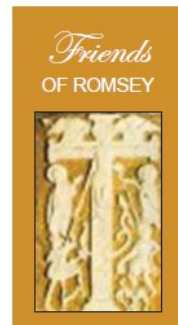


NEWSLETTER

Winter 2015

Issue 12



A message from the President, the Revd Canon Tim Sledge, Vicar of Romsey

Dear Friends

Developing Partnerships

Happy New Year!

We all know that we live in rapidly changing times. Although we are emerging slowly out of a financial crisis, many local councils are still having to make massive savings and cutting services all over the place. Recent cuts locally have made me realise more and more that this money is not going to be available again. We need to find different ways of ensuring the future. This is true of heritage, the arts and faith communities as well as public services.

Therefore, partnerships are the key for the future. Working together for the common good, for mutual benefit, for shared goals.

That is why the Friends of the Abbey are so important. What is so healthy about the Friends is our shared commitment and love of the Abbey and our desire for more people to share this wonderful, living place. Partnerships take time to work out, and change as time goes on, but I am so grateful to the Friends for your support and for our partnership. Long may our precious partnership continue to thrive as we work together in our shared purpose.

With warmest good wishes,

Tim

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Coffee Mornings

The Coffee Mornings, in Romsey Town Hall, continue to run bi-monthly throughout the year from January. As well as excellent freshly brewed coffee and home-made biscuits (only £2 for all the coffee and biscuits you can consume), there is also a friendly, welcoming atmosphere which has encouraged a few more people to join as 'Friends'. Friendship is indeed the main aim of these mornings – the new members and the steady income we achieve are an added bonus. Last year, the coffee mornings raised £930 for the Friends.

Many thanks to the team who help with the mornings – on the door, running the raffle, making biscuits, and serving coffee. And thanks, of course, goes to our many customers. I really enjoy co-ordinating these mornings but, if I was called away or taken ill, there is no-one to cover for me. If anyone feels they could take on this role, please contact me through the 'Friends'. You would be given a fantastic welcome!

Report by Lis Speck (with thanks to Mike Perfect for the statistics)

Photos from the Annual Dinner, 2014



Many thanks to our guest speaker, Geoff Howard—a specialist in fundraising



Friends of Romsey Abbey Annual Strawberry Tea 2014

The Friends of Romsey Abbey Annual Strawberry Tea was held on a Sunday afternoon at the end of August in the Vicarage Garden, by kind permission of the Revd Tim and Caroline Sledge. We are very grateful for their hospitality and warm welcome.

About 35 Friends enjoyed local strawberries and homemade shortbread. There were some new faces as well as many loyal supporters. It was a lovely warm and sunny afternoon. The customary quiz led to some lively discussion about general knowledge and local events. The tea was followed by a special Friends Evensong in the Abbey.

Many thanks to all who helped to set up the garden and to serve the tea.

Report by Jill Hall



Strawberry Tea 2014

Notes from the Chairman

Dear Friends

I am able to say this today with greater conviction and sincerity, as it has been a very pleasurable experience getting to know a much larger cross section of 'friends' during the past year at coffee mornings and other events. I continue to be encouraged by the love and enthusiasm shown by everyone in support of the Abbey and its work!

It is a great pleasure to report a successful year for The Friends especially in relation to our steadily growing numbers and the strengthening of our committee, as follows:

The appointment of a new Treasurer – welcome Michelle and many thanks for taking on this challenge. Thanks to Ken Gibson for re-joining the committee and for the energy and enthusiasm he brings to our meetings. Also, thanks to Dick Hewett who has recently joined the committee and will take over Chairmanship of the Events Sub Committee in the New Year. Many thanks for accepting this task, Dick.

I am delighted to report that all our existing committee members are willing to continue in service and special thanks must go to Jill Hall for her tireless work as Secretary; Roger Rowe for his expert database manipulation as Membership Secretary; and John Thompson-Hall who is bringing his skills to chairing the Projects Sub Committee. Although unable to attend committee meetings, special mention must be made of Ria Skelton for producing our Newsletters and John Compton for keeping our website shipshape! We are never satisfied however and are still most interested to hear from anybody who is available to join our committee, so please do not hold back if you have an interest in our work.

Your Events Sub Committee organised some well supported trips during the year, the most memorable for me being our trip to Bletchley Park, led by John and Julia Slade. What an amazing story this place has to tell, and it is sobering to realise the great debt of gratitude we owe to the 10,000 people who worked there during the war. Despite the spectacular thunderstorm at tea time we all had a memorable day – many thanks to John and Julia for arranging this. In November and in complete contrast – apart from the weather – we enjoyed a most enjoyable day at a fascinating working museum, the Whitchurch Silk Mill. A rare glimpse into our water-powered history and the opportunity to see real craftsmanship still in action. I was also able to buy some very unusual Christmas presents! The pub lunch at the end of the morning was just right – a truly lovely day out. Many thanks to Colin and Rosemary Davis for their organisation.

Before closing I must say a very big thank you to Liz Hallett for making available her invaluable fund of knowledge on all things to do with the Abbey, and also for Mike Hallett's quiet practical support in so many ways!

The programme of events for 2015 is looking good and I hope you will get your bookings in as early as possible to enable our organisers to plan transport requirements.

With all good wishes for a peaceful New Year,
John Twigg

The Friends visit to Whitchurch Silk Mill – in the rain again...

The Friends latest trip in November saw 35 dedicated travellers visit Whitchurch Silk Mill, situated in the lovely village of Whitchurch, Hampshire.

Whitchurch Silk Mill is the oldest silk mill in the UK that is still in its original building and a gem of industrial heritage in beautiful, rural Hampshire. It has been producing silk since 1817, when it was bought and converted by a silk weaver from Spitalfields, London – then the heart of the British silk industry.



After a refreshing cup of coffee the large group split into two to tour the Mill, which included watching silk yarn being spun into fabric on antique looms.





The trip was led by Friends members Colin and Rosemary Davis, who were complimented for organising a wonderful trip.

One thing The Friends can usually guarantee is the weather – it just tipped down with rain from the moment they arrived to the time they departed, after a delicious lunch at The White Hart Hotel in the town centre.

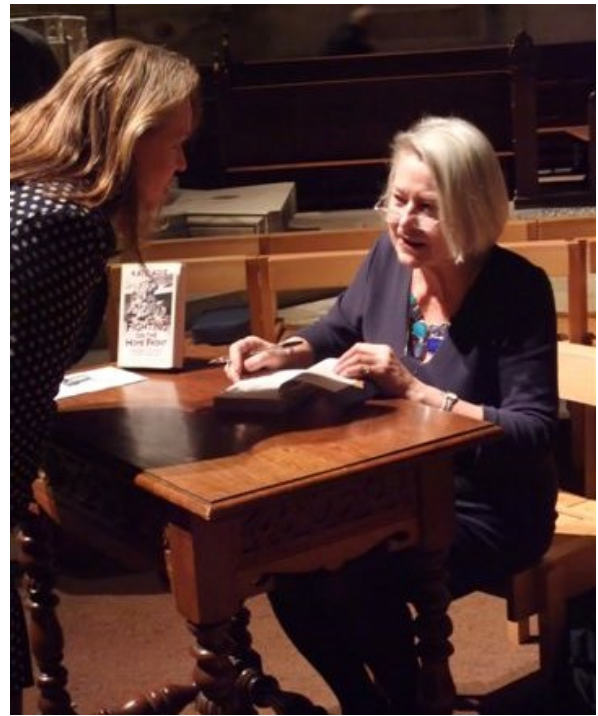
Whitchurch is a beautiful part of Hampshire situated on the River Test and even the rain could not dampen the enthusiasm of The Friends!

Report by Ken Gibson



Ethelflaeda Lecture by Kate Adie

In spite of the postponement of the lecture and the fact that the new date coincided with the Christmas Fair and the Winter Carnival, the Abbey was packed to hear Kate's fascinating talk. She spoke about the way women's roles changed almost immediately following the outbreak of the First World War and how even the smallest community was affected when women, of necessity, took over many roles as the result of so many men being away at the Front.



Kate had a lovely sense of humour for the whole hour and a quarter that she spoke. Afterwards there was a long queue as she signed copies of her book and chatted to each person in the line. During her talk Kate mentioned that as a very junior assistant she had been in Romsey Abbey helping with a Songs of Praise broadcast. We told her there was a chalk inscription in the north triforium saying 'BBC TV Songs of Praise 22/11/74', but did not realise until afterwards that this showed she was back in the Abbey forty years to the day since her previous visit!

Report by Liz Hallett



Friends of Romsey Abbey – Events 2015

January

Fri 16th January. Coffee Morning in the Town Hall, 10.00am – 11.45. **Members and non-members are all welcome at Coffee Mornings**

February

Weds 25th February at 3.00pm. Stories behind the stained glass of Romsey Abbey. A talk in the Abbey with Annegret Evans. **Open to everyone:** £3.00 each for members booking in advance. £4 to all who pay on the door

March

Fri 6th Mar 7.00pm for 7.30pm in the Abbey. ‘The Vicars of Romsey’, a talk by Liz Hallett. Glass of wine on arrival. £5.00 each for members booking in advance or £6.00 to all who pay on the door. **Non-members welcome**

Fri 20th Mar. Coffee morning in the Town Hall, 10.00am – 11.45.

April

Mon 13th Apr. A cruise on the beautiful Basingstoke Canal from Odiham to the ruins of King John’s Castle at Greywell with a talk there by a local historian. To be followed by an early dinner at the Waterwitch pub - extra cost payable on the day. Leave Romsey 1.15pm, return by 8pm. Led by Colin and Rosemary Davis. Cost: £18 per person, cheque with booking please. Minibus transport included

May

Thurs 14th May. Trip to Exbury Gardens including 20-minute train ride in the garden. N.B: Restaurants on site or take a picnic. Leave Romsey 10.00am, return 4.30pm. Led by John Clarke. Cost: £23.00 per person, cheque with booking please. Minibus transport included

Fri 15th May. Coffee morning in The Town Hall, 10.00am – 11.45

June

Tues 2nd Jun at 7.30pm. FRA Annual General Meeting to be held in Romsey Abbey. With a talk by The Rt Revd Geoffrey Rowell, speaking of his unique ministry as Bishop of Europe, 2001-2013

Tues 16th Jun. Barrow Boys and Bankers, a fascinating visit to the City of London. A walking and coach tour with a visit to the Bank of England Museum. Coffee and light lunch included. Leave Romsey 7:30am. Led by Ken Gibson. Cost: £42:50 per person, cheque with booking please

July—Fri 17th. Coffee Morning in the Town Hall, 10.00am – 11.45

August

Sun 23rd Aug at 4.30pm. Strawberry Tea in the Vicarage Garden. £5.50 per person, cheque with booking please, then Friends' Evensong in The Abbey at 6.30pm

September

Sat 5th Sept. Trip to Imber St Giles, Edington Priory and Steeple Ashton with a guided tour of Edington. Coffee on arrival at Edington. A pub lunch will be booked, select and pay individually. Leave Romsey 9.00am. Led by Shirley Rogers. Cost £15.00 per person, cheque with booking please. Minibus transport included

Fri 18th Sept. Coffee Morning in the Town Hall, 10.00 am – 11.45

October

Tues 6th Oct 7.00pm for 7.30pm. FRA Annual Dinner, Berties Restaurant. 3-course dinner with pre-dinner drinks. Cost: £33.00 per person, cheque with booking please

Mon 12th to Thurs 15th October. Visit to York by train led by Tim Rogerson

Weds 21st October, 3.00 pm. Some stories behind the sculptures of Romsey Abbey. A talk in the Abbey with Brian Lamb. **Open to everyone:** £3.00 each for members booking in advance. £4 to all who pay on the door

Ethelflaeda Festival and Lecture – dates to be confirmed

November

Tues 10th November. An afternoon visit to Wimborne Minster with guided tour including optional visit to the Chained Library and free time in the town afterwards. Leave Romsey 1.00pm with coffee on arrival. Return approximately 6.15pm. Led by Liz Hallett. Cost: £14.75 per person, cheque with booking please. Minibus transport included

Fri 20th November. Coffee Morning in the Town Hall, 10.00am – 11.45

December

Sun 20th December. Service of 9 Lessons and Carols in the Abbey at 6.30pm

From 1 February, bookings for events should be sent to Dick Hewett not John Twigg. **Please note an error with Dick's mobile phone number on the Events Diary and booking forms: this should be 07743 942576**

How have we been able to help the Abbey recently?

John Thompson-Hall, the new Chairman of the Projects Committee, has been looking back at all we have done for the Abbey over the past 18 months: “We funded the printing of Visitor Leaflets in 4 languages (French, Spanish, Italian and German). We installed bicycle racks for the more energetic users, and sited ‘A’ boards for the display of information. We ensured provision of up-to-date internet access for future use with electronic tablets. And were able to provide financial support for the Ethelflaeda Week, including the delayed talk by Kate Adie. Some improvements to the Children’s Corner have also been made. The latest innovation is a defibrillator, located just inside the North Door, for emergency medical use”.



Update on St Anne’s Chapel

As you may already know, the refurbishment of St Anne's Chapel is being funded by The Friends. The plans include new decor, flooring and lighting. There will also be a new altar with a rail protecting the Saxon Rood, candle holders and a lectern. A faculty for the work has now been issued! We hope that a start will be made early in 2015.

Stewards offer a warm welcome to the Abbey

It is always encouraging to receive thanks and praise for a job well done. If you are one of those who currently act as Steward in the Abbey you will be aware that this is exactly what we receive on many occasions, from visitors who have received a warm welcome to our beautiful church.

Many members of the Friends already work as Stewards but if you have not yet considered this, now would be a good time! No special knowledge is required, it is both interesting and rewarding and can be arranged to suit the time you have available.

So, if this is something you have considered but not yet made the move – delay no longer!! Contact Sheila Latimer, our Steward Coordinator, who will be delighted to supply further details: Tel. 01794 523120 Email – sheilalatimer@hotmail.com

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** Revd John Clarke; **Projects Sub Committee Chairman** John Thompson-Hall; **Secretary** Jill Hall; **Treasurer** Michelle Twigg; **Membership Secretary** Roger Rowe; **Events Committee Chairman and Bookings Officer** Dick Hewett. **Other members:** Tim Rogerson, Ken Gibson, Chris Harpham, Lis Speck, Mike Perfect (Events Sub Committee only)

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

Contact us by email: office@romseyabbeyfriends.org

Our Vision

The vision of the Friends 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'.

Registered Charity No. 1134191



The Garth gate. Photo by Ella Machin, daughter of Jax, our former Assistant Curate