



in support of **National
Trust**

The Rugby National Trust Association

Autumn/Winter N

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ation 2026

www.rugbynati

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We had an excellent outing to **Shrewsbury Flaxmill** organised by Pam and led by Alain. We had very good and enthusiastic tour guides. It was a fantastic building, the structure leading the way for the skyscrapers of the future.



Photos by Alain and Isobel

Committee Report

It is now a year since George Brunavs died and we have managed a full year on a reduced committee – basically five of us covering all the tasks. However, I think we have done a good job with an excellent programme of talks throughout the winter, a Christmas lunch and four outings which were thoroughly enjoyed by members. Thank you to Sheila Richards for organising the great visit to Maxstoke Castle.

As you will see, we have a full programme of interesting and varied talks arranged for this winter and a Christmas lunch in the pipeline. A few suggestions have been made for outings next year but we still need people to lead them. To allow for planning and costing, offers need to be with Pam by October 2026. Everything needs to be in place by the end of November to allow for printing before the AGM.

Our finances are still pretty good and earlier in the year we donated £1,000 to Canons Ashby for a project they were working on. We recently heard that the plans for the Louis Osman display are progressing nicely and they hope to install it either towards the end of this year or in time for opening in February 2027.

Pam has learnt that her stalwart helper with refreshments, Norma Elliott, is giving up so we are looking for some offers of help there. Thank you very much, Norma, for your long stint in that role. We are also appealing for someone to back up Alain on the sound system as he will not be available for meetings after the turn of the year. **This is an urgent SOS.** With such a small, relatively elderly team, we feel rather vulnerable and, ideally, we would like some roles shadowed in case of emergency.

We have appreciated the people who have been turning up early at meetings to help put out chairs and tables. It has made life so much easier for us and I hope that will continue when our meetings resume.

We look forward to seeing you on Thursday, 1 October to hear all about
The Notorious Culworth Gang of South Northamptonshire.

Isobel Palmer in consultation with the Committee

Membership News

The current membership of RNTA stands at 210.

Membership fees for the year starting on 1 October 2026 remain unchanged at £10 for single people and £15 for two people giving the same address. If you pay by standing order, this will be done automatically. Otherwise 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.

Road safety for mature drivers

A member has suggested we might be interested in a Mature Drivers Workshop.

As many of you do not drive it may not be suitable for replacing one of our regular meetings and we have speakers booked right through to March 2027. It might be better to suggest that those interested contact Road Safety Education (see below) and ask if there are workshops in the local area. They offer helpful hints, practical tips and useful reminders to support driving safely for longer. If you are resident in Warwickshire, on completion you would then be offered a free Mature Driver review, a chance to go out in your own car with someone from IAM to assess your driving.

email: roadsafetyeducation@warwickshire.gov.uk
420

telephone: 01926 412

Aileen Brown

Aileen died earlier this year. She was a valuable member of RNTA joining the committee in 2003 and became 'Route Planner' in the days when Eric Dalglish was organising a very full outings programme. This was before satnav became widespread. She later took on the role of Deputy Membership Secretary before leaving the committee in 2008.

However, she continued to be an active member, organising walks (from Hatton CP and Harbury) with Tony and usually planning at least one outing a year as well as trips to the ballet at The Hippodrome and concerts in the Birmingham Symphony Hall.

The outings she planned were varied and interesting often reflecting her great interest in wildlife, gardening and art. One in particular was very unusual – using a vintage coach from Catteralls, we travelled to Stoke Bruerne, where we had lunch, a boat trip through the Brixworth tunnel and time to explore the canal museum. It was a lovely leisurely day out.



I remember sitting near her at an RNTA lunch in Arnold's restaurant when I was extolling the virtues of HF Holidays that I'd recently discovered. A man opposite said he'd met his wife on one year's ago and Aileen told me that was how she and Tony met – holidaying on the isle of Aran. I've always thought that belonging to the NT brings together people with similar interests which helps us enjoy each others company.

Martin Stammers

We will also miss Martin who died in January after a few months illness.

He took on the role of Secretary in 2006 and then became Chair in 2010 for three years. He has been a regular supporter of our activities joining many of our outings and walks either with Marie (his wife) or on his own. Martin was also a volunteer at Canons Ashby for many years until Covid hit and he didn't return as his eye-sight meant he had to stop driving.



THE RUGBY NATIONAL TRUST ASSOCIATION
Minutes of the 38th Annual General Meeting
held in Dunchurch Village Hall on 15th January 2026 at 2.30pm

Isobel Palmer took the chair and opened the meeting by welcoming 60 Association Members. She requested that members collect the Spring 2026 newsletter from the table at the side of the hall before the AGM starts as it contains the agenda and summary of the accounts.

1. **Apologies** had been received from Graham and Sandra Bevan, Jill and Tony Birch, Chris Dales, Rose Foote, Alaister and Karen Railton, Sandra Seakins and Tony Smith

Sadly, Isobel reported the deaths of two longstanding members who had given so much to the Association: Aileen Brown and Martin Stammers

2. **Minutes of the 37th Annual General Meeting** were printed in the Autumn 2025 newsletter and were taken as read. There were no matters arising

3. **Treasurer's report**

Tim Seakins thanked Pam for standing in whilst he was unwell.

Alain Foote proposed that the Treasurer's report be approved,
seconded by Jan Elliott

4. **Committee Report**

We were hard hit by the death of George Brunavs. 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 Tim back in October, ready for the new financial year.

The committee has carried on with me 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 also need help at meetings – particularly with the chairs. This may be any able-bodied person who can come in early (we open the hall an hour before the meeting). Alain has been shown the technical information on setting up the meeting but he is not always available so we desperately need someone to 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 this summer – 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.

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

Janet Frankl proposed that the Committee report be approved
seconded by Pauline Springett

Discussion about the way forward. Isobel asked for comments about whether what we are providing is what members want and there was a general feeling that the programme is enjoyable. It was suggested that there could be a rota of people willing to come early to set up the room and this will be discussed at the next committee meeting. Sadly there were no offers to join the committee.

6. ***Election of Committee*** As ten people had signed to agree that committee members could continue to serve beyond 8 years, the committee was re-elected as before:

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

Ken Monk proposed that the above members be re-elected
seconded by Anthony Addams

7. ***Appointment of Independent Examiner***

Ian Stimson had agreed to continue to examine the accounts

Gwen McShane proposed that his appointment be approved
seconded by Jan Elliott

8. ***Subscriptions***

It was suggested that the subscriptions continue as last year.

Gwen McShane proposed this was accepted seconded by Alain Foote.

9. ***Any other business*** none

10. ***Date of Next Annual General Meeting***

39th Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 21st January 2027 at
2.30pm at

Visit to **Ashby St Ledgers Church** in June arranged and led by Pam.

We had a very comprehensive talk from the vergers from the 3-tiered pulpit on the history of the church and the various Catesby family members depicted in the brasses going back hundreds of years which had been uncovered for us to see.



This well-worn brass is the surviving figure of three originally



There were also wall paintings which had been whitewashed over during the changes in religious thought.

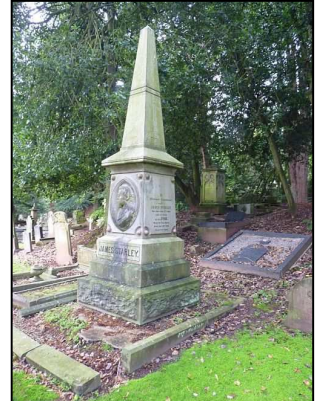
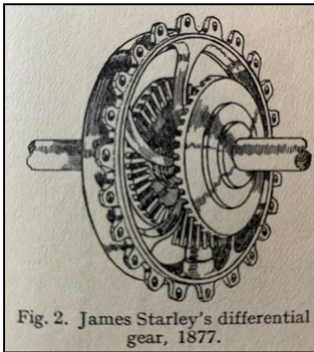
The Starley Family of Sussex and Coventry

Thursday 5 November 2026

Dunchurch Village Hall 2.30pm

Speaker: John Starley

A tale of bobbins, bicycles, batteries, bangers and buses. A canter through the meteoric development of Coventry from the 1600's seen through the eyes of one family.



Carpathia: the midnight dash

Wednesday 18 November 2026

Dunchurch Village Hall 7.30pm

Speaker: Andrew Lound

Of the many stories about the Titanic, one remains rarely told in detail - that is the story of Captain Rostron and the Cunard ship *Carpathia* that raced to the *Titanic's* rescue. In a very dramatic performance *Carpathia's* role in the *Titanic* story is relived demonstrating the incredible actions of Captain Rostron, his crew and of course Harold Cottam, the radio operator who acted on the call from the *Titanic*.

A Medieval Christmas

Thursday 3 December 2026

Dunchurch Village Hall 2.30pm

Speaker: Michael Brown

Michael presents this in 14th Century clothing and talks about the Christmas traditions, myths and plants of the medieval period, with music played on early instruments

The Notorious Culworth Gang of South Northamptonshire

Thursday 1 October 2026

Dunchurch Village Hall 2.30pm

Speaker: Richard Blacklee



Richard explains the location of the village of Culworth in a historical context and gives the names of known gang members and where they operated. He describes the circumstances of arrests, imprisonment, trials and hangings in 1787. The talk includes a brief introduction to Northampton Sessions House and County Goal, impressive buildings dating back to the 1680s.

Tea and the Empress of China

Wednesday 21st October 2026

Dunchurch Village Hall 7.30pm

Speaker: Mike Burton

China tea was a British obsession. It sparked a global battle which ran for two centuries, almost leading to the collapse of China. Her saviour was a no-nonsense princess who shrewdly kept the predatory trading powers at arm's length. This is a story of spies, fast sailing ships and a plan to "transplant China into India" - all because we love our "cuppa".

39th AGM followed by:

A brief history of Lime and Cement in the Rugby area

Thursday 21 January 2027

Dunchurch Village Hall 2.30pm

Speaker: John Frearson

Lime was first produced by the Walker family at Newbold in 1776, a few years after the canal was opened across their land. They developed their cement works on the present site in New Bilton from 1865 and built their first rotary kiln in 1910. This talk, based largely on rescued archives, shows a succession of legal cases until better management in the late 1800s and continued expansion until the 1960s before take overs by RMC in 2000 and CEMEX in 2005.

Delivering a Greener Rugby

Thursday 4 February 2027

Dunchurch Village Hall 2.30pm

Speakers: Alex Becker and Ellie Lawson

Firstly Ellie, as Climate Change Projects Officer, will talk about the work Rugby Borough Council is doing to protect our local environment and mitigate the effects of climate change. After the interval Alex, as Waste Services Development Officer, will talk on tackling waste and promoting the circular economy in Rugby.

Japan: Ikebana and The Floating World

Wednesday 17 February 2027

Dunchurch Village Hall 7.30pm

Speaker: Laura Malpas

Laura will talk about the history of **Ikebana**, Japanese flower arranging which was brought to Japan in association with Buddhism in the 6th century AD. Originally it was a male only practice, reserved for the Emperor and his courtiers, monks and samurai before becoming a mainstream part of the Japanese refined arts.

After the interval Laura will give a shortened version of the talk postponed from November 2025:

The Floating World - The Beauty of Japan



The Chelsea Peers – Charles Rennie Mackintosh

Thursday 4 March 2027

Dunchurch Village Hall 2.30pm

Speaker: Robert Kendall

The title is an obvious pun on the Chelsea Years that Mackintosh spent in London from the end of 1914-22 and beyond in France from 1922 to 1926. Specifically, it regards the architectural work he was engaged in (but never materialised) and his landscape work in France. The story also considers the other artistic movements in London and those he associated with such as JD Fergusson, the Scottish colourist, and his wife, Meg Morris, and how it connects with the German Bauhaus

Wigs, Whiskers and Warships: The extraordinary world of Willy Clarkson, royal perruquier and costumer

Wednesday 17 March 2027

Dunchurch Village Hall 7.30pm

Speaker: Ann Featherstone

Eccentric and flamboyant Willy Clarkson is perhaps the most famous man you've never heard of! He was the reputed disguiser of Dr Crippen and any number of policemen and ne'er-do-wells and provider of fancy-dress costumes for the Kaiser and the Prince of Wales. Everyone in theatre-land knew him, yet he died in mysterious circumstances and his will was found to be forged. It is a story which is both strange and fascinating.

Christmas lunch

Thursday 10th December 2026

at the Countryman, Staverton NN11 6JY

12 for 12.30pm

If you are interested, could let me know so I can book enough tables.

email: psouthern223@btinternet.com

or use contact details inside front cover or let me know at a meeting.

When I get the price and two course menu, I will contact you for a deposit and any dietary needs and/or seating requests and your choice of menu.

Pam Southern, Bookings Secretary

Visit to Maxstoke Castle in July organised and led by Sheila Richards. We were guided round the house in a leisurely manner by Edwina Fetherston-Dilke who lives in the castle with her husband and their children.



An introduction in the courtyard

We ended up with a sandwich lunch and plenty of yummy cake and then were free to explore the garden and grounds before we headed home when we'd seen enough.



Photos by Ted Pearson and Isobel

Our final outing was to **Kenwood House** arranged by Pam and led by Isobel. We made good time down the M1 and through busy London suburbs to arrive in time for a quick drink and then guided tours. The guides were very informative explaining the construction of the house and the occupants. The house and extensive art collection was bequeathed to the nation by Lord Iveagh whose will was to allow free entry to the public. It's truly wonderful with a lot of really

familiar paintings.



After lunch, there was time to explore the grounds to view the

Hepworth and Moore sculptures



Dates for your Diary in 2026/7

Date	Title	Time
1 Oct	The Notorious Culworth Gang Speaker: Richard Blacklee	2.30 pm
21 Oct	Tea and the Empress of China Speaker: Mike Burton	7.30 pm
5 Nov	The Starley Family of Sussex and Coventry Speaker: John Starley	2.30 pm
18 Nov	Carpathia: The Midnight Dash Speaker: Andrew Lound	7.30 pm
3 Dec	Medieval Christmas Speaker: Michael Brown	2.30 pm
10 Dec	Christmas lunch at The Countryman, Staverton	12 noon

2027

21 Jan	39th AGM followed by A brief history of Lime and Cement in the Rugby area Speaker: John Frearson	2.30 pm
4 Feb	Delivering a Greener Rugby Speakers: Alex Becker and Ellie Lawson	2.30 pm
17 Feb	Ikebana and the Floating World of Japan Speaker: Laura Malpas	7.30 pm
4 Mar	The Chelsea Peers—Charles Rennie Mackintosh Speaker: Robert Kendall	2.30 pm
17 Mar	Wigs, Whiskers and Warships: Speaker: Ann Featherstone	7.30 pm
14 April	Visits planning meeting	DVH 7.30 pm