



Oxford Centre of the National Trust

Newsletter August 2023

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Greetings everyone! I do hope you are enjoying the summer and are busy seeing family and friends in whatever you're planning. We're planning too as you'll see on pages 4–6 here with details of our **Autumn Programme** – join us for a **guided walk**, or meet up with us on part of it? Come with us to **Tyntesfield near Bristol**, or drop in for coffee with us at **Weston Library Café** at the table by the window, 10.30–11.45 on the last Tuesday of each month

Read up on the latest news of **our NT Neighbours (pages 2–3)** and come with us to see for yourselves what's happening? **Batsford Arboretum** in October offers the prospect of beautiful autumn colours and is another double venue visit. **Monthly Lectures** either in Magdalen Auditorium or via Zoom are back in the calendar from October to March. And **Kent, the Garden of England,** awaits for a Spring 2024 mini-break in friendly company, offering a very appealing itinerary – enclosed here, with Booking Form. Plenty of choice, then?

It's a very real pleasure to introduce our new Membership Secretary **Louise Hodges** to you. We were all delighted when Louise, a new member herself, offered to help by filling this long-standing vacancy. She has been warmly welcomed by Committee. See her article on page 2, note the new email address — membership.ocnt@gmail.com — for membership queries, or phone **07802 390914**, as usual.

We have other Committee roles to fill as well as smaller, occasional roles covering publicity to hospitality and more. For instance, we're hoping someone would like to lead a theatre matinee visit, perhaps in November or January — anyone interested in doing that? I'm unashamedly asking everyone I can think of these days and would be delighted to hear from you if you'd like to help out one way or another. This needn't be a big commitment: for instance, every time as a member you bring a friend along to a lecture, book for a friend on a visit, pass on details of a holiday, perhaps recommend membership to someone you know, you're making a difference and that's invaluable. But if you can spare a little more time, do get in touch. Don't wait to be asked! Thank you.

We've recently had welcome news from the **Oxfordshire History Centre** that they will take core material from our archives – dating back to 1969! It's been fascinating going through it all, putting things in order. More importantly, it feels very gratifying and entirely right and proper that our history should be lodged in appropriate archival storage in this way – I'm keenly aware of how many good people have devoted their time and stewardship to the unfolding story of Oxford Centre NT over the years. Their efforts surely deserve this recognition.

Read on, we hope there will be something of interest to everyone in these pages, so reach for your diary and a pen and we'll look forward to the pleasure of your company, very soon.

Pauline Martin, Chair, chair.ocnt@gmail.com 07802 390914

Membership Update

I am delighted to have joined the Executive Committee of OCNT in the role of Membership Secretary. As a new member myself this year, I have already enjoyed the excellent day trip to Bath and an interesting talk at the AGM and I'm looking forward to taking part in more activities going forward.

A big thank you to all members for your ongoing support. As well as enabling us to continue to offer an interesting programme of activities for members to enjoy, your support also enables us to support our local National Trust properties. We currently have 305 members, but of course we would love to have more, so please do tell your friends and neighbours about the interesting programme of activities we offer. If you enjoy our regular coffee mornings in the Weston Library café, why not invite a friend to come along with you? It's a great way for them to find out more about what we do.

I'm looking forward to meeting more of you at some of our events going forward. In the meantime, if you have any membership queries you can contact me at membership.cont@gmail.com

Louise Hodges, Membership Secretary

Advance notice: Revised subscription rates from January 2024 for members who receive newsletters by post

As some members will know, it was agreed at the AGM in March that annual subscription rates for members receiving Newsletters by post (rather than email), would increase by £5 to £15 (single) and £20 for joint members, with effect from 1 January 2024. This reflects the increased cost of printing and posting.

Full details will be provided in the November newsletter, so please do look out for that in the autumn.

Felicity Peacock, Treasurer

Our National Trust Neighbours

West Oxfordshire

Sarah Hannis, Senior Volunteering & Community Officer for West Oxfordshire writes:

After a busy summer term, our school visits have come to an end and family activities are back, running through August and culminating with the re-chalking of our beautiful **White Horse** near Uffington over the Bank Holiday weekend. This annual event involves scouring (or weeding) the chalk horse, then breaking down last years chalk before topping up with fresh stone. This is a brilliant opportunity for visitors to, legitimately, hit a scheduled ancient monument with a small hammer! This year the horse is growing too. Research has shown that the horse used to be bigger, so our Ranger has been working with experts to return it to its former glory.

Meanwhile in **Coleshill**, the Heritage & Rural Skills Centre workshops have garnered positive feedback. Courses and workshops for the rest of the year are filling up too. After a successful production of **Romeo & Juliet** at Great Coxwell Tithe Barn, we are looking forward to hosting an action-packed, open-air production of **Robin Hood** on Friday 8th September in the Coleshill parkland.

At **Chastleton House**, the Best Garden is looking stunning after its restoration by the Garden team. On dedicated days in August, there is a new way to enjoy the gardens. Visitors can book on to Quiet Art Days to draw, paint or simply enjoy the garden in quiet contemplation, bringing their own materials.





As part of the **Save our Wild Isles** campaign we are encouraging people to get out and enjoy nature. Highlights across our properties in West Oxfordshire are a lapwing chick successfully raised, rare Pepper Saxifrage growing on the River Cole, barn owl chicks that have been ringed by volunteers and there's an array of beautiful butterflies in the parklands and hedgerows.

Photos have been taken by Buscot & Coleshill volunteer, **Martin Trewhella**, who caught the lapwing and NT

volunteer photographer, **Hugh Mothersole** for the Best Garden at Chastleton – we are fortunate to have talented volunteers.

Thames Valley

Julia King, Senior Programming & Partnerships Officer for the Thames Valley Portfolio writes:

At **Basildon Park** we have a host of exciting new events and programmes coming up this year, which we'd love to tell you more about:

27 June to 28 August 2023 – Summer of Art Exhibition: This summer, Basildon Park launched an exhibition in the mansion house to celebrate the Iliffe family's collection of art featured throughout the house. We have selected 15 paintings in total for Summer of Art by asking National Trust staff and volunteers to select their favourite paintings from the collection and explain their reasons for their choice. My own favourite is 'The Attributes of Hunting and Gardening' by Anne Vallayer-Coster, 1774. This impressive painting is one of the very few still lifes in the collection and one of the only paintings by a woman.

We are opening the house up for **Evening Art Tours** throughout August with a glass of bubbly to finish. Tickets cost £15 and can be purchased through our website.



'Basildon Park, The Iliffe Collection @National Trust Images

9 September to 5 November – Carr 300 exhibition in the Mansion: 2023 marks the 300th anniversary since the birth in 1723 of **John Carr of York**, who was architect of Basildon Park and one of the most prolific and significant architects of the mid-18th century. To celebrate this special anniversary the mansion house will display unseen pieces of collection from our architectural salvage which are interconnected with Basildon Park's history.

October – Festival of Light and Colour: As the days are dimming, Basildon Park is turning up the colour and light with the return for the fourth year of this festival. During October half-term, the mansion



©National Trust Images/ Arnhel de Serra

house will once again illuminate the rooms with colourful lanterns, diyas, tealights, torans and light projections.

We are delighted to welcome back **Rohit Rajaguru**, an acclaimed local artist, to create a rangoli in the garden room within our **India & Me Exhibition**.

Diwali celebrations, a Hindu festival with lights, usually held in the period October to November, comes later this year, so visitors can also return on 11 to 12 of November to see a celebratory rangoli display.

VISITS SEPTEMBER TO OCTOBER 2023

Thursday, 14 September 2023: VISIT TO TYNTESFIELD (NEAR BRISTOL)

Tyntesfield was acquired by the National Trust in 2002. It is a magnificent Victorian house, remodelled in the Gothic Revival style by **Walter Gibbs**, who made his fortune from guano trading in South America. The interior of the house is richly decorated and the building is very ornate, especially the private chapel which was modelled on the flamboyant architecture of Saint Chapelle in Paris. It is joined to the house by a bridge. Touring the house is free flow.



The house is surrounded by 540 acres of land, including woodlands, parklands, towering trees and an orchard. There are open lawns, flower filled terraces, an historic orangery and a kitchen garden.

The **Cow Barn Kitchen restaurant**, near the Welcome building, serves hot/cold drinks, cakes, snacks, and light lunches. **The Pavilion cafe** in the lower garden has take-away drinks, snacks and picnic tables.

Tyntesfield is built on the side of a valley. Walking to and from the house involves slopes that can be steep and uneven in places, and some paths are of loose gravel. The walk from the Welcome building takes 10 to 15 minutes. A mobility shuttle service is available at various locations around the site. Mobility 'tramper scooters' are available but need to be booked beforehand.

<u>Cost</u>: £32 <u>Booking deadline</u>: <u>Tuesday</u>, 29 August <u>Leader</u>: Cathy Pickin (07798 931633)

Departing: Wheatley, Plastow's Yard** 8.30 am Wheatley, Ambrose Rise 8.35

Headington Shops (outside Iceland) 8.45 Cunliffe Close 9.00

Oxford Playhouse 9.15 Redbridge Park & Ride 9.30

Wednesday, 27 September 2023: 10.45–1.15, COLESHILL RURAL SKILLS CENTRE (NR FARINGDON), 2.15–4.30, BASILDON PARK (NR READING)

Come with us to see for yourself two 'jewels in the crown' of our local NT properties. Coffee and biscuits will be served on arrival at the newly launched **Coleshill Rural Skills Centre**. There's lots to see on site (allow 30–40 mins) following a seated talk on Coleshill's unique connection to artisan crafts and skills (approx. 45 mins). We'll be accommodated in the comfortably refurbished **Carthorse Stables**. The Booking Form has an additional option for you to pre-order a sandwich or salad box lunch or just bring your own picnic to enjoy on site (or on the coach for the on transfer to Basildon).





We'll leave at 1.15 sharp for the 1 hr drive to **Basildon Park** and the **Stable Yard** entrance. Your NT membership card must be scanned at the Visitors Centre before we take the 400-metre uphill stroll through woodland to the house. *Please indicate on your Booking Form if you would like to pre-book the Buggy Service, instead.* We're offered a talk (seating available) outlining the fascinating history of the property (30–40 mins), before own time for your choice of the

house, the gardens and the Exhibition Room where 'India & Me' depicts Basildon's historic Indian connection, and/or enjoy tea (and a cake?) before we leave for home, at 4.30 latest.

<u>Accessibility</u> at Coleshill is via level gravel paths between the coach and Carthorse Stables. You may encounter steps if you opt to explore further. Basildon House has 22 stone steps with handrails to its 1st-floor opulent reception rooms, and bedrooms via more stairs to the upper floor. At ground level, there's easy access to the Tea Rooms, Pleasure Gardens, the original Kitchen and Exhibition Room.

<u>Cost</u>: £43 <u>Booking deadline</u>: Tuesday, 29 August <u>Departing</u>: Wheatley, Plastow's Yard** 8.55am

Headington Shops (outside Iceland) 9.15

Oxford Playhouse 9.45

<u>Leader</u>: Pauline Martin (07802 390914) Wheatley, Ambrose Rise 9.00

Cunliffe Close 9.30 Redbridge P&R 10.00

Tuesday, 10 October 2023: VISIT TO BATSFORD ARBORETUM AND CHASTLETON HOUSE

We will visit **Batsford Arboretum**, near Moreton-in-Marsh, in the morning with over 3 hours to explore the vivid autumn colours. The **Garden Terrace Café** is excellent for coffees and lunches, a shop and plant centre. Paths are generally level, but some slope gently as the Arboretum is situated on a hillside.

We'll leave Batsford by 2pm for the 15-minute drive to **Chastleton House**. *National Trust membership cards must be shown: non-members pay £10.50 extra by cash or cheque*, to cover the Guided Tour and refreshments*. Access to the house involves a steep path: suitable shoes are recommended!

At the House we'll be welcomed with a short introduction to the history of Chastleton, and then start guided tours of the House. The entrance is up 5 stone steps; the House has two staircases over four floors. There are few chairs on which visitors may sit during the tour. The steps are generally shallow with landings and handrails, but if you feel unable to manage these, please indicate on your booking form that you opt for the shorter Tour 2. This



alternative tour includes steps to the entrance, the Ground Floor and lower floor kitchen area, then watching a 30-minute video of the whole house. Chastleton has asked us to let them know in advance how many in our group will be opting for Tour 2, rather than the guided tour of the whole house, so they can arrange the requisite number of Guides.

Self-service teas, coffees & biscuits will be available after the tours in the **Brewhouse**, and there will be the opportunity to walk in the restored gardens before we leave. We aim to return to Oxford by 6pm.

*Non-National Trust members need to bring cash or a cheque payable to 'Oxford Centre of the National Trust' for £10.50 to give me on the day. Please indicate on the booking form if this applies to you.

Cost: £44 Booking deadline: Tuesday, 29 August

<u>Departing</u>: Wheatley, Plastow's Yard** 8.45 am

Headington Shops (outside Iceland) 9.00

Oxford Playhouse 9.30

Leader: Felicity Peacock (07975 678475) Wheatley, Ambrose Rise 8.50 Cunliffe Close 9.15 Parkway P&R 9.45

News from the Walking Group

This year we have enjoyed walks based on Bradenham and Hughenden, Stowe, Buscot and Long Crendon. Our next visit will be to **Waddesdon** on **7 September**: and then on **9 October** we will conclude the year's programme with some walks from **Grey's Court**. In each case there should be a choice of two walks, one of under two miles; and the other of four or five. Some join both: others combine one of the walks with an extended visit to the property.

If you are not on the list of walkers, and would like to receive details of each walk, please email oxfordcnt@gmail.com

Jonathan Anelay

The Walking Group and the Cow: On a visit to Buscot, the walking group found their path blocked by an escapee cow which had fancied the grass was greener nearer the river on the other side of the fence to her friends in the field. 'We were stuck', says Felicity Peacock, 'walking at a cow's pace, wondering how to get past her without coming into contact with her muddy flank or falling into the water'. At last, she paused for a mouthful of succulent grass, and the first in the group of 10 walkers slipped past.' A phone call to the Coleshill Estate Office ensured the loose cow's rescue.



'She was determined to walk with us and ignore her friends on the other side of the wire!'

^{**} We very much appreciate the kindness of Barbara Plastow in allowing use of the limited parking spaces available at Plastow's Yard for members who request it – please <u>always</u> ensure you have sought her permission before booking with us to board at this point, by phoning her on **01865 872270**

Autumn Lectures 2023 – October to December

Tuesday, 17 October 2023, 11am at Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall St:

Bringing the climate change challenge to life: how the National Trust is playing its part to tackle its

biggest threat

We are delighted to welcome **Patrick Begg, Outdoors and Natural Resources Director** for the National Trust, to outline how the Trust's current Strategy recognises that the biggest threat to our core conservation mission is the accelerating impact of climate change. Trust properties are suffering from the serious consequences of drought, flooding, changes in humidity and the severe pressures on species and habitats. This



Birling Gap, 2017

presentation will bring to life the various ways our places are being affected, and describe how we are responding.

Tea and coffee will be served in the Auditorium Foyer from 10.30am, a chance to chat with friends!



20 to 26 November, via Zoom at a time of your own choosing Nuneham Courtenay: one of the most beautiful landscapes in the world

The whole Nuneham estate, including the planned village and house and park, represents an important demonstration of 18th-and 19th-century aristocratic taste and power. It also illustrates the threats to survival which faced English country estates in the decades after World War 2, and the challenges that still lie ahead.

This talk by **Malcolm Airs**, former district conservation officer closely involved in the protection of Nuneham Courtenay, will touch on all these themes in exploring its chequered history. A link to view this Zoom lecture will be emailed to members a few days before 20 November.

Tuesday, 12 December, 11am at Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall St <u>Caring for a Nation's Photographs</u>

National Trust photography collections are widespread; they reflect the development of photography from the 1840s to the present day. Many reveal how our places appeared in the past, while others capture formal and informal portraits of the people who lived there. Numerous family albums reveal their creator's interests and concerns, helping today's visitors to understand our properties.

Anita Bools is the National Trust's Senior National Conservator for Paper and Photography. In this talk she will share some of her favourite photographs and reveal their stories. She will also describe the challenges in caring for such a vast and precious collection.



Self portrait of Liverpool photographer, Edward Hardman

Tea and coffee will be served in the Auditorium Foyer from 10.30am, a chance to chat with friends!

Coffee Mornings

We are pleased to say that our popular coffee mornings will continue over the summer and autumn months, providing an opportunity to meet up socially for a chat over a cup of tea or coffee with fellow members. These gatherings are held in the Weston Library Café, Broad Street, from 10.30 to 11.45 am on the last Tuesday of the month. Purchase your drink and perhaps a cake, then join us at our table. The planned dates over the next few months are 25 July, 29 August, 26 September, 31 October and 28 November. Drop in any time that suits you. See you there!

OCNT Holidays

We were blessed with wonderful weather for the holiday in April to **Plymouth**. Each property we visited was remarkable with exceptionally helpful staff and volunteers and the hotel and coach arrangements suited us well. (See Betty Father's reminiscences below.)

Thirty-eight members are going to **Chester** in October when visits will be reminders of the Industrial Revolution, Liverpool past and present, and properties owned by families holding strong religious and political ideals.

Plans are in place for next May's visit to **Kent**, based at the **Bridgewood Manor Hotel and Spa** in **Chatham**. A booking form and itinerary are included in your Newsletter. Remember 'first come, first served' for single rooms. I hope you will join me on this trip to the Garden of England. **Pam Lee**

Visiting Old Haunts in the West Country

In April 2023, 37 intrepid voyageurs set off for our adventure to visit National Trust properties in **Dorset, Devon and Cornwall**. Although there had been an accident on the A34, we were not held up too much and arrived at **Kingston Lacey** at 12.30pm. As I could only access the



Servants' Hall and Egyptian Room, I was given a most interesting 'virtual tour' and probably saw more than others as the upstairs was closed due to lack of volunteers. A very nostalgic visit to the Laundry brought back many childhood memories. It was a long way to our hotel in Plymouth but the varied countryside was looking lovely with Devon primroses along the roadside.

Buckland Abbey was the venue for Tuesday. The gorse and sheep with lambs over Dartmoor delighted us on the way there. The Abbey was originally the house of Cistercian monks who farmed the estate. It was then converted into a family home by Sir Richard Grenville who then passed it on to Sir Francis Drake. The Great Barn was enormous and would have stored grain and farm produce. A kind volunteer helped me into the Entrance Hall with its replica Drake Chair (original in the Bodleian Library). The volunteer in the Kitchen explained the history and use of the implements and seemed pleased to have an interested listener. We came back to Plymouth in glorious sunshine via the Barbican and seafront and several people dismounted to explore this area.

We visited **Cothele** on Wednesday, having to go the same way across Dartmoor to Tavistock and then across the River Tamar into Cornwall negotiating *very* narrow lanes. The entrance to the Tudor mansion, home to the Edgcumbe family since 1352, was approached via a meadow where daffodils and narcissi were still in flower. The Great Hall has much armour on the walls and also an early prosthetic arm! Into the Kitchen and then the Breakfast Room with a fantastic exhibition of artefacts illustrating the work of the National Trust since 1947. Another 'Virtual Tour' for me and then a walk to the terrace garden with beautiful tulips and rhododendrons. Back to Plymouth through Cornwall and over the Tamar Bridge.

The next day most of the group went to **Saltram** and enjoyed it. I decided to relive memories of Plymouth which I used to visit three times a year from 1961 to 2008. My goodness, how it has changed! What used to be a Naval city is now dominated by University and student accommodation in modern blocks. But they can't change the Hoe with all its memorials or Madeira Drive alongside Plymouth Sound. The Mayflower Steps are still there but the old Fish Market is now a shoe shop! The original Barbican Tudor independent shops are now cafes, pubs and restaurants, like all cities these days.

We came back to Oxford via **Killerton** which was given to the National Trust in 1944 by Sir Richard Acland due to his political beliefs. The Georgian house is more of a family home and the ground floor was accessible so I was able to see all the rooms but did not venture upstairs to the Fashion Collection.

Everywhere I went the Trust volunteers were very helpful and keen to pass on their extensive knowledge of the properties. The food at the hotel was excellent and served by very attentive staff. Our thanks must go to **Pam Lee** for organising our interesting visits and her patience and cheerfulness throughout our time away, and also to our driver, **Diane**, for her excellent driving through gorgeous scenery.

Betty Fathers

Do put these dates into your diary – we really don't want you to miss out ...

	<u> </u>
AUGUST	
Tues, 8th	Deadline final balance payable for Chester holiday (2 – 6 October)
Tues, 29th	Booking deadline, Forms 1 & 2 Visits: Tyntesfield (14 Sep) + Coleshill & Basildon Pk (27 Sep) +
	Batsford & Chastleton (10 Oct)
Tues, 29th	Coffee at Weston Library café, just drop-in, 10.30 – 11.45
SEPTEMBER	
Thurs, 7th	Guided Walk: Waddesdon with Jonathan Anelay
Thurs, 14th	*Day visit to Tyntesfield, nr Bristol, with Leader, Cathy Pickin
Tues, 26th	Coffee at Weston Library café, just drop-in, 10.30 – 11.45
Wed, 27th	*Day visit to Coleshill Heritage Skills Centre & Basildon Park, with Leader, Pauline Martin
Fri, 29th	'Coffee with the President' for new members, Committee & Friends and Supporters hosted
	by Dr Nick Brown at Linacre College, 10.30 – 11.45 – by invitation
OCTOBER	200 CLUB DRAW, no 4 of 6
2 nd to 6 th	*OCNT holiday based in Chester
Mon, 9th	Guided Walk: Grey's Court with Jonathan Anelay
Tues, 10th	*Day visit to Batsford Arboretum & Chastleton House with Leader, Felicity Peacock
Tues, 17th	Lecture: Magdalen Auditorium , 10.45 – 12 noon, ALL welcome. Patrick Begg, 'Bringing the
	climate change challenge to life', £5 or £6 non-members, payable at the door
Fri,27th	Booking deadline with deposit, for OCNT Kent Holiday, 5 – 9 May 2024
Tues, 31st	Coffee at Weston Library café, just drop-in, 10.30 – 11.45
NOVEMBER	200 CLUB DRAW, no 5 of 6
20 th -26th	Zoom lecture : Malcolm Airs, 'Nuneham Courtenay: one of the most beautiful landscapes in
	the world'
Tues, 28th	Coffee at Weston Library café, just drop-in, 10.30 – 11.45
DECEMBER	200 CLUB DRAW, no 6 of 6
Tues,12 th	Lecture: Magdalen Auditorium , 10.45 – 12 noon, ALL welcome. Anita Bools, 'Caring for a
	Nation's Photographs', £5 or £6 non-members, payable at the door

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

Oxford Centre NT's 2022–3 Executive Committee, Friends and Supporters

President: Dr Nick Brown, Principal, Linacre College, Oxford
Chair: Pauline Martin chair.ocnt@gmail.com 07802 390914

Vice Chair: A Committee vacancy

Hon Treasurer: Felicity Peacock treasurer.ocnt@gmail.com_07975 678475

Hon Secretary: Pat Jones

200 Club: Felicity Peacock

Friends 'in residence': Pegasus Grange: Pam Lee, Val Gould

Tumbling Bay Court: Mark Davies, Sally Roberts

more OCNT Friends at: Moorside Place, Wingfield Court, William Morris Court residences
Holidays Co-ordinator: Pam Lee, working with Plastow's Travel Ltd & Airedale Tours Ltd

Lectures: Felicity Peacock, assisted by Karin Eldredge

Membership Secretary: Louise Hodges membership.ocnt@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor: Margaret Lipscomb editor.ocnt@gmail.com with proof-reading by

Janet Redfern

Auditorium helpers: Pam Lee, Ellis Forman, Cathy Pickin, Jo Willoughby, Hilary Whitehouse, Mary

Quinlan – more volunteers welcome

Ticket Secretaries: Rupert McNeile, Guy Rogers

Visits/Events: Betty Fathers, Rupert McNeile, Guy Rogers, Cathy Pickin, Matthew Johnson,

Nesta Jones and others

Walking Group: Jonathan Anelay

Website Editor & Publicity: Felicity Peacock – additional help with publicity leaflets is urgently sought

Website Manager: Ashley Castelino