



Friends of Reading Abbey

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2016

Patrons:

*The Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire
The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Reading
The Right Reverend the Bishop of Reading
The Abbot of Douai*

*The MP for Reading East
The MP for Reading West
The Vice Chancellor, Reading University*

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

**Friends of Reading Abbey, Friends of Reading Museum
and Friends of Caversham Court Gardens, invite you to their**

ANNUAL SUMMER PARTY

SUNDAY 19 JUNE 2 - 5pm, FORBURY GARDENS, READING RG1 3BB



Celebrate the Council's bid for Heritage Lottery Funding for the 'Reading Abbey Revealed Project'

- * 2pm - Welcome by the Mayor of Reading
- * 3pm - The Trinity Concert Band (bandstand)
- * Performances from Progress Theatre and Reading Between the Lines throughout afternoon
- * **Choir Rehearsals of Sumer is Icumen In, held in St James' Church**
led by *Professor David Owen-Norris, Head of Keyboard & Percussion at Southampton University*

2pm Open rehearsal	2.30 Presentation - Professor David Owen Norris on how to write a round
2.45 Open rehearsal	3.15 Presentation - Dr Helen Deeming on the precocity of the music
3.30 Open rehearsal	3.45 Presentation - Professor Vincent Gillespie on how to pronounce the words
4.00pm Transfer to the Mound in the Gardens	4.30pm General rehearsal of all who'd like to sing
	4.45 PERFORMANCE

Friends' Marquees and Displays

Children's History Trail

Reading Abbey Revealed Display - Reading Museum

Guided Walks of Abbey Quarter (Abbey Ruins not included)

FRIENDS OF READING ABBEY AGM SATURDAY, 29 OCTOBER 2016

We are delighted to announce that this year's AGM will be followed by a lecture given by Ron Baxter, the author of *The Royal Abbey of Reading*, the new book on Reading Abbey published earlier this year by Boydell. Full details will follow in the autumn newsletter.

Spring Lecture 14 April 2016—The Late Medieval Abbot.

More than 90 people braved a wet April evening to attend the lecture given by Dr Martin Heale, from the University of Liverpool. The venue was St Laurence church, which is rarely open nowadays.



The lecture was preceded by a short guide to the church monuments from our President, Professor Brian Kemp. The church contains some fascinating monuments including John Blagrave, a famous 17th century mathematician, and a mural monument in painted alabaster to Martha daughter of Thomas Seakes of Henley on Thames (pictured).

Martha, wife of Charles Hamley 'of Cornwall' died 1636.



We are extremely grateful to Dr Heale for a very entertaining illustrated lecture, that drew such a large audience. It was also a pleasure to get back inside St Laurence's church, which was part of the Medieval Abbey precinct, built as a place of worship for the townspeople.



DATES OF FUTURE EVENTS

WATERFEST

Saturday 11 June - Forbury Gardens & Chestnut Walk ,11am - 5pm

OUTING TO LEWES

Wednesday 6 July (*a few seats available - contact secretary@readingabbey.org.uk*)

NEW PLAY

2 - 19 November *King Henry 1 of England, performed at St James Church by 'Reading Between the Lines'. Book via RBTL website. More details in our autumn Newsletter.*



Abbey Quarter Update

Reading Abbey Revealed Project Following the news of the grant award, the procurement of the main contractors will start in spring; and in the summer, procurement for the consultant for the interpretation implementation work will begin. Contracts will be awarded to the successful applicants in the autumn. Work on site will include the stabilisation of the ruins, and landscaping and restoration of the Abbey Gate. Interpretation work across the Abbey

Quarter will tell the story of the different aspects of history and link up the various historic buildings and monuments around the Quarter through directional signage and interpretation panels. Work on site will begin in the autumn and it is hoped this will be complete by spring/summer 2018.

Hidden Abbey Project—extract from Reading Borough Council's Press Release, April 2016

The Hidden Abbey Project involves Reading Borough Council, the RC Diocese of Portsmouth and the Ministry of Justice, as the principal public landowners in the Abbey Quarter site, together with the Friends of Reading Abbey, Darlow Smithson Productions and Philippa Langley of Little Marilyn Productions Ltd.

The project is being taken forward by a Steering Group on which all of the above organisations are represented. Reading Borough Council will be the commissioning body for works associated with the project, although it will not itself provide any funding directly. The Hidden Abbey Project Steering Group is in the process of awarding the tender for the GPR surveys, with a decision expected during May.

Friends of Reading Abbey Website: The BBC recently borrowed a copy of the photo of the Dormitory area and the Blade which appears on our website front page, to use as part of their "Shakespeare 2016 on Tour" website article. The BBC page with the copy can be seen at link [BBC Shakespeare Tour](#).

- A minor change to the Home page was introduced recently, making the wording of links a brighter red. They can now be more easily distinguished from ordinary text.
- The programme page changes rather a lot at this time of the year, with many events coming together within 3 months and this information is being kept up to date.
- Attention now will focus on reorganising the Abbey Quarter Information page. *Feedback welcome.*