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Last year's *Chariots of Fire* prize-giving ceremony. This year, whoever's on the podium, Romsey Mill wins!



Could this be you?  
Running the relay  
through historic  
Cambridge colleges  
in aid of Romsey Mill



## Chariots of Fire

We are thrilled to have been selected as one of the two charities to benefit from the 2008 *Chariots of Fire* race.

### Biggest local fundraising event

Last year *Chariots of Fire* involved nearly 2500 local runners in over 400 teams.

This year the race will take place on Sunday 21st September 2008, starting at 9.30am. It is based on the film of the same name (a true story about British athletes in the 1924 Olympics). Teams of six run the relay, each member covering a 1.7 mile (2.7km) course, starting on Queens' Green and running through three Cambridge colleges and the Backs. (Runners must be over 16 years old). There are prizes for the fastest team, as well as fastest female, mixed, college and veteran teams—but everyone gets a medal!

### Facts, figures and figureheads

Each team is asked to raise as much as possible from sponsorship, and to pay an entry fee of £130 (that's only £21.67 per head!). Please consider

entering, or sponsoring, a team. Registration begins in May.



Organisers Hewitsons, Grant Thornton UK LLP and Cambridge News fund the administration costs of running the event so that most of the money raised can go to the charities.

Celebrity comedian Al Murray will officially start, and enter in, the race. The event's Honorary President, Michael Marshall, is the son of Sir Arthur, a member of the British athletics squad featured in the film

We need to provide 50 volunteers on the day, for varied tasks such as marking the course, distributing water and medals, marshalling, clearing... You can sign up by contacting us, or on the enclosed questionnaire.

More details next issue, but for now please put the date in your diary—whether it's to run, volunteer or spectate!



## An Irresistible Revolution?

I am writing this short article for the Spring *Mill News* during Holy Week (Holy Week in the Christian year is the week immediately preceding Easter).

At this time of year in particular, people of all faiths and none have the opportunity to reflect on the last week in the life of Jesus Christ.

The Easter story, as retold in the new BBC event drama *The*

*Passion*, takes up and encourages this in a compelling way. This particular retelling depicts the tension between different views of revolution. The revolutionaries of Jesus' time stood ready to sweep Jesus to power as he entered Jerusalem. However, he rejected their naïve concept of replacing power with power and instead he chose a revolution of humility and sacrifice.

But the story didn't end there. Instead, the story of Jesus is also one of enduring, of overcoming, of living to tell, of hope. Jesus

showed another way of doing life.

At Romsey Mill we want our work with children, young people and families to exemplify a distinctive way of doing life, one that embraces humility, sacrifice, endurance, and hope.

We invite you to join us in this work so that together we might participate in an irresistible revolution.

**Neil Perry, CEO**

## Under 5s: news in brief

The recently started fourth Playgroup morning has been very successful: it is fully subscribed and children are developing well.

We plan to introduce Parentcraft classes (antenatal) and breastfeeding clinics during the summer term.



We are awaiting the outcome of our Ofsted inspections—early indications are good.

Parent action group F@RM (Friends at Romsey Mill) are holding a 'Big Toddler' sponsored event at Vinery Road park on Sat 7th June, in aid of Barnardo's and Romsey Mill.



## 'Care to Learn'

Since April 2007 the Young Parents Programme courses have joined up with a government initiative called 'Care to Learn' which provides money for childcare for young parents under 20, so they can access learning (see [www.dfes.gov.uk/caretolearn](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/caretolearn)).

The Young Parents Programme crèche has become Ofsted registered, making it possible for crèche workers to be funded through this scheme.



Since 'Care to Learn' began financially supporting young women to attend courses and to use the crèche facilities at Romsey Mill, Under 5s have been able to provide a consistent and qualified childcare team for the courses. This has been vital for those parents anxious about leaving babies for the first time.

19 young parents have benefitted from using the 'Care to Learn' funding to access courses such as: Healthy Living, Self Confidence, Textiles and Literacy.

Many of these have reported...

- Developing new skills and confidence
- Enjoying mixing with other people and getting out of the house
- Becoming more independent
- Gaining qualifications
- Being able to go onto college

The Young Parents Programme would like to thank Louise Bowett-Jones, the Under 5s team, and the volunteers for all their hard work and provision of such an excellent childcare service.

***'I found [crèche] really useful and definitely think it's helped. They're all really nice so I trust them.'***

***'I was a bit scared to leave her [at crèche] at the beginning, but I'm fine now coz I know she's fine.'***

# Thank you, A-Team!

Mother of Aspire group member

*A-Team is the Aspire Programme's youth club for 9-12 year-olds with autistic spectrum conditions*

"When we moved to Cambridge Tom\* hadn't been to school for many months (he was permanently excluded because his behaviour was unmanageable). He had absolutely no company and was very lonely and isolated, but attempts to join other groups such as the football club and Cubs were unsuccessful - he simply could not cope and his self-esteem was at an all time low.



He was also completely unable to separate from me because of his anxiety and for more than a year would not physically let me out of his sight. Eventually he found it difficult to even leave the house, and leaned heavily on his siblings for attention and companionship.

I am sure you can imagine how fearful he was about coming to A-Team but when we walked in on the first day I was immensely relieved to see a small group of similar boys, friendly helpers and activities that were spot-on in terms of what these kids like to do. In that very special atmosphere of complete acceptance and understanding, he was happy to be left from day one.

I cannot emphasise enough how much I appreciate the respite, especially during the long period when Tom didn't go to school; didn't go *anywhere* without me. But the benefit to his siblings is even more important. At 14 and 13, they are young carers and inevitably have a lot of extra stress and responsibility because of Tom. Also, he is usually always at home when they are - so, it is very nice for them to come in from school and have some downtime with him not there. Not all of their friends can cope with Tom, either, so it also means they can have a social life without having to excuse their brother's behaviour every five minutes.



There has not been a Thursday since when he has not been desperate to get there and says it is "the highlight of his week". His enjoyment of the group motivates him to overcome his fear of taking part in social activities. A-Team is rebuilding his trust in having adults work 1:1 with him and the boy who never went out is now having swimming lessons, riding three times a week and has asked for football coaching! The most exciting development is that he is now back in mainstream school four mornings a week. A-Team has helped him believe he can join in, make friends and accept help and support."

\*Name has been changed

***"...he is now back in mainstream school...A-Team has helped him believe he can join in, make friends and accept help and support."***

## Transitions Programme developments

### Extra support for parents

The Transitions Programme has developed an excellent programme of personal, social and educational support for vulnerable 10-14 year-olds. In the past few years we have begun to develop contact with their parents, increasingly recognising a need to offer support to them as they begin to face the challenges of supporting their teenager.



To this end, Transitions Coordinator Ellie Howes has developed her work with parents by increasing contact and involvement with parents of children attending the Transfer Programme. Through this she has found that many parents are keen to learn new ways to parent their children as they grow into their teenage years.

Ellie has just completed training enabling her to deliver 'Triple P' (Positive Parenting Programme), which equips parents to parent their children more effectively. Ellie hopes to run the Triple P course with a few parents in the summer term, with a view to starting the course with a larger group in September. This is an important development in the programme, expanding the support available to children and young people we are working with.

### Youth worker Gavin expands his hours

We are delighted that Gavin Howard has expanded his hours in Transitions, enabling us to expand our reach in the east of Cambridge, particularly working with more boys in Coleridge Community College.



## Music projects

Over 70 young people from across Cambridge are now actively involved in our music projects on a regular basis. Over the last three months we have continued to develop these projects and the number of young people



wanting to gain a variety of skills involved in music production is increasing. These young people are given opportunities to express their opinions through music and to develop their self-confidence as a result.

### Open mic nights

We have re-launched an 'Open Mic'(rophone) night, which is attracting 30-40 young people from around Cambridge, and continue to run a successful project for a younger group from Abbey ward.

**'Music lets me say what I think'**

## Joint work with pupil referral units (PRUs)

Many students at PRUs struggle with traditional forms of learning and lack confidence to share their opinions in a class-room environment. The relaxed

approach at Romsey Mill allows them to experiment creatively without feeling threatened or embarrassed. We are now

working with two PRUs and seeking to develop further links with the Youth Offending Service.

### Peer Mentoring

Three young men who have been involved with the Mill for four years are now volunteers - passing on their knowledge and

skills to younger groups. We are seeking to expand this excellent initiative.

We are delighted that our own Lee Tomkies, who has a particular interest and skill base in music technology, will be joining the team full time in April.

## Meet Sarah-Jayne Lomax

" I came here in Sept 07 for my 100 day placement as a 2nd year Social Work student from Anglia Ruskin University. I was immediately impressed with the building and resources and was made to feel incredibly welcome by all the staff.



I'm helping staff in the Young Parents and Under 5s Programmes to plan and deliver group activities and 1:1 support sessions. I particularly enjoy activities that parents and children can enjoy together, such as arts and crafts, physical play and educational sessions such as learning how to cook! All of these have been great fun to participate in. Seeing how much the children and their parents enjoy them is very rewarding.

My time at Romsey Mill is giving me the experience of working within a community with a wide range of different people and hugely qualified dedicated members of staff, all with training in many different areas. It's helping me to further develop my skills, e.g. communications and working with children, which are essential for my future goal of becoming a social worker working with children and families."

## Over 60s

This young at heart group meet on Monday afternoons at Romsey Mill Centre (2pm – 4pm). Activities include: games, chat, bingo, bring & buy,

talks, sports, music, quizzes, crafts, outings, videos...

For more information please contact Ron Doggett on 420932. Thanks to Ron Doggett and Margaret Davies, who make it happen!

## Shop and search fundraising!

Do you search the internet or shop online?

Yes? Then please raise funds for Romsey Mill whilst you're at it! All you need to do is go to [www.everyclick.com](http://www.everyclick.com), select Romsey Mill as your chosen charity and off you go! Use it as your search engine (just like you would *Google* or *Yahoo*) and

every click will generate funds for our work. When you want to shop online at favourite stores such as Amazon, Tesco, Asda, M&S, ebay... go *through* the everyclick site and they will donate a portion of your purchase to us. We have already received our first £30 from 19 people using the site, but if everyone reading this started to use it that could rocket to £30,000 a quarter!



## Online giving

It's easy to make a donation to Romsey Mill online using a credit or debit card. Just go to the '[Get Involved](#)' section of our website and click:

 **donate now**

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