

Abbey Together

The newsletter of Amesbury Abbey Group

September 2026



Spectacular September

What a fantastic few weeks we've had. The seasons are starting to change, and autumn is just starting to think about making an appearance. Our grounds are looking particularly beautiful thanks to our wonderful gardening team, and everyone has been enjoying all we are blessed with at home, out and about strolling (or being gently pushed) through the grounds.

We've also been busy with historical trips, music, art, entertainment, delicious food and even a few creepy crawlies along the way! From cruising the Kennet & Avon Canal to enjoying a night at the circus, there's been plenty happening at both Amesbury Abbey and Sutton Manor with something for everyone to get excited about.



Naam



Creepy Crawly

Everyone enjoyed a fantastic visit from ZooLab; creepy-crawly heaven! Not for the faint-hearted, but what amazing creatures. There was so much fun to be had handling these wee, and not so wee, beasts. The excellent and informative keepers got everyone enthused about these unusual animals and the time passed in a flash.



David Niven – From Movie Extra To Hollywood

We very much enjoyed September's Richmond Arts Society lecture, which was an absolute corker: 'David Niven and Friends – From Movie Extra to Hollywood Institution'. We delved into Niven's remarkable life and career, and explored his enduring place in the public's affection. A wonderful speaker and a fantastic character to learn about.



A Journey Through History At The Great Hall

We had a wonderful visit to The Great Hall in Winchester. What a building, steeped in history and legend. As the remains of the magnificent Winchester Castle, built by William the Conqueror, it is home to the legendary Arthurian Round Table. We thoroughly enjoyed exploring the hall's many treasures and particularly loved seeing the large-scale bronze of Queen Elizabeth II, created by our very own Vivien Mallock. What an incredible talent she has and what an honour to have sculpted royalty.





Steel Pan Duo Bring The Energy!

Our first in-house entertainment of September went with a BANG! The Steel Pan Duo brought all the energy. Starting with a fascinating talk on how the pans are made, the origins of the music and how Rebecca and Graham met and formed the band, we then enjoyed some brilliant music. Residents got involved in the performance with maracas and tambourines, a few even having a go on the actual pans and a number up and dancing!

What an afternoon. Great fun.



Textured Art

Ta-dah! Van Gogh, eat your heart out. The results of the residents' textured art projects are stunning. The canvases crafted in the first session were absolutely transformed by the addition of colour in week two. Marvellous.





A Night At Circus Wonderland

What a brilliant night. Circus Wonderland came to town, and the residents were thrilled to pay a visit to the Big Top. The feats were fantastic, the popcorn delicious, and we were on the edge of our seats throughout. Thanks, as ever, to Jo for masterminding such a memorable night.



Cruising the Kennet & Avon Canal

A day of two halves – rain and sunshine in equal amounts.

This was the first of two planned trips along the Kennet & Avon Canal with the excellent Bruce Boats Co. Skipper Paul Eames and three other crew, all volunteers, were brilliant. Hugely knowledgeable about the canal and its history, we thoroughly enjoyed their company.

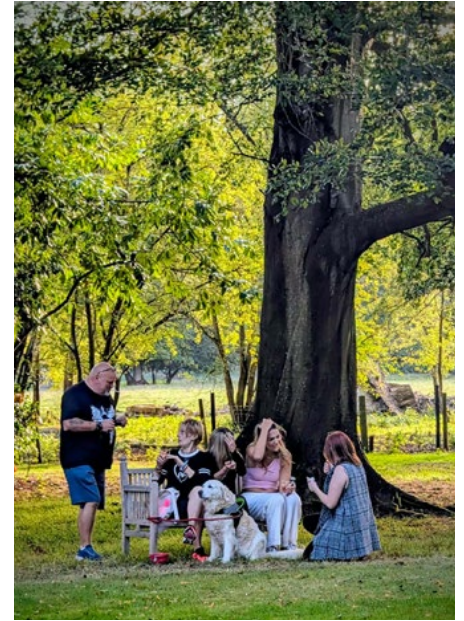




Throughout the day, we travelled through four locks, from Great Bedwyn to Beam Engine Lock. We saw fantastic wildlife, including herons, red kites and swans. Everyone enjoyed the delicious picnic feast provided for lunch by Manoj and Yvonne, our Manor chefs.

All in all, it was a memorable day of conversation, laughter and gently drifting through beautiful countryside. Everyone slept soundly after plenty of fresh air, fine food and great company. All in all, it was a memorable day of conversation, laughter and gently drifting through beautiful countryside. Everyone slept soundly after plenty of fresh air, fine food and great company.





AAG End-of-Summer Staff BBQ

Oh, what a night! In a secret corner of the park down by the river, we had an absolute hoot at our end-of-summer staff BBQ. The setting was magical, the weather was perfect, the food was unbelievably delicious, and the entertainment was first-class!

What a fantastic afternoon and evening celebrating our superstar staff from both Sutton and Amesbury. We even had a few residents join us. Commander Brown in the flash mob deserves a special mention!





Massive thanks to Richard, our Director of Music; Heath, for putting up and dressing the marquee; Teresa, for the logistics; and Chef Yvonne, who brought her absolute A-game on the food front.



No one will be forgetting that night for a while. Just what we all needed, ready for autumn.





Cruising the Kennet & Avon Canal – Part 2

Another fantastic day out on the Kennet & Avon. This time we had a whole day of sunshine and another expert team: Skipper Tony, with Helen, Paul and Claire helping out. We were joined by Fudge the dog, who behaved beautifully throughout and seemed to enjoy the experience.



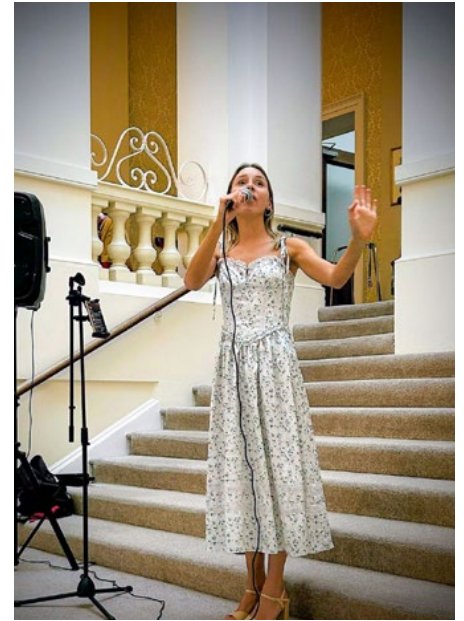


We had a delicious lunch of poached salmon from our wonderful Manor chefs, and many interesting conversations were sparked by the history of the canal and local area. Top marks were awarded to Mr Cumming for his work at the tiller, consolidated with a handshake from the Skipper for the precision of his steering. Another lovely day out. We'll be back again next year!



An Afternoon of Musical Entertainment

Abbey residents were delighted to welcome Charlotte from The Mini Concerts Co. to perform her Doris Day tribute, 'The Girl Next Door'. Her beautiful voice had everyone enchanted. Meanwhile, over at Sutton, residents were enjoying the smooth sounds of Joel Phelps, returning to the Drawing Room with his wonderful piano playing and extensive repertoire.



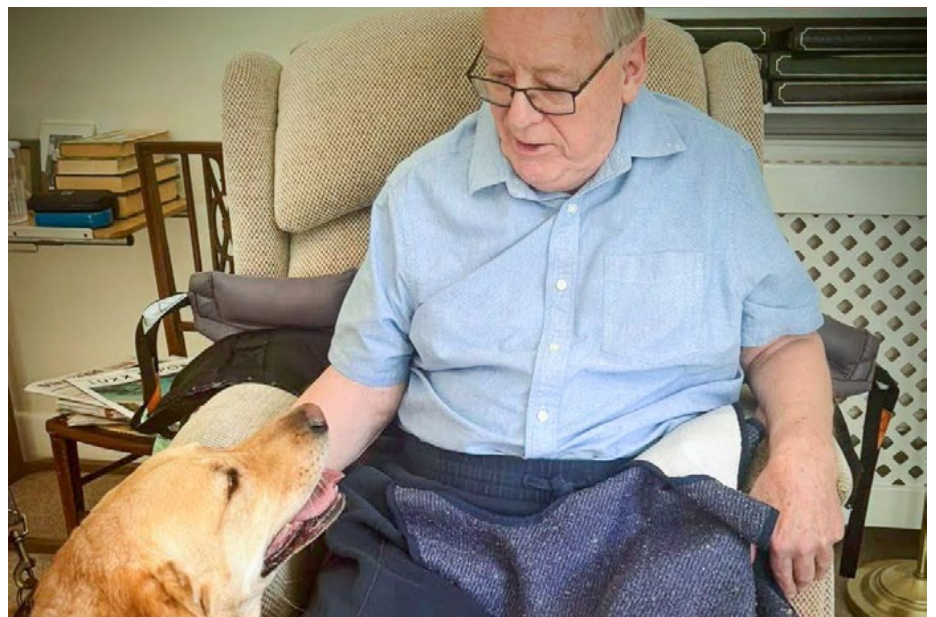
Many Happy Returns!

Sutton Manor wished our very own Mrs Weatherley a very happy 103rd Birthday, with a beautiful cake, fabulous flowers and a classic cup of tea with friends. Many happy returns to our longest-serving resident who has lived with us for approaching a quarter of a century! What an incredible force of nature she is.



Charlie Charms Us

Residents were delighted to welcome our four-legged friend Charlie, and his mum Janine, to the Manor this week. He's such a gorgeous boy, with an incredibly sweet and kind temperament. He's always happy to say hello, absolutely loves a fuss and is guaranteed to raise a smile.





Macmillan Coffee Morning

As usual, Sutton Manor and Amesbury Abbey were both keen to support the annual Macmillan Coffee Morning. Staff, residents and the chefs created an array of delights for fundraising that Nigella would be proud of.

Clearly these proved too hard for anyone to resist, and this year we've brought in a staggering (AAG record-breaking?) joint total of £800 across the two sites!

Special mentions must go to Tracy at the Abbey, who created such a fabulous Macmillan-branded cake and the carpet layers at Sutton, who were in on Friday and came back for more on Saturday, raising almost £80 buying Yvonne's delicious cupcakes alone!

An all-round stellar effort from everyone involved. The takings tins, and our tummies, are bulging.



Remember, Remember

Date for your diaries! AAG Fireworks Display will be held at Sutton Manor this year. We hope you can join us for this brilliant night of fireworks and food. Please register your attendance with your manager so we can ensure we have plenty of soup and sausages!



Tilers On The Roof!

Visitors to the Manor may well have wondered what all the scaffolding going up around the building over the last few weeks is for...

We have, in fact, been preparing for the start of a HUGE roof renewal and

re-decoration project, which is now well underway! Two whole sides of the building – the main lawn and front reception sides – are being completely stripped, re-battened, felted and tiled, with repairs carried out and a full paint job undertaken.

We'll be looking absolutely tip-top and brand new for Christmas. Thanks so much for bearing with us through the disruption to the main entrance while we give our beautiful, historic building a facelift.