

# The Friends Newsletter Summer 2017



## A message from Revd Canon Tim Sledge, Vicar of Romsey

Dear Friends

What a difference you have made!

The Abbey has been spending your money and spending it well!

Over the past year, you have contributed to the work of the Children and Families Worker, new Visitor leaflets, some materials for the Education Officer, Video Streaming in Nursing Homes, new equipment for the Youth Group, and a contribution to Romsey Tourism project to encourage more visitors.

There is more. I could list it all. But more important is the impact of all this work. The Baby and Toddler group, led by Rhiannon (our Children and Families Worker) is growing faster and faster. We now have more leaflets in more languages for visitors to the Abbey, we are welcoming more people.

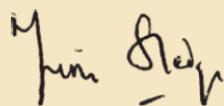
These projects are all about people – about making the Abbey come alive for people of all ages, and enabling others to access the Abbey who might otherwise not be able to.

The Friends are about that. They are about relationships. I know how many of you appreciate the trips, the coffee mornings, the get-togethers.

The Friends remind us that you cannot be a friend on your own – it needs someone else. The power and strength of the Friends is the more we have the more impact we make together, and to be an even bigger and better force for good for the Abbey and the wider community. So, I encourage you to invite others to come along – to have a taster of the wonderful community and not only the difference you make to the Abbey, but the difference you make to each other.

Thank you for being such a force for good – and having fun along the way!

With all good wishes,



# Letter from the Chairman

Dear Friends

Tim Sledge, our retiring President, was the inspiration behind setting up the Friends in 2009. He had a vision for us, and has helped us to create a vibrant organisation to deliver that vision.

We have made good progress building our own traditions and practices supporting that vision. Celia and I are delighted how many friendships have blossomed within our community of Friends as we have pursued this path. We feel The Friends are truly the Abbey's 'extended family'.

The Parish and the Friends will move on as Tim moves to Peterborough. Inevitably, things will change. But change brings new opportunity both for The Friends and for the Abbey. As I write this I do not know who our next Vicar – and hence our next President - will be; nor when she or he will be appointed. My focus now is to position the Friends to be effective within the broad Abbey community, as the PCC prepares for the new Vicar. The Friends' goal is unchanged: to nurture a community for those who love the Abbey and enjoy funding and supporting its many and varied projects.

I shall be working closely with the Churchwardens and PCC members to facilitate cooperation between the various groups within the Abbey, and to learn where we can most effectively deploy our talent, effort and funds. Friends are here to help - and we have much to offer!

I am looking forward to the rest of a busy year as your Chairman.

Best wishes,

Roger Rowe

Friends Chairman

# Events Programme

## News update —2017

Our series of trips this year has been very enjoyable and successful. The Kennett & Avon canal trip to Bath, which sailed just 200 yards along the Canal in April, was well reported around the Friends! The Hire Boat company gave us a refund, which we offered to all 'sailors' that day.

Our thanks to all those who asked us to retain the refund for our funds for use on Abbey Projects. Good news, another Canal trip has been booked for April 2018.

Our next trip was to the Swanage Railway. Despite the forecasts of rain and wind, the day was highly enjoyable, with coffee in the railway buffet and visits to the new Swanage RNLI Lifeboat Station and the restaurants and shops of Swanage. On the afternoon return train, members had the option of alighting to visit Corfe Castle.

By the time you read this we shall have had our trip up the Test Valley to visit the disused churches at Ashley and Little Somborne, with our guide Liz Hallett.

Our next trip is to the fascinating Tangmere Military Aviation Museum on Tuesday 26th September. A few spaces remain on our minibus, so please book today to join this trip. There are impressive aircraft, as well as interesting displays about Douglas Bader and the Battle of Britain. There will also be an opportunity to fly your own airplane on the museum's highly realistic simulator.

Cost is just £22 including minibus travel and entrance to the Museum

### How to book onto Events

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 FRA bank account (Sort Code 30-97-14, Account 31345360, Reference 'Events') and email Dick Hewett at [events@romseyabbeyfriends.org](mailto: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 Hewett on 01794 500523

# Friends' delightful day at the Seaside

A day at the seaside which includes a steam train ride, sunshine, wind and the occasional downpour is a quintessential British way to spend the day.

Twenty-three members of Friends travelled to the Swanage Railway in Dorset and alighted at Norden Station to board the 10.40am steam train to Swanage. Pulled by steam locomotive BR 2-6-4 T Class 4MT – No. 80106, a gleaming black steam engine built in the 1950s for commuter and suburban services.

The 25-minute journey took in some wonderful scenery and of course dramatic views of Corfe Castle. Upon arrival at Swanage, the Party enjoyed a welcome cup of coffee at the Station Buffet, courtesy of the Friends Team.



After lunch, the Party caught the 14.00hrs steam train back to Norden Station, with half the Party alighting at Corfe Castle Station to visit the Castle and enjoy afternoon tea.

A wonderful trip thoroughly enjoyed by all of the Friends!!

# Dates for your Diary

## Friends Coffee Mornings

### 15th September and 17th November

Happy Friends in Romsey 😊



# Friends Canal trip on the Kennet & Avon

On a gloriously sunny morning 49 Friends gathered in Church Place for a Coliseum Coaches luxury coach trip to Bradford on Avon, on the edge of the beautiful Cotswolds and onwards, on the Kennet and Avon Canal for 9 miles to Bath. The trip was organised and led by Colin and Rosemary Davis.

Our boat, the 'John Rennie' Luxury Restaurant boat operated by Bath Narrow Boats, arrived from Bath after a short wait and we boarded, ready for the cruise to Bath and a wonderful two-course gourmet meal with coffee.

Exiting the Bradford on Avon Wharf lock, one of the busiest in the country, we 'slowly' made our way up stream. We travelled for 200 yards, before the engine on the boat promptly stopped and seized, with rope tightly bound around the prop!!

The staff from Bath Narrow Boats were wonderful. Pegs were hammered into the towpath bank and we were tied up in the afternoon sunshine to enjoy our meal and plenty of wine!!

Meanwhile our Coliseum Coaches driver had driven to Bath to pick us up. Colin and Rosemary organised his return to collect us all safely at 3.30pm for our return trip to Romsey. Even though we only travelled 200 yards, everyone on board had a great time, gourmet lunch, wine and an onboard Canal Quiz .



**The Friends of Romsey Abbey  
Invite you to the Annual Dinner**

**at  
The White Horse Hotel  
Romsey**

**Tuesday 3rd October**

**Pre-drinks from 7.00pm for  
7.30pm  
3-course dinner and light  
entertainment**

**Tickets £33.00**

**Call Dick Hewett  
01794 500523  
Email - [events@gmail.com](mailto:events@gmail.com)**

# Proposed Events for 2018

The trip on the Kennett and Avon Canal from Bradford-on-Avon to Bath has been rearranged for Tuesday 10th April 2018. The arrangements and cost will be the same as this year's aborted trip, and first refusal on bookings will be given to those who booked for 2017.

Coffee mornings, so key to keeping us together as a community, will of course keep going thanks to Lis Speck and her team of helpers.

Beyond that no further events are planned. Members themselves will need to come forward with suggestions and offers of help. We need three or four people to put forward ideas for outings, which they are prepared to organise and lead. The Committee can advise, and to a limited extent, give you support.

I am standing down as Events Chairman with immediate effect, as I said at the AGM. I will be leading the trip to Tangmere in September, but John Twigg and Colin Davis are taking responsibility for the Annual Dinner and the Sonning trip respectively. I will continue to look after event bookings as Treasurer.

The Events Committee puts together a programme of trips and events for the calendar year. Meetings are held every two months. The main work is in the autumn when the following year's programme is agreed. This needs someone to oversee the programme and organise the production of the schedule of events.

The Chairman doesn't need to organise events!

SO – AN APPEAL TO MEMBERS: If you want a programme of events in 2018, you need to propose an event (which you would be willing to organise and lead). We also need one of you to offer to take on the role of Charman of the Events Committee. I would be delighted to hear from anyone interested in coming forward.

It will be a matter of sadness to us all if no one comes forward with new events or to take the Events Chair, leaving us with no real Events Programme in 2018.

Dick Hewett  
FRA Events Chairman (retiring)

## Can you please offer your Help to the Friends?

We continue to have difficulty recruiting additional Committee Members, Trustees, and Helpers. To grow as we should, we need new Committee Members and Helpers with some of the following interests:

- ◆ Recruitment - to grow the Membership
- ◆ Communications, Publicity and Marketing to the Membership and Community
- ◆ IT skills to assist in Membership, Communications, Admin or Finance
- ◆ Events/Social activities - we are looking for a Member to manage this highly enjoyable area!!

PS You really don't have to belong to the Committee to do many of these jobs!

If you do have the time and interest, please contact our Chairman Roger Rowe. Tel: 01794 522113 for an informal chat

or

Email: [office@romseyabbeyfriends.org](mailto:office@romseyabbeyfriends.org)

## STOP Press

Our Editor, Ria Skelton is having to stand down as her work responsibilities increase. She has worked very hard to maintain a high standard Newsletter for us and we are very grateful for her efforts—usually against a demanding schedule.

So another plea:

Can someone with Microsoft Publisher skill come and help on our Newsletters?

# What are we doing for the Abbey

The Friends income from your subscriptions is approximately £6000 a year. Our goal is to spend all this income on Projects for the Abbey (we have adequate reserves, making this possible). Our Events aim to make a modest profit but some cash has to be held back in case we suffer a loss on our events programme. At the end of a Financial year the spare cash from Events is added to the pot for our Projects.

And the more members we have the more we can do—so please try to recruit new members.

With your subscriptions we are providing some of the funding for the Parish's Children and Families worker, Rhiannon. We Friends are not the youngest of communities and have not found it easy to find projects that nurture a love of the Abbey in the younger generation. Through Rhiannon we can now have a direct effect. Her Lego Church, for instance, has brought in 60 youngsters to the Woodley Area of Romsey. We recently gave Rhiannon a grant for her new Cooking project for the young.

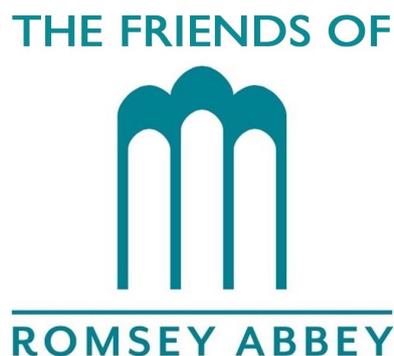
We continue to work with George Richford to see where we can help with the Abbey's music. We are here for the Abbey as a whole—and are here to help!

As in past years we will give financial support for the Abbey's Ethelflaeda festival scheduled for October this year.,

The Abbey Development Project covers many projects where the Friends could and should help. We are holding back a significant sum each year for the Project. I want to build links between the Friends and the Project, to see where we can best apply our talents, effort and funds.

Roger Rowe

PS—Here is our Logo as a member of the Abbey Family.



***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.*

**Our Vision is to fund projects that enhance the Abbey and its place in the Romsey community, bringing together those who love the Abbey and wish to support its life, work and ministry.**

**Thank you for  
your valued  
support**

## **Your Trustees:**

**President** Revd. Canon Tim Sledge, Vicar of Romsey;

**Chairman** Roger Rowe

**Secretary** Jill Hall

**Treasurer** Dick Hewett

**Membership Secretary** Roger Rowe

**Events Committee Bookings Officer** Dick Hewett

**Projects Committee Chairman** John Thompson-Hall

**Events Committee Chairman:** vacant

**Committees members:** Tim Rogerson , John Twigg

## **Members at Large**

Mike Perfect, Ken Gibson

## **Honorary Vice-Presidents, ex officio:**

The Mayor of Test Valley;

The Town Mayor of Romsey;

The Bishop of Southampton

**Website Manager** John Compton

**Registered Charity No. 1134191**

**TSB Account: The Friends of Romsey Abbey, at TSB Romsey**

**Account Number 31345360, Sort Code 30-97-14**

**office@romseyabbeyfriends.org**

## **Late News:**

Thanks to Barry Graham for the idea of a Test Valley Churches outing to Ashley and Little Somborne, which we enjoyed on July 25th. Liz Hallett was our guide, Dick Hewett marshalled the Event, and he and Tim Rogerson drove our transport.

