

Seend Historic Houses Club AGM 2025 report & resume of previous years visits.

- Rodmarton Manor 22nd May Lovely Arts & Crafts manor house with locally crafted oak furniture and many wall-hangings, including a large applique detailing the 1937 Coronation. There was also a chapel at the end of one wing, some lovely bedrooms and some interesting rules and regulations for staff to follow to ensure that guests were made comfortable. The weather was awful and so many didn't get to enjoy the garden. Great tea-room!
- Chawton House 26th June Charming manor house with extensive grounds (a little in need of TLC) and a strong association with Jane Austen as the property belonged to her brother Edward. There was a fascinating library specialising in women writers from 1660 – 1860. A strong link with the USA through a Friends association which raises funds to support Chawton.
- Corsham Court 24th July Although well known locally it was a pleasure to renew our acquaintance with this stately home which has been in the ownership of the Methuen family for eight generations. We were given a wonderful tour of the house and then took our time to enjoy the gardens and parkland, including Brown's Bath House – a gothic folly and the walled garden.
- Kingston Lacy 25th September We headed down to Dorset for the splendour of Kingston Lacy, we were blessed with good weather and were able to enjoy the formal gardens and the various 'walks' and kitchen garden. The house itself contains many beautiful paintings and pieces of furniture and is in the possession of the National Trust, having been bequeathed it by the last owner in 1981 when it was their largest ever single bequest. Much restoration work needed to be done to bring the estate back to life, I remember being told in the 1980s that it was only the death-watch beetles holding hands that had kept the roof up!

Members have increased in the past twelve months, although we sadly lose some members over time, we are fortunate that local people still like to visit historic houses and join up. We often re-visit some of them over the years and it is always interesting to note changes in what is presented to the public both in the houses and the grounds. We try to avoid using coach companies to travel as the costs are so high these days, so generally we rely on members using their own transport locally and a combination of the Shuttle and private cars for other trips. This year we have three visits in progress, the first being a visit to Bowood House and Gardens, which has already happened at the end of April! 37 of us enjoyed a talk on the history of the house and grounds after which we were free to enjoy ourselves on what was a wonderfully warm, sunny day.

Tina and Neil Yockney are planning to visit Tyntesfield at the end of May and Sherborne Castle in July.

I will no doubt organise an autumn visit later in the summer.

If anyone would like to join the Seend Historic Houses Club please contact Mrs Debbie Savage in the first instance. Membership fees remain at £4 up until next year's AGM.

Len Murray, SHHC Committee.