



HERITAGE OPEN DAYS IN READING

6-15 September 2024



heritageopendays.org
whatsonreading.com



FREE TO EXPLORE



Heritage Open Days in Reading

6-15 September 2024

Explore Reading's heritage as part of England's annual heritage festival. All Heritage Open Days events are FREE to attend, but charity donations are accepted at some events.

This Reading programme lists over 40 events in Reading and the surrounding area that showcase some of the rich stories that make Reading such a unique place to live, work or visit.

A number of these events must be pre-booked due to limited capacities. Check the individual event listing to see if you need to book.

Please check heritageopendays.org before travelling to check accessibility. Many of these heritage sites have limited wheelchair accessibility and there is full detail of access arrangements on the website. The website also provides information on travel options.

Look out for events that celebrate Reading's connections as part of this year's theme of Routes – Networks – Connections.

All the events are listed in date order.

Key:



Routes - Networks - Connections

Explore how people and ideas have moved around and come together throughout history.



Online only

All information is correct at the time of printing.

1 Basildon Park

Discover 400 acres of the National Trust's historic parkland and gardens centred around an 18th century Palladian villa. From its origins connected to the East India Company, to a WWII army base and a glamorous home in the 1950s, the history of Basildon Park is a rich and interesting one. The house has a collection of fine furnishings and carefully selected Old Masters. Free during Heritage Open Days.



Fri 6 – Sun 15 Sept
11:00 – 17:00

Basildon Park, National Trust,
Lower Basildon RG8 9NR
No booking required



Fri 6 Sept
10:00 – 14:00

Sat 7 Sept
09:30 – 17:30

Thurs 12 Sept
10:30 – 12:30

Sat 14 Sept
10:00 – 16:00

14 Castle Street RG1 7RD No booking required

2 St Mary's Episcopal Chapel

Self-guided tours of the chapel and display of pots and glassware found in a pit under the floor during renovations. Search for your ancestor in the baptismal register (1884-present). The chapel was opened for worship in 1798 but the site had previously housed the County Gaol.

3 Reading Abbey Gateway Tour

A special opportunity to visit the Abbey Gateway and learn about this listed building's fascinating history and its role in the Abbey Quarter. Hear about the Abbey monks, visiting royalty, links to novelist Jane Austen and much more. Please note that the Gateway has no step free access and there are uneven steps and floors. Delivered by the Reading Museum team.

Fri 6 Sept, 11:00

Reading Abbey Gateway,
Abbey Street RG1 3BD
Booking required:
readingmuseum.org.uk





4 Watlington House – a hidden gem

Grade II listed Watlington House is a hidden gem of a house and garden in the heart of Reading. Reading's oldest domestic building, its history goes back to the Tudor period. Enjoy the restored garden and meet some of the modern-day tenants. During the morning there will be short talks about the history of the house and restoration of the garden.

Fri 6 Sept
09:30 – 16:00
44 Watlington Street
RG1 4RJ
No booking required



5 Renewable Energy Exhibited

Join the Mills Archive Trust for an exhibition on the history and development of renewable energy. The Trust is an award-winning archive and educational institution that prides itself on connecting the past with the present. The display will cover centuries of innovation from milling through to the modern-day wind and water turbines used for electricity generation.

Fri 6 Sept
10:00 – 16:00
Sat 7 Sept
11:00 – 14:00
44 Watlington Street
RG1 4RJ
No booking required



6 About Your House – discover the families who lived in your house

Who lived in your house? Ask the experts at the Centre for Heritage and Family History how to find out who occupied the premises and when. See the changes to Reading caused by the creation of the Inner Distribution Road. Find out what Broad Street looked like in the past. Displays, videos and tours on different days.



Fri 6 Sept 10:30 – 16:00 | **Sat 7 Sept** 10:30 – 14:30 | **Mon 9 Sept** 10:30 – 15:00 | **Tue 10 Sept** 10:30 – 16:00 | **Sat 14 Sept** 10:30 – 14:30
Centre for Heritage & Family History, 2nd Floor, Reading Central Library RG1 3BQ
No booking required

7 Interwoven Tales: Embracing Diversity in Diaspora Exhibition



A profound exploration of displacement depicted by refugees through embroidery. Each piece tells a unique story, forming a narrative of resilience and unity. The exhibition is the result of a year-long project which aims to engage viewers in a dialogue that transcends boundaries of language, culture and geography.



Sat 7 | Sun 8 | Sat 14 | Sun 15 Sept
10:00 – 17:00
Riverside Museum – Turbine House,
Kenavon Drive RG1 3DH
No booking required



8 Tour of the University of Reading's Great Hall

For the first time during Heritage Open Days, the University Great Hall is open to the public. Hear about its history, view the organ, enjoy the architecture and the internal decor and see behind the scenes

Sat 7 Sept, 11:00 & 12:15
London Road campus,
Acacia Road, off London Road
RG1 5AQ
Pre-booking required:
brenda@morrisandfamily.co.uk

backstage. The Grade II listed Great Hall was designed by Ravenscroft and Steward Smith and opened in 1906. It is used for degree congregations, concerts, examinations, lectures and receptions.

9 Saint Giles Church Reading

View one of the three medieval churches in Reading. In 1191, Pope Clement III gave the church to Reading Abbey and throughout the Middle Ages it enjoyed the right of sanctuary. During the Civil Wars of the 17th century, St. Giles tower was garrisoned for the King and the upper part was destroyed in 1643. The fabric was restored at the end of hostilities.



Sat 7 & Sat 14 Sept
10:00 – 16:00
Southampton Street RG1 2QP
No booking required



10 The origins of plants at Caversham Court Gardens



Circumnavigate the globe learning the origins of some of the fine collection of plants and trees in Caversham Court Gardens. Throughout history, travellers have collected useful and beautiful plants and brought them back to Britain from all over the world. Our quiz will take you round the gardens and give you fun facts about important plants and their uses. Children's activities also available.

Sat 7 & Sun 8 Sept
11:00-16:00

Church Road, Caversham
RG4 7AD
No booking required

11 Royal Berkshire Archives Tour

Behind the scenes of the Royal Berkshire Archives, the Archives of the Royal County. We will take you where visitors are not normally allowed to go – into the archive storage and staff areas. Our conservator will provide details on the work that they do and show you the conservation studio too. You'll discover more about the services we offer, the collections we hold and how to visit to use the archives yourself.



Sat 7 Sept, 10:30

Royal Berkshire Archives,
9 Coley Avenue RG1 6AF
Pre-booking required:
0118 937 5132



Sat 7 & Thur 12 Sept
09:50

Corner of Pell Street &
Elgar Road RG1 2NZ
Pre-booking required:
eventbrite.co.uk

12 Katesgrove Walkabout



A guided walk by Terry's Reading Walkabouts covering Katesgrove's history, culture, heritage, industry and people as well as its wonderful Victorian Brickwork. Staggered terraced houses, lost printing works, the history of Reading bricks, the story of Trooper Potts VC, Waterloo Meadows alongside the Kennet, the Hindu Temple and the Whitley Pump ending up at the Hook and Tackle for a drink and a natter.



Sat 7 Sept, 10:00 – 16:30

Rowberry Morris,
17 Castle Street RG1 7SB
No booking required

13 17 Castle Street

Visit the rooms not normally open to the public in this 16th century house with interesting beam construction, diamond chimneys, carriage mounting block and Victorian staircase. Previously used as an inn, doctor's residence and surgery and once owned by a Reading Mayor. The building has been used as a Solicitor's Practice since 1971.

14 Reading Old – A 'Garden Cemetery'

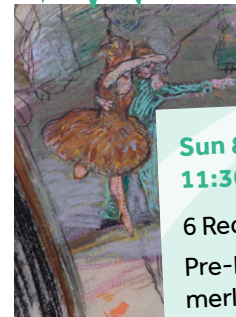
Reading Old, which opened in 1843, is one of the earliest examples of a Garden Cemetery in the UK. Guided walks and talks around the cemetery focusing on the history of the Garden Cemetery movement plus exploring some of the nature and wildlife related to the original planting of the site by Sutton Seeds Ltd. The walks/talks are run by volunteers from Econet Friends of Reading Old group.



Sun 8 Sept, 13:00 – 15:30

Reading Old Cemetery,
London Road RG1 3AQ
No booking required

15 The MERL: Routes, Connections, Networks



Sun 8 Sept
11:30, 14:00 & 15:30

6 Redlands Road RG1 5EX
Pre-booking required:
merl.reading.ac.uk/whats-on

Book onto one of these special events for a unique chance to view pop-up displays of items from the University of Reading's Special Collections and Art Collections not currently on public display. Material will celebrate how people and ideas have moved around and come together throughout history.

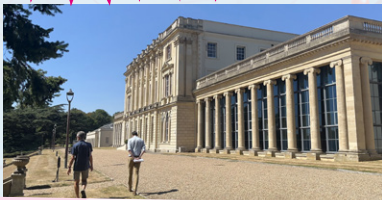
16 Tour of Foxhill House

Foxhill House is a fine example of mid-Victorian architecture. Designed by Alfred Waterhouse, it is situated on raised ground near the northern corner of the University's Whiteknights campus overlooking the meadows down to the lake. The guided tour by members of The Friends of the University of Reading will enable you to see the hall and some rooms in the house as well as the former stable block, the stylish external design and the garden.



Sun 8 Sept, 11:00 & 12:15

University of Reading, Whiteknights
campus, Shinfield Road RG6 6EP
Pre-booking required:
brenda@morrisandfamily.co.uk



17 BBC Monitoring's place in Caversham



From 1943 to 2018 BBC Monitoring was an integral part of Caversham. Over the years, employees came from across the world and enriched the local community. Join Sarah Stuffsins, who worked at Caversham Park from 1985 to 2018, for a talk on this fascinating slice of local history. Supported by the Caversham and District Residents Association.

Tues 10 Sept, 19:00

St Barnabas Church, Grove Road, Emmer Green RG4 8RA

Pre-booking required: [eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk)

18 Reading Museum Store Tours

Join us behind the scenes at our store in Whitley. This year's theme is Roman Silchester, looking at objects connecting the regional capital to the wider Roman empire. Tours are in small groups led by the Reading Museum team and last about an hour.



**Wed 11 Sept
11:00, 12:15, 14:00 & 15:15**

Directions will be sent by email five days before the tour

Booking required at [readingmuseum.org.uk](https://www.readingmuseum.org.uk)



19 Making connections at Green Health Thames Valley



Thurs 12 Sept, 16:30

The Well Centre, Next to 29 Dawlish Road RG2 7SD

Pre-booking required: charlotte@greenhealththamesvalley.org.uk

Our garden connects us with nature in many different ways. It also connects us to our local community... come along and discover this magical space for yourself. Enjoy nature connection activities that will develop a sense of place and a sense of connection for the attendee.

20 Reading's Renewable Routes



Guided walks to celebrate the launch of the Mills Archive Trust's new walking route, which journeys through Reading's mills and renewable energy sites. The walk will start at Watlington House with an exhibition followed by a guided walk around Reading by Margaret Simons, Mills Archive Trustee and seasoned historian. Exhibition and walk will last 90 minutes.



Fri 13 Sept 10:00 | **Sat 14 Sept 10:00 & 12:00** | **Sun 15 Sept 12:00**

Watlington House, 44 Watlington Street RG1 4RJ
Pre-booking essential:
[0118 950 2052](tel:01189502052) / outreach@millsarchive.org

21 A new garden at historic Hillside House

The new garden at Hillside House was created in 2020-21. It was opened to the public for the first-time during Heritage Open Days 2023. This is an opportunity to see how it has changed. The garden was designed by Lloyd Turner and garden designer Gaila Adair who will give tours. It celebrates the history of the house and is a memorial to the sons of the Sutton family who died during WWI. The house itself is not open.



**Sat 14 Sept
10:00, 11:00 & 12:00**

Hillside House 19-28 Allcroft Road RG1 5DJ

Booking required: [eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk)

22 Reading Minster Heritage Weekend

Reading Minster is the oldest ecclesiastical foundation in Reading, with a history dating back to the 10th century. It had strong links with Reading Abbey and following the reformation, was extensively restored using stones and timber from the ruins of the dissolved Abbey. There will be church and parish records on display and an opportunity to light candles for quiet prayer and reflection.



**Sat 14 Sept
10:00 – 16:00**

**Sat 15 Sept
10:00 – 13:00**

St Mary's Butts RG1 2LG
No booking required

23 Royal Berkshire Hospital Medical Museum

Landmarks from the fascinating history of medicine and surgery and the important developments that have taken place at the Royal Berkshire Hospital since it was opened in 1839. Being a patient in the past could be very unpleasant, and we have on display old instruments and equipment that bring it all to life.



**Sat 14 & Sun 15 Sept
14:00 – 16:30**

Royal Berkshire Hospital,
London Road RG1 5AN

No booking required



Sat 14 & Sun 15 Sept
11:00 – 17:00

Brock Keep, 571 Oxford Road RG30 1HL
No booking required

24 Brock Keep

A tour around the historic former armoury and gatehouse which is now home to artist studios and contemporary art gallery. Brock Keep (1877) is a fine example of a Victorian keep, built to aid recruitment and to increase local pride and is one of the surviving few that have not been demolished or converted. Since 1980, it has been used for artists' studios and exhibition space and is run by OpenHand OpenSpace.

25 Green Park Wind Turbine Tour

A talk all about the landmark Green Park wind turbine. See the turbine up close and personal, find out what it is, what it does and how it works. Suitable for all age ranges. Meet the experts who will explain all about the Turbine.

Sat 14 Sept
12:00 – 13:00

The Wind Turbine, Green Park,
South Oak Way RG2 6UG

Booking preferred:
greeneducation@hotmail.co.uk



26 St Luke's Church

St Luke's Church (1882-83) is a Victorian church built to serve the growing population of the Redlands area of Reading. Materials on display celebrate the church's 140th anniversary with information about the history of the buildings, music and stained glass windows, a number of which came from the studio of C.E. Kempe.

Sat 14 Sept
09:30 – 17:00

Erleigh Road RG1 5LH
No booking required



27 St Michael Tilehurst – A Celebration of Creativity

Self-guided tours of the beautiful and historic church building, parts of which date back to the 12th century. It was extensively remodelled in the mid-Victorian era and amongst many other interesting features boasts a fine Arts and Crafts stained-glass window by William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones. There will also be a sale of local arts and crafts.



Sat 14 Sept, 10:00 – 16:00

New Lane Hill, Tilehurst RG30 4JX
No booking required

28 Walk in the Light – an exhibition & play by Reading Quakers

Walk in the Light celebrates the 400th anniversary of the birth of itinerant preacher and Quaker founder George Fox with an exhibition of Quaker heritage and artwork and a short play for all ages. The Meeting House itself dates from 1835 and is a strikingly spacious and peaceful place. Its burial ground and garden has uniform rows of simple grave-stones including many Victorian Quakers such as the Huntley and Palmer families.



Sat 14 Sept, 10:00 – 16:00

2 Church Street RG1 2SB
No booking required



Sun 15 Sept
11:30 – 19:00

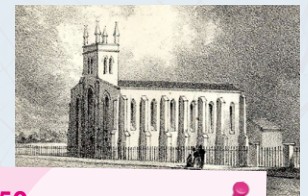
Christchurch Road
RG2 7AR
No booking required

29 Christ Church Open Day and Festival Evensong

Christ Church Reading will be open to the public with guided tours together with a Church/Christian Quiz for the children during the day followed by a Festival Evensong at 6pm with drinks and nibbles afterwards.

30 Victoria Park Area Walkabout

An easy guided walk from Terry's Reading Walkabouts covering a Reading area not well known. Bordered by the railway to the north, the area has grown from 12th century Abbey lands through the Victorian era with its abattoir and historic pubs to modern Reading with Chatham Place and the work of the High Street Heritage Action Zone.



Sun 15 Sept, 09:50

Oxford Road Community School on
Oxford Road RG1 7PJ
Pre-booking required: eventbrite.co.uk



31 Written in Stone

A family-friendly guided tour of Reading Old Cemetery. Find out about the history of the site, some of the monuments and the life stories of people buried there. Dressing up optional but fun! Enter the best outfit competition and win an exciting Victorian-style prize!

Sun 15 Sept, 13:00 – 15:00

Reading Old Cemetery, Cemetery
Junction, London Road RG1 3AQ

Pre-booking preferred:
readingoldcemetery1843@gmail.com

Further afield

Please visit heritageopendays.org for full details of these events outside Reading.



32 Decontamination Suite at Greenham Airbase (Newbury)

Sat 14 & Sun 15 Sept, 11:00 - 16:00
No booking required

33 Exhibition from the Archives of The Bracknell Forest Society (Bracknell)

7 Sept
No booking required

34 From the Garden of Eden to Paradise, a journey in stained glass (Henley)

Fri 6 – Sun 15 Sept, 10:00 - 16:00
No booking required

35 Greys Court (Rotherfield Greys)

Fri 6 – Sun 15 Sept, 10:00 - 17:00
No booking required

36 Masonic Centre Thames Lodge (Henley)

Sat 14 & Sun 15 Sept, 10:00 - 16:00
No booking required

37 Henley's Quaker Heritage – Whatever the weather from frost fairs to global warming (Henley)

14 Sept, 14:00 - 17:00
No booking required

38 Nuffield Place (Huntercombe)

Fri 6 | Sat 7 | Sun 8 | Wed 11 | Thurs 12 |
Sun 15 Sept, 10:00 - 17:00
No booking required

39 St James Church Finchampstead – Open Tower (Finchampstead)

Sun 8 Sept, 14:00 - 17:00
No booking required

40 St. Michael and St. Mary Magdalene Church (Bracknell)

Wed 11 | Thurs 12 | Sat 14 Sept, 11:00 - 16:00
No booking required

41 Wokingham Town Hall (Wokingham)

Sat 14 Sept, 11:00 - 15:00
No booking not required



42 Historic Walking Tours at Silchester Roman City Walls & Amphitheatre

Sun 15 Sept, 10:00 & 14:00
No booking required



Online only



43 Six degrees of separation, from the Zinzan family to Kevin Bacon



Event hosted entirely online – whatsonreading.com

Based on the parlour game Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon, this Reading Libraries film looks at different places and people from Reading's history to see if it is possible to get from a 16th Century family called Zinzan to American actor Kevin Bacon? A chance to learn about Reading's history from ancient to modern through connections.

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