

Friends of Romsey Abbey Events 2022

After two years with virtually no events for the Friends of Romsey Abbey, plans are well in hand for a full programme in 2022. The following have now been confirmed.

We start on **Monday 25th April** with a **boat trip** on the Thames from Caversham, led by Colin and Rosemary Davis. This trip is already fully booked with a waiting list: look out for another in 2023.

On **Tuesday 17th May** there is an opportunity to visit **four churches** in the Fordingbridge and Downton area to view some of their stunning **stained glass**, in the company of Brian Woodruffe. Some members were able to purchase Brian's glossy booklet on the subject last year. We shall travel by minibus, with a pub lunch (at own cost). We shall leave Romsey at 09.30 and arrive back at 16.30. Cost £15, to include minibus and a contribution to each church.

Then on **Tuesday 5th July** the Friends are invited to join Colin and Rosemary again for our first trip to the **Hawk Conservancy** outside Andover. This is a charity that works to conserve birds of prey and their habitats. The birds include eagles, hawks, vultures, kestrels and owls. We shall look at the birds in their aviaries and watch them fly over our heads in spectacular flying displays. This is a magical experience, always different. The trip involves walking at your own pace on grass and tracks. There is an excellent cafe on site for coffee on arrival and lunch. Cost £25 per head including travel by minibus (journey time 30 minutes), entrance fee and all activities. Cost of food and drink to be paid by Friends on the day. We shall leave Romsey at 09.30 and return by 16.45. (Note that the birds don't fly in strong wind or rain, so if the weather is poor, the trip would be postponed to later in the year.)

Thursday 28th July sees Dick Hewett leading a party to **Dorchester Abbey** in Oxfordshire, departing at 1030 and returning to Romsey by 1800. Lunch (at own cost) in a local hotel. The trip will include an afternoon tour of this historic Abbey, followed by a cream tea. The £30 charge will cover minibus transport, tour and cream tea.

Then on **Thursday 25th August** Dick will lead another group to two venues near Guildford, leaving at 0900. The **Watt Gallery Artists' Village** is a unique Arts & Crafts gem nestled in the Surrey Hills. Discover stunning Victorian paintings and sculpture in the historic Watts Gallery, wander to the nearby Grade I listed Watts Chapel, taking in the beautiful woodlands and grounds, or find out more about the lives of G F and Mary Watts at Watts Studios. We will then head to **Hatchlands**, a nearby NT property, for lunch (at own cost) and a tour of the house, which is filled with historic keyboard instruments, many once owned by some of the greatest of composers. The £35 charge is for the minibus

transport and the Watts Gallery (including morning coffee): non-NT members will be required to pay the normal entrance fee on arrival at Hatchlands. Return to Romsey by 1730.

Meanwhile the Friends will be holding a number of events in Romsey itself. The Friends are encouraged to attend the **AGM** in the Church Rooms at 1630 on **Sunday 19th June**, followed by a **Strawberry Tea** (£5). Members are then invited to attend a **Choral Evensong** dedicated to FRA.

Then on **Tuesday 11th October** we will return to the White Horse for our annual **Dinner**, starting at 1930, with light musical entertainment. At £40 per person, this is becoming a firm fixture in the social calendar for many.

Bookings for all these events can be made by contacting Dick Hewett via events@romseyabbeyfriends.org, or on 01794 500523.

FRA will also be sponsoring the lecture during the Ethelflaeda Festival in October. And of course our popular bi-monthly **coffee mornings**, on the third Friday of March, May, July, September, November and January, will continue in the Town Hall.

Finally, FRA will be working closely with the Abbey Social Committee to arrange further events in and around the Abbey for both FRA members and the Abbey congregation.

The outcome of all this activity is not only a chance for members to get out and about and socialise, it also makes a healthy contribution to the projects supported by the Friends.

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