

FRIENDS OF READING ABBEY

# BRIAN KEMP MEMORIAL LECTURE

Saturday 14 March 2026 2.30 pm

St James' RC Church, Forbury Road, RG1 3FD

## Patronage, Scholarship and Scandal: the story of Malmesbury Abbey

Tony McAleavy



The Benedictine monastery at Malmesbury in Wiltshire was an important institution throughout the Middle Ages. Tony McAleavy will tell the story of the building and the community from its foundation in the seventh century to the Dissolution under Henry VIII. He will analyse the architecture of the church - which includes some of the most important Romanesque sculpture in England - and describe the colourful lives of several medieval monks who were a remarkable assortment of saints, distinguished scholars and rogues.

Tony McAleavy read history at Oxford. He is the Chief Education Officer for the Education Development Trust, based in Reading. He has written extensively on different historical topics and recently published the first ever full-length history of Malmesbury Abbey.



St James's RC Church is next to Reading Gaol, in the Abbey Precinct. It will be open from 2.00pm. Free entry, with a voluntary retiring collection.