



Mill News



Daring to Create

Portraits in the style of Andy Warhol, Marvel Comic characters and landscapes are just some of the styles and subjects that six of our young people have been exploring in preparation for their Bronze Arts Award.

If all the hard work pays off, this will lead to a Level 1 qualification—a great addition to a curriculum vitae.

Two local artists have been supporting the young people to gain skills and express their creativity, but at the beginning of the course, one young person was adamant “I don’t do art...it’s just not my thing. I cannot draw”.

She went on to create stunning paintings, as well as teaching what she learnt to others.

The self belief, positivity and pride that comes from making something completely unique as well as the qualification, makes this course a great experience for young people who may not have felt capable of studying art at school. As Matt Howell, the Youth Development Worker who worked with the young people said “Until you try, you just don’t know what you are capable of. I am proud of what they’ve done and the effort they’ve put in—the art works speak for themselves.”

Romsey Mill is a Christian charity dedicated to creating opportunities for change with young people, children and families in Cambridgeshire—including teenage parents, young people with autism, families with small children and young people experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage.

Positive & Uplifting

Recently I enjoyed attending a concert put on by a local community gospel choir to raise funds for the work of Romsey Mill.

Whittlesford Community Gospel Choir (WCGC), founded in 2005 by Musical Director Tina Brooks, gave a fantastic performance. Invited to speak about Romsey Mill during the concert, I decided that I would riff (a musical term for improvisation) around the themes of 'Community', 'Gospel' and 'Choir'. This is the gist of what I said that evening.

Community: our work is all about community development – encouraging and enabling people living in Cambridgeshire, particularly young people and families, to fully belong, positively contribute and thrive.

Gospel: this means 'Good News' and is what the team of staff and volunteers want to be. We want our work to bring joy to the faces

and hope to the hearts of young people, children and families.

Choir: a choir is an organised group of individuals who come together to create something harmonious, unique and more powerful than anything they could achieve alone. Similarly, Romsey Mill is only able to co-create opportunities for lasting change through many people coming together to support our work.

WCGC gave a positive and uplifting performance to an enthusiastic and appreciative audience. The whole team at Romsey Mill strives to give our best – to be part of something that is positive and uplifting. Your enthusiastic support makes all the difference.



NCA Stars Shine



A group of 14 Year 6 pupils from five primary schools in the north of the city were part of a transitions project based at North Cambridge Academy last term called NCA Stars.

NCA Stars increased confidence about starting secondary school and gave individuals a chance to meet their future class mates and teachers. The project included taster sessions of secondary school lessons and activities such as trampolining, cooking and creating indoor fireworks!

Peer mentors from North Cambridge Academy supported the group, and were

trained by Romsey Mill before the project began. Building social skills was a key focus, and during half-term the group visited Anglesey Abbey to take part in activities to practise these team work and communication skills even more.

The project ended with a celebration event to which parents were invited to hear about their child's progress and meet Romsey Mill and school staff.

Each child received a certificate for their attendance and the Peer Mentors acknowledged pupils who had particularly excelled with awards.

As one pupil said "I am excited about secondary school now because I am going to have more friends. I really liked trying out secondary school activities like making pizza."

New Partnership in Abbey

An exciting new partnership will benefit young people in Cambridge's Abbey ward. Romsey Mill has linked with 'Abbey People' (a neighbourhood community project), Marshall Group and Cambridge Utd Youth & Community Trust (CUYCT) to offer young people in the area extra support and positive activities.

Funding from Marshall Group for the next three years will enable CUYCT to open their Youth & Community Room, and Romsey Mill will use this space to run a weekly youth club for about 15 – 20 teenagers. As well as table tennis, pool and table football there will be visits from players and opportunities to link in with the football club.

Rev Stuart Wood, Minister of Barnwell Baptist Church, Chair of Abbey People and Chaplain of Cambridge United, said "It has been exciting to see this partnership emerge - this isn't about ticking boxes or going through the mo-



tions – there is a real commitment from all the partners to make a difference to the lives of these young people."

In the photo from left to right: **Jon Sanders** (Youth Development Worker, Romsey Mill); **Robert Marshall** (CEO, Marshall Group); **Dave Doggett** (Chairman of Cambridge United) and **Rev Stuart Wood** (Chair of Abbey People).

Free to learn, play and grow

In September 2013, the government introduced free childcare for two year olds from low income families.

Since then, Romsey Mill Children's Centre has supported 22 families to access this funding and 18 children have attended Romsey Mill's Playgroup.

Many of these families would not be able to take up the opportunity of childcare in a playgroup setting without this funding, and being at a playgroup develops a child's readiness for nursery and school alongside their peers.

The early learning and play opportunities at Romsey Mill Playgroup grows skills and independence, develops positive communication, and allows children to make friends and learn in a safe, nurturing environment. Sometimes

leaving their parents and carers for the first time, the children learn to settle well, play well and gain a sense of value and self-worth. The focus is on development in PSE (personal, social and emotional), communication and language, as well as physical skills.

There has been incredible progress for many of the children in Playgroup, as we aim to give them the best start and a firm foundation for moving on to nursery, and ultimately school. It has strengthened links between the Playgroup and Children's Centre, particularly where the Children's Centre has been supporting families who have additional needs. In September 2014 funding will be broadened to include children with special educational needs, so more families can benefit from early years support for their children.

Ready to Learn and Earn

As well as helping post-16 year olds gain qualifications they didn't attain at secondary school, Romsey Mill's Alternative Education programme provides work experience in settings that interest our young people.

In April, four young people started work experience one day a week for a ten week period at Coulson Building Group, Ridgeons Ltd and at Romsey Mill Playgroup. Getting a taste of different skills needed in joinery, plumbing, yard work and childcare (though not all at once!) is great for the CV, and builds confidence and 'work readiness'

As Stephen Terrell, a Director at Coulson Building Group says "Coulson believes work experience allows young people to gain a taste of the working environment and the chance to consider the construction industry, before deciding on their choice of career."



Future Youth Leaders



Romsey Mill and Shelford & Stapleford Youth Initiative (SSYI) are working together to deliver and develop youth work in the Shelford and Stapleford area.

Jamie Sawtell, one of Romsey Mill's Youth Development Workers, has taken on the lead youth work role.

Building on this, a 'Young Leaders' residential took place at the end of May,

funded by Cambridgeshire County Council.

Young people from youth clubs in Sawston, Shelford and Linton undertook Entry Level Youth Work Training and those spotted for their leadership potential attended the residential at St Mark's College, Saffron Walden.

This proved to be a fantastic opportunity for young people to develop new skills, meet new people and explore how they could take on leadership roles within their clubs. Jamie Sawtell said 'the young people have all been really excited since the training with new ideas and passion to get more involved! We're so glad that they could all achieve this qualification in Youth Work and love seeing their enthusiasm grow!'"

24 Peaks in 24 Hours



Not quite as well known as the Three Peaks Challenge, but undoubtedly tougher, 39 people braved Romsey Mill's 24 Peak Challenge Trek over a weekend in late April to raise vital funds for youth and family work.

The challenge was to climb 24 peaks in the Lake District, each one over 2,400ft high, within 24 hours total walking time. The route included many famous peaks such as Red Pike, Scafell Pike, Helvellyn and Great Gable.

The weather was grim and the challenge was far tougher than expected, pushing everyone to their mental and physical limits. The challenge was described by some of the trekkers as 'brutal', 'beyond tough' and 'gruelling' but humour, perseverance and camaraderie got everyone through.

"I didn't know my little legs could carry me so far but it was all worth it for Romsey Mill"
Paula Renouf

"There was a great team spirit amongst team members, a real sense of 'one for all and all for one' and at the very end it was quite emotional to have completed such a great challenge!" *Jon Chiffins*

"There was the driving rain and the knee problems but apart from that it was a great weekend and very satisfying to have completed the challenge. 'Inspiration through Perspiration' seems to sum it up nicely."
Martin Holland

"As it was my 40th birthday this year, I wanted to do something momentous to celebrate it. The trek came up on a friends Facebook page and I decided to make that my chosen celebration (it fell over my birthday weekend, in my birthplace!). It was bloomin' hard work, but such a wonderful achievement. I also made some lovely new friends, who are awesome, inspirational, all encouraging people. An all round unforgettable experience that has made me set myself regular new aims. I will always remember how I celebrated my 40th!"
Anna Richardson

"Engaging my mind in neutral gear and letting my body get on with it was certainly the way to get through it. I was really delighted with the people on the weekend – the camaraderie was pretty much non-stop!" *John Davies*

It was fantastic and humbling to have so many people coming together, giving their best and fundraising for Romsey Mill. Sponsorship of the Trek by Cambridge's outdoor pursuits shop Open Air will make the monies raised go even further, reaching more families and young people facing their own challenges.

Sponsorship money has been coming in thick and fast, and we are delighted that after costs, we are on target to raise £20,000!

A big thank you to everyone who took part or made this Challenge possible.



Canine Capers



In the Easter holidays, two young women from our Transitions Programme visited the K9 Project to spend an afternoon with some very lovely dogs. The award-winning K9 Project aims to increase communication skills, personal responsibility, self-awareness, assertiveness, self-esteem and motivation. Being around dogs can provide an instant point of connection and enhance emotional and physical well-being.

Both girls love animals and are interested in pursuing a career in this area. They spent the afternoon with two dogs, Billy and Cassie, and learnt about how our body language affects animals; care information about dogs; how to teach dogs good behaviour and even some tricks!

The young women did really well, taking their dogs for a long walk and keeping them under control at all times, especially around other people. They learnt how tone of voice is important when giving instructions and how to act confidently around dogs. They reflected on how similar some of these techniques are to interacting with people.

One girl was looking forward to going home and teaching her own dog some new tricks. They are now enjoying looking back on what they learnt and making scrapbooks of their experience.

Help us to help others

How much could you donate today to support the work of Romsey Mill?

£10 pays for 1 hour of a youth worker's time to develop skills with a group of young people

£25 pays for 1 session of accredited learning for 1 young person

£30 pays for one young person to attend an Aspire club session

£40 pays for youth workers to run a 2-hour session of late night football, developing skills and decreasing anti-social behaviour

£150 pays for one young parent to attend a ten-week antenatal course

- I am sending a one-off donation
- I want to give a regular donation

£10 £25 £30
 £40 £150 Other £

Name and address

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Please tick to Gift Aid your donation

I confirm that I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each year (6th April to 5th April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand that the charity will reclaim 25p tax on every £1 that I give. I will advise Romsey Mill Trust if these details change.

Cheques payable to 'Romsey Mill Trust'

Signed:

Please detach this form and return with donation to:
 Romsey Mill, Hemingford Road, FREEPOST
 CB1067, Cambridge, CB1 3YD

Thank you!

Empowering Young Fathers

In March 2012, Romsey Mill's Young Fathers Project was awarded a four year grant by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to meet a growing demand for focused support of young fathers. This funding enabled us to develop and deliver innovative work with young fathers in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.

Romsey Mill's Young Fathers Worker, Ben Wilkes, offers around 116 young fathers and expectant young fathers varied and tailored support. Ben works to build relationships and to help these young men engage and access support at a practical and emotional level. This includes parenting advice, 'father-friendly' ante-natal sessions, employment/training support and positive activities to develop self-identity, skills and aspirations. It also includes one-to-one support, home-visiting, family trips and accredited courses. Through this much-needed work, young fathers have been empowered to transform their lives, enabling them to develop positive relationships with their partners and children.

"I'm more confident around my baby. I know what to do and what not to do. I'm a better person and a better dad than what I was at the start." Young Father, 25

Our young father's work is now an integral part of our established Young Parents Programme, which supports over 150 young mothers each year and is the lead response for pregnant teenagers in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.

We have discovered that young fathers have many different needs which impact on their ability to lead a fulfilling life and form a positive relationship with their child. They may feel inadequate or unwelcome as a parent, they are often not prepared (cognitively, emotionally and financially), may have difficulty expressing themselves, lack of skills to gain and maintain employment, and can also have an unwillingness to sacrifice their current self-focused lifestyle. The level of support we offer varies, as we also work with competent young fathers needing minimal help.

Many young dads have had a negative experience of fathering and have lacked positive male role models in their own lives. This can mean that they do not have the basic tools and understanding needed to be a good father. Without specific intervention, they will struggle to break this cycle which is likely to continue as their children become adults.



Recently, we piloted a four week Thai Boxing course with five young dads. This merged positive practice of a disciplined sport with reflective discussions around what it means to be a man and dealing with emotions. The guys loved the boxing and we were especially encouraged when one participant had an injury which stopped him taking part in the boxing, but he still attended the session so he could participate in discussion.

We recognise that what works for some young men does not necessarily work for others. Therefore, this work is evolving as we adapt and listen to young father's ideas, interests and concerns, in order to respond effectively and compassionately to their needs. We plan further work through setting up a weekly group, running more activities and encouraging young fathers to become confident sharing their experiences with professionals and policy-makers.

"I like Romsey Mill. We can come to chat about life, problems and how to solve them. Sometimes we do exercise. I enjoy this as it helps with expressing myself and helps with anger problems. I like to leave Romsey Mill stress free and most of the time I do." Young Father, 19

[Donate now](#)

Please give now to support the work of Romsey Mill. You can write a cheque and send it to us, or make a donation via www.romseymill.org.

News in brief from the Mill

- Citrix Systems UK Ltd donated money towards the refurbishment of Romsey Mill's charity shop on Mill Road, which will be spruced up at the end of July. Donations to the shop can raise an extra 25% for Romsey Mill—if you pay income tax, your donation of goods to the shop may be eligible for Gift Aid. Pop into our shop at 176 Mill Road for more details.
- Pouring rain meant that the Romsey Parent's Group sponsored toddle took place in the Sports Hall—but it still raised £330! Huge thanks to all who took part or sponsored toddlers.
- Claire Lea and Sarah Collins have moved on from Romsey Mill's Fundraising & Communications Team and will be embarking on new ventures—we wish them every success in the future.
- Save the date! **Romsey Calling**—a live music festival at the Earl of Beaconsfield on Mill Road— will take place on Saturday 27th September 2014 (3pm till late). As well as fabulous music from the likes of John Wheeler from Hayseed Dixie, there will be kid's activities, an auction and a raffle. All proceeds to Romsey Mill.
- Sawston Cycle Ride will be on 6 September, raising money for Romsey Mill. If you would like to volunteer to be a marshall please get in touch. To register for the ride or find out more, contact Bruce Waldron on bruce.waldron@uwclub.net
- The Step Up Awards Ceremony will be hosted by Marshall Group on 17 July—celebrating the achievements of young people who took part in Step Up and gained qualifications, skills and experiences that deserve recognition.

Food for thought:

“All great artists draw from the same resource: the human heart, which tells us that we are all more alike than we are unlike.” Maya Angelou



Visit www.romseymill.org