

Ramsey Mortuary Chapels Heritage and Archive Centre

By Jane Yardley – Chair, Friends of Ramsey Mortuary Chapels

Heritage Day. Well, it certainly was a day of two halves. It was bright and sunny in the morning, and we were having such a great time meeting you all, but as the day wore on, it got darker and darker and so we decided it might be prudent to pack away earlier than planned.

Just as well. Suddenly the heavens opened, and I can honestly say that I have never seen rain like it, combined with huge hailstones and a very fierce wind. We were all soaked to the skin in seconds and looked as though we had just got out of the Forty Foot drain.

The wind got hold of our gazebo and twisted it, so that we were unable to get it down. To stop it blowing around and being a danger to the public, the best we could do was to put it over the churchyard wall. However, I did telephone the vicar and apologise!

The next day Maurice Margetts and I went to see if we could rescue it. Maurice managed to collapse it sufficiently to enable him to get it into his car, take it home and I'm pleased to say that he has managed to repair it. We all thought that the money raised on Heritage Day would have to go towards buying a new gazebo, as having one is so handy when we are out and about raising funds. Thank you, Maurice, you're a star!

Two great supporters of our restoration

project are Margaret and Neville Bailey who have donated several items into our care in the past. Now they have given us a beautiful painting of the lodge at the entrance to the cemetery, painted by Margaret. Not only is Margaret a talented artist, she is also a fantastic flower arranger and won the "People's Choice" at the Flowers Festival at St. Thomas a' Becket Church this year.

Another great supporter of ours was dear Aubrey Prior. You may remember reading his obituary in last month's Informer. It was whilst at his funeral that I came across a slip of paper stating that it costs a staggering £74,000 a year or £1,425 a week to keep the church running.

I was absolutely astounded, it's hard enough to raise funds to restore the Ramsey Mortuary Chapels, but to have to continually raise this amount is truly mind blowing and this doesn't even include the cost of any large maintenance projects that have to be carried out.

Although not a religious person, I do care passionately about Ramsey, it's architecture and its history. So please support them when you can. For over 1,000 years this wonderful building has played such an important part in the life and times of the people of Ramsey and to see it closed doesn't bear thinking about.

On a cheerier note, we will be having another stall at Ramsey's market on Saturday 28th October, 10am to 3pm. We look forward to seeing you there.



● Mortuary Chapels Lodge - Painting