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Peter Phenna, Romsey Mill founder



Neil Perry, current Romsey Mill CEO

## Celebrating 30 years with Romsey Mill

2010 is a special year for Romsey Mill as it marks 30 years since the charity was established. We're planning lots of exciting ways to celebrate Romsey Mill's 30<sup>th</sup> birthday, with opportunities for everyone to be involved. These include a reunion event, a thanksgiving service, an auction of promises, open days, and parties.

a young person or family, as a volunteer, or as a member of the staff team. They can be stories about friendships made, activities enjoyed, faith developed, lives transformed, communities helped. Please send your stories, and pictures if you have any, in to us at Romsey Mill Centre (contact details on page two).

A second way you can be involved in 30<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations is through our *Year of Challenges*.

### *"Year of Challenges"*

Whether you prefer skateboards or ironing boards, climbing or reclining, you can take part! The idea is that you take on a challenge that will raise funds for and/or awareness of Romsey Mill. It could be a sponsored toddle, read, hike or bike, a coffee morning, a music gig, a run, a garden party or an epic adventure!

The idea is that everyone can be involved in their own way, either as a group or as individuals, perhaps involving your school, sports club,

## Church partners event

New member of the fundraising team, Karen Hosking, organised an event in November to develop our partnerships with city churches. Representatives from eleven churches met to discuss ways to support one another's work.

We are keen to maintain and develop links with partner organisations that share our Christian ethos. The evening was a good way to inform and enthuse churches, and to explore ways of working together. We are also excited about launching the church reps scheme next year.

We hope to make the most of the opportunity for more people to hear about Romsey Mill's work with children, young people and families, and straight away there are two ways in which you can participate.

### *"What's your story?"*

We're looking for stories of people who have benefited from opportunities created with Romsey Mill over the 30 years. Whether you are currently involved, participated in the recent past, or have memories from decades ago, we'd love to hear from you!

It would be great to receive stories from people who have participated in Romsey Mill groups and activities, as

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church or bunch of mates. The more the merrier!

If you are able to, please visit our website ([www.romseymill.org](http://www.romseymill.org)) for regular updates on our 30th birthday activities. We hope that many of you who have helped in making Romsey Mill what it is will join with us in making 2010 a year to remember and, with God's help, a spring board for the next 30 years.

**Neil Perry**

## How to participate in the 30th

Please send stories and pictures of your time with Romsey Mill to Martin Brooke at [martin.brooke@romseymill.org](mailto:martin.brooke@romseymill.org) or post them in to Romsey Mill Centre.

For more information about our *Year of Challenges*, or for a sponsorship pack, please contact Sam Hill on 01223 566492, [sam.hill@romseymill.org](mailto:sam.hill@romseymill.org) or drop in to Romsey Mill Centre.

## Stop the pigeon!



This term, we added clay pigeon shooting and kickboxing to the range of positive activities we're developing. Two groups travelled to High Harthay Shooting Ground near Huntingdon to hit clay discs whizzing through the air, using 12-bore shotguns.

Staff at High Harthay patiently coached the young people in this tricky sport, keeping everyone safe and enabling them to achieve some brilliant scores through perseverance and attention to detail. It was a first for everyone who went and all enjoyed it greatly.

Young people took part in eight Muay Thai Kickboxing sessions, instructed by Kru Ryan Rudkin, the England Coach and founder of Cambridge Singto Kickboxing gym. The sessions addressed fitness, violence and emotional literacy as well as engaging the young people in a fun activity through which they achieved success. Along with building self-confidence, persistence and determination, the young people made new links with the community. The majority of the young people intend to continue kickboxing, enjoying the sport and its discipline.



## Visiting families

Fiona Wade joined Romsey Mill in September as the new Family Involvement Worker for the Children's Centre. Fiona has a wealth of experience of supporting families through her training as a midwife and experience of working in Children's Centres for the past few years.

Fiona has been involved in setting up new groups at locations other than Romsey Mill Centre to enable families who live further away to access support. Fiona's appointment has also enabled Romsey Mill to begin visiting parents of 0-5s at home to let them know about the support available.

## Incey Wincey Literacy

Romsey Mill's Early Years team is always looking for ways to enhance children's experience of language learning, providing a secure skills base when they start formal education at school. We are currently benefiting from the expertise of Christine Barker, National Literacy Consultant for Cambridgeshire County Council, who is training the team twice a term in strategies for teaching literacy through play.

Our playgroup staff Jacqui and Emma put training into practice with their Incey Wincey Spider routine that combined visual aids in the shape of a sparkly drainpipe, black spider, bright sunshine and rain clouds, with printed words and singing. Such an approach engages children who have different learning styles – tactile, visual and auditory – making learning accessible to all and combining the development of skills in communication, language



and literacy. The children and play leaders all enjoy this new rendition of an old song, helping to further excellence in our Playgroup activities.

# My story - Nikki, a young parent

In June 2006, I moved to Cambridge to stay at the Women's Refuge. I was seven months pregnant, aged 17, in a new city I'd never been to before. I cried when I got off the train. I phoned my mum, told her I was in 'bike city' and that I wanted to go home. Next month I heard about Peter Maitland Court - a home for young mums. I went for a chat there, met Emily and through her heard about Romsey Mill. I started going to antenatal group at Romsey Mill, then went to the baby group. It was good to meet others in similar situations. Everyone was really friendly and the staff helped with everything if I was worried. They always gave me the right support.

I did various courses at Romsey Mill: Drama, English, Textiles and Maths. I started a hairdressing course at CRC but didn't complete it as my daughter was unwell. Then I moved house and found myself pregnant with my second child, living in a flat three floors up. I moved again. During all this I continued my involvement with Romsey Mill. It was nice to be around people I could talk to.

I decided it was time to do something to make my kids look up to me. I wanted to put the past behind me and start afresh. It was difficult to manage childcare and funding but Romsey Mill helped me to arrange everything. I wouldn't be where I am if it wasn't for Romsey Mill: I would have quit if I hadn't had the

support to push me to keep on going. Now I'm supporting other young parents at college, so I'm doing a similar job to Emily. She has inspired me.

Knowing the children have settled into the nursery helps a lot. When things get tough I just look to the future. I'd like to work with children with cerebral palsy. I think it would be really rewarding at the end of the day, knowing that I'd helped somebody else.

Nikki having fun baking cakes with Emily Barton, a Young Parents Programme worker at Romsey Mill



I think other young parents should go to baby group so their kids can interact with other children. Romsey Mill will help with courses. Then they can progress with their education. Even if they find it tough, the support they need is there.

## Football crazy

Matt Howell, a youth worker for Romsey Mill, spent three weeks in Ghana earlier in the year, working with an underprivileged children's centre.

Matt taught in the centre and also coached the under 12s football team. Great stuff Matt!



## Freedom from abuse

In the UK a woman is assaulted in her home every 6 seconds. The government has announced that all school children will be taught that using violence against women is wrong. But many women grow up in abusive homes, go on to choose violent partners and have children who are then exposed to domestic violence. Thus a cycle goes on. The Freedom Programme aims to break into this damaging cycle.

Steve Rudkin trained as a facilitator for the Freedom Programme, a 12-week course providing a forum where women can safely explore issues of domestic abuse and be equipped to make safer choices in the future. The course enables women to take greater control of their lives, to recognise beliefs held by abusive partners, to explore the impact of their life's history on their circumstances and to enable them

better to protect their children.

Steve, from Romsey Mill, and Lynn Tumber, from the King's Hedges Family Support Project, have co-facilitated a successful course in north Cambridge: now it is finished participants are continuing to support one another, and want to take part in future groups as peer educators. Some are breaking free from family patterns of involvement in abusive relationships that span generations. Forty women have already said they want to take part in the next Freedom Programme, though there are spaces for only 16, and new referrals are continuing to come in weekly. The demand is huge and we are looking for ways to meet it.

Contact: Steve Rudkin:  
[s.rudkin@romseymill.org](mailto:s.rudkin@romseymill.org) or  
07760 202309

## Ready to Go goes nationwide

Romsey Mill's *Ready to Go* resource is being rolled-out to primary schools across the country following successful pilots at more than a dozen schools in Cambridgeshire, including Manor Community College and the Parkside Federation.

*Ready to Go* is an easy-to-use, off-the-shelf resource designed to support children during the transition from primary to secondary school. It has been developed by our Transitions team at Romsey Mill who have been working alongside young people moving from primary to

secondary school for over 10 years. Ellie Howes, Transitions co-ordinator at Romsey Mill, said: "It's great to see our pioneering work in this area being adopted by schools in Cambridgeshire and beyond.

"Moving from primary to secondary school can be a traumatic, daunting and difficult time for young people and their

families, on a par with moving house."

For more information contact Ellie Howes 01223 566392 or email [transitions@romseymill.org](mailto:transitions@romseymill.org).



## Bon voyage

Romsey Mill would like to say a heartfelt thank you to Neal Wilcox, a youth development worker on our SIP programme, for his commitment, energy, and enthusiasm, over the past two and a half years.

Neal is leaving the Mill to take up a new teaching post at a small school for children in care near Stansted Airport in Essex, which is much closer to Neal's home.



"It's really sad to be leaving but I have so many great memories of Romsey Mill, the staff and the young people," said Neal. "The Mill's flexibility and adaptability to develop programmes that are shaped around the young people has been really awesome—keep up the great work!"

## Pioneering 'Best Practice'

Over the last two years Romsey Mill and the Cambridgeshire Sexual Health and Teenage Pregnancy Partnership (SHTPP) have been working together to promote effective ways of supporting young parents based on 'best practice' national guidelines and the models of work developed over 10 years through the Young Parents Programme at Romsey Mill.

We have met with Children's Centre managers, area network committees and heads of services to encourage them to employ specialist posts across the county who have direct responsibility for the support of young parents.

As part of this process, on 16th November we delivered a day training course to 13 specialist young parents workers from across Cambridgeshire.

The training covered topics such as: developing group activities, running tailored antenatal sessions, effective outreach methods and information and guidance on the support available for young parents locally.

Each worker was provided with an antenatal resource pack that included 8 tailor-made sessions that would equip them to begin running antenatal sessions in their own areas of Cambridgeshire. Feedback from the day was very positive.

For more new stories about Romsey Mill, please visit:

[www.romseymill.org](http://www.romseymill.org)

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