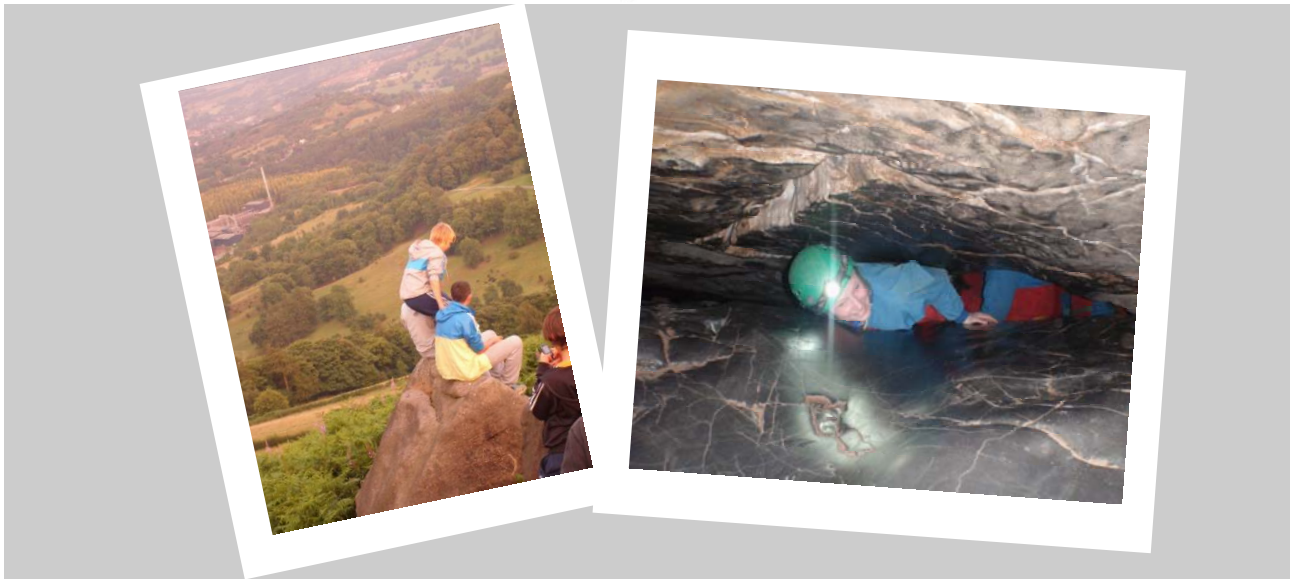


Mill News



Summer challenge

This (shorter) edition of Mill News focuses on this Summer's residentials and activities. Here, Dave Shuler describes a Social Inclusion Programme camping trip in Derbyshire.

Following the long drive to Derbyshire, we enjoyed a barbeque and game of cricket on a sunny evening. After which, we walked up the rocks, where the boys decided to play a wide game - so we used the rock circle and surrounding fields for a few hours, returning to camp for hot chocolate and games before bed.

We woke to bright sunshine. The boys slowly got up and we were greeted by their disbelief when we reminded them we would be caving all day. But caving went really well with all the boys pushing themselves to their limit in a very challenging cave that saw us abseiling, crawling on hands and knees and traversing open spaces.

The rest of the day was filled with people talking about their experiences in the cave. One of the young men said, 'I had never slept away from home before and I had a great time. I learned how to cave - the abseil was very scary but I managed to do it.'

Meeting personal challenges like this helps to create new patterns of success in the lives of the young people as they realise how much they can achieve with the right support and positive determination.

Dave commented, 'It was great to see the young people out of Cambridge. I know that we will be able to work with these young people even better next year because of the relationships we've built up and the experiences we've had together.' Another participant summed it up: 'This would be in the top five weekends of my life.'

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!

Fun in the parks

During the school summer holidays Romsey Mill Children's Centre continued to run a variety of groups for families of 0-5s. Whilst the sun didn't shine for the whole of August, we took advantage of any sunny days and ran events for families in the local parks.

Many of our regular families attended picnics, stories and parachute play. It was also a great opportunity for staff to meet families who live locally and who hadn't known about the Centre. Staff talked to at least twenty new families, a number of whom are now accessing activities.

One of the highlights of the park events was an international teddy bears picnic. Families were encouraged to bring along a teddy and a healthy picnic snack from a country of their choice. Many families with English as an additional language attended.

Another highlight of the summer programme was the Twins Event held at Romsey Mill Centre. This was attended by thirteen sets of twins and their parents or carers. It was a lovely opportunity to meet a lot of local families and for those families to build links and share experiences with others who have twins. Many commented on how supportive the event had been.



Aspire has an active Summer



Aspire activities this year were designed, with families, to enable as many young people as possible to benefit and develop social skills and friendships. This meant a move away from day-trips to short sessions that everyone would feel confident about attending. Young people and families were very enthusiastic. A parent said, 'For the first time this year he has hardly thought about the Xbox and has had a really good time with other people. He did not feel left behind at the end of the school year and he had exciting things to look forward to.'

We extended Aspire clubs into the school holidays for an extra week, with provision for parents to meet and chat over tea and coffee during the club times - a good opportunity for parents to gain from each other's experiences and to share challenges.

There were three trips to the local bowling alley, and sessions for Lego, music, drama, football, and computer gaming. These gave the young people opportunities to develop their particular interests and to strengthen friendships with other club members.

A first aid course enabled young people, who might not be able to access uniformed clubs, to gain a skill and a certificate to prove it. The summer's programme was rounded off with a family picnic at a local country park. Siblings and parents were all invited to share food and play games.

As one happy participant put it, 'This summer programme you have put together is fantastic.'

Young parents take a break



'Being girls, cooking together, having a face-mask, being yourself for one night....' These are a few of the experiences eight young mums from the Young Parents Programme enjoyed during a two-day trip to Norfolk this Summer. For most, it was their first real break from full-time childcare.

After fish and chips in Wells-next-the-Sea, the young women took a boat trip to Blakeney Point. One commented, 'That was something different—you don't see seals every day.'

Seeing these animals in their natural habitat was a first for the young women. Everyone enjoyed the sea breeze as well.

Back at the hostel later on everyone chipped in to cook dinner, then spent time considering what the idea of beauty means to a woman. A 'pampering' time followed, with face-masks and other treats, time to build confidence and self-esteem.

It all added up to a great time for developing closer friendships and support, with some reflection thrown in. As Sophie said, 'It was nice to get to know people for a whole day and to know them as someone other than a mum.'

The group headed off to Norwich the following morning where they enjoyed the feeling of pushchair-free shopping.

Having had a wonderful break they happily headed home to be reunited with their babies, refreshed and relaxed.

'I feel happy all week'

Each year the Transitions Programme invites young people from year six transfer groups on a three-day residential in Norfolk at the Horstead Centre, with the aims of building friendships, raising self-esteem and trying new, challenging, activities in a supportive environment. Thirty-four year six pupils attended this year.

Everyone had the chance to take part in climbing, flying along a zip line, canoeing, completing a low ropes course, and raft-building. There were team games, communal meals, times for reflection and time to spend with new friends. During activities, the young people had plenty of opportunities to practise team work and social skills, and to increase in confidence through trying new things. They supported and encouraged each other, and tried activities they found challenging.

As well as the Horstead residential, ten young people chose to attend a Falcon Camp – a break away from the pressures of home, in a

Christian setting, with time to think, and to build lasting relationships with adults and peers. Along with a programme of outdoor activities, there were opportunities to talk openly with young people about the challenges they face in their lives, such as living with a parent suffering mental ill health. It's a popular camp, with young people returning each year, sometimes graduating to leadership roles. As one said, 'It's just like being part of a big family – I always just feel happy all week.'



[Donate now](#)

Please donate now to support the work of Romsey Mill. You can write a cheque and send it to us, or [donate online via our website](#).

Elsie and Audrey remembered

The Romsey Mill community was saddened by the sudden deaths during the early Summer of Audrey Sparkes and Elsie Impey.

Audrey and Elsie were good friends and next-door neighbours for thirty-five years. They were long-standing volunteers at Romsey Mill's charity shop where customers referred to them as the 'golden girls'.

Audrey had served the shop since the start and was its first manager. She was, like Elsie, well known to the shop's community of regulars, many of whom like to call in for company and a chat while bargain-hunting.

Audrey and Elsie were unflappable and faithful workers who calmly dealt with

whatever situation arose in the shop and who treated all customers equally.

We remember them with affection and gratitude and extend our sympathies to their families and friends.



Ashleigh Calver climbs Mt Kilimanjaro to raise money for Romsey Mill and Macmillan.

She says, 'I hope to reach the top and to raise as much money as possible for these charities. At the Aspire Programme I experienced the great positive impact Aspire has on helping young people with autism develop social relationships and confidence.'

Visit <http://www.justgiving.com/ashleigh-calver>

Diary dates

2nd October Fashion Event in St Ives in aid of five youth charities, including Romsey Mill. Tickets from Romsey Mill.

13th October Romsey Mill's Thanksgiving Service 7.15pm at St Martin's Church, Suez Road, preceded by AGM. All supporters are welcome to attend.

3rd December Mill Road Winter Fair

Coming soon! The *Big Give Christmas Challenge*. More details will be available on our website from November 30th.

www.romseymill.org

Food for Thought

Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

Matthew 6:26-27