

Marple Local History Society

Visits Organiser Report

Society Year 2024-2025

Given that the Society financial year runs from 1 March one year to end February the next, this report considers Society outings which have taken place between March 2024 and February 2025. We started in March 2024 with a tour of Southern Cemetery, the largest cemetery in Europe, led by Blue Badge guide Jonathan Schofield. We saw graves and memorials of many notable Manchester citizens, as well as enjoying the peaceful sylvan surroundings on a really beautiful spring afternoon.

Our summer visit took place in May when we had a guided tour of Bramall Hall, Stockport's timber framed mansion, which was started in Elizabethan times, but was embellished in the 19th Century by its owner Charles Nevill, after it was given to him and his wife Mary as a wedding present by his father Thomas Henry Nevill, one of the directors of Strines Print Works.

In October we were taken round Staircase House in Stockport Market Place by Eddie Wilshaw who has a unique perspective on this important historic building, dating from 1460, as he was the Project Manager who oversaw the renovations of the site in the late 1990s to early 2000s.

We finished the 'financial year' at the end of February 2025 with a bespoke visit to Avro Heritage Museum, based at the Woodford airfield fire station. There was a lot of interest in this as plenty of local people have worked at Woodford in one of its several guises. A series of guides (aka aircraft enthusiasts) took us into many cockpits, to see lots of model aircraft, and to get a clear understanding of the many other exhibits. We felt privileged that the afternoon was reserved just for us with no crowding and plenty of time to look at things and ask questions.

Evening strolls took place in May 2024, when Andy Cook was in central Marple, looking at houses associated with people involved in the First World War, in June Neil Mullineux looked at the All Saints conservation area, and in July 2024 there was something different, with a cruise on the New Horizons narrow boat instead of a walk.

Outings remain popular as ever.

Judith Wilshaw has coordinated visits since 1996, and has decided to step down from this role after 28 years for various reasons. In that time there have been 106 visits of great variety: on foot near home, maybe a short journey by car or public transport to reach the start, or further afield by coach. There have been very few repeats, though that has been relaxed a bit latterly when newer members complained that they had missed out because not there first time round. It just shows how interesting northern England is: none of the visits has required a journey of more than two hours.

I have enjoyed my time as Visits Organiser for MLHS immensely. It stands out as one of the most fulfilling roles of my life. The job has never seemed difficult or stressful, and any unforeseen hitches have been easily overcome with the help of those there at the time. Outings of all kinds are an integral part of the Society's activities, and I hope they will continue. For anyone interested in taking on the role of Visits Organiser, there is a list of all the visits so far, and an information sheet detailing the scope of the job. Come and talk to me at the end of the meeting if you want further information. Ideas for visits are welcomed from all members and can be passed to any committee member for further consideration.

***Judith Wilshaw,
Visits Organiser***