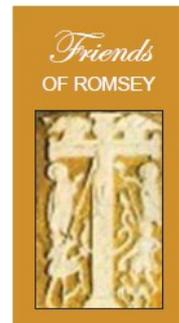


NEWSLETTER



Winter 2017

Issue 16

A message from Revd Canon Tim Sledge, Vicar of Romsey

Dear Friends

We live in an age of fast, rapid and expanding communication. This has its challenges but also gives us huge opportunities to get the good news about the Abbey, the Friends, and our life in this community out to a global audience.

Already, thanks to the Friends support, we now livestream a number of our services. Over Christmas there were 1000 people who accessed our worship on line. We now want to develop this, and will be looking into all nursing homes having access to the Abbey online, so that people who are sick or housebound can have the Abbey brought into their lounges.

We also want to improve our stories in the local press and through our developing tourism programme, so that more people both hear about and come to the Abbey and experience it for themselves.

The word "Gospel" means "Good News". In the Abbey we read it every day. Thanks to you, we need to find new and innovative as well as tried and tested ways to make sure that this Good News is spread far and wide, so that people can experience the beauty of the Abbey every day.

That's why the Friends of Romsey Abbey are Good News!!

With all good wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tim Sledge'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned below the text 'With all good wishes,'.



Friends of Romsey Abbey – Events 2017

MARCH

Friday 17th, Coffee morning, Town Hall. 10–11.45am. Non-members welcome

APRIL

Thursday 6th, cruise on the **Kennet & Avon Canal** from Bradford-on-Avon to Bath. Superb scenery, 2 historical aqueducts over the River Avon and sweeping views of Bath from the water. Included in the cost is a 2-course lunch, served on the boat during the 4-hour cruise. Travel by luxury coach, leave Romsey 9.30am, return 5pm. Led by Colin and Rosemary Davis. Cost (includes coach, boat and lunch) £50 per person. Payment with booking please

MAY

Friday 19th, Coffee morning, Town Hall. 10–11.45am. Non-members welcome

JUNE

Tuesday 6th, Swanage Railway. Leave Romsey 9am, return by 5pm. Including minibus travel, return steam train trip, and 3 hours in Swanage. Take/buy own lunch. Optional time in Corfe Castle before return home. Led by Dick Hewett. £25 per person. Payment with booking please

Thursday 8th, Annual General Meeting in the Church Rooms. Starts 7.30pm.

Sunday 25th, Afternoon Cream Tea, 4pm in the Church Rooms, with the Romsey Abbey Catering team. £3 donation suggested, and advance notice welcomed. Friends are then invited to **Evensong** at 6.30pm

JULY

Saturday 1st – Sunday 16th, the **Romsey Festival** – a wide variety of events, including **Insights Into The Abbey**, daily talks/tours of the Abbey covering a variety of topics. 3pm –3.45pm daily. Organisers Liz Hallett and Brian Lamb, with guest guides. *Not a Friends event, but please do support these talks*. Payment in advance or on the day. See www.romseyfestival.org for more details

Friday 21st, Coffee morning, Town Hall. 10–11.45am. Non-members welcome

Tuesday 25th, churches at **Ashley and Little Somborne**. These are 2 of several lovely churches in the Test Valley that are redundant and in the care of the

Churches Conservation Trust. Afternoon trip by minibus, with a tea stop at Annie's Tea Rooms on return journey. Leave Romsey 1.30pm, return 5pm. Led by Barry Graham, with Liz Hallett as guide. £10 per person. Payment with booking please

SEPTEMBER

Friday 15th, Coffee morning, Town Hall. 10–11.45am. Non-members welcome

Tuesday 26th, day-trip to **Tangmere Military Aviation Museum** (near Chichester). Depart Romsey 9.30am, return 4.45pm. £22 including minibus, welcome coffee and entrance charge. Snack lunches available at own cost (menu to follow). Led by Dick Hewett. Payment with booking please

OCTOBER

Tuesday 3rd, Annual Dinner at The White Horse. 7pm for 7.30pm. 3-course dinner with pre-dinner drinks and entertainment. Organised by John Twigg and Ken Gibson. £33 person. Payment with booking please. *Menu choice to be confirmed*

Late October, Ethelflaeda Festival and Lecture. *Details to be confirmed*

NOVEMBER

Mid November, trip by coach to the **Mill Theatre at Sonning** (on the River Thames) for lunch and a matinee performance. Led by Colin and Rosemary Davis. *Date and details of this trip cannot be confirmed until after Easter.*

Friday 17th, Coffee morning, Town Hall. 10–11.45am. Non-members welcome

DECEMBER

Sunday 17th, Service of 9 Lessons and Carols, Romsey Abbey. 6.30pm

How to Book

Bookings can be made on booking forms, or by phone or email.

Either send a cheque made payable to 'The Friends of Romsey Abbey' to: The FRA Bookings Officer, Dick Hewett, 42 Botley Rd, Romsey, SO51 5AP (enclose the booking form or a short note)

Or pay online direct to the Friends' bank account (Sort Code 30-97-14, Account 31345360, Reference 'Events') and email Dick Hewett at events@romseyabbeyfriends.org to confirm you are booking and have paid online.

Please separate out payments for different events—this makes it easier to track payments and to handle any subsequent cancellations or refunds. To check details or availability of places, please ring Dick on 01794 500523

Letter from the Chairman

Dear Friends

First of all a very big thank you for your support and enthusiastic encouragement during the past, very eventful year for the Friends.

As the New Year gets underway I sense a realisation by many of a feeling of opportunity and challenge for the future, and it is pleasing to see this being welcomed by many. In the same spirit, your management committees have continued to strengthen our ability to respond to requests for financial support both for current projects and future opportunities. Significant improvements in our administration procedures have taken place during the past year, which means that the roles of Chairman and Treasurer are now simpler and less onerous than hitherto. Many thanks to Roger Rowe and Dick Hewett who have undertaken this work.

An interesting programme of events has been devised for 2017 and I am grateful for the offers of help that have been so encouraging over recent months. I look forward to meeting many of our members as we enjoy these opportunities to get out and about.

One of the greatest challenges voluntary organisations face today is to find the most effective way of integrating social media with traditional methods of communication, especially for recruiting new members. Therefore the Trustees are keen to hear from anyone who feels able to make a contribution in this field.

As I will be standing down as Chairman at the AGM in June, I would like to say what a pleasure and privilege it has been to work with the Friends during my short period of involvement. I am confident that the organisation is well placed to continue making a significant contribution to the work of the Abbey into the future.

Every Blessing,
John Twigg

A bumper Friends Coffee Morning in January....

Friday morning at Romsey Town Hall, the aroma of freshly brewed coffee is in the air and the main hall is buzzing with noise and conversation. The Friends of Romsey Abbey are holding one of their regular Coffee Mornings, open to members and non-members, which take place every other month.

Terry Hamer, the Town Crier, resplendent in Blue robes and uniform, is 'out and about' in Romsey, drumming up customers and giving them the good news – fresh 'Coffee and Biscuits' for just £2.00!!!



The Friends welcomed over 60 guests to their bumper Coffee Morning in January. And the ever-popular Raffle, managed by Roger and Celia Rowe, had one of their busiest mornings ever.

The Coffee Mornings not only offer coffee and biscuits fantastic value, they offer the chance to meet new and old friends in a lovely warm atmosphere.



If you would like enjoy a coffee with us, the next Coffee Morning is on **Friday 17th March at 10.00am in Romsey Town Hall.**

Report by Ken Gibson

Christchurch Priory

In September, 27 Friends left Romsey by minibus to visit Christchurch Priory. On arrival we enjoyed tea and a splendid selection of cakes in Priory House, an 18th Century property built adjacent to the south side of the Priory. This houses the Cloisters Cafe Bar, the profits of which support the work of the Priory. The church is fascinating and has a lot of links with Romsey Abbey: Neil Crawford-Jones was Assistant Curate there, Tim Harling was ordained there and our present technical team have passed on to them some of our unneeded video equipment and are helping them to upgrade their system.



Roughly the same age as the Abbey, the Priory is a wonderful building. The tour included visiting 2 separate Crypts, as well looking around the Priory at floor level. We saw the Miraculous Beam: legend tells how this had been accidentally cut too short, but next day was found to be the correct length and to have been lifted into place in the roof overnight by a mysterious carpenter, believed to have been Jesus of Nazareth.



After the tour some of us ascended the tower which, despite the slightly hazy weather, afforded views across to the Isle of Wight, the New Forest and Swanage. Our guide explained that on a clear day it is possible to see the top of Salisbury Cathedral spire, around 25 miles away.



Some of the group went up to the St Michael's Loft Museum, located above the Lady Chapel, which contains artefacts dating back to Saxon times. Members of the Christchurch Friends met up with some of us, which was a chance to exchange ideas.

There was time for some of the group to explore the town and harbour before the drivers, Tim Rogerson and Jan Stafford, brought us safely home to Romsey. A great afternoon out.

Report by Liz Hallett and Tim Rogerson

(Thanks to Liz Hallett for making the arrangements for this most interesting visit)

Bombay Sapphire Gin Distillery



In October, 30 Friends visited Laverstoke Mill on the river Test to learn about the origins and production of Bombay Sapphire Gin.

We started our tour in the extraordinary, tall modern glasshouses where samples of each of the 10 botanical plants used in the manufacturing process are grown in their natural state. Later in the Dakin Still House we were shown the unique vapour infusion process where the high quality spirit is infused with the exotic botanicals that complete the gin making process.



Each person was given a personal interactive guide for use in a tasting and sampling process in the Botanical Dry Room. Here we selected our preferred aromas from 10 botanicals and chose which type we wished to have to suit our individual palate in our complimentary cocktail, served at the end of our tour in the Mill Bar. The interactive guide also gave details of the various botanicals and listed the better known gin cocktails and the alternative of 2 soft drinks.



In the Heritage Room we discovered the rich history of Laverstoke Mill over the past centuries.

The visit culminated in a delicious lunch at the Red Lion, Overton.

(Thanks go to John and Jill Hall for arranging this visit)

What have we done to help the Abbey recently?

Since the Summer Newsletter, we've supported the annual Ethelflaeda Festival during September. And we now have a 5-year commitment to contribute towards the salary of the Children and Families Worker, who started in January 2017. An annual sum of £5000 from our reserves has been ring-fenced for the Abbey Development Project that may be required during the next 3 to 5 years. We are also supporting a publicity campaign to enhance the visitor attraction to Romsey and the Abbey, in conjunction with Test Valley Borough Council.

Funding for the internship was completed in September 2016. Further funds are reserved for a Bell Ringing Summer School, Choir support costs, Audio Guides for visitors, a second TV Monitor, sports equipment for the Youth Worker and educational equipment for children's visits. Recently live streaming of Abbey services, weddings and funerals has been introduced for housebound parishioners or those living far away.

Report by John Thompson-Hall

Christmas Fair

The Christmas Fair raised £5000 towards Abbey funds, with the Friends' tombola stall contributing £500. Many thanks to everyone for their help and support.



The Annual Dinner 2016

Tuesday 4th October saw a well-supported event when 50 of our members gathered in the Stables Dining Room at The White Horse Hotel, Romsey. The evening started well with a glass of bubbly for all. Conversation was soon flowing freely and the layout of 5 round tables of 10 guests per table seemed to work well.

Our guest speaker this year was Jonathan Frost, the Bishop of Southampton. Our president, Revd Tim Sledge, gave him a warm welcome before saying grace. Bishop Jonathan's theme for the evening was inclusiveness. He encouraged us to continue developing the unique potential of the Friends, to act as an enabling agent for the many varied activities and works carried on under the 'Abbey Umbrella'.

A delicious and varied menu was provided by the White Horse, served by a very well organised team. The evening was a great success and we hope to return for the 2017 event in even greater numbers.

The Friends' Prayer

Loving Lord, we thank you for blessing us with the beauty of Romsey Abbey. We pray for the life and work of the Abbey; that you would inspire all who visit with a vision of your beauty.

Guide and strengthen the Friends that they might be a generous and supportive group for the benefit of the Abbey and that the beauty of your love may be made more widely known.

Your Trustees: President Revd Canon Tim Sledge, Vicar of Romsey; **Chairman** John Twigg; **Vice-Chairman** Roger Rowe; **Projects Committee Chairman** John Thompson-Hall; **Secretary** Jill Hall; **Treasurer** Dick Hewett (temporary); **Membership Secretary** Roger Rowe; **Events Committee Chairman and Bookings Officer** Dick Hewett. **Committee members:** Tim Rogerson, Ken Gibson. **Member of the Events Committee:** Mike Perfect. **Honorary Vice-Presidents, ex officio** The Mayor of Test Valley; The Town Mayor of Romsey; The Bishop of Southampton. **Newsletter Editor** Ria Skelton. **Website Manager** John Compton. **Registered Charity No. 1134191**

Our Vision is 'to further projects which enhance the building and its place in the community, bringing together all those who love the Abbey and wish to support its life, work and ministry'.



Romsey Abbey—beautiful inside and out!

