

**The Rugby
National Trust
Association**



in support of **National
Trust**

Autumn Newsletter 2023

Talks Programme

Christmas Lunch

www.rugbynationaltrust.org

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Outing to Wightwick Manor on 17 May

The only coach trip to run this year was a great success. It was organised by George Brunavs.

In this photo, we see members assembling for a tour of the house



Photograph by Adrian Futter

Letter from the Committee

Welcome to a new season of Rugby National Trust activities and to this Autumn 2023 Newsletter. We can look back to 2022-23 as a season where happily attendances at our talks have grown back slowly to pre-Covid levels and the Association seems to be getting along quite well. All the lectures have been enjoyable, recent highlights being “Treading the Duckboards” by Kate Wills, and the outstanding “William Cavendish and the Building of Chatsworth” by Gill White.

Behind this however, there are reasons for us to be perhaps more than a little concerned. The programme of visits this summer had to be curtailed beyond recognition (only one coach trip was feasible!) due to lack of organisers and, while we are working towards a better list of trips for 2024, we don't anticipate as extensive a programme as pre-2020. And without more people volunteering to organise visits, there is unlikely to be substantial improvement. Since this is our major source of income, our finances will remain static, with no real scope for making significant donations any time soon to the National Trust or its local properties.

So our reason for existence looks like shifting more towards being a social club for people interested in history and heritage which it has always been, partly, and our members may well be quite happy with that. But even so, the ageing of Committee members with possible incidence of health problems suggests to us that we shall probably not be able to carry on in the same way, and things may get harder in the next year or two. Already, to help with physical matters at meetings, and as announced elsewhere in this Newsletter, we are suspending the Sales Table indefinitely, and shall be asking audience members at talks to assist with setting up and clearing away of chairs, tables and other equipment.

Beyond that, the prospect of closure of RNTA looms. We are as yet reluctant to issue any deadlines, as none of us want to just give up too soon. But unless a new Committee of like-minded members and friends is created, closure in the next year or two will be a realistic and inevitable outcome. Of course we hope that the situation can be rescued. Things are that serious.

Meanwhile, we are carrying on with a full programme of lectures for 2023-24, described herein, and as good a series of visits for next summer as we can arrange. We thank you for your continued support and continue to welcome all your ideas and suggestions.

On the next page is an appreciation of Barrie Bemand, one of our most valued members, who sadly passed away in April; especially for the numerous visits he and his wife Lynne organised over the years.

Compiled by George Brunavs

in consultation with all other Committee members

Barrie Bemand

Barrie died in April after quite a long illness.

Many know of Barrie as a local GP. Malcolm Tennant remembers him as his works doctor at GEC for a number of years until his retirement – “He had to pass me medically fit so I could travel the world for GEC”. For several years he was also Chairman of Rugby NHS Primary Care Trust.

Barrie was a keen supporter of the National Trust being both a member of RNTA and a volunteer room guide at Upton House. For our Spring Newsletter in 2021, he wrote an article on ‘Upton House during Covid-19’

Barrie was a regular organiser of outings from 2013, often supported on these trips by his wife, Lynne. These visits were to interesting and sometimes unusual places including:

2013 May—Jewellery Quarter and Soho House, Birmingham

2014 May—Red House Glass Cone and Broadfield House Glass Museum

2015 June—Batsford Falconry and Adam’s Farm

2016 May—Webbs Garden Centre and Harvington Hall

2017 June—Avoncroft Museum and Hanbury Hall

2018 June—Hereford Cathedral

2022 June—Arbury Hall

2023 June—Holdenby House
and July—Stoneleigh Abbey



Barrie leading at Avoncroft Museum



unfortunately he died just before these were due but other members took over the arrangements he had made so they could go ahead.

I’m sure many of us will have enjoyed some of these outings and have happy memories of a good day out.

George says

‘He and his wife were a positive life-force in RNTA.’

He will be greatly missed by us for his many contributions but also by the community at large.

Barrie at the Falconry Centre

Membership News

The membership fees for the coming year which starts on 1st October remain unchanged at £10 for a single membership and £15 for joint membership (two people at the same address).

Currently over 75% of our members pay by standing order and, if you are one of those, clearly you need take no action. If you do not pay by standing order your annual membership fee is due on the 1st October 2023. Payment can be made by posting a cheque to the membership secretary or by payment by cheque or cash in person at any of the meetings in Dunchurch Village Hall. You can also pay by bank transfer directly to our account “Rugby National Trust Association” 54-41-00 43070566, preferably after the start of our new financial year on 1st October 2023.

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 the management of coach trips and other activities of the Rugby National Trust Association.

Such details will not be disclosed to any third party.

Sales Table

It has been decided to suspend the sales table for the time being. Malcolm Tennant has been managing this alone since his wife, Kate, died some years ago. At present he has some health problems which make setting up the table difficult. He hopes to have it up and running again in due course.

Refreshments at our October meetings

DVH is having building work which prevents us accessing the hatch and Sports Hall at our meeting on **Thursday 5 October**. We shall just provide cold drinks from a table at the back of the hall with disposable paper cups.

We expect the work to be completed in time for us to be able to offer our normal tea/coffee/biscuits at our second meeting on **Wednesday 18 October**.

Bringing your own mug to that does help our small team in the kitchen.



Thankyou, Pam Southern

Help!

In order to keep RNTA going
We need more help from our members

New committee members

(several of the current office holders will be stepping
down)

New members to arrange visits

It's not been possible to offer a full programme
More support for the visits we **do** arrange

Help at the meetings

(setting out chairs, tables, screen, etc.)

The Sales Table, Jigsaw Puzzle exchange!

People with IT skills

New ideas

Without members coming forward, closure looms large

THE RUGBY NATIONAL TRUST ASSOCIATION
Minutes of the 35th Annual General Meeting

held in the Dunchurch Village Hall on 19h January 2023 at 2.30pm

George Brunav took the chair and opened the meeting by welcoming 59 Association Members. George requested members to collect the spring 2023 newsletters from the table at the side of the hall before the AGM as they contained the agenda and summary of the accounts.

1. **Apologies** had been received Christine Dales, Peter Elliott, Jane Walker, Barrie and Lynne Bemand, Susan Woollard, Helen Bennett and Margaret Clements.
2. **Minutes of the 34rd Annual General Meeting** were printed in the Autumn 2022 Newsletter and were not read out at this AGM.

Val Brunavs proposed that the minutes be approved, seconded by Rona Townsend and George Brunavs signed them as a true record.

3. There were no **Matters Arising**

4 Treasurer's Report

Tim Seakins gave the following Treasurer's report:

First of all, I have to admit to not having done the bulk of the work on the accounts since I took over in September, after Pam Southern had acted as Treasurer so efficiently and produced the summary of accounts which she passed on to me in very good order. So thanks are due to her and to Ian Stimson for his work as Examiner of Accounts. I should also like to thank the rest of the Committee for their help and support.

If you study the accounts, you will see that we get income mainly from membership fees, but also from meetings' admissions, the raffles and the sales table. Thanks are due to Malcolm Tennant for running the sales table and to Val Brunavs for organising the raffles.

Meetings actually cost money, for the hire of the Hall and the speakers' fees; but they are partly what the Association exists for. The trips and visits made a profit of about £850 and next year we will get a little more interest on the Business Reserve Account. The cost of printing has risen but membership income remains about the same, so annual fees can remain at £10 for individuals and £15 for couples. I am always available to answer any members' questions!

Tony Birch proposed that the Treasurer's report be approved
seconded by Val Brunavs

5 *Committee Report*

George Brunavs gave the following committee report:

As at the start of every new year, we wish all our members the best of everything for 2023, and reflect on how the previous year has been for our Association. We have managed to present a full programme of talks at DVH, highlights from which have been the visit of Paul Forecast, the Director of Midlands and East England National Trust at January's AGM, "Northampton Guildhall", "Queen Victoria – a Life in Portraits", Keith Holmes' photographic essay on "Bridges in Britain", and "Stoneywell and the Gimson Family" by Mark Temple. Summer visits re-started in 2022 and there was a really good Christmas Lunch at Compton Verney.

Audience numbers at talks have been around the 40-50 level, a noticeable drop from pre-Covid days; whether this is somehow an after-effect from the pandemic or due to the current economic hard times, we don't know. Despite that, what is certain and very gratifying is that our membership has stayed unchanged over the past year, with welcome new members balancing a few who have left.

Financially we are also in a stable and healthy state and hope to be able to resume donations to local NT properties within this new year; that will depend on communications with those properties and the NT itself. Also at present they will have to be careful and circumspect, as there is a potential concern regarding our future financial well-being. As you will notice from the new issue of the Newsletter, there is a much smaller number of Summer visits planned for 2023, and they are a major source of our income every year. The reduced number is due to previous visits organisers retiring and, to return the programme to the full strength of previous years, we do need new organisers.

This is a serious appeal and a notice to this effect is also in the Newsletter. A big drop in income could threaten the Association's very existence. A different but equally serious looming problem concerns our Committee. Over the last few years we have many times asked members to volunteer to fill vacancies; and we are very thankful to Tim Seakins for stepping up to be our new Treasurer, and also to Adrian Futter, who became our Membership Secretary a couple of years ago. With their vital help we appear to be managing reasonably well, although other Committee members are still undertaking more than one role. But they are ageing, and their retirement is likely in the not too distant future.

5 *Committee Report (cont)*

All this a “reality check” that we must face if we value our Association and want it to carry on. We don’t want to reach a “crisis point”, either from lack of finance from visits, or because of a collapsing number on the Committee. Please talk to us if you think you might be able to help or would like to find out more. We are still doing well – but we can’t ignore the clouds on the horizon. A number of National Trust Supporter groups like ours have closed down in recent years, doubtless for similar reasons.

Pam Southern proposed that the Committee report be approved,
seconded by Janet Frankl

6 *Election of Officers and Committee*

George Brunavs advised the membership, that for the election or re-election of the committee for 2023, some of the people standing for re-election have already served for a full 8 years. According to our constitution, after 8 years, in order to authorise their re-election, we require signatures from at least 10 of the main RNTA membership, in order to relax the constitution rule which specifies that people need to stand down for at least one year before being eligible for re-election.

George was pleased to report that 10 members had signed the form, at the start of the AGM, in order to relax this clause for the year 2023. Therefore, the following members of the committee offered themselves for election or re-election and the following were proposed:

Chairman:	Vacant
Secretary:	Vacant
Treasurer:	Timothy Seakins
Membership Secretary:	Adrian Futter
Meetings Sec/Vice Chair :	George Brunavs
Bookings Secretary:	Pamela Southern
Visit Co-ordinator:	Pauline Springett
Web Editor:	Vacant
Publicity Officer:	Vacant
Newsletter Editor:	Isobel Palmer
Sales Table:	Malcolm Tennant

Val Brunavs proposed the above members be elected to serve on the committee for the year 2023 seconded by Brian Williamson

7. *Appointment of Independent Examiner*

The Acting Treasurer advised that Ian Stimson had agreed to continue to examine the accounts for 2023

Janet Frankl proposed that his appointment be approved,
seconded by Jean Black

8. *Subscriptions*

George Brunavs reiterated to the members present that subscriptions would remain unchanged for a further year.

Tony Birch proposed that subscriptions remain as agreed,
seconded by Jenny Major

9 *Any Other Business*

None

10 *Date of the Next Annual General Meeting*

The 36th Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 18th January 2024
at 2:30 pm at Dunchurch Village Hall

Wightwick Manor

The garden



Photograph by
Adrian Futter

AUTUMN/WINTER LECTURE PROGRAMME

A Victorian Splendour - The Golden Age of British Glass

Thursday 5 October 2023

Dunchurch Village Hall 2.30pm

Speaker: Charles Hajdamach

Glass geniuses

John Northwood, George Woodall, Aspley Pellatt

Fabulous glass in a kaleidoscope of colours and decorative techniques

Cut and engraved glass, cameo and rock crystal glass, pressed glass and Art Nouveau

British glass at its very best

This will be Charles' very last presentation to Rugby National Trust, as he is retiring from lecturing at the end of this year.



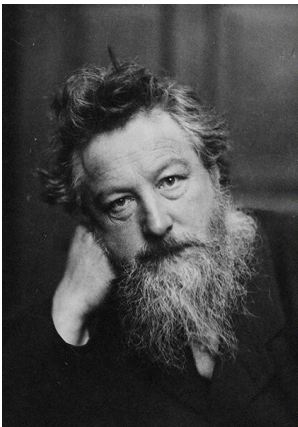
William Morris (1834-1896)– A Re-evaluation

Wednesday 18 October 2023

Dunchurch Village Hall 7.30pm

Speaker: Rowan Roenisch

William Morris, famous to this day for his Arts and Crafts pioneering designs and flat patterns, is sometimes believed to be a machine hater and backward-looking



medievalist; and, as a socialist, has been criticised for being a wealthy businessman. This lecture attempts to correct misunderstandings and to show the inter-connections between his many activities.

Yōkoso! Welcome to Japan!

Thursday 2 November 2023

Dunchurch Village Hall 2.30pm

Speaker: Laura Malpas

Have you ever dreamed of visiting this magical country, and wondered what it might be like? Laura has visited Japan regularly over the last 15 years, and her talk is illustrated with many photographs showing what a visitor might expect. Highlighting the “must-see” elements of Japan, and the exciting differences between the Japanese and English cultures, this interactive talk gives a fascinating introduction to a unique country which respects its past whilst embracing the ultra-modern.



Canals Worldwide – Large and Small!

Wednesday 15 November 2023

Dunchurch Village Hall 7.30pm

Speaker: Anthony Addams

Anthony will present a gentle, colourful talk about man-made waterways, water-courses and irrigation channels, as well as boat canals, from all around the world. Water ways from ancient Mesopotamia to the incredible South North Chinese Canal system, the biggest ever engineering project in the world.



A Norfolk Journey

Thursday 7 December 2023
Dunchurch Village Hall 2.30pm
Speaker: Keith Holmes

Keith returns to us once more with another of his high-quality photographic presentations, this time travelling across the unique and fascinating county of Norfolk. He hasn't given us a full description of the talk, but says it is very popular and that "we won't be disappointed!"



RNTA Annual General Meeting

Thursday 18 January 2024
Dunchurch Village Hall 2.30pm
(See AGM Agenda on page 6)

Followed by.....:

The Life and Crimes of Agatha Christie

Speaker: Mark Temple



Following his outstanding in-depth talk about Stoneywell Cottage and the Gimson family last Autumn, Mark returns with a popular presentation about one of Britain's best-loved writers. The title says it all!

Bolsover Castle through the Ages

Thursday 1 February 2024
Dunchurch Village Hall 2.30pm
Speaker: Ian Morgan

From its humble Norman beginnings through its early 17th-century magnificence, the castle has settled into a beautiful shadow of its former glory. It stands as a monument to the Cavendish family who lavished money and love on their “Pleasure Palace”, leaving as their legacy a romantic ruin and stunning paintings within the “Little Castle”.



This talk will also provide a taster for RNTA’s proposed visit to Bolsover Castle in July.

A Midlands Canal Miscellany – an Odyssey Through Time

Wednesday 21 February 2024
Dunchurch Village Hall 7.30pm
Speaker: Roger Butler

Roger will take us on a fascinating journey through time and place along the Midlands canal network, visiting Rugby, Braunston, Coventry and Birmingham and elsewhere, evoking the beauty and romance of the canals, as well as their industrial past.



For those in Peril on the Sea - Britain's Lighthouses

Thursday 7 March 2024

Dunchurch Village Hall 2.30pm

Speaker: Kate Wills

Kate gave us colourful and fascinating talks on Northampton Guildhall and World War I Concert Parties, and now comes back again in a totally different direction – the history and architecture of our lighthouses!



Godrevy Lighthouse >

Robert Dudley, Elizabeth I, and the Kenilworth Entertainment of 1575

Wednesday 20 March 2024

Dunchurch Village Hall 7.30pm

Speaker: Gillian White

For three weeks in the summer of 1575 the eyes of England were on Kenilworth, where the castle's owner, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, was entertaining his sovereign, Queen Elizabeth I. The entertainments were some of the most elaborate ever offered to a monarch, with gods, goddesses, legendary Arthurian characters, mermaids, giant dolphins, singers and acrobats all pressed into action. But many people also saw in it a last attempt by the earl to persuade Elizabeth to marry him. The talk tells the story of the romance and of the Kenilworth entertainment and its aftermath.

Another welcome return
by an outstanding
speaker.



Christmas lunch at the Golden Lion Hotel, Easenhall CV23 0JA

Wednesday, 13 December 2023

By car to arrive at 12.30-12.40 pm

Organised by Pauline Springett

The Golden Lion is situated in Easenhall just outside Rugby and Coventry where it dates back to the 16th century. We are proud to share the original Wattle and Daub dating back to 1659 where this is the centre of the Golden Lion's history. We were established as a Restaurant/Pub by Mr Austin in 1939 and it is still in the hands of the fourth generation, where change and growth has evolved.

On arrival, the car park is situated at the back of the hotel. Walk in to the side entrance marked 'Reception'.

Lunch will be served at 1 pm and drinks can be bought from the bar.

Please indicate if you wish to sit with friends or if you have special dietary needs



LUNCH MENU

Main

Roast Turkey and seasonal trimmings

Or

Christmas vegetarian Wellington (v)

Or

Honey baked Salmon, Hollandaise sauce

All served with roast potatoes and roast vegetables

Desserts

Christmas Pudding with Brandy sauce

Baked rum and raisin cheesecake

Tea and coffee served with mince pies

Visit to Holdenby House—21 June



Organised by
Barrie Bemand
but led on the day
by
Pam Southern.

On a very hot day, we had a tour
of the house in two groups and
time to explore the extensive
gardens and Falconry before tea
and cake

Photos by Isobel Palmer
& Adrian Futter



Printer Cartridges and Mobile Phones

We are still collecting these for the NT scheme
A collection box will be available on a table at the back of the hall

Dates for your Diary in 2023-24

Date	Title	Time
Talks		
5 Oct	Victorian Splendour in Glass Speaker: Charles Hajdamach	2.30 pm
18 Oct	William Morris (1834-1896)— A Re-evaluation Speaker: Rowan Roenisch	7.30 pm
2 Nov	Yōkoso! Welcome to Japan! Speaker: Laura Malpas	2.30 pm
15 Nov	Canals and Watercourse Worldwide Speaker: Anthony Addams	7.30 pm
7 Dec	A Norfolk Journey Speaker: Keith Holmes	2.30 pm
13 Dec	Christmas lunch at the Golden Lion, Easenhall	12.30 pm
2024		
18 Jan	RNTA 35th Annual General Meeting Talk—The Life and Crimes of Agatha Christie Speaker: Mark Temple	2.30 pm
1 Feb	Bolsover Castle through the Ages Speaker: Ian Morgan	2.30 pm
21 Feb	A Midlands Canal Miscellany – an Odyssey Through Time Speaker: Roger Butler	7.30 pm
7 Mar	For those in Peril on the Sea - Britain’s Lighthouses Speaker: Kate Wills	2.30 pm
20 Mar	Robert Dudley, Elizabeth I, and the Kenilworth Entertainment of 1575	7.30 pm



Compiled and edited by Isobel Palmer
The Rugby National Trust Association 2023

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Cover photo of Bolsover Castle