

Report on MLHS Visits 2019-20 *should have been presented to the membership at the AGM on 20th April.*

There have been 4 main visits to:

16.5.19. Adlington Hall - Spring

7.7.19. Bakewell - Summer

26.10.19. Catalyst Museum - Autumn

26.2.20. Refuge Assurance Building, Manchester - Winter

As well as **Summer Evening Strolls** to Mellor Mill site, Compstall and Disley in May, June and July 2019.

It has been our custom since the late 1990s to have a visit for every season of the year, to encourage people to engage with as much history as possible 'in situ', and they are generally very popular. Perhaps it is one reason for our large and lively membership?

In May, we followed up an interesting talk about Adlington Hall during our winter season with a bespoke guided tour of the house, and afternoon tea. The house started as the medieval hunting lodge for the progenitors of the extensive Cheshire Legh family, but it has had many additions of many different periods, so is full of intriguing nooks and crannies. The afternoon tea wasn't at all bad either, and the visit was thoroughly enjoyed by the 43 members and friends who came along.

The Summer outing took us to Bakewell, which astonishingly, Society records show that we have never visited officially. We spent the morning at the little known Old House Museum, based in a Tudor merchants house with exhibits exploring every aspect of Bakewell's history and life. It was a lovely warm sunny day, and after a lunch break Judith Wilshaw took some on a short historical walk round the town and there was time for all those things people like to do in Bakewell: feeding the ducks, eating ice creams, shopping, sitting by the river. Our homeward journey was by a different route to the outward journey so we had a tour of the Peak District to make our day complete.

Diana Leitch gave an interesting talk about Manchester notables at the April 2019 meeting, and urged us to visit Catalyst Museum of the Chemical Industry, which she had largely established, so off we went in October. Unfortunately, we couldn't maintain our good weather record, and it was an awfully wet day, but fortunately most of our time was spent indoors. It did clear up in the afternoon when a guided walk of the surroundings was scheduled so people were able to enjoy that. The museum concentrates on the enormous importance of the chemical industry to the economy and everyone's daily lives, and reasons for concentration of the factories in the Widnes area. After this visit no one should ever be able to claim that chemistry is boring. Our route included a crossing of the new and magnificent cable-stayed Mersey Gateway Bridge, and it was worth going on the trip for that alone.

Finally for this Society year, Jonathan Schofield, our favourite Blue Badge Guide took us round the Refuge Assurance Building on a February afternoon. Built in three phases as the business and wealth of the Refuge Assurance Company grew in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, it is one of the largest and most splendid terracotta buildings of which Manchester has one of the most magnificent collections. The beautifully tiled interior speaks volumes of the wealth amassed as industry and its offshoots grew during Manchester's heyday. There can be no one better at doing this kind of tour than Jonathan Schofield so we had a thoroughly memorable afternoon.

2019 was our third season of evening walks and took us to Mellor Mill, Compstall and Disley. They were all well attended and are now an established part of MLHS activities

We had planned to visit the Derbyshire town of Wirksworth at the beginning of May, and to explore the historic core of Stockport at the end of June, but these had to be put on hold because of the corona crisis. Hopefully they will happen when things are back to normal.

Thanks are due to those who have led evening walks, and have provided help and inspiration for all our outings, not least by contributing their impressions to the website. Keep your ideas coming so we can ensure a varied programme which continues to appeal to you.

Judith Wilshaw, Visits Organiser March 2020