



# The Rugby National Trust Association

Spring Ne

Talks Programme  
Summer Outings

ted by Isobel Palmer  
Trust Association 2026  
Steers Printing  
Stowe Gardens

www

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## **We have been able to make two donations to Canons Ashby.**



A small one to fund a wooden mud kitchen in the children's play area. We have permission to show this photo of a little boy enjoying using it and I think the team hope to add some pots and pans!

A larger donation of £1,000 is to support a new project: the creation of a dedicated display celebrating the life and work of Louis Osman (1914–1996), one of Britain's most innovative silversmiths, jewellery designers, and architects.

The project would establish a fixed display space, featuring 14 collection items, including recent acquisitions of Osman's jewellery, alongside silver pieces, design drawings, and his architect's desk .

Visitors would also enjoy a film of Osman at work. This would be the only long-term display dedicated to Osman in the UK, offering unprecedented access to the elements of the Trust's modern decorative arts collection.

Canons Ashby is seeking to raise £10,000 and hopes to open the display in the summer of 2026

Request from Ellie Fisher, Collections & House Manager

## **Committee Report - Spring 2026**

By now, I'm sure you will all be aware of the death of George. I know, some of you attended his funeral but for those who didn't I've included part of the appreciation we were asked to give (see p6).

He is sorely missed. Fortunately for us, he left a full season's programme of talks, had booked the hall for a complete year and had even started work on two outings for next summer.

Last year, we were also hit by our treasurer being ill for a long period when Pam Southern took over the role until we were glad to welcome him back in October, ready for the new financial year.

The committee has carried on with Isobel introducing the meetings, Pam contacting and liaising with HQ and DVH and with other members picking up extra duties. We have not held a raffle as George and Val arranged that. It has made it apparent to us how important it is to have each role backed up by another person because it took us some time to locate contact details for speakers, key holders, etc. As you can imagine, we are now hard pressed to cover all that needs to be done and we are appealing for new members to join the committee. The association still has a lot going for it but could benefit from younger people with ideas and energy.

We are also appealing for help at meetings – particularly with the chairs. This can be any able-bodied person who can come in early (we open the hall an hour before the meeting).

Whilst Alain has been shown the technical information on setting up the meeting, he is not always available so we desperately need someone with this type of expertise who can back him up.

Looking at the past year, we can say that it was successful with a wide range of speakers bringing a good attendance at meetings. As George flagged up this time last year, our outings programme shrank considerably to just six including the Christmas lunch. The reports back indicated that they were much enjoyed. However, we miss Pauline as Visits Co-ordinator and we struggled to find organisers for next year – Pam has managed to finalise the coach trips George had set up and we have two car visits. Maybe, the demand for outings has lessened in recent years and it's time to rethink our programme.

Financially, we are still in a good position and we have been able to make some donations to Canons Ashby (see p2).

We are keen for the association to continue, I hope you are too.

*Isobel Palmer in consultation with the Committee*

THE RUGBY NATIONAL TRUST ASSOCIATION  
**37<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Thursday 15 January 2026

at 2.30 pm in the Dunchurch Village Hall

**Agenda**

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Minutes of the last AGM**
- 3. Matters Arising**
- 4. Treasurer's Report**
- 5. Committee's Report and discussion**
- 6. Election of Committee** – The members of Rugby National Trust Association that are put forward for election in the year 2026 are:

Chair	Vacant
Treasurer	Tim Seakins
Bookings Secretary	Pam Southern
Secretary/Speaker Planner	Vacant
Membership Secretary	Adrian Futter
Newsletter Editor	Isobel Palmer
Web/Publicity Editor	Alain Foote
Member	Malcolm Tennant
- 7. Appointment of Independent Examiner**
- 8. Subscription**
- 9. Any Other Business**
- 10. Next Annual General Meeting**  
Thursday 21 January 2027 at 2.30 pm in the DVH



## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT - 2024/25

INCOME	2023/24	2024/25
Membership Fees	2,220.00	2,030.00
Admission to Meetings	1,035.00	1,115.00
Sales/Raffles	160.00	183.50
Donations	119.00	162.00
Trips and Visits	7,429.80	3,423.00
Bank Interest	44.70	37.60
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£11,008.50</b>	<b>6,986.10</b>

EXPENDITURE		
Speakers	1,120.00	1,125.00
Hall Hire	809.47	962.75
Printing	941.00	777.00
Postage/Admin Expenses	438.79	416.66
Refreshments	85.00	100.00
Raffle Prizes	60.00	78.52
Trips and Visits	6,152.02	3,181.18
Donations to NT Properties		695.99
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£9,606.28</b>	<b>£7,337.10</b>
Surplus for the year	1,402.22	-351.00
Balance brought forward	15,574.30	16,976.52
Balance carried forward	<b>£16,976.52</b>	<b>£16,625.52</b>

RESERVES at YEAR END		
Nat West A/C 43070566	£9,438.45	9,504.02
Nat West A/C 43070574	£4,448.74	£3,994.57
Nat West Business Res A/C 43207758	£3,089.33	£3,126.93
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£16,976.52</b>	<b>£16,625.52</b>

I have examined the accounts and bank records of the Rugby National Trust Association for 2024-25 and consider that, in my opinion, the Income and Expenditure Account, as presented above, gives a true and accurate report of the Associations finances at 30 September 2025

signed..... date .....

Ian Stimson Examiner

# Financial report

## Report from the Acting Treasurer for 2024/25

At the time of writing, November 2025, I have completed the end of year accounts and have just received them back from our Examiner, Ian Stimson. We thank him for all his hard work in verifying the figures and are glad he is willing to continue in this role.

There is a deliberate reduction on the Outings account because we used some of the surplus from last year to give two donations to Canons Ashby.

We still have very healthy amounts in the accounts so I do not feel there is any need to increase subscriptions.

Pam Southern, Acting Treasurer

## Membership News

The current membership of RNTA stands at 235 but that includes 37 members who are yet to pay their annual subscription for 2025/26.

I'm happy to report that we gained 26 new members in 2025, of which 11 have joined since October. We welcome the most recent new members:

Nicola Phelan

Anne Love

Julie & Neville Moran

Margaret Fiander

Celia Jones

Anne Tippet

Anne & Roger Dore

Margot Robson

Helen Brittain

If you are one of the 37 members yet to pay, you will find a payment request enclosed with this Spring Newsletter 2026. Payment can be posted to me, given to me at any of the meetings in Dunchurch Village Hall or paid by bank transfer to the account:

Rugby National Trust Association, Sort code 54-41-00, Account no. 43070566.

Adrian Futter, Membership Secretary

## The RNTA Database

Full details of our membership are kept on personal computers for the purpose of membership subscriptions, circulation of Newsletters and key activities of the RNTA. Such details will not be disclosed to any third party.

## George Brunavs

We were very sad to learn of the death of George on 9 September who had become a mainstay of RNTA. He became Meetings Secretary in 2012 and was still holding that position when he died. Over the years, he devised a programme of autumn and winter lectures covering a wide range of subjects to suit all tastes and interests. I imagine some of the subjects were dear to his heart with his great interest in art. This role also entailed welcoming the speakers and conversing with them during the interval which he did with aplomb. Later he took on introducing the meetings and making everyone very welcome when we failed to find a chairman to replace Roy Deacon.

When George first began organising outings, he and I had made the same suggestion, so we planned and led the visit to Port Sunlight together in Spring 2014. That was the first of many he ran mainly supported by Val – a total of 12. The Bodleian Library and Ashmolean Museum trip to Oxford was especially interesting being very different from most of our outings. Probably the most memorable was to Windsor Castle in 2018 and the recent one to Hatfield House.

He gave so much to the Association but I hope he also enjoyed his membership as he and Val went on many of our outings and attended the Christmas lunches each year.

George was a key figure and will be sorely missed. He, together with Val, brought to us their ideas, skills, wide interests and commitment.



Isobel and Ian Liddle

## Ian Liddle

Ian also died in September. He had been Social Secretary for RNTA from 2001-06 and during that period we had enjoyed a number of coffee mornings, lunches and visits to concerts. Most memorable were the Christmas lunches he arranged at Sulgrave Manor and Slimbridge – the latter so successful that it was run two years in succession and the second one extended to see the feeding time at sunset.

Isobel Palmer

## **Join the RNTA Committee**

The current committee is under increasing pressure with some members doing multiple roles.

We are in need of people to take on some of these roles.

Please think about what you could do and talk to a committee member at meetings or contact them using details on p1 of this Newsletter

Exact roles are negotiable and none of them onerous

**We need new energy and ideas**

## **PROGRAMME of OUTINGS for 2026**

### **Trips and Visits**

We would like to remind all members that our outings can be quite demanding . We often visit places with old and uneven floors, stairs that can be difficult with no lift options and gardens and tours that may involve quite a lot of walking. Always check with the organiser if you have mobility problems. Members who need assistance should bring a companion.

### **Departure Point for Coach Outings**

The Committee has made arrangements with St Mark's Church, Bilton for the use of their car park so, *unless stated*, we depart from there. We try to use as little space as possible, so please park on the side away from the church and as close together as possible.

Association Committee



## **Flaxmill Maltings, Shrewsbury**

Thursday, 7 May, 2026

by coach departing from Bilton Church at 8.30 am

Leader on the day: Alain Foote (tel 07801 774 277)

Organised by Pam Southern (tel 01788 813657)

Newly restored, the Flaxmill Malting is celebrated as the grandparent of modern skyscrapers.

Opening in 1797 as a purpose-built mill to process flax, commonly used in the manufacture of linen, this was the first multifloored iron-framed building in the world.

There is the Jubilee Tower, giving visitors the opportunity to climb to the viewing gallery to experience fantastic views of Shrewsbury and the surrounding countryside. This was constructed in 1897 as part of the transformation of the site from a flax mill to a barley maltings. It houses the machinery that powered the grain elevators that moved the barley around the building and honoured Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. For those unable to manage the climb there is a video of the journey to the top of the tower and the views, accessible by lift.

We aim to arrive about 10.30 am and will be divided into groups for the Behind the Scene tour. The rest of the time is for you to explore the Mill Exhibition on the ground floor, visit the café and Mill shop. The cost of refreshments is not included in the price.

Note: the tour does involve climbing stairs although part of the building can be accessed by lift.

It is an English Heritage site and members may be given a refund on the day.

Please bring your EH card with you.

When timings of the tours are agreed, there may be time to visit Attingham Park, a short drive away. Please bring your NT card with you or be prepared to pay if you are not a NT member. The coach cannot park at the Maltings so be ready to board the coach at 2 pm or as advised on the day. There will be time to explore the grounds and have tea.

The coach then leaves at 4 pm to be back in Bilton about 6pm



## Ashby St Ledgers Church

Thursday 11 June 2026

By car, to arrive by 2 pm

Organised by Pam Southern

(01788 813657, mobile 07903 991456)

The pretty village of Ashby St Ledgers lies off the A361 between Kilsby and Daventry which until fairly recently was owned by Lord Wimbourne.

On arrival we are given a talk about the history and links with the Catesby family and the Gunpowder plot.



Then there is time to look around the church—the oldest parts of the present church are from the 1100s. There is a rare three decker pulpit.

About 3.15 pm you can make your way to the village hall where tea/coffee and cake are served. There are also toilets, not available at the church.

If you have the energy after tea, you can wander around the village and view the Manor House.

A few notes about finding the church will be sent to those booking when the forms are returned after 1<sup>st</sup> March

The cost of the trip includes:

- ◇ the speaker
- ◇ refreshments including hiring the village hall
- ◇ a donation towards the upkeep of the church

## Maxstoke Castle B46 2RD

Thursday 2 July 2026

By car to arrive by 11 am

Visit to include refreshments

Organiser Sheila Richards 017888 12208 07946 632910

Maxstoke Castle, near Coleshill, a short distance off the A45, is a fine example of a 14<sup>th</sup> century, moated and fortified manor house.

It was built in 1345 to a rectangular plan with octagonal towers and is surrounded by a moat.

It has been owned and lived in by its present owner, the Fetherston-Dilke family for over 400 years.

It includes the ceremonial rooms, historical artefacts and the Lady Tower.



The tour will be led by Edwina, wife of the owner.



There are extensive formal and informal gardens which can be enjoyed at leisure. The head gardener will be available for questions.



You can then leave  
at leisure

More details are  
available by visiting



[www.maxstokecastle.com](http://www.maxstokecastle.com) or [www.Historichouses.org-Maxstoke Castle](http://www.Historichouses.org-Maxstoke Castle)

## **Kenwood House, London**

Thursday 16 July, 2026

by coach departing from Bilton Church at 8.30 am

Leader on the day: Isobel Palmer (tel: 01788 552234 mobile: 07710 552940)

(organised by Pam Southern tel 01788 813657)

Kenwood House , overlooking Hampstead Heath, was designed by Robert Adam. Apart from its fine historic interiors, sculptures, furniture and jewellery, it has an internationally renowned collection of paintings including works by Vermeer, Van Dyck, Gainsborough, Reynolds and Rembrandt, including his “Portrait with Two Circles”.

The collection of paintings has grown from an initial gift of 63 works. It was bequeathed in 1928 by Edward Cecil Guinness, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Iveagh, to evoke the atmosphere of an 18<sup>th</sup> century gentleman’s house.

There are extensive grounds to explore.



We aim to arrive about 10.30am and will be divided into groups for a guided tour. Then you will have time to explore further and buy refreshments. Please note that it is a cashless site and the cost of refreshments is not included in the cost of the outing. It is an English Heritage site and EH members may be given a refund on the day, Please bring your EH card with you.

The coach cannot park onsite so be ready to board at 3pm for the return journey back to Bilton arriving about 5 pm.



## Our visit to The Charterhouse

We had very good visits to the Charterhouse in Coventry over two consecutive weeks. I was part of the second group which was lucky enough to get an unexpected tour by a guide who was steeped in its history.

The wall paintings are a remarkable survival of the priory's chequered past.



I was pleasantly surprised how good the garden is being laid out as it might have been in monastic times.



A lunch was enjoyed in the good café following which we headed over to the London Road Cemetery - a very interesting place.

Isobel Palmer



## Dates for your Diary in 2026

Date	Title	Time
5 Feb	The English and Gardening Speaker: Danny Wells	2.30 pm
18 Feb	Judge, Jury, Judgement and ... Justice? Speaker: Alan Cutler	7.30 pm
5 Mar	Gardens and <i>et jardins</i> Speaker: Keith Holmes	2.30 pm
18 Mar	The Arts and Crafts Movement and Stoneywell Cottage    Speaker: Rowan Roenisch	7.30 pm
8 April	Visits Planning Meeting	7.30 pm

All meetings are held at the Dunchurch Village Hall

### Outings

Thurs, 7 May	Shrewsbury, Flaxmill Maltings	8.30 am
Thurs, 11 Jun	Ashby St Ledgers Church	by car to arrive by 2 pm
Thurs, 2 July	Maxstoke Castle	by car to meet at 11 am
Thurs, 16 July	Kenwood House, London	8.30 am

Coach outings leave from the car park of  
St Mark's Church, Bilton