

The Rugby National Trust Association



In support of National
Trust

Spring Newsletter 2019

Programme of talks

Outings

Local NT properties

www.rugbynationaltrust.org

Contents

Committee for 2019	inner front cover
Committee statements	2
Letter from the Committee	3
Association News	4
AGM Agenda	5
Treasurer's report for 2017/18	6
Summary of accounts 2017/18	6
Letter from Midland Region	7
Programme of outings for 2019	9
A new carpet for the staircase at Canons Ashby	20
Diary of events	inner back cover

Photo on the cover by Isobel Palmer ©

Baddesley Clinton

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.

Trips and Visits

We would like to remind all members that our outings can be quite tiring. 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

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

Printer Cartridges and Mobile Phones

The National Trust has a scheme for collecting used printer cartridges and mobile phones (preferably with charger) that contributes towards fundraising. A collection box will be available at meetings.

Letter from the Committee

As we approach 2019, the position of the Association's Chair is still pending and, for the foreseeable future, the functions previously carried out by the chairperson are being divided up between our other Committee members. This situation will of course be continuously reviewed.

The start of the current 2018-2019 season of talks has been gratifyingly successful with very interesting and varied presentations and with strong attendances. It is good to see that members responded positively to the small increase in entry fees; please continue to spread the good word about our programme and encourage friends and acquaintances to come to our talks as visitors. It is also good to see that our membership as a whole is holding up well, with many welcome new faces.

A small fire in the kitchen at Dunchurch Village Hall in August caused that area to be closed temporarily but it was back in operation in time for our first talk on 4th October. However, our Association's equipment and other goods had to be removed from the upstairs storeroom, the floor of which had to be replaced. While this did not seriously affect our Autumn talks, the Main Hall also had to be cleaned from smoke deposits, including the cleaning of the blackout curtains high up on the Hall's south side. Regrettably, these were not back in place by our first meeting (a very sunny afternoon) making it difficult for many of the speaker's slides to be clearly visible. Thankfully, the curtains were back in place by our next afternoon talk on 1st November.

As a result of members' participation and support, Rugby NTA has been able to make substantial donations to various local National Trust properties which is, of course, our main purpose. Details of what has been given to which properties, and for what use, can be found on page 8. We would once again encourage members to visit the website frequently (www.rugbynationaltrust.org) for fuller details of all our work, activities, talks, presentations and outings, etc, and for any latest or urgent updates.

We also intend to give a brief summary of Committee members' functions on the website, for anyone interested in helping, to find out what is involved. We always welcome new people and new ideas.

In the meantime, we hope you enjoy all the Spring talks and get onto as many of the Summer trips as you can! This newsletter has a list looking ahead to the Autumn 2019 talks, as the 2019-2020 programme is also now complete.

*Compiled by George Brunavs (Talks and Meetings Secretary/
Vice-Chairman) in consultation with other Committee members*

Association News

The Association welcomes all **new members**.

We hope you will enjoy our programme of events.

Photos for Review of 2018

Please give to Isobel Palmer

Or send to isobelpalmer@btinternet.com

NEW ORGANISERS WELCOMED

Visits Planning Meeting

Wednesday, 10 April 2019 at 7.30 pm

Our Planning Meeting for 2020 visits will be in the Committee Room at the Dunchurch Village Hall.

We are looking for new people with ideas for outings who are willing to organise or help with a visit. Why not start by supporting the organiser of a visit or getting together with a friend to plan one.

There will be plenty of help and advice to get you started if you need it.

THE RUGBY NATIONAL TRUST ASSOCIATION
32nd **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Thursday 17th January 2019
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. **Chairman's Report**
6. **Election of Committee** – The members of Rugby National Trust Association that are put forward for election in the year 2019 are:

Vacant	(Chair)
David Knapp	(Treasurer)
Anne Turner	(Secretary)
Patricia Downton	(Membership Secretary)
Jean Kortegas	(Deputy Membership Secretary)
Pam Southern	(Bookings Secretary)
Vacant	(Publicity Officer)
George Brunavs	(Meetings Secretary/ Vice chair)
Pauline Springett	(Visits Co-ordinator)
Malcolm Tennant	(Sales Table)
Michael Turner	(Web Editor)
Isobel Palmer	(Newsletter Editor)
7. **Appointment of Independent Examiner**
8. **Subscription**
9. **Any Other Business**
10. **Next Annual General Meeting will be Thursday 16th January 2020**

TREASURER'S REPORT 2017/18

The accounts for 2017/18 show a net surplus for the year of £2,718.76, a total very similar to the previous year. In addition membership numbers continued to hold up well at 344 and we were pleased to welcome a number of new members to the Association. Unfortunately, total income from the meetings' programme and from trips and visits both fell slightly due to adverse weather conditions and factors that were beyond our control.

As at 30th September 2018 the total financial reserves of the Association stood at £11,743.07, an increase of £2,718.76 on the previous year. However, for the second year running no donations were made to local properties but 2018/19 has started off well with sizeable donations having already been made to Canons Ashby, Farnborough Hall and Stoneywell Cottage (see p8). As in previous years the Committee will continue to monitor how these donations are being spent. A number of other donations will hopefully be made shortly and we will continue to keep members informed via the website – www.rugbynationaltrust.org. Without doubt, the commitment, effort and hard work of many individuals and groups of members within the Association continue to raise significant funds in support of the work of the National Trust at local, regional and national level, as well as offering a variety of social activities to make your membership of the National Trust more enjoyable.

It has been agreed by the Committee that the current subscription rates of £10 for an individual and £15 for couples will remain the same for 2019/20, and we will continue to pursue other areas of fund raising as appropriate. Any ideas or suggestions that you may have are most welcome.

Finally, thanks once again go to Ian Stimson for examining, and approving, the accounts and bank records of the Association. If any member would like a copy of the full Balance Sheet, please do not hesitate to contact me.

David Knapp
Honorary Treasurer

SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS 2017/18

	2016/17	2017/18
MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS	3,030.00	2,950.00
LESS expenditure on meetings, newsletters, etc	2,979.84	2,318.21
Surplus for the year	50.16	631.79
ADDITIONAL INCOME		
Trips and Visits	1207.00	900.00
Sales Table/Raffles	222.60	167.00
Talks given by Members	35.00	
Entrance charges to meetings	793.00	618.00
Bank Interest	0.43	1.39
PC Recycling	37.60	23.08
Refreshments	345.50	268.50
Donations	90.00	109.00
Net surplus for the year	2,781.29	2,718.76
Balance brought forward	6,243.02	9,024.31
Balance carried forward	9,024.31	11,743.07



**National
Trust**

Catherine.taylor@nationaltrust.org.uk

Direct line: +44 (0) 121 224 7460

30th October 2018

David Knapp
RNTA Hon Treasurer
44 Orson Leys
Rugby
CV22 5RF

Dear David

£2,460 Donation

Thank you so much for the cheque for £2,460, which I received at the Birmingham Office.

On behalf of my colleagues in the Midlands Region, I take this opportunity to thank you and the members of the Rugby National Trust Association for your generous donation.

Our Supporter Groups are superb ambassadors for the work of the Trust and the contributions of time, money and resources you donate are greatly appreciated.

Your cheque has been banked and as you requested, the monies will be allocated as follows:

- £250 Canons Ashby – Terracotta Pots
- £250 Canons Ashby – Natural Play Equipment
- £460 Canons Ashby – Traditional Wooden Bench

- £1000 Farnborough – Information Boards

- £200 Stoneywell – Tearoom Improvements
- £300 Stoneywell – Gardening Tools

I have notified all the property teams and Treasury department of your generosity. I have also asked that the properties keep the group informed with any of the project updates.

Please pass on our sincere appreciation to all of your members who work so hard on behalf of National Trust

With thanks and kind regards,

Catherine Taylor
Senior Business Support Coordinator

National Trust, Midlands Region
Birmingham Office
Studio 217, Zellig
Gibb Street, Digbeth
Birmingham
B9 4AA

President: HRH The Prince of Wales
Chair of the Midlands Committee: Carys Swanwick
Director for the Midlands: Andy Beer

Registered office:
Heelis, Kemble Drive, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 2NA
Registered charity number 205846

PROGRAMME of OUTINGS for 2019

Leicester Cathedral and Richard III Centre

Wednesday, 10 April 2019

By car to meet outside Cathedral at 11 am

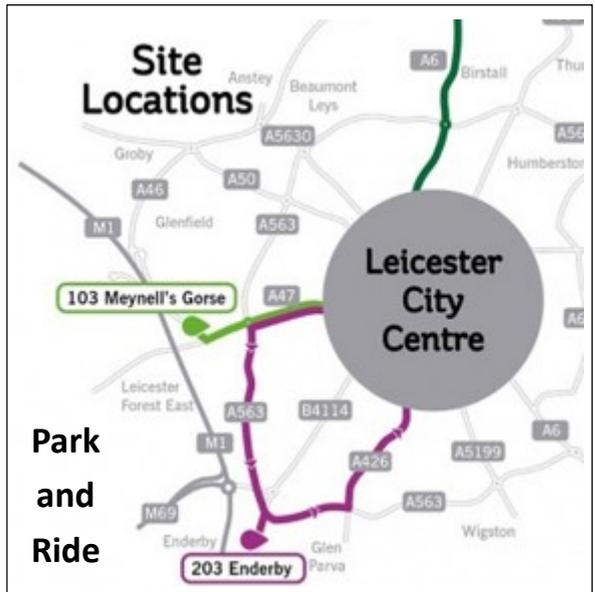
Organised by Isobel Palmer

Supporter needed

Following a talk by Iain Gordon on 'The King under the Car Park' in February, I have arranged for us to meet in Leicester to see things for ourselves. The Cathedral and Richard III Centre are close together in the centre of Leicester so I am leaving people to make their own way there.

I found it was easy to drive using the M1, exit 21a Park and Ride at Meynell's Gorse (LE3 3LF) and take a bus which drops you off very near the Cathedral.

Enderby (LE19 2AB) may be more suitable for people not using the M1.



Firstly, at 11.15, we will have an hour long tour of the Cathedral, dedicated to Saint Martin of Tours, where Richard is now buried and since we last visited in 2010 has been transformed. The tour includes the history of the Cathedral as well as seeing Richard's tomb, the beautiful pall, designed by Jacquie Binns, and his recreated crown.

There is some particularly fine new stained glass, The Redemption Windows, by Thomas Denny in St Katherine's Chapel.

We will cross to the Richard III Centre for a soup and sandwich lunch with coffee/tea. Following this, there will be an introductory talk before you will be free to explore the excellent exhibition and even see the hole from which Richard was removed.

You can leave when it suits you.

Walk from Hatton Locks

Wednesday, 8 May 2019

By car, meet in the Hatton Locks Car Park for a 10 am start

Organised by Mark Furber

Supported by Flick Furber

Unfortunately, the walk in 2018 had to be abandoned due to torrential rain, so we will try again this year.

The walk starts from the Hatton Locks (car park is charge £1.50). It is 4½ miles long with no stiles and only gentle slopes.

We commence along the Grand Union Canal towpath, passing four locks and a canal side café which has toilet facilities and you can purchase an early cup of tea.

We then leave the canal and have a short walk along a quiet road passing the entrance to Hatton Country World. Leaving the road we cross several fields and then join a wide track. After three cattle grids we reach one of the original lodges to the Grove Park estate. Warwick Castle and St Mary's Church in Warwick can be seen in the distance.

Leaving the track we cross more fields and reach a country road which takes us to Budbrooke Farm, passing the farm the path goes into woodland and then reaches the canal again. There is a gentle climb back to the car park.

If the weather is fine we can then get lunch at the Canal café or, if you prefer, take a picnic to eat beside the canal. The Hatton Arms, close to the canal, provides an excellent meal but is very busy and fairly expensive. If you prefer to eat there I would suggest you ring and book a table, tel. 01926 492427.



Hatton Locks

Melton Mowbray and Belvoir Castle

Tuesday, 21st May 2019

By coach Departing at 9 am

Organised by Pauline Springett

Supported by Alec Springett

Melton Mowbray is a quintessential English market town which has been built on a strong tradition of farming and fox hunting. Renowned for its fine food and drink, the borough has become the centre of excellence for local food products. Famous for its pork pies and Stilton cheese, the town of Melton Mowbray is now home to the Melton Mowbray Food Festival, British Pie Awards and Great British Festival of Pies, and the largest Artisan Cheese Fair in the country. It is no wonder that Melton Mowbray is known as the Rural Capital of Food.

We leave St Mark's car park at 9 am and arrive at Melton at approximately 9.50 am. Members are then free to explore the town. In particular if you wish to see a demonstration of pie making this takes place at the Ye Old Pork Pie Shoppe in Nottingham Street. The demonstration takes 20 minutes. There is cheese tasting at Melton Cheese Board, 8 Windsor Street. You can visit the country's oldest and finest street market. Members should ensure they have some lunch before boarding the coach at 1.15 pm to proceed to Belvoir Castle

Belvoir Castle, home of the Duke & Duchess of Rutland, commands a magnificent view of the Vale of Belvoir. The name Belvoir, meaning beautiful view, dates back to Norman Times when Robert Todei, Standard Bearer to William the Conqueror, built the first castle on this superb site. Destruction caused by two Civil Wars and by a catastrophic fire in 1816 breached the continuity of Belvoir's history. The present building owes much to the inspiration and taste of Elizabeth, 5th Duchess of Rutland and was built after the fire.

On arrival at Belvoir Castle we will have a guided tour of the castle which lasts 1½ hours. After the tour members can visit the café for tea, etc, and the gardens.

We will leave Belvoir at 4.30 pm and should arrive back in Rugby at approximately 5.45 pm.

Members who wish to view the pork pie demonstration should indicate on the booking form. There is a charge of £1 per person payable on the day.

Special Note. This visit is not suitable for persons with mobility problems as there are numerous stairs in the castle.

Kew Gardens and Palace

Wednesday, 12th June 2019

By coach departing at 8.45 am

Organised by Janet and Ken Wayland

Supported by Janice Snell

Kew Gardens is a World Heritage site and has the world's largest and most diverse collection of living plants anywhere in the world. There are 326 acres of exceptional landscape featuring glasshouses, stunning floral displays, immersive installations, a royal palace and art galleries.

Don't miss the Palm House built in the mid 1840's home to plants from the tropical regions of the world with temperatures kept at a steamy 81F (27C) all year round, the ultra-modern Davies Alpine House and the Princess of Wales Conservatory featuring ten different zones.

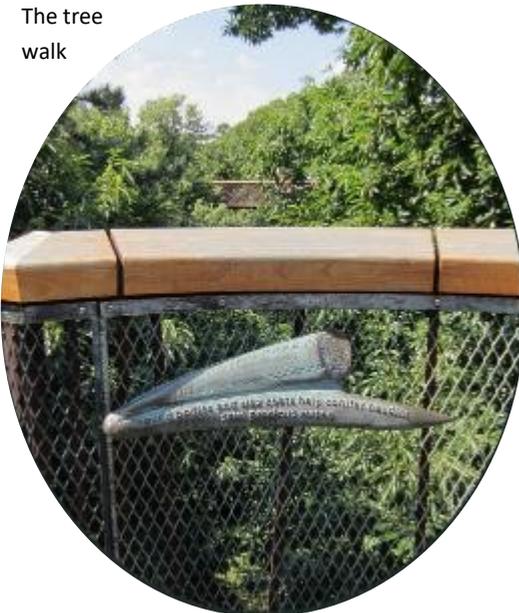
Step inside Kew Palace the former residence of King George III and explore a beautiful royal retreat that has been thoughtfully restored and offers a fascinating insight into the life of the royal family in the late 18th century. Next to the Palace are the Georgian Kitchens that act as a reminder of the difference between life above and below stairs.

For a more leisurely tour around the whole site take the hop-on, hop-off Kew Explorer train, this is included as part of your trip. This offers the opportunity to explore some of the further reaches of the Gardens while the driver provides guided commentary throughout. There are seven stops along the route to allow passengers to explore areas in more depth.

We leave St Mark's car park at 8.45 am and aim to arrive at Kew by 11.30 am after a comfort/tea/coffee stop at Oxford Services on the M40 .

Kew Gardens provides several cafes and restaurants or, if you prefer, take your own picnic to eat in the gardens. The coach will be ready for boarding at 4.15 pm for a prompt departure at 4.30 pm. We should be back in Rugby around 6.30 pm.

The tree walk



Delapre Abbey, Northampton

Thursday 20th June 2019

By coach departing at 9 am

Organised by Janice Snell

Supported by John Snell, Janet & Ken Wayland

The beautiful Grade II* Listed Delapre Abbey, just one mile from Northampton town centre, has entered an exciting new phase in its history. The Abbey was a building at risk, but, with the help of the Heritage Lottery Fund, it has undergone extensive restoration. The Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust and Northampton Borough Council have opened the Abbey's doors to the public for the first time in its 900 year history. The 18th century stable block has been turned into a new visitor and education centre, shop and exhibition space. The Orangery, where we have our refreshments, was once a billiard room. You will learn more of the Abbey's history which started life as a nunnery during our guided tour.

We hope to arrive at 10 am and have tea/coffee and biscuits in the Orangery (included). At 10.45 we will be split into three groups:-

Group 1 Tour of the Abbey, watch video, then explore battlefield room.

Group 2 and 3 will do the same but in a different order.

You may have a little time to wander in the garden before we meet at 12.30 for our two course lunch in the Orangery (included).

After lunch you have free time for the gardens. There is a large walled garden, specimen trees in the understated arboretum, the hidden remains of a splendid water garden, a rock garden, a ha-ha, a lake and sculptures.

We meet up at 3 pm in the Orangery for tea/coffee and biscuits (included) before boarding the coach at 3.45. Depending on traffic, we hope to arrive back in Rugby at 5 pm.

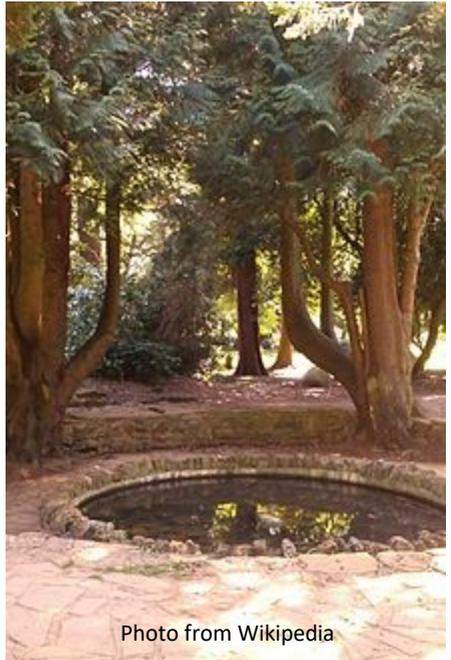


Photo from Wikipedia

Tyntesfield, Somerset

Wednesday, 26th June 2019

By coach departing at 8.45 am

Organised by George Brunavs

Supported by Val Brunavs

Tyntesfield is a powerful and dramatic High Victorian mansion, yet beautifully sited on wooded slopes and without any hint of Gothic gloom. Since its acquisition by the National Trust in 2002, it has been restored and developed as a major showpiece of the Trust. It was expanded from a smaller house in the 1860s by the Gibbs family, who made their huge fortune from fertiliser, first from Peruvian guano and then sodium nitrate from desert regions in South America.

Their architect for the conversion was John Norton, who worked locally in the Bristol area, and who was a thorough disciple of the school of Pugin and Scott; later alterations were carried out by Henry Woodyer, another outstanding exponent of the Gothic Revival style. The house and gardens are presented as in around 1875, all of a piece with original furnishings, decoration and accumulated possessions of the time. It is especially notable for its internal woodwork and panelling, as in the Library and the striking roof of the Billiard Room. The Chapel is as magnificent as that of an Oxford or Cambridge college.

We shall have a comfort/refreshment stop at Gloucester Farm Shops services on the M5 motorway, and probably arrive at Tyntesfield around 11.30 am. The whole day will be a free-flow one, with time to explore the house, extensive gardens, grounds and walks, and visit in your own time the Cow Barn restaurant or Pavilion

café serving food made largely from local produce.

We expect to leave at 4.15 pm for our return journey to Rugby, hoping to arrive back at approximately 6.15-30 pm.

**Please remember to
bring your National
Trust membership
cards**



Photo by George Brunavs ©

Burghley House, Stamford

Wednesday, 3rd July 2019

By coach departing 9.00 am

Organised by Roger Jones

Supported by Catherine Jones, Pauline & Alec Springett

Burghley House is one of the country's premier Tudor mansions. Located just outside the town of Stamford, it was built between 1555 and 1587 by William Cecil, Lord High Treasurer to Queen Elizabeth I.

The house was altered to repair damage after a short bombardment by the Parliamentarian forces during the Civil War and again by Lancelot "Capability" Brown during his re-arrangement of the grounds during the 18th C. The house has been in the hands of 16 generations of the Cecil family and is now run by the Burghley Preservation Trust.

The major state rooms are open to the public and contain magnificent collections of paintings, ceramics and furniture.

We leave St Mark's car park at 9 am and on arrival will be served coffee/tea and biscuits (included) in a private room. Members are then free to tour the house on a "free flow" basis and visit the gardens/parkland at leisure. There is a restaurant in the Orangery where a wide variety of meals/snacks can be purchased.

We will be leaving at 4 pm to return to Rugby by approx. 5.30 pm.



Clip Art Photo

Barnsdale Gardens and Rutland Water

Tuesday, 16th July 2019

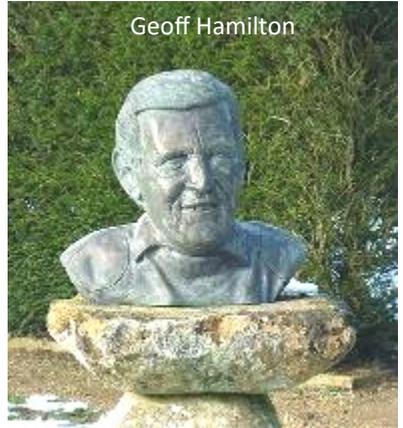
By coach departing at 8.30 am

Organised by Janice Snell

Supported by John Snell, Janet and Ken Wayland

Barnsdale's award-winning collection of 38 individually themed garden 'rooms' will delight and inspire any garden-lover. There is planting for every condition and aspect, wild and wooded areas, plus the famous productive gardens which now supply the Barnsdale Tea Room. The gardens include a rose garden, Japanese garden, rock garden, knot garden, kitchen garden, bog garden and orchard. We hope to arrive by 10.00 am and have coffee/tea and biscuits (included). Members have approximately three and half hours to look around the gardens, and get a light lunch (not included) at the Tea Room.

The coach will leave at 2.00 pm for the short journey to Rutland Water, leaving us plenty of time to leave the coach and walk to the moorings for 2.45 pm where we board the Rutland Belle for the 3.00 pm sailing. A cruise aboard the Rutland Belle allows you to enjoy the sights of Rutland Water whilst listening to a commentary highlighting points of interest.



Geoff Hamilton



Drinks are available on board (not included)

Our coach will leave at 4.45 pm.

< Normanton church
(from Clip Art)

Sudeley Castle and Gardens

Wednesday 24th July 2019

By coach departing at 8.45 am

Organised by Mark Furber

Supported by Flick Furber

Sudeley Castle has been in and out of royal ownership throughout much of its existence. Perhaps the most famous was Henry VIII, who rather neglected Sudeley towards the end of his reign. On his death the castle passed to Thomas Seymour, he renewed his courting of Henry's widow, Katherine Parr, they married and moved to Sudeley. After the birth of her child, Mary, Katherine died and was entombed in the Chapel of St Mary at Sudeley Castle where her tomb may be seen. Katherine remains the only Queen of England to be buried at a private residence.

We leave St Mark's car park at 8.45 am. On arrival we will have tea/coffee and biscuits (included) followed by a talk on the History of Sudeley Castle. You will then follow a planned route through the Castle and Gardens, this is free flow and the purchase of a guide book is to be recommended. The castle rooms and exhibits contain many fascinating treasures from Roman times to the present day.

Following a sandwich lunch (also included) there will be the opportunity to walk around the ten award winning gardens and view the rest of the estate. The Pheasantry at Sudeley houses a collection of 16 rare and endangered species of birds from around the world as part of Sudeley's programme of breeding and conservation.

We will leave at 4 pm to return to Rugby for 5.45 pm.



<
RNTA
outing
In
2015
Photo by
Isobel
Palmer

Coton Manor Garden, Coton, Nr Guilsborough, Northants

Tuesday, 13th August 2019

By car to arrive at 12.15 pm

Organised by Pauline Springett

Supported by Alec Springett

Coton Manor lies in peaceful Northamptonshire countryside and enjoys beautiful views providing an ideal setting for the garden. The ten acre garden, originally laid out in 1925 by the grandparents of the present owner, encloses a series of smaller gardens providing interest and variety throughout. Luxuriant borders will delight the plant enthusiast while everyone will enjoy the charm and special atmosphere of the garden, with colour and interest maintained throughout the season.

On arrival from the car park there are steps leading down to the local road. Cross over the road and enter through the main entrance. Members will be directed to the restaurant where we will be served with lunch which comprises:

Main course

Homemade quiche Lorraine (or vegetarian quiche) served with salad & new potatoes

or

Home cooked ham served with salad and new potatoes.

Pudding

Homemade individual meringue topped with seasonal fruit and cream

or

Homemade warm chocolate brownie served with ice cream

and a glass of wine or soft drink

A menu sheet will be enclosed when the booking form is returned



After lunch members will be free to wander around the gardens at their own pace. The gardens are open from 12 noon until 5.30 pm.

Directions The Post Code is NN6 8RQ. If approaching from the A428 from Rugby, take the B5385 sign posted Ravensthorpe. Go through Ravensthorpe Village when you will see a sign for Coton and, shortly after, the car park sign for Coton Manor.



Kelmscott Manor

Thursday, 22nd August 2019

By coach departing at 9 am

Organised by Aileen Brown

Supporter required

Kelmscott Manor was built around about 1600 by a farming family called Turner and was improved by each generation as they became more wealthy. They owned the house until 1871 when it was put up for rent and William Morris saw it and, after his first visit, described it as 'a heaven on earth'. Its special appeal to Morris was that it embodied many of his ideals having been built by local builders using local materials and vernacular forms. Morris took the Manor on a joint lease with Dante Gabriel Rossetti for three years and the family continued to rent the house as their country retreat until 1913 when it was purchased by Morris's widow Jane. The house contains many examples of furnishings, ceramics, needlework and other textiles made by the Morris family and their friends.

We will leave St Mark's car park at 9 am and on arrival at Kelmscott we will have tea/coffee and biscuits (included) and an introductory talk from one of the experienced guides. Members can then look around the house at their own pace and there are knowledgeable room stewards to answer questions. The included lunch is a Ploughman's Lunch with either ham, Cheddar, Brie or Stilton (choice on the day). Hot drinks and homemade cakes are also available.

After lunch members are free to look around the gardens of the Manor and also Kelmscott village which contains several buildings in the Arts and Craft style.

William Morris and his family are buried in the churchyard of the 12th-13th century St George's Church. There is also a short walk from the house which leads to the River Thames and the Thames Path.

We expect to leave Kelmscott about 15.30 pm and arrive back in Rugby between 17.00 and 17.30 pm.

Photo by Aileen Brown



A new carpet for the staircase at Canons Ashby

After 7 years of use and the passage of approximately 400,000 pairs of feet, the time has now sadly come to replace the Staircase carpet. We are working with Grosvenor Wilton, one of the country's oldest and most prestigious carpet manufacturers, to design and make a new carpet. Grosvenor Wilton still operates from their founding Kidderminster location, using historic looms. Their oldest loom is 120 years old and, whilst it has been converted from steam to electric power, it otherwise remains unchanged from its late nineteenth century design.

Grosvenor Wilton specialise in recreating authentic historic designs and they are very pleased to be working with us to create a design that is historically appropriate for Canons Ashby. We have used Clara Dryden's watercolours of the Staircase as a starting point for our research into patterns and, as per Clara's paintings, the new carpet will feature a strong pattern with a border and will be primarily composed of blues and greens.

Our Curator has conducted further research into patterns that would have been found in a house of Canons Ashby's style and status. We are now working with Grosvenor Wilton to draw up a number of potential designs to choose from with the intention to install the carpet in the spring of 2019.



Watercolour by Clara Dryden ,
showing the carpet laid on the
Staircase in the early 1900s

The replacement carpet will also extend further through the ground floor of the Staircase to mirror the layout on the first floor landing, with one section running between the Dining Room and Book Room doors and another running between the Great Hall and South Front doors. This will act as protection for our floorboards in this area which are amongst the oldest and most vulnerable to damage in the house. The new carpet will have a cut pile, rather than the closed pile of the existing carpet, which will better absorb the movement of footsteps and will, therefore, be more robust. It is anticipated that the replacement carpet will last for at least 15 years and, in this time, will protect the Staircase from the wear of over 1 million pairs of footsteps!

Helen Roadnight