

Baronet's Diary

September 2023 Edition

It was a pleasure to attend the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Derby & District National Trust Members' Group at Kedleston Hall in July. The organization was founded by local members to promote friendship through the various meetings and outings that are part of the annual events programme. Over the 50 years the group has raised over £100,000 for local National Trust properties including Calke, Staunton Harold, Sudbury and the Ilam Estate near Dovedale. At one time it had garnered over 400 members but today is more around the 120 mark, with the membership enjoying lectures in the winter with outings and rambles in the summer months. I was delighted to say a few words in my role as President alongside Hilary McGready the Director General of the Trust and local chairman Ian Samways. After a gorgeous cream tea, we were entertained by the Rock Choir made up of over 100 local singers. It was a glorious afternoon in great weather and let us look forward to the next 50 years!

Even I am surprised sometimes by the questions that come through my email groups. As a member of the East Midlands Historic Houses committee, we were forwarded a request that read ...

'We've had a peacock here for two years or more, and now he has a mate and three-month-old peachicks. During most of his life here he roamed free, and was a star attraction in the courtyard. But then he attacked a car with his beak, and respraying cost me £540. So now he is in a netted pen. I would love to let him roam again. There are free roaming peacocks at Castle Howard and elsewhere; how do they deal with the issue of liability?'

I am afraid that I have little knowledge of this particular wildfowl except for the fact that there are several present in Middleton by Youlgreave, some of which cause a consternation. Maybe a reader has an answer to this particular problem?

The Peak Five Benefice of the parishes of Fenny Bentley, Thorpe, Tissington, Parwich and Alsop-en-le-Dale have a new Vicar. In late July we were delighted to welcome The Rev Dr Nicola McNally to be our Priest-in-Charge as she was installed at a service at St Peter's Parwich with over one hundred parishioners attending. As patron I was privileged to introduce the candidate to the Bishop of Repton, The Right Revd Martin Macnaughton who led the service of induction. It was a pleasure to be part of this historic moment as Nicola, amidst a phalanx of 11 robed priests and a further 4 in mufti, was recognised by our five parishes. We all look forward to her ministry in the forthcoming years. Praise the Lord!

After a lull during the pandemic the village were proud to put on a wonderful show with its Secret Gardens of Tissington this summer. On a glorious Sunday afternoon in July, 12 gardens in our pretty village opened up to visitors in aid of St Mary's, raising over £1200 for church funds. These Village Open Garden Days are proving very popular in our part of the Peak District with places such as Winster, Bonsall and Parwich all opening. It is a great way to see further 'inside' our dwellings and some of the participants offer refreshments including Phil and Linda Oxburgh who raised further funds with a glass of Pimm's at their delightful cottage garden. Look out for a glut of such events in the 2024 season.

As High Sheriff in Nomination for Derbyshire for April 2025 there is not a great deal to do at present except to observe the impressive working of our wonderful High Sheriff Theresa Peltier from Wirksworth . However, the Under Sheriff, the role that acts as the conduit between the incumbent and the people of Derbyshire , rather interestingly came up for interview this Summer as the present holder of the post Andrew Cochrane announced he was stepping down in a year's time. The Interview Panel consisted of Theresa, High Sheriff in Nomination for 2024 Ian Morgan and myself. We had several splendid candidates and are delighted to welcome Sue Jennings (who works at the University) as our new Under Sheriff from 2024 with Chris Birds as Deputy. I am sure I will see a great deal of them both in the future. Long live the Shrievalty!

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