



## NEW YEAR 2024 NEWSLETTER

*We wish all Friends a peaceful and successful 2024.*

### Our Aims

Our stated aims are to:

- Publicise the Abbey effectively
- Draw more people to the Abbey
- Enhance the Abbey experience for all
  - Educate people of all ages

We raise funds to achieve these aims by means of membership subscriptions, donations as well as funds accrued through trips and events. All this leads to our support of projects which contribute towards physical improvements to the Abbey and the facilities we can provide.

*A message from our President,  
Revd Canon Thomas Wharton*



A Happy New Year to you all! Having just had a review of the Christmas period at the Abbey, I'm reliably informed by our Head Verger that over 8,500 people came through our doors during the month of December. My ears still prick up when I hear visitors commenting how magnificent the building is while in the same sentence saying how warm and comforting they find it. Having been Vicar here for over 5 years, I still find myself having both of those reactions. I'm still amazed at the scale and beauty of the Abbey while also finding it holds a sense of peace and spiritual warming.

I'd like to thank the Friends of Romsey Abbey for all your support, projects, vision and community building that weaves into the life of our Abbey. With ongoing projects which the Friends are generously supporting and which make a real difference, we are also looking at some of our bigger challenges and opportunities for the future: protecting the external Saxon Road; improving visitor facilities including water and toilets; planning for a new Abbey heating system that reduces our carbon footprint. We look forward to intentionally working together on these opportunities which fundamentally are about enhancing the life, mission and fabric of our beautiful abbey for present and future generations.

Thank you for supporting the Friends of Romsey Abbey.

*A message from our Chair  
Jill Hall*



The year 2023 has been a very active one for the Friends with a rich and varied programme of events, enjoyed by many of our members. We have contributed to the Abbey through our projects and have other ideas coming to fruition in 2024. We thank all the Friends for their subscriptions which together with donations and funds accrued, allow us to offer the Abbey the support it so justly deserves. Our President and Vicar, Thomas Wharton attends our projects meeting along with Julie Carlton our Churchwarden, a vital liaison with the Abbey and their needs.

We are hoping to attract new members - if you have friends who could join us, do please encourage them. Our new website is nearly up and running. We are seeking someone who has experience of website management who could help to provide backup for our committee.

I would like to thank our Committee for all their support, unflinching hard work and commitment throughout the year.

### **Our Achievements in 2023**

We are about to provide funding for:

A new Top Gown for the Head Verger

A cashless payment machine for the Shop

Abbey advert in the SE Tourism Guide 2023

20,000 Abbey Guide leaflets

Initial restoraton of the Alice Taylor effigy

The Light Event

Half of the costs for the required re-wiring in the Abbey

The Clock repair

Initial design work for the new signage

Donation to Children and Families workers

### **Our aims for 2024**

Whilst other projects will arise in the course of the year, these are the ones currently on our horizon:

Replacement of the external signage of the Abbey

Abbey advert in the SE Tourism Guide 2024

We would like to support a shop re-fit

The trees in the North and South Garths and Churchyard will all be labelled with their botanical and common names

Funding, figure currently unknown, towards the restoration of the Alice Taylor Memorial

### **OUR FUN**

It's not all about the serious funding of projects but also a social programme which gives Friends the opportunity to mix, meet and socialise whilst perhaps making new friends.

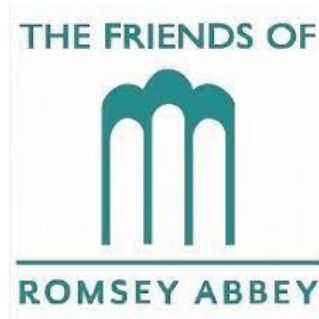
**Coffee Mornings** have continued to take place every two months in the Town Hall and offer a great opportunity not only for a superb value coffee and home-made biscuits, but also provide a chance to enjoy some socialising. For those who may be nervous about meeting new people, it's a great way to get a feel for the Friends and the fun that can be enjoyed. Do encourage anyone who is uncertain about joining, to come along.

Through the year a full range of events were enjoyed by Friends and 2024 promises to be full of places to visit and new experiences. If you haven't joined an event, do give it a try and take part.

See for yourself .....

[www.romseyabbeyfriends.org](http://www.romseyabbeyfriends.org)

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



Charity No: 1134191

## ***Annual General Meeting – SUNDAY 24 MARCH***

***Join us for Afternoon Tea with a bit of a FIZZ!***

*The AGM of the Friends will take place at 4.15pm  
in the Church Rooms on Sunday 24 March.*

*(Agenda included in Events listing)*

*You are invited to join us afterwards for a delicious tea  
with the bonus of Fizz (for those who opt for it). As  
ever, it promises to be an enjoyable and informative  
afternoon.*

*We hope many members will then stay for the Choral  
Evensong at 6.30 pm, dedicated to The Friends.*

*Cost for the afternoon tea,  
including Fizz if you wish to partake, is £5.*

*To book your place, please email:*

*[events@romseyabbeyfriends.org](mailto:events@romseyabbeyfriends.org)*



# The Friends of Romsey Abbey

## *Events 2024*

*This programme of events is organised by the Friends, with first priority for all bookable events (shown in black) given to members. (\*\* = non-FRA event)*

### *March*

#### **Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March:**

**Coffee morning** in the Town Hall, including raffle. 10am –11.30am. Entrance £2. Non-members welcome.

#### **Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March:**

**Talk with Puddings.** Rob Gower presents “**St Kilda**”, 7.30pm, Church Rooms. **£10.** Open to non-members. Payment with booking please.

#### **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March:**

**Friends of Romsey Abbey AGM** in the Church Rooms, 4.15pm (agenda below). Followed by a **Friends’ Afternoon Tea (£5)**, and **Choral Evensong** at 6.30pm. Payment for tea with booking please.

### **The Friends of Romsey Abbey**

*Charity Number 1134191*

### **2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2024 in The Church Rooms at 4.15pm**

#### **AGENDA**

1. Opening Prayer
2. Welcome by the President
3. Apologies
4. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting (*available on website and on request*)
5. Chairman’s Report
6. Honorary Treasurer’s Report (*accounts available on website and on request*)
7. Honorary Project Chairman’s Report
8. Honorary Events Chairman’s Report
9. Honorary Membership Secretary’s Report
10. Election of Officers and Committee Members
11. Any Other Business

### *April*

#### **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> April:**

A cruise on the **River Thames**, from Henley-on-Thames. Depart Romsey 9am, return by 5.30pm. Led by Colin & Rosemary Davis. **£90** (inclusive of coach, boat and lunch). Payment with booking please.

### *May*

#### **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May:**

**Coffee morning** in the Town Hall, including raffle. 10am –11.30am. Entrance £2. Non-members welcome.

#### **Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> May:**

**Highclere Castle and Gardens:** Depart Romsey 9.30am, return by 4.30pm. Led by Dick Hewett. **£40** for castle entrance and minibus. Lunch at own expense. Payment with booking please.

## *June*

### **Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> June:**

**Isle of Wight Steam Railway.** Depart Romsey 10am, return at 6pm. Led by Dick Hewett. **£45** (inclusive of minibus, ferry and steam train). Lunch at own expense. Payment with booking please.

## *July*

### **Friday 19<sup>th</sup> July:**

**Coffee morning** in the Town Hall, including raffle. 10am –11.30am. Entrance £2. Non-members welcome.

### **Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> July:**

Day trip to **Larmer Tree Gardens and Groveley Jigsaw factory** (on Cranborne Chase). Leave Romsey 10am, return by 4.30pm. Led by Dick Hewett. **£35** including minibus and entrances. Lunch arrangements to be confirmed (at own cost). Payment with booking please.

## *August*

### **Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> August:**

**Churches tour:** Four churches in the Wilton area. Guide: Brian Woodruffe. Depart Romsey 9.30am, return by 4.30pm. Led by Dick Hewett. **£20** for minibus and donations to churches. Pub lunch (at own cost). Payment with booking please.

## *September*

### **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September:**

**Coffee morning** in the Town Hall, including raffle. 10am –11.30am. Entrance £2. Non-members welcome.

### **Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September:**

**FRA Annual Dinner** at The White Horse. Arrival by 7pm for dinner at 7.15pm. A 3-course dinner with pre-dinner drinks, and tea/coffee. Light musical entertainment. Organised by Jill Hall and Dick Hewett. **£55** per person. Payment with booking please.

## *October*

### **Friday 25<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> October:**

\*\* **Ethelflaeda Festival** in Romsey Abbey. Event sponsored by FRA. See Abbey website for details.

## *November*

### **Friday 29<sup>th</sup> November** (note later date):

**Coffee morning** in the Town Hall, including raffle. 10am –11.30am. Entrance £2. Non-members welcome.

### **Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November:**

\*\* Abbey Christmas Fair, including **Tombola Stall** run by FRA. In the **Abbey**, 10-2pm.

## *December*

### **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December:**

Trip by coach to the **Mill (Theatre) at Sonning** for lunch and a matinee performance of "White Christmas". Depart Romsey 9.30am, return by 7pm. Led by Colin and Rosemary Davis. Price for coach, lunch and theatre seat: **£100** per head. Payment with booking please.

### **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December:**

\*\* Provisional dates for Services of **9 Lessons and Carols** in Romsey Abbey. 6.30pm. All members welcome. (FRA provide one of the readers.)

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**\*\* We would also remind you of the regular monthly parish event: Last Sunday of every month: Afternoon Parish Tea and cakes,** with the Romsey Abbey Catering team. 4pm in the Church Rooms.

**\*\* In addition to the events listed above, extra events may well be arranged during the course of the year. Details of these events will be announced in due course. We will keep you posted!**

#### **For more details of any event:**

Detailed event arrangements will be sent to all those who have booked, at least one week before the event.

*In the meantime, if you wish to check any details, please contact the organiser of the event as shown on the list, or email [events@romseyabbeyfriends.org](mailto:events@romseyabbeyfriends.org), or ring 01794 500523.*

#### **Pick-up points and parking:**

The standard departure pick-up point for the **coach trips** is the coach stop at the Bus Station.

The minibuses are based at Romsey Football Ground (access off the By-Pass). Cars may be parked for free for the day, next to the minibus parking (facing Southampton Road). **Minibus trips** therefore all have two pick-up points: 1. Romsey Town Football Ground; 2. Between the Abbey and the Former Magistrates' Court.

#### **Insurance and emergency contacts**

Members need to be aware that FRA do not provide insurance cover for personal injury or loss and therefore attend events at their own risk. Transport by minibus or coach is covered by their fleet insurances, whilst venues likewise have their own insurance cover.

A list of participants on trips, including emergency contact details, is supplied to a contact at Romsey Abbey.

#### **To book for events (those bookable in advance):**

##### ***Bookings accepted from 27<sup>th</sup> January onwards.***

Members may book as follows.

**Either** pay on-line direct to the FRA bank account at TSB, Sort Code 30-97-14, Account 31345360, Reference 'EVENTS', and email [events@romseyabbeyfriends.org](mailto:events@romseyabbeyfriends.org) to confirm you are booking and have paid on-line, identifying which events are involved (important, as several are the same price). *(This is the preferred method.)*

**Or** write a simple note listing the event(s) for which you are booking, and post to: The FRA Bookings Officer, 42 Botley Rd, Romsey, SO51 5AP, enclosing one cheque to the total value, payable to 'The Friends of Romsey Abbey'.

*You are invited to combine payments for more than one event into a single cheque or on-line payment.*

*Confirmation of booking and receipt of payment will be given.*

*Members will be advised when any trip is full. In that instance, members are invited to register to join a waiting list, however please do not send payment until requested.*

*Members may wish to note that all events are priced to ensure costs are covered with a planned minimum break-even attendance, which is less than full capacity. An event will be cancelled, and refunds offered, if too few people book to reach the break-even figure. Any surpluses generated by attendance being over and above the break-even figure are added to the overall funds of the Friends for use in future projects for the Abbey.*



## EVENTS IN 2023!



Cruising on the Thames

Visit to Arundel Castle and Gardens



AGM with a lovely Strawberry Tea – how better to carry out the formalities than with a Strawberry tea. See pages 3 and 4 for news of the 2024 AGM!



Stourhead & Brush Factory trip



Much delayed and successful visit to Dorchester Abbey







Tour of four Churches in the Avon Valley

Raimes Family Vineyard and nearby Hinton Ampner House



Annual Dinner at the White Horse

Bottle Tombola at Abbey Christmas Fair



'High Society' at The Mill at Sonning

*Thanks to Ken Gibson for photographs*