**. The itinerary will follow the usual pattern with visits going North and back plus three well-known properties in the Lancs / Cheshire area. See more details for Chester in the February 2023 Newsletter but ***please put the dates in your Diary now!*** **Pam Lee**

Dates for your diary – don't miss anything !!

AUGUST	
Tues 30 th	**Booking deadline for <u>29 Sept</u> Hampton Court &/or <u>13 October</u> Coleshill 'Hands-on History' &/or <u>9 Nov</u> Compton Verney visits &/or <u>22 Nov</u> , Afternoon Tea
SEPTEMBER	
Weds 21 st	* Walk: from Chastleton House (the last in the 2022 series) <i>please note change of date</i>
Thurs 29 th	* Visit: Hampton Court, day visit
OCTOBER	200 CLUB DRAW, no 4 of 6
Thurs 13 th	* Visit: Coleshill Estates 'Hands-on History' day visit
Tues 18 th	Lecture: Magdalen Auditorium , 10.45-12 noon, ALL welcome – <u>Rebecca Hellen</u> , 'Paintings at the National Trust'. (The first in a themed series of 6.) You are most welcome to bring a friend. £5 or £6 non OCNT members, payable at the door
Mon 30 th	**Booking deadline with deposit , for OCNT Plymouth Holiday, <u>17-21 April 2023</u>
NOVEMBER	200 CLUB DRAW, no 5 of 6
Weds 9 th	* Visit: Compton Verney, day visit
14 th to 20 th	Zoom lecture (no 2 of 6): <u>April Thompson</u> , 'Greys Court through the Ages'
Tues 22 nd	* Afternoon Tea , Cotswold Lodge Hotel, Banbury Road, Oxford
DECEMBER	200 CLUB CHRISTMAS DRAW, no 6 of 6 – with special prizes!
Tues 13 th	Lecture (no 3 of 6): Magdalen Auditorium , 10.45-12 noon, ALL welcome – <u>Hilary Jarvis</u> , 'Insects in Collections-care'. £5 or £6 non-members, payable at the door

Note: * Members need to have booked a place for these events, please refer back to the detailed notes on pages 4-5

Oxford Centre NT's 2022 Executive Committee and Support Roles

President:	Dr Nick Brown, Principal, Linacre College, Oxford
Chairman:	Pauline Martin chair.ocnt@gmail.com 07802 390914
Vice Chairman:	<i>Situation vacant</i>
Hon Treasurer:	Felicity Peacock treasurer.ocnt@gmail.com 07975 678475
Hon Secretary:	Pat Jones
200 Club:	Felicity Peacock
Holidays Co-ordinator:	Pam Lee, in collaboration with Plastow's Travel Ltd and Airedale Tours
Membership Secretary:	<i>Situation vacant</i>
Newsletter Editor:	Margaret Lipscomb editor.ocnt@gmail.com assisted by Janet Redfern (proof reading)
Visits:	Betty Fathers, Rupert McNeile, Cathy Pickin, Matthew Johnson, Nesta Jones and others
Lectures:	Felicity Peacock, assisted by Karin Eldredge & Di Lynch
Walking Group:	Jonathan Anelay
Publicity:	Felicity Peacock – <i>additional help is urgently sought</i>
Ticket Secretaries:	Rupert McNeile, Guy Rogers
Website management:	Ashley Castelino

When you applied for membership of the Oxford Centre of the National Trust you gave us contact information so that we could keep you informed about forthcoming activities and invite you to take part in our events. This personal information is used solely for the purposes of running the Centre and its activities. It may be exchanged among members of the Committee but will not be shared with any other organisation. Your details will be kept securely, and you have the right to opt out of our communications at any time. You also have the right to request to see what information we hold about you. If you wish to do this please contact: Acting **Membership Secretary**, phone 07975 678475 email: oxfordcnt@gmail.com