



FRIENDS OF READING ABBEY

NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2019

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



FRIENDS' FIRST SUNDAY EVENT, 4 AUGUST 2019 2pm - 5pm Caversham Court Gardens RG4 7AD

This year we have been invited by The Friends of Caversham Court Gardens to take part in their popular 'First Sundays'

In this beautiful riverside setting, The Friends of Reading Abbey will join together with The Friends of Reading Museum to provide information and leaflets. FORA's display will focus on Henry I, and with the 900th anniversary of the Abbey Ruins in 2021 much in our minds, we'll be inviting ideas from members of the public on ways to mark this important event. Also on offer will be the FORA History Trail for children, informal tours of the gardens by Friends of Caversham Court Gardens volunteers and music from the Salvation Army Band. If you arrive early - Ways and Means are running a fun dog show from 12.30pm to 2.30pm.

The Tea Kiosk will be open for coffee, tea and cake to complete your afternoon by the Thames.

FUTURE EVENTS IN 2019

WATERFEST

15 June

READING ABBEY QUARTER TOURS 6 July & 3 August New dates may be added - *Contact Reading Museum*

FRIENDS ANNUAL OUTING

23 July to Cholsey, Wallingford and Dorchester on Thames

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

26 October at Greyfriars Church - *speaker, Malcolm Summers*

SPRING MEETING, 22 MARCH 2019 An audience of over 90 people came to hear Joe Chick's talk on **The Impact of the Dissolution of 1539 on the Town of Reading.**

Held in St Laurence church, the talk gave an insight into this period of Reading's history, and is summarised below:

"The dissolution is famous as a major event in British religious history, but in Reading it was more than just a religious event. Reading was not just a town with an abbey in it: the abbey was lord of the entire town. The event had an effect on the whole politics, economy, and society of the town. Politically, it led to a transfer of power that gave the merchant guild the governmental authority which it had been denied throughout the medieval era. This led to a change in the culture of politics.

The end of monastic lordship also affected the town's economy, although there are signs that it didn't cause the crisis that was once assumed. The newly formed corporation faced initial financial strain, but the town's clothiers did not face any serious difficulty in covering its debts while the corporation found its feet. Certainly, the town was home to rich clothiers throughout the century and this played a major role in enabling the townsmen to successfully adapt in this period of change.

The decades following the dissolution were also a time of dramatic religious change, although much of this did not result directly from the dissolution. The abbey had never been the central feature of religious life for town residents but, instead, the town's three parishes of St Laurence, St Mary, and St Giles. Yet further government religious initiatives disrupted parish life and created a climate of nervousness about the prospect of future religious change" Joe Chick



WATER FEST - SATURDAY, 15 JUNE 11am to 5pm

The Friends of Reading Abbey will be in action at Water Fest, which is celebrating the 30th anniversary of this event. We'll be actively promoting the importance and history of the Abbey Ruins as well as canvassing the public for their take on how best to commemorate the abbey's 900th anniversary in 2021. Find us on Chestnut Walk, alongside **The Friends of Reading Museum**. There will be lots to view on our stands - do call in and see us.



Waterfest has live entertainment, water activities, narrowboats, craft and charity stalls and is a great day out.



THURSDAY 10 OCTOBER 2019, 7.00 pm – 7.00 pm
READING ABBEY RUINS, ABBEY STREET, READING RG1 3BA

Launchpad's Big Sleep Out is a fundraising challenge where people swap the luxury of a home and a comfortable bed, for a cardboard box and a sleeping bag for the night – all to raise vital funds and help prevent homelessness. And this year the event is held in the iconic and historic **Reading Abbey Ruins**. Every penny raised will help Launchpad continue to provide vital information and support for individuals, couples and families who don't have a stable place to live or are at risk of losing their home.

The Big Sleep Out doesn't replicate homelessness but it does offer a brief insight into some of the things faced by the street homeless. To book a place, or find more information visit Launchpad's website - <https://www.launchpadreading.org.uk/big-sleep-out-at-reading-abbey-ruins/>

THAMES RIVER CRUISES resume their popular boat trips in June from Caversham (with stops along the way) to **Reading Abbey**, twice daily. What better way to explore the Thames and see the town from a different angle? You will then join the Kennet to arrive in the heart of Reading at the Abbey. Cruises run from June to 31 August and you can find the time table on their website <https://www.thamesrivercruise.co.uk/book-online/caversham-to-reading-abbey-river-shuttle> or phone 0118 948 1088.

