



Friends
of
Reading
Abbey

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2018

Patrons:

The Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire

The MP for Reading East

The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Reading

The MP for Reading West

The Right Reverend the Bishop of Reading

The Vice Chancellor, Reading University

The Abbot of Douai

President: Professor Brian Kemp **Vice Presidents:** Janet Bond Leslie Cram

www.readingabbey.org.uk

**THE ABBEY RUINS TO RE-OPEN
ON SATURDAY 16 JUNE 2018**

11am to 5pm



Photo: David Shephard

The official re-opening of Reading Abbey Ruins will coincide with this year's Reading Water Fest and will begin the Reading Abbey Revealed Festival.

This event takes place in the Forbury Gardens, Abbey Ruins and along the Kennet, between Chestnut Walk and The Riverside Museum.

Do come along and enjoy the live entertainment, children's activities, narrow boats, craft and charity stalls.

Most importantly, come and celebrate the long-awaited re-opening of the newly conserved ruins.

The Friends of Reading Abbey will have a gazebo on Chestnut Walk, just south of the Reredorter and will be running a memory board on behalf of Reading Borough Council, inviting passers by to record their recollections of the Abbey Ruins. Why not join in! **A DAY NOT TO BE MISSED**

SPRING LECTURE - 13 APRIL 2018

We enjoyed a greatly increased attendance at this year's lecture, held in St Laurence's Church.



Over 130 people gathered to hear Simon Marsh's lecture on the Siege of Reading, by far our largest audience to date. We were given a very informative account of 17th Century siege warfare by Simon, who described the weapons and equipment in use at that time and how the defences of towns and castles would have been breached.

The town of Reading was very important strategically and changed hands four times between Royalist and Parliamentary Forces during 1642 – 1644. The fact that so much of the fabric of Reading Abbey survived this period is both fortunate and surprising. The event was widely

publicised and we're very grateful to all those who spread the word - and to members and non-members alike who supported this most enjoyable evening.

We were also pleased to welcome The Mayor, Councillor Rose Williams, pictured here with our speaker, Simon Marsh.



LATE SUMMER PARTY IN THE ABBEY RUINS, SUNDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2018 From 2pm to 5pm

Join us for an afternoon of entertainment, singing, live music, children's Abbey Trail and cream teas. The Friends of Reading Abbey, Friends of Reading Museums and the Friends of Caversham Court Gardens are once again joining together to put on this event, which we are delighted to hold in the Abbey Ruins. Further details to come when the programme is complete - but now's the time to enter the date in your diary.

DIARY DATES: In this busy and important year, make sure you don't miss these events:

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| 16 June | Abbey Ruins re-opening and Water Fest |
| 23 June | BOOK LAUNCH - Records of Reading Abbey (<i>prepared by Professor Brian Kemp</i>). Takes place in St James' Church at 3pm. An indication of numbers would be helpful, please email peter.durrant@reading.gov.uk if attending. |
| 2 Sept | Friends Late Summer Party |
| 7,8 & 14,15 Sept | Heritage Open Days |
| 29 Sept | Henry I's Reading Abbey (Oxford Study Day) book via https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/ or phone 01865 270380 |
| 27 October | ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - Speaker Professor Anne Lawrence-Mathers 'Magic, Medicine and Miracles in the Medieval Abbey' |



THE DATA PROTECTION LAW CHANGES ON 25 MAY 2018

A copy of 'The Friends of Reading Abbey' Privacy Statement can be found on our website www.readingabbey.org.uk

ABBEY GATEWAY OPENING - 14 APRIL 2018



Having emerged from its hoardings, the Gateway re-opened on Saturday 14 April and the public were able to gain access. On this long awaited day they were able to learn about its history, take tours of the historic building, enjoy free craft sessions and more. Part of the Reading Abbey Revealed conservation project, the Friends of Reading Abbey were pleased support the event and provided volunteers on the day. A smaller private launch was held on Thursday, 12 April where the Mayor of Reading, Councillor Rose Williams unveiled a commemorative panel describing the Gateway's history. Children's Workshops will be held there on 29, 30, 31 May. To find more abbey related events visit www.readingabbeyquarter.org.uk/abbey/whats-on or phone 0118 9373400. Photographs from the 12 April launch are by kind permission of *Chris Forsey*.



THE FRIENDS OF READING ABBEY GET A BIRDS-EYE VIEW FROM THE BLADE

On Monday 23 April, Gateley plc very generously gave FORA the use of their boardroom, situated on the top floor of The Blade in Reading. The great value of this to us was that the room looks directly onto the Abbey Ruins and the committee decided to use this offer as an opportunity to invite our volunteers and partners along to thank them for their support and help over the years. We also included members of the Reading Abbey Revealed Team and were very grateful to Matthew Williams, Reading Museum's Manager, for giving a short talk. From our vantage point on the thirteenth floor, we were able to view the almost completed works to the ruins and admire the newly turfed dormitory area. The room afforded wonderful views over Reading and beyond, even as far as Windsor Castle (about 20 miles away) which we could just make out on the horizon.



PHOTOS: David Shephard (exterior shots)

