

John Bolton, 1947-2013

Most readers of this Newsletter will be aware that our secretary, John Bolton, died on 26 June, a few days after his 66th birthday. He had been secretary of the Friends since 2010 and had brought to the role not only considerable ability as an administrator, but also a deep love for and great knowledge of the Abbey and of Benedictine history generally. John was an artist of imagination, a skilful calligrapher and a poet. He had been a monk, at Worth and Douai Abbeys, and although he had left the latter and at the time of his death was a member of



John Bolton helping 'Abbey Trailers' at the Summer Party, June 2013

the Society of Friends, the Benedictine tradition remained important to him. He was committed to supporting the preservation of the remains of Reading's great abbey and to promoting public understanding of its history and importance, and this commitment was evident in everything he did for the Friends, whether taking minutes at meetings, organising events and outings, maintaining the membership list, producing the Newsletter, or simply sharing his knowledge and enthusiasm with others.

Both I and my predecessor as Chairman, Julia Boorman, greatly valued his support. The Friends were represented at his funeral by our President, Professor Brian Kemp, and by several members of the committee. He will be greatly missed.

Peter Durrant

The Abbey Quarter

Latest news is that Reading Borough Council intends to submit another bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for financial support for stabilising the ruins and for carrying out essential work to make the Abbey Gateway watertight.

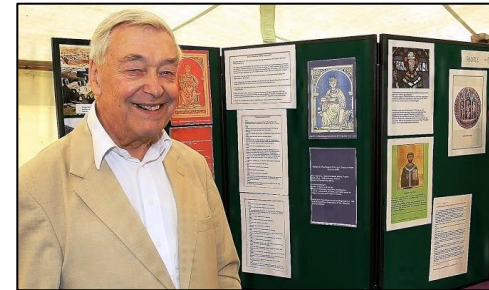
The Friends are keeping a close watch on developments and will be offering support where-ever possible.

The impending closure of Reading Gaol presents a magnificent opportunity to investigate those areas of the Abbey church at present inaccessible, and perhaps of opening up the whole site to better effect. The Friends will be watching developments carefully.

Summer Garden Party – 16 June 2013

For the second year a Summer Party was held in co-operation between the Friends of Reading Museum, the Friends of Reading Abbey and hosted by the Friends of Caversham Court Gardens. With the Mayor, Councillor Marian Livingston introducing the Summer Party, the event echoed the success of last year with large numbers of the public attending.

Excellent entertainments were on offer with the Reading Spring Gardens Brass Band, the choir Parenthesis and the Progress theatre group showcasing their sword fighting skills for their production of Macbeth.



Professor Brian Kemp at the FoRA stand

Displays were given by the Friends of Reading Museum and an exhibition of the Abbey history by the Friends of Reading Abbey.

Learning from the lessons of last year the children were not forgotten. The drawing activities led by Caversham artists were very successful as was the Abbey Trail. The questions listed and the clued answers to be found within the gardens, demonstrated to children taking part, the significance and history of the Abbey in relation to Reading.

Once again the cream teas were organised by the charity Ways and Means and although the weather briefly made its presence felt by a short and slight shower, Way and Means were pleased with the results; people making the most of the beauty of the Gardens for afternoon tea.

Sincere thanks to Riverside Dental Practice and IVC (Caversham) for their generous sponsorship and to Moira Gomes, Friend of Caversham Court Gardens, whose powers of persuasion secured the sponsorship. Thanks also to the three committees of Friends who worked so well together to make this year's Summer Party a success and to all those who gave raffle prizes.

May I, on behalf of the Friends of Reading Abbey, hope for future co-operation between the three Friends - and for further successful events.

Yours truly, Iris Hunt