

**The Rugby
National Trust
Association**

in support of 
**National
Trust**

Autumn Newsletter 2021

Programme of talks
Christmas lunch

www.rugbynationaltrust.org

Contents

Committee for 2021	inner front cover
Letter from the Committee	1
Winter Lecture Programme	3
Christmas Lunch, December 2021 with a history of Dunchurch Park Hotel	9
AGM Agenda	12
Diary of events	inner back cover

Photo on the cover by Isobel Palmer ©

Canons Ashby House



Autumn Letter from the Committee

Welcome Back! (if still a little cautious!)

After 18 months of repeated lockdowns and relaxations, we are all, hopefully, seeing light at the end of the tunnel and trust that this Newsletter finds you sound and well.

Although the light ahead is still probably amber rather than green, we are fully intending our 2021-22 programme to restart in October and look forward to a recovery to full strength by next year with a good programme of talks and summer visits in 2022.

Cont. on next page

Autumn Letter from the Committee (cont)

A Christmas lunch is being arranged and details of that and the booked lecture programme are in this Newsletter.

However, many of us are justifiably still a little apprehensive as to exactly how soon we shall feel entirely safe after the protracted threat of the virus pandemic and, accordingly, we at RNTA would like to find out from our members how you feel about returning to our regular activities. To this end, our first meeting on 7th October at Dunchurch Village Hall will be a rather special one, with free admission to everyone and a Question and Answer session at the end, after the scheduled talk, when those attending can give us their thoughts about how our meetings this season might be conducted and also provide us with any suggestions for how we run things and how we might go forward.

Apart from the external threat from the virus which we all hope is gradually receding, we do unfortunately have an internal one to the future entire existence of our Association. Following the retirement of three members during this year, our Committee is now down to only six people and, although we are determined to make 2021-22 as good a success as all our previous active years, it could be a bit of a struggle. Clearly we need some new recruits to the Committee; and, although we have frequently made requests for people from our membership to volunteer to help us, as you can see, the situation is now becoming somewhat perilous and could easily threaten our whole existence. So, once again, we are appealing to you to consider stepping up to help or, at least, enquire from any of the remaining Committee to find out what's involved. More about this will be discussed at our first "special" meeting on 7th October (see also the Lecture Programme details in this Newsletter for more about this).

But welcome back! and here's to a successful 2021-22 with the RNTA!

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

LECTURE PROGRAMME 2021—22

(First Special “Open” Meeting)

The Life and Work of Ernest Gimson

Thursday 7 October 2021

Dunchurch Village Hall 2.30pm

Speaker: Allan Tyler

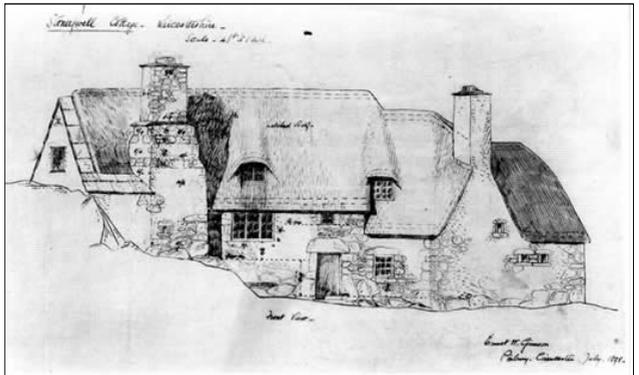
In his classic *Pioneers of Modern Design*, the eminent art historian Nikolaus Pevsner described Ernest Gimson as “the greatest of the English architect-designers”. Gimson is indeed now firmly established as one of the most influential designers of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Allan Tyler, from the Leicester

NTA ,will present an illustrated talk about Gimson’s life and work. Gimson was born in Leicester where he met and was

inspired by William Morris and won first-class success at the Leicester College of Art.

He practised in London in the

office of the Arts and Crafts architect John Dando Sedding and went on to design houses and furniture of great distinction; excellent examples of his furniture can be seen in the Leicester Art Gallery and Museum. With his friend and associate Sydney Barnsley, he established design workshops in Sapperton in the Cotswolds. Outstanding examples of his buildings are in Leicester and the National Trust has the marvellous Stoneywell Cottage in Charnwood Forest.



**Please note: This is our “Welcome Back” special meeting,
with NO admittance charge**

**It is open to all, friends and acquaintances, as well as regular members.
At the end, we shall hold a short discussion session to gather your views on
the way forward with RNTA after our enforced suspension.**

CONCERNING OUR TALKS AND COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

Please note that we shall be taking all necessary precautions at our talks and meetings in the Dunchurch Village Hall to keep everyone safe, in terms of social distancing, ventilation and hand sanitiser.

We ask members to wear face masks until the danger from the virus recedes to a much lower level

We should also like to hear from you on how you feel about the provision of refreshments at meetings.

We will discuss this at our first meeting in October or you can email or phone a Committee Member with your thoughts.

Mary Queen of Scots – the Captive Queen 1568-1587

Wednesday 20 October 2021

Dunchurch Village Hall 7.30pm

Speaker: David Templeman

David Templeman, Elizabethan historian, writer and lecturer, came to us a few years ago with his knowledgeable and inspiring two talks about the life of Mary Stuart in captivity in England and he now returns to us with an updated and revised edition of this enthralling story, tied in with his recent book on the same subject.

David writes:

“Find out what really happened to Mary in her captivity years on this journey around Carlisle Castle, Bolton Castle, Tutbury, Wingfield Manor, Chatsworth, Sheffield Castle and Manor Lodge, Buxton and Worksop Manor. Rather than the benign period portrayed by her biographers, the talk conveys intrigue, passion, plots and escape attempts. It is an important part of the story of one of history’s most romantic and enigmatic characters.”



Railway Crime

Thursday 4 November 2021

Dunchurch Village Hall 2.30 pm

Speaker: Mike Riley

Mike Riley, who has given us previous lively talks on the Great Central Railway and Railway Accidents, returns to give a fascinating illustrated run-down of notable crimes on the railways of Britain during the last two hundred years. (We all know about the famous Great Train Robbery of 1963 but what of the murder of Elizabeth Camp, the first woman ever to be murdered aboard a train in Britain (1897), and of the Merstham Tunnel Mystery (1905)?)

THE VICTORIAN RAILWAY MURDERS



ARTHUR & MARY SELLWOOD

The Panama Canal (and more!)

Wednesday 17 November 2021

Dunchurch Village Hall 7.30pm

Speaker: Anthony Addams

Why was the Panama Canal built? Why did the French fail? How did the Americans succeed? Anthony Addams (a member of Rugby NTA) describes in his illustrated



talk, the history, politics, construction and operation of this canal, while we transit from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

This is followed by a look at other extraordinary canal structures in France, Belgium, Scotland and

Germany. Compare different engineering solutions and see why one was doomed to failure. All illustrated with 130 slides and personal exploration.

“Light Fantastic” – One Thousand Years of Stained Glass

Thursday 2 December 2021

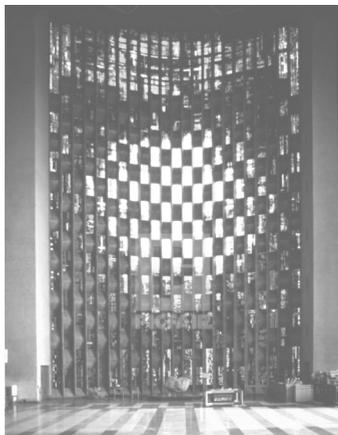
Dunchurch Village Hall 2.30pm

Speaker: Keith Cattell

Having given us excellent talks on “Victorian Architecture” and “English Castles” in previous years, Keith returns with another visually enthralling presentation.

He writes:

“Although a very common material, glass, when coloured and assembled into pictures and patterns, has entranced man for well over 1000 years. It is now enjoying a world-wide resurgence of interest and this talk covers its history from the earliest examples to the present day.”



RNTA Annual General Meeting

Thursday 20 January 2022

Dunchurch Village Hall 2.30pm

(See AGM Agenda on page 12)

Followed by:

Playing our part - the National Trust Strategy to 2025

Speaker: Andy Beer

Director of Midlands National Trust

Andy Beer has been invited by us to talk about our local association’s work, attend this AGM, and give his presentation on the National Trust’s visions and plans for the years ahead, with particular reference to new moves and projects in the Midlands.



Creating a New Future from an Old Garden

Thursday 3 February 2022

Dunchurch Village Hall 2.30pm

Speaker: Mick Evans

Mick Evans, Head Gardener at National Trust's Packwood, is visiting us again to present another fascinating chapter in the work he and his team are doing in



re-imagining and re-creating the gardens and landscape at Packwood.

The History of the BTH Works in Rugby

Wednesday 16 February 2022

Dunchurch Village Hall 7.30pm

Speaker: Alain Foote

Following his enthralling and deeply researched study of the Willans works in Rugby, which he gave us two years ago, Alain returns with the story of another major landmark of Rugby's industrial past, the British Thomson-Houston works, for so many years a prominent and iconic feature of railway journeys into and out of Rugby station.



Northampton Guildhall – A Study in Stone

Thursday 3 March 2022

Dunchurch Village Hall 2.30pm

Speaker: Kate Wills



Kate Wills will recount the story of one of the most striking and beautiful Town Halls in England, an outstanding work of Edward William Godwin, one of the most imaginative and artistic architects of the nineteenth century Gothic Revival. His work here was not confined to the design of the building but also to stunning interiors and superbly crafted furniture for the working spaces within; a truly aesthetic whole.

Queen Victoria – A Life in Portraits

Wednesday 16 March 2022

Dunchurch Village Hall 7.30pm

Speaker: Gillian White

Throughout her long life, Queen Victoria was painted by the Leading artists of the day. From daughter to empress, by way of wife, mother and dog-owner, her ever-changing role on Britain's stage was carefully captured and controlled for both public and private consumption. In this talk we'll follow her story in a selection of these portraits – some familiar, some perhaps surprising – and see a winsome toddler develop into a symbol of the nation.



Christmas at Dunchurch Park Hotel

Tuesday, 7 December 2021

Organised by Pauline Springett (01788 814634, 07733148004)

Lunch will be served at 1 pm. Members are advised to arrive at least 15 minutes beforehand. Follow the sign for Hotel Reception and parking.

After lunch members are allowed to view the gardens.

Please indicate on the booking form your menu choices, special dietary requirements and requests to sit with selected people.

Menu

Roast Turkey with all the trimmings

Or

Pan-fried market fish with wilted greens and beurre blanc

Or

Four-cheese tortellini bound in spinach velouté with roquette and parmesan

Dessert

Christmas pudding with brandy sauce

Or

Glazed lemon tart with mascarpone cream & raspberry drizzle

Or

European cheese platter with traditional accompaniments

Tea/coffee.

Drinks can be purchased at the bar before hand

A history of Dunchurch Park

- ◆ This year we are going to be in a place steeped in history since 1767. The lands came into the possession of King George III and were later developed by Lord John Scott, second son of the 4th Duke of Buccleuch.

Cont.

History of Dunchurch Park Hotel (Cont.)

- ◆ In 1804 the estate was acquired by the Oxford Union Canal Co for £700 who arranged the building of a fine red brick mansion known as Dunchurch Lodge. In 1805, Richard Tawney, a proprietor of the Oxford Union Canal Navigation company, moved into the Lodge and lived there until his death in 1832.
- ◆ 1834 the Oxford Union Canal Company leased out the Lodge to Colonel John Rochford. William Keach, a gentleman farmer of Dunchurch, moved in with his family and servants.
- ◆ 1861 Thomas Hazlehurst occupied the Lodge with his wife and servants.
- ◆ 1868 The estate was acquired by Alfred Hyde Harrison who converted the house into a preparatory school for the sons of gentlemen. John Robert Edwards Sumner was an amateur footballer and teacher at the school who, in later life, played in the FA Cup against Wanderers FC. In 1882 the preparatory school prospered and grew until it was moved to Dunchurch Hall in the village. Extensive repairs to house and outbuildings were completed for the arrival of Walter Sandilands, 12th Lord Torpichen of Scotland and his wife. His two sons were later born at Dunchurch Lodge.
- ◆ 1890 £4,000 was spent on refurbishment in November before sub-letting to the honourable Douglas Leigh for the hunting season. Disaster struck in December when a fire broke out in the Lodge. The location of the house made it extremely difficult for the fire fighters and volunteers to extinguish the fire, so by the time the fire was out only the East Wing remained. The exact cause of the fire is unknown although it is rumoured to have begun in the servants' quarters. John Lancaster commissioned Gilbert Fraser, a reputable architect, to design a new mansion house for the site. It incorporated the old East Wing where there have been several sightings of a female ghost.
- ◆ By 1908 the building of the new mansion house and three lodges for the estate workers was complete. A landscape architect, Thomas Mawson, was commissioned to design a garden with pleasant grounds to enhance the house. Thomas Mawson became one of the most successful landscape gardeners of the Victorian era. The gardens surrounding the Lodge remain today and have been grade II listed.
- ◆ 1920 The Cayzer family bought the estate and stayed there until Major Harold Stanley Cayzer, the High Sheriff for Warwickshire, died in 1948.
- ◆ 1950 The estate was purchased by The English Electric Company which later became GEC Marconi and utilised the house as a training college for its apprentices. Famous attendees include Sir Iain Duncan Smith, the Conservative MP.

History of Dunchurch Park Hotel (Cont.)

- ◆ 2001 In January Rugby Borough Council listed the lodge and grounds Grade II*: 'Dunchurch Lodge is the outstanding centre piece of a major estate, designed by Gilbert Fraser with his long-time collaborator, Thomas Mawson, the celebrated landscape architect.'
- ◆ In 2001, it was bought by first! Venues and transformed into a conference centre.
- ◆ 2003 Signature Hotel Group developed the centre further by adding additional function rooms and bedrooms.
- ◆ 2004 Dunchurch Park Hotel held its first wedding, which paved the way for the hotel to become one of the most popular, premier wedding venues in Warwickshire. The Draycote Suite, Bar 1823 and a decked area within the beautiful Victorian gardens were completed. In 2005, a marquee was erected within the rose garden for weddings, meetings and functions. A full refurbishment programme on the original manor house and public areas was completed in 2015 and refurbishment of the bedrooms, gymnasium, Garden Rooms and meeting rooms commenced in 2016.



Dunchurch Park Hotel

The gardens are landscaped and there are lovely views from the terrace



THE RUGBY NATIONAL TRUST ASSOCIATION
33rd **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Thursday 20 January 2022

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 2020 are:

Vacant	(Chair)
Vacant	(Treasurer)
Vacant	(Secretary)
Adrian Futter	(Membership Secretary)
Vacant	(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)
Vacant	(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 19 January 2023**



in support of **National
Trust**



Compiled and edited by Isobel Palmer

The Rugby National Trust Association 2020

Printed by Steers Printing