



# FRIENDS OF READING ABBEY

# NEWSLETTER

## Summer 2023

**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:** Janet Bond

**Vice President:** John Mullaney



**SATURDAY 10 JUNE 2023, 11am – 5pm**  
**Forbury Gardens, Reading Abbey Ruins,**  
**Chestnut Walk and Riverside Walk**



WATERFEST returns on 10 June with a full programme of live entertainment, children's activities, narrow boats, craft and charity stalls.

Along Chestnut Walk will be food and craft stalls, and on the Kennet Canal you'll find the traditional painted narrow boats, whose owners are always happy to chat about life on board.

The main stage is set within the lovely open space of the Refectory area of the abbey ruins and there will be many more things to see and do throughout the Forbury Gardens.

The Friends of Reading Abbey will have a stall inside the south transept, along with other heritage groups. It's another opportunity for us to talk to visitors and meet members. We hope that the new edition of Brian Kemp's original 1968 Guide to Reading Abbey will be available for sale, at £5 a copy. This represents excellent value for what is still a definitive guide to the establishment of the Abbey. Put this date in your diaries! Entry is free.

The full programme will be available on [Reading Water Fest 2023 | What's On Reading \(whatsonreading.com\)](https://www.whatsonreading.com)

## SPRING LECTURE

OUR PROFESSOR BRIAN KEMP MEMORIAL LECTURE on Saturday 18 March, drew a large audience of almost 90 people, taking us back to pre-Covid numbers. Held in the beautiful St James RC Church, Dr Jamie Ingram gave his talk on the Medieval Pilgrimage Experience, explaining that pilgrimage was a journey for the specific purpose of creating change. His illustrated talk also covered graffiti, which were marks that represented prayers from parishioners.

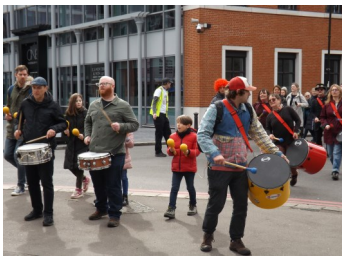
It was heartening to see so many people gather for this extremely interesting talk. The afternoon ended with an enthusiastic Question and Answer session, with many in the audience being keen to learn more on the subject.



Dr Jamie Ingram and Dr Peter Durrant MBE

## MARCH TO READING GAOL – SATURDAY 25 MARCH

Accompanied by the rousing drums of the Samba Band, an estimated **700 people** marched from the Hexagon to the Abbey Ruins, answering the call to give a strong message to the Ministry of Justice, not to build luxury flats on this historical site. The hope is that the Gaol can be used as a world-class arts and heritage site, open to all. Once inside the Abbey Ruins, there were stirring speeches from The Mayor, Councillor Rachel Eden; Matt Rodda, MP for Reading East; Sir Alok Sharma, MP for Reading West; Councillor Sarah Hacker, Chair of the Arts and Heritage Forum; Toby Davies from Rabble Theatre and Linda Saul, organiser of the Reading Gaol Hug.



**READING AND CAVERSHAM PILGRIMAGE TRAIL, ZOOM TALK - 28 February** - over 30 people logged in to this talk, given by our Secretary, John Painter. These talks via Zoom have proved very popular during the winter months.

**The Trail** is the subject of a REDA leaflet, available locally, and through the companion web page:

[RUK Pilgrims Map A4 Landscape print from website\(2\).pdf \(visit-reading.com\)](#) and was part of the

**Reading Walks Festival (10-14 May)**. On 12 May, the **Pilgrimage Trail** walk was led by John Painter of FORA, who also led a tour of the **Abbey Quarter** on Sunday 14 May. At the time of publishing, both were fully booked, as were the majority of the walks, making this inaugural event a great success. John is happy to provide talks on the Abbey to local groups and you can book by emailing [secretary@readingabbey.org.uk](mailto:secretary@readingabbey.org.uk).

### DIARY DATES 2023

**Saturday 10 June WATERFEST**

**Wednesday 26 July - SUMMER OUTING to St Bartholomew the Great church and The Charterhouse**

By now all members will have received details of this outing, either by email or by post. There has been a good uptake for places, but numbers are limited to 40 people. If you'd like to come along, please call John Painter on **0118 9267893**.

**13 June to 1 July HENRY 1 - Rabble Theatre Production within Abbey Ruins**

**8 - 17 September HERITAGE OPEN DAYS**

**28 October AGM AND AUTUMN LECTURE**

**AND THERE'S MUSIC - 9 June DISCO ABBEY 2023** (<https://whatsonreading.com>) Type in 'Abbey'

**8- 9 September: MUSIC DOWN AT THE ABBEY** (<https://downattheabbey.co.uk>)