

Ramsey Mortuary Chapels Heritage and Archive Centre

By Jane Yardley – Chair, Friends of Ramsey Mortuary Chapels

By the time that you read this I hope that the drought is well and truly over. In fact, as I write I think that I can hear thunder in the distance and see a few drops of rain, so fingers crossed.

And talking of water, I'm sure that many of you will have noticed the large pool of water in the Cemetery. Both Gary Cooke, Ramsey Town Clerk and myself have lost count of the times we have contacted Cambridgeshire Water about it. We appreciate that it is very difficult to tackle a water leak in a Cemetery as it is consecrated ground,

and therefore many rules and regulations apply. Ramsey Town Council have decided not to wait any longer and have arranged for a contractor to excavate the pathway and see if the source of the leak can be located and repaired, so watch this space!

Also, thanks to Ramsey Town Council, we now have a new electricity consumer unit at the chapels. I was showing a visitor our new chandeliers, and when I turned them on there was a large pop. As luck would have it, our visitor used to be an electrician and he advised that our existing unit was obsolete and could be dangerous.

We have to thank Mark Wildish from MSO Electrics for doing such a great job and we are waiting for him to reinstate the electricity supply into the Non-Conformist chapel, then it will be full steam ahead with the renovations.

Doesn't the War Memorial in Ramsey look fantastic now. When it was decided to carry out restoration work on it, Councillor Steve Corney came up with the great idea of re-using the York stone slabs at the Mortuary Chapels. All the

new paving work, both on the memorial and at the chapels has been carried out by Gilbert-Scape our local paving specialists and what a fantastic job they have done! It has been a real family effort by Mark, his wife Alison and children Nick and Ellie. They worked so hard, on what were the hottest days so far this year and the result is absolutely superb. Now wheelchair users and anyone who might find steps difficult can access both chapels without any problem.

Members, Gillian Knox and Bill Barcas manned a stall for us at a boot sale at Ramsey Mereside Village Hall. The temperature was well into the 30s and as a consequence the turnout was limited. But they persevered and still raised money for the chapels. I can't thank them enough for their kindness and determination!

All of the good quality bric-a-brac that you kindly donate to us goes onto our stall at Home & Vintage in Bury. Many of you may not realise that the shop is a charity shop, charity no. 1098715 and that it has a sister shop in Peterborough. One of the many projects that they support, is the Kenyan Children's Project which rescues vulnerable children, many of whom have been abused, orphaned, neglected and abandoned. They become part of a family where they find safety and receive love and an education. We pay 15% of the money raised on our stall to this very worthwhile cause and are very happy to do so. Home & Vintage sell just about anything that you can think of and will also deliver or pick up any items that you wish to donate, just pop in or call: - 01487 710607, it's well worth a visit.

And lastly, but not least, a big thank you to Roger Reynolds. He has written a new book about 156 Squadron, which was formed in 1942 and was one of the squadrons chosen to form the famous Pathfinders based at Warboys. In 1944 they moved to RAF Upwood, where they remained until the end of the war.

Roger's book is only available from Ramsey Mortuary Chapels or Home & Vintage, price £7

and he insists that all profits go towards the restoration of the chapels. He is a great supporter of our project and we can't thank him enough for his kindness.

We decided to open the chapels this year on the Ramsey 1940's Weekend. None of us were sure if we would have any visitors, but we needn't have worried as we had over 300!

It was so nice to see a lot of old friends and also to welcome many new ones, some of whom had come quite a distance. We had such nice comments about the restoration work and a lot of visitors who had been before couldn't believe the difference. Our next open day will be Heritage Day, Sunday 11th September, 11am - 4pm.

Apart from our usual books, CD's, DVD's sale, tombola, lucky dip and bric-a-brac, we will be having an early Christmas sale. Due to your kindness and generosity, we have had a lot of Christmas related items donated to us, so come along and get yourselves an early Christmas bargain.

Many of you will know local lady, Cathy Cracknell and the wonderful handcrafts that she makes. Cathy will also be having a stall at the chapels on Heritage Day, yet another chance to get some early Christmas presents!

Along with the Mortuary Chapels, there will be plenty of other venues open for you to visit. Included are, the Ramsey Walled Garden, Abbey House and Lady Chapel, Abbey Gatehouse, St. Thomas a' Becket Church (only open from 12 noon), Ramsey Rural Museum and the newly refurbished Abbey Rooms in the High Street. There is also an Artisan Market on the Great Whyte 10am - 2pm. Additional parking will be available at the new extension to the Cemetery in Wood Lane. We look forward to seeing you all on the day.

Our last Open Day this year will be on Sunday 2nd October 2pm - 5pm.

Thank you all for the support that you have given us this year, it has meant a lot to us.



● Photo courtesy of Pat Carlaw

Gilbert Scape half