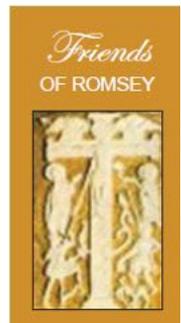


NEWSLETTER

Winter 2013

Issue Ten



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

Dear Friends,

We are now the proud owner of some new smart cycle racks in the South Garth – this is thanks to the generosity of the Friends. Small and significant projects like this are all part of the vital difference that the Friends make to the life of the Abbey.

One of the most important roles of the Friends is to enhance the visitor experience to the Abbey. One way in which we are developing this over the next few months, and for which I am hugely grateful for the support of the Friends, is through re-ordering St Anne's Chapel. This is an expensive and extensive way to enhance the Saxon Rood, which is both the logo of the Friends and the jewel in the crown of the Abbey. What this work will do is to enhance the Rood and how it is displayed and lit in the Abbey, so that visitors have more of the "wow factor" when they see this wonderful historical piece, and also so that it enhances its place in our worship.

Secondly, we are working with education experts to develop the children's visitor leaflet to the Abbey. The Friends have assisted in the past with developing the visitor leaflet for adults and we are working on foreign language versions, but we want families to come too. Young visitors today are part of our support for the future. Progress on all these things is not rapid, but is moving, so rather than watching this space, watch the spaces of the Abbey as these two projects develop this year. And when you do see things, remember that they could not have happened without your help and support.

With all good wishes,

Tim

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tim Sledge'.

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VISIT TO ROYAL NAVY SUBMARINE MUSEUM GOSPORT

September 2013

The fog had lifted by the time a group of 19 led by John Twigg left the Abbey for Gosport, in two TVBC mini-buses driven by Tim Rogerson and Dick Hewett.

On arrival at the R.N. Submarine Museum, John announced that we were to assemble for a conducted tour of H.M.S. Alliance. While waiting for our tour to begin, we passed the time inspecting the many interesting artefacts on display in the museum. These included stepping aboard Holland 1 (the Royal Navy's first submarine built in 1901 and salvaged from the deep a few years ago), peering into X24 (the only remaining midget submarine to have served in WW2) and watching a film on personal recollections from submariners who served in the South Atlantic in 1982.

Aboard the Alliance, our tour guide was Jim Hugman who had been a submariner chef. We walked nearly the length of the sub through sleeping quarters, mess rooms, the minute galley that supplied 3 meals a day for 60 crew, the control platform with two periscopes and then into the engine room. Here there were two 6 cylinder diesel engines in tandem that drove the vessel when on the surface, and also the generator to charge the batteries for the electric motor for underwater propulsion.

One could only imagine the noise and atmosphere from diesel fumes and I think that everyone enjoyed Jim's stories of life in a submarine.

After lunch, we embarked on the "Jenny R" water taxi which was to take us to the Explosion Museum with stops at Gunwharf Quay (where we had a good view of the Spinnaker Tower, now bathed in glorious sunshine) and at H.M.S. Warrior. Finally we arrived at Priddy's Hard, which since 1771 had been the R.N. Armaments Depot.

Here we experienced an audio-visual interactive show, otherwise known as "musical chairs"! After another tea break in the sun we were treated to a real experience when John Coker, a retired armaments technician gave us an in depth history of naval weapons from cannons to Exocet missiles.

A most enjoyable day ended with a return trip through Stokes Bay and Stubbington. Our thanks to Dick and Tim for the transport and most of all to John for arranging the programme.

Report by Colin Wedderburn



Gosport museum visit, photo by Chris Marchant

Strawberry Tea 2013

The Friends of Romsey Abbey Annual Strawberry Tea was again held in the Vicarage Garden by kind permission of the Rev Tim and Caroline Sledge. We are very grateful for their hospitality and warm welcome. Over thirty Friends enjoyed local strawberries and homemade shortbread. After initial concerns over the weather the day developed into a 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, accompanied by a visiting choir, from St Mary's Church Kidlington.

Report by Jill Hall



Annual Dinner

What is becoming a regular annual event, the Friends' Dinner, took place at the White Horse on Tuesday 1st October. Once again this was a very enjoyable evening and we all sat at one long table in the Tack and Forge Room. This is not a fund-raising event, more a chance to get together for a chat and good food. We were delighted to welcome Chris Riley as our after-dinner speaker, and he shared with us his experiences in Romsey, both as Chairman of Governors at the Abbey School and as a local estate agent, giving us his views on the future trends in the town centre.



Thanks go to our after dinner speaker, Chris Riley, pictured above

Coffee Mornings

Coffee mornings take place in the Town Hall on a bi-monthly basis, on the third Friday of the month. For just £2.00, we serve fresh cafetiere coffee (as many cups as you like) and as many homemade biscuits as your conscience will allow. Where else can you get such a bargain! A fantastic group of volunteers cheerfully help on the door, serving, and in the kitchen. There is a raffle, generously supported by donated prizes. Many thanks to the 'team' who give their time (and homemade biscuits) so generously. A regular group of loyal customers is augmented by those who are tempted in from the street. The Town Crier attends when he can and this always increases the numbers – we are very grateful to him for this.

The Coffee Mornings raise funds for the friends, which is wonderful. But they are not just a fund raiser. More importantly they attract more people who love the Abbey and value its importance in the town, to become a 'Friend' and help ensure its survival and continuing contribution to the life of Romsey. They also enhance and develop the genuine friendship the Friends of Romsey Abbey offers to all its members.

Report by Lis Speck

The 2013 Ethelflaeda Lecture

Members of the Friends are always especially welcome to attend the Lecture which is a key feature of the Ethelflaeda Festival.

This takes place each year over the weekend closest to 23rd October, the Saint's patronal festival.



In 2013 the speaker was the internationally-acclaimed novelist Sara Maitland (pictured above with Tim Sledge) who gave a thought-provoking talk on the subject: 'Did women have a choice? Freedom, marriage and religion in medieval Europe.' The event was well attended and there was a chance to talk to Sara and to discuss her subject over a glass of wine afterwards.

It has been agreed that the Friends will act as sponsors for the 2014 Festival. We intend to pay for the leaflet and use the back third for an advertisement for the Friends.

Committee News and a few words from the Chairman

We are delighted to report the addition of 2 new members this year, Phillip Hutchings and Ria Skelton, and it is through Ria's efforts that you are reading this Newsletter today.

Liz Hallett and Mark Cooper stood down from the Committee during the year. Liz Hallett however has offered to continue with publication of The Friends Newsletter and our other printing needs. Thank you Liz and all good wishes for a happy outcome following your imminent surgery!

Our other Committee members are:

Revd John Clarke - Vice Chairman. I am most grateful to John for his background knowledge and also his encouragement and support.

Tim Rogerson – Treasurer. Thank you, Tim, for keeping our funds secure but available, not to mention your driving skills which are much appreciated on our away day trips.

Jill Hall – Secretary. An essential role performed most efficiently and always willing to multitask at events like The Strawberry Tea. Many thanks, Jill.

Roger Rowe – Membership Secretary and, most recently, chairman of our Projects Sub Committee. This has, with the direct involvement of the Vicar identified projects/schemes that require funding, set budgets and tracking procedures for completion. This is proving a great encouragement to us.

Lis Speck – Coffee Morning Coordinator. The FRA Coffee Mornings held every two months in the Town Hall are invaluable for the fellowship of The Friends and also as an outreach to the people of Romsey. Not to mention the very positive contribution to our funds. Many thanks, Lis and to your loyal and dedicated support group of ladies and gentlemen that make it all work.

Chris Harpham and myself complete the roll call .

A FEW WORDS.....

So what are friends for? And specifically what are the Friends of Romsey Abbey for? Since becoming involved with the FRA I am often asked that question and there is still some misunderstanding of our purpose in life, so for the avoidance of doubt I will quote the wording of our VISION as agreed at our committee meeting held on 3rd January 2013:

“To further projects which enhance the building and it's place in the community, bringing together all those who love the Abbey and wish to support it's life work and ministry.”

Since taking on the role of chairman in July last year, I have, with your committee engaged in a process to develop a persona for the FRA which has some prospect of attaining this VISION and I am pleased to report some progress despite the multitude of interest groups that exist within the Abbey Family, and the varied levels of communication between them. This has been made possible through the dedication and commitment of your committee and the enthusiastic support of Tim, our Vicar.

Projects we have been able to support during the past year include:

- Total funding for the new cycle racks in the South Garth.
- Part funding for the new lightweight staging.
- Funding for the preparation of new logo.
- Funding for IT hardware to enable broadband access for the Abbey.
- New signage throughout the Abbey.
- Purchase of portable A Boards to advertise Abbey events.

We were especially pleased to be asked to assist at the Abbey Christmas Fayre last December and those of us who helped on the Bottle Tombola enjoyed it very much. We hope to be asked

again!

Do you find it challenging to keep up with the rapidly changing methods of communication today? If your reply is; “yes but I am not giving up”.....congratulations – we really need to make best use of the truly wonderful opportunities readily available to us today..... And this brings me to the serious business of this letter:

With the challenges that are rapidly approaching there is a pressing need for the FRA to increase in strength and, if possible, reduce the average age of our membership. So I appeal to each of our existing members:

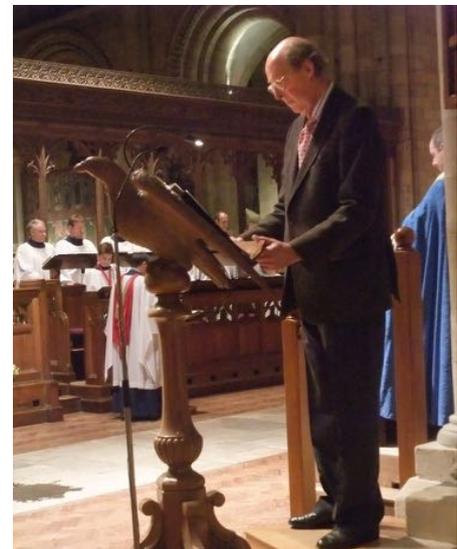
Set yourself the task of recruiting at least one new member, preferably not yet, or recently retired, so we may reach a membership of 400 by our AGM in June - I honestly believe this is achievable – please do not disappoint me!!

During 2014 there will be many opportunities to take us towards realising our vision and I pray each of us will be able to play a significant part in this!

With every blessing,

John Twigg

*John reading the lesson
at the Service of Nine Lessons
and Carols in December*



The Friend's Website - WE NEED HELP!!!

We would like to say a big thank you to Dominic Brenton, who has been doing a great job managing the Friend's website. But Dominic is now stepping aside from the day-to-day editing of the website, owing to other commitments, so we are putting out a request for someone to step into his shoes.

The editing is all done through a Web browser – no other software is required – and anybody with basic proficiency in using the Internet ought to be able to make updates. Dominic is happy to teach anybody who agrees to have a go: it can be more than one person, to spread the load. He has also kindly agreed to remain the first point of contact for technical queries.

If you think you could help, please contact Mr John Twigg: Tel 01794 521966, or email littlecopse@btinternet.com

Friends of Romsey Abbey Events – 2014

January

Fri 17th Coffee Morning in the Town Hall.

10am – 12 noon. Non Members welcome.

March

Fri 21st Coffee Morning in the Town Hall.

10am – 12 noon. Non Members welcome.

Tue 25th Visit to Brooklands Museum.

Led by John Twigg. An interesting look at the history of Flight and Motor Racing from the twenties and thirties plus a chance to go aboard the Concorde for a virtual flight. Cost : £25 per person, cheque with booking please.

April

Fri 4th at 7.00 pm in The Abbey, Talk by Revd Tim Sledge.

The Benedictines: their ethos and importance to Romsey Abbey.

Tickets: £5.00 each for members in advance or £6.00 each on the door – to include a glass of wine. Non Members welcome.

May

Thur 1st Visit to the Bell Tower with the Verger and Bell Captain followed by a glass of wine. £5.00 per person.

Eight members only on this visit. Meet at 7.15pm for 7.30 start.

Fri 16th Coffee Morning in the Town Hall.

10am – 12 noon. Non Members welcome.

Thur 22nd Visit to Bletchley Park

Led by John and Julia Slade. Reopened in 2013 after restoration, Bletchley provides a fascinating window on the activities of our Code Breakers in WW2.

Cost : £30 per person cheque with booking please.

June

Tuesday 3rd 7.30 pm: The FRA Annual General Meeting.

In Romsey Abbey. With a talk by Prof Peter Tyne CBE.

July

Fri 18th Coffee Morning in the Town Hall.

10am – 12 noon. Non Members welcome.

August

Sun 24th Aug. 4.30 pm Strawberry Tea in the Vicarage Garden followed by Friends Evensong in The Abbey at 6.30 pm.

Tickets: £5.50 per person, cheque with booking please.

September

Wed 10th Sept. 3.30pm in The Abbey: A guided tour for The Friends.

Tickets £5.00 each or £6.00 each on the door including tea and biscuits in the Church Rooms afterwards. Non Members welcome.

Fri 19th Coffee Morning in The Town Hall.

10.00 am – 12.00 noon. Non Members welcome.

October

Tue 7th FRA Annual dinner at Berties, Romsey

Two courses and a welcoming drink will be included in the price, which is £30 per person (please note, wine with the meal is not included). Speaker to be confirmed. Bookings now being taken!

Mon 13 – 16th inclusive - Three day visit to York led by Tim Rogerson.

The approximate cost will be £280.00 per person to include rail fares and B&B. Please see separate information/booking form available from Jill Hall or John Twigg.

November

Fri 21st Coffee Morning in the Town Hall.

10am – 12 noon. Non Members welcome.

Tue 11th Visit to Whitchurch Silk Mill. Led by Colin and Rosemary Davis.

Conducted tour with Coffee on arrival. followed by Pub Lunch . Cost: £14.00 per person. Please note – Pub Lunch will be extra cost.

December

Sun 21st Service of Nine Lessons and Carols in The Abbey

To book any of the upcoming events, please contact John Twigg:
Tel: 01794 521966
Email: littlecopse@btinternet.com or office@romseyabbeyfriends.org

How have we been able to help the Abbey recently?

Christmas Fair

The friends thoroughly enjoyed running the Bottle Tombola at the Christmas Fair, and hope we can look forward to the same generous support next Christmas! The total amount raised by the Fair was around £4600.



South Garth

The Friends will be helping to keep the public informed on the South Garth developments by the provision of audiovisual equipment. A TV-type monitor will be provided on which to run a presentation, explaining the developments. The aim is to help the community understand what is being proposed and how the project is developing.

'App' for visitors

This is now ready to be used. Progress is also being made on providing wireless broadband for the Abbey, which the Friends are helping to fund. The App will be able to run via the new broadband. We may need to purchase a few tablets to be kept in the gift stall - security of these is an issue but they would be fitted with a security device and returned to the Parish Office each night to be charged.

Update on St Anne's Chapel

The Diocesan Advisory Committee and the PCC are happy with the plan for a complete refurbishment of St Anne's Chapel. The Friends have agreed to fund the furnishing of the chapel up to a specified amount. The DAC will be reviewing carpet samples and specifications for LED lighting in February, so work is expected to commence fairly soon. The refurbishment is expected to take about nine months to complete.

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, The Revd Tim Sledge, Vicar of Romsey; Chairman; Mr John Twigg; Vice-Chairman, The Revd John Clarke; Secretary, Mrs Jill Hall; Treasurer, Mr Tim Rogerson; Membership Secretary, Mr Roger Rowe; Bookings Secretary, Mr John Twigg. Other members: Mrs Liz Speck; Mr Chris Harpham; Mr Phil Hutchings.

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'.

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the Trustees of The Friends of Romsey Abbey, as distinct from the PCC.

Newsletter Editor: Ria Skelton
Registered Charity No. 1134191



Sara Maitland giving the 2013 Ethelflaeda Lecture