

# Heritage Open Days in Reading

8 – 17 SEPTEMBER 2023



## CREATIVITY UNWRAPPED

[heritageopendays.org](https://heritageopendays.org)  
[whatsonreading.com](https://whatsonreading.com)

FREE TO  
EXPLORE



# Explore Reading's heritage as part of England's annual heritage festival, Heritage Open Days, which celebrates our built, natural and cultural heritage.

Reading places and people are putting on a range of fantastic events to showcase some of the rich stories that make Reading such a unique place to live, work and visit.



## CREATIVITY UNWRAPPED

Look out for Reading events showcasing creativity as part of this year's theme of Creativity Unwrapped.



Please check [heritageopendays.org](http://heritageopendays.org) before travelling to check accessibility – many of these heritage sites have limited wheelchair accessibility – and for closest transport information. A number of events have small capacities so must be booked in advance.

All Heritage Open Days events are free to attend, but charity donations are accepted at some events.

**FREE TO EXPLORE**

Key:  CREATIVITY UNWRAPPED

 ONLINE ONLY

All information is correct at the time of printing.

## 1 Untold Histories of People and Place exhibition



Join Reading High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) as we share creative work from residents and communities. Working with local charities including Alana House, Sadaka, ACRE and Change, Grow, Live we have been exploring untold histories of people and place.

Add your voice to the consultation on public artwork which will be a legacy of the HSHAZ programme.

**FRI 8 – SUN 17 SEPT**

10:00 – 18:00

Riverside Museum, Turbine House, Kenavon Drive, RG1 3DH (next to Bel & The Dragon)

No booking required



## 2 Reading Quaker Meeting House, burial-ground & art exhibition



A place of peace and beautiful simplicity in the centre of Reading. Quakers have occupied this site since 1715 and the current building is late Georgian.



**SAT 9 SEPT**

09:00 – 17:00

2 Church Street, RG1 2SB

No booking required

A strikingly spacious and peaceful interior with original features and a tranquil burial ground and garden including the gravestones of the Huntley and Palmer families. Several Quakers will be unwrapping their artistic creativity and there will be a presentation on 'Quaker iconography' at 10:00, 12:00 and 14:00.

## 3 St Mary's Episcopal Chapel

Self-guided tour of the chapel with special display of "St Mary's Pots", part of the hoard found during the renovation project. The collection has been catalogued and pre-dates the chapel which opened for worship in 1798. The chapel was built on the site of the former County Gaol.



14 Castle Street, RG1 7RD

No booking required

**SAT 9 SEPT**

09:30 – 17:30

**THURS 14 SEPT**

10:30 – 12:30

**SAT 16 SEPT**

10:00 – 16:00

#### 4 17 Castle Street

Visit the rooms not normally open to the public in this 16<sup>th</sup> 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. Now a solicitor's practice.



SAT 9 SEPT

10:00 – 16:30

Rowberry Morris & Co, 17 Castle Street, RG1 7SB

No booking required

#### 7 St Luke's Church – History and Glass



St Luke's is a Victorian church built to serve the growing population of the Redlands area of Reading. The architect was J.R. Piers St. Aubyn. The Church contains a number of fine stained-glass windows from the C.E. Kempe studio (talks at 11:00 and 14:00). Materials celebrating the church's 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary will be on display with extensive information about the history of the buildings, music and windows. There will also be an opportunity to see some beautiful modern stained glass made by local artist Sal Hunt. Refreshments available.



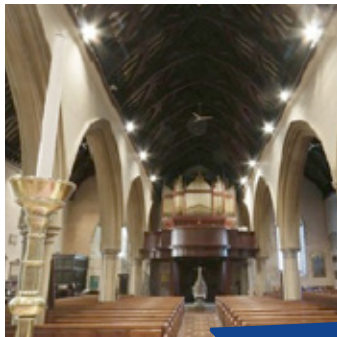
SAT 9 SEPT

10:00 – 17:00

Erleigh Road, RG1 5LH

No booking required

#### 5 St. Giles-in-Reading Church



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 17<sup>th</sup> 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 9 & SAT 16 SEPT

10:00 – 16:00

Southampton Street, RG1 2QP

No booking required

#### 8 Wesley Church Open Day

Celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Wesley Methodist Church is holding an open day with talks/tours. The Grade II listed building was built in 1873 in the Gothic style, designed by an amateur architect. A new entrance extension was built in 1997. Tours at 11:00 and 14:30.

SAT 9 SEPT

10:00 – 17:00

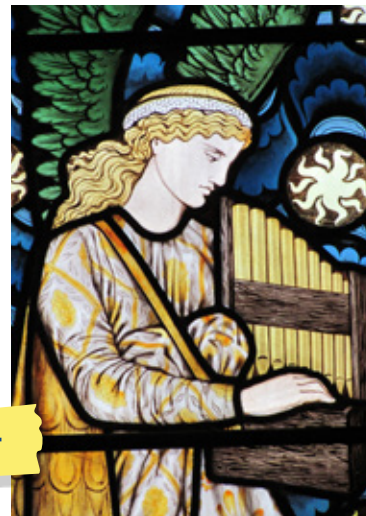
84 Queens Road, RG1 4BW

No booking required

#### 6 St Michael's Church Tilehurst – A Celebration of Creativity



A celebration of creativity set in a beautiful historic church, incorporating an exhibition and sale of local arts and crafts and self-guided tours of the building and churchyard. St Michael's dates back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century and boasts a fine Arts and Crafts stained-glass window by William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones, beautiful sculptures and the ornate Jacobean tomb of the merchant and royal jeweller Peter Vanlore. Refreshments will be available.



SAT 9 SEPT

10:00 – 16:00

New Lane Hill, Tilehurst, RG30 4JX

No booking required

SAT 9 SEPT

10:30

9 Coley Avenue, RG1 6AF

Booking essential: 0118 937 5132

[berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk/contact-us](http://berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk/contact-us)

#### 9 Berkshire Record Office Tour

Come on our free behind the scenes tour of the Berkshire Record Office, the archives of the Royal County. You'll be able to look at some original documents on display, find out more about the services we offer and be taken where visitors are not normally allowed to go – into the archive storage and staff areas. Our conservator will also be on hand to reveal more about their work in repairing documents.

#### 10 Reading Abbey Quarter Tour

A chance to enjoy a guided tour of Reading's historic Abbey Quarter. Book a free ticket for our popular tour as a special treat for Heritage Open Days. Discover the wonderful heritage of Reading's town centre with one of our experienced volunteer tour guides.

SAT 9 SEPT



11:00 – 12:30

Town Hall, Blagrove Street, RG1 1QH

Booking essential: 0118 937 3400

[readingmuseum.org.uk](http://readingmuseum.org.uk)

## 11 Tour of Foxhill House and through the meadows to the Whiteknights lake



Foxhill House is a fine example of mid-Victorian architecture. Designed by Alfred Waterhouse to be his own home, it is situated on raised ground near the northern corner of the University Whiteknights campus overlooking the meadows down to the lake. Since 2004 it has been the home of the School of Law.



**SAT 9 & SUN 10 SEPT**

**11:00 – 13:00**

University of Reading, Foxhill House,  
Shinfield Road, Whiteknights Campus, RG6 6EP

Booking essential: 01635 869594 / [brenda@morrisandfamily.co.uk](mailto:brenda@morrisandfamily.co.uk)



## 12 RISC Edible Roof Garden

Discover a small edible roof forest garden that was developed to demonstrate sustainability and our dependence on plants. All the plants in the garden have an economic use for food, clothing, medicine etc. and come from all over the world. Demonstration of renewable energy, water harvesting and irrigation systems. Steep external staircase.

**SAT 9 & SUN 10 SEPT**

**12:00 – 16:00**

35-39 London Street, RG1 4PS

No booking required

## 13 St Peter's Caversham Conservation Area and Beyond guided walk

A two-hour wander around the less travelled heights and streets of Caversham led by Richard Bennett of Reading Civic Society & Terry's Reading Walkabouts. Including Caversham Court Gardens' restored riverside Gazebo, St Peter's Church, the Mount, St Anne's Well and the only protected group of terraces in Caversham. Finishing in Church St. 2 hours duration.



**SUN 10 & WED 13 SEPT**

**09:50**

Start outside 8 Bridge Street (by bus stop), Caversham, RG4 8AA

Booking essential: [EventBrite.co.uk](http://EventBrite.co.uk) / 07802 763289

## 14 Rediscovering Our Forgotten Heritage



Junction Arch Heritage & Arts (JAHA) will be hosting an exhibition of the work of heritage photographer Matt Emmett at the iconic Grade II Listed Junction Arch. Matt's awards include Architectural Photographer of the Year 2016 and Historic Photographer of the Year 2017. The exhibition is a journey of discovery through ruins and forgotten heritage across the UK and Europe. JAHA are finalising plans to repurpose the building as a vibrant community space.



**SUN 10 SEPT**

**10:00 – 17:00**

Junction Arch, Reading  
Old Cemetery, RG1 4LS

No booking required



## 15 Reading Synagogue

Visitors will be able to view and hear about a traditional synagogue from the guides who will be present on the day. A Grade II listed building which has undergone complete restoration of the roof and cupola, Reading Synagogue is a traditional synagogue in a Moorish Style opened in 1900 and still in regular use.

**SUN 10 SEPT**

**14:30 – 17:00** (last entry at 16:30)

Reading Hebrew Congregation, 7 Goldsmid Road, RG1 7YB

No booking required

## 16 Green Park Wind Turbine Tour

Come along to the outdoor amphitheatre at Green Park wind turbine and find out all about the fifteen-year-old turbine. The tour will also allow for a full Q&A session – up close and personal, find out what it is, what it does, how it works and experience a few experiments too. Suitable for all ages.

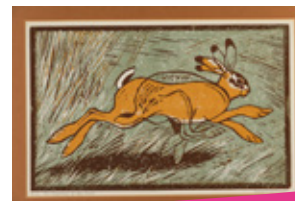


**SUN 10 SEPT**

**16:00**

South Oak Way, Green Park, RG2 6UG

No booking required



**MON 11 SEPT**

## 17 Heritage Open Days at The MERL



A unique chance to see works of art and archive items from the University of Reading's Special Collections and Art Collections that are not normally on display. Material will celebrate the stories and work of experts and enthusiastic amateurs, showcasing creativity in Reading and beyond. Please note: the cafe and shop will be open but the galleries will be closed.

**10:30 – 11:20, 11:30 – 12:20 & 14:00 – 14:50**

Museum of English Rural Life, 6 Redlands Road, RG1 5EX

Booking essential: [merl.reading.ac.uk/whats-on](http://merl.reading.ac.uk/whats-on)



**MON 11 – SAT 16 SEPT**

## 18 Discover Basildon Park



Discover 400 acres of the National Trust's historic parkland and gardens with an 18<sup>th</sup>-century Palladian villa at its heart. The impressive mansion with its collection of fine furniture and Old Masters as well as the picturesque pleasure grounds will be open to explore throughout the day. The tea-room will be open for refreshments.

**10:00 – 16:00**

Lower Basildon, RG8 9NR

No booking required

## 19 6 Bridges and a Bridge Too Far!

A 4 km linear guided walk by Terry's Reading Walkabouts from Caversham Bridge to Duke Street Bridge including all the bridges on the Thames & Kennet on route. Discover their history and the importance of both rivers to Reading. The walk follows the Thames Path to Horseshoe Bridge and comes back into Reading via the towpath. 2 hours duration.

**09:50**

**THURS 14 & SAT 16 SEPT**

9A Bridge Street, Caversham, RG4 8AA

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

Donations to local charities welcome



## 20 The Royal Berkshire Hospital – Building on its Heritage

In the 75<sup>th</sup> year of the founding of the NHS, two presentations will explain the history of the Royal Berks Hospital which dates from 1839 and give an update on the future options for the hospital. Richard Havelock will give an overview of the history of the hospital buildings and Lynn Bushell will look at the challenges the Hospital faces today with an increased population, constrained site and some original buildings.



**THURS 14 SEPT**

**18:30**

Old Pathology Library, Royal Berkshire Hospital, London Road, RG1 5AN

Booking essential: [eventbrite.co.uk](http://eventbrite.co.uk) / 0118 959 8350



**THURS 14 SEPT**

## 21 Reading Museum Store Tours



Join us behind the scenes at our new South Reading store. This year's theme is Our Green Stories, focusing on objects linked to the local environment and our relationship with nature. Tours are in small groups (up to 6) led by Museum staff and last about 45 minutes.

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

South Reading museum store – directions will be sent by email two days before the tour.

Booking required: 0118 937 3400 / [readingmuseum.org.uk](http://readingmuseum.org.uk)

## 22 Grade II Watlington House

Watlington House is one of Reading's oldest buildings with parts dating back to the 1500s but mainly built in 1688 and the mid-1700s. Come and hear about the house's history, the garden restoration and meet some of the tenants. There will be short tours during the morning.

**09:00 – 16:00**

44 Watlington Street, RG1 4RJ

No booking required

**FRI 15 SEPT**



## Special Event

**The Great Reading Fight: An incident in the Glorious Revolution of 1688**

A presentation in the Garden Hall about The Reading Fight in 1688 when troops loyal to King James II were driven out of Reading by the invading army of William of Orange.

**FRI 15 SEPT**

**14:30**

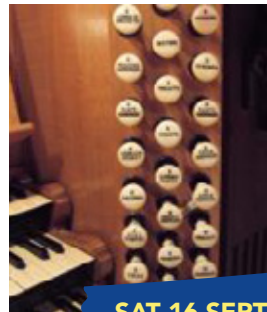
Booking required:  
[eventbrite.co.uk](http://eventbrite.co.uk)  
07802 763289



## 23 Meet the Father Willis Organ



Just how does an organ work? And who was Father Willis? Be astounded by the sound of the organ and maybe even have a go for yourself. Join Organ Curator Dr William McVicker and members of the Berkshire Organist's Association in an exploration of the history and sounds of the internationally-renowned Father Willis Organ.



**SAT 16 SEPT**

**12:00 & 14:00**

Reading Town Hall, Blagrove Street, RG1 1QH

No booking required

## 24 Unwrap Ancient Games – Ure Museum of Greek Archaeology

To coincide with the new temporary exhibition on games in the ancient world Locus Ludi: Anyone can play! the Ure Museum hosts a special family event to unwrap ancient games. There will be an opportunity to see the new exhibition, try your hand at some ancient games and even create your own to take home!



**SAT 16 SEPT**

10:00 – 16:00 Ashbury House, University of Reading, RG6 6HA  
Pre-booking preferred: 0118 378 6990 / ure@reading.ac.uk



**SAT 16 SEPT**

10:00 – 13:00

The Mills Archive Trust,  
Watlington House,  
44 Watlington Street, RG1 4RJ  
No booking required

## 25 Reading emPOWERed: Paper Sculpture and Mark Making Workshop



Join Jelly Artists and the Mills Archive Trust for a special workshop celebrating creativity. Come and get in the creative flow, taking inspiration from wind and water-power, past and present. Jelly artists will guide you to create drawings, marks and patterns inspired by items from the Mills Archive Trust's historical records. Your drawings will then be turned into a wind paper sculpture.

## 26 A New Garden at Historic Hillside House



The new garden at Hillside House was created in 2020-21. It is open to the public for the first time during Heritage Open Days 2023. Hillside House was built in 1880 and has belonged to both the Palmer and Sutton (seeds) families. The new garden has been designed by Lloyd Turner and garden designer Gaila Adair, and celebrates the history of the house and is a memorial to the four sons of the Sutton family who gave their lives during the First World War.



**SAT 16 SEPT**

10:00, 11:00 & 12:00

Guided tour of the garden

19-28 Allcroft Road, RG1 5DJ

Booking required: eventbrite.co.uk

## 27 Caversham Court Gardens



Drop in to see how contemporary artists have been inspired by the historic gardens with an exhibition of recent works by local artists, sculptors and poets. Join a tour of the fine specimen trees, explore the unique history of the site and the families who lived there with a volunteer guide. Bring along your sketch pad or poetry notebook and set your creative genius to work. Children's drawing table and charity-run Tea Kiosk.

**SAT 16 & SUN 17 SEPT**

11:00 – 16:00

Church Road, Caversham,  
RG4 7AD

No booking required



## 28 Brock Keep



Come for a tour around the Grade II listed former armoury and gatehouse which is now home to artist studios and a contemporary art gallery. Completed in 1877, it is a fine example of a Victorian keep, built to aid recruitment and to increase local pride. Reading's Keep is one of the surviving few. Since 1980, the keep has provided artists' studios for OpenHand OpenSpace and Reading Space Studios.



**SAT 16 & SUN 17 SEPT**

11:00 – 17:00

Open Hand Open Space Ltd,  
571 Oxford Road, RG30 1HL  
No booking required



**SUN 17 SEPT**

13:30 – 16:00

Reading Old Cemetery,  
Cemetery Junction, RG1 4LS  
No booking required

## 29 Around the Cemetery in 80 minutes: An interactive Victorian family adventure

Find out about the history of Reading Old Cemetery and the lives of people buried there. Meet some of the permanent residents & hear their stories; collect all the clues for the grand Victorian prize! Take part in the 'Great outfit' competition or the 'Great (fake or real) moustache' competition! Dressing up is very welcome but optional!

## 30 The Hexabition: Celebrating 45 years of The Hexagon Theatre



A unique exhibition celebrating 45 years of The Hexagon. We will be displaying a selection of rarely seen items from the archives and take you behind the scenes to find out more about this amazing venue and the many incredible artists that have appeared here. Search the archives and browse through posters and brochures going back to the 1970's. Refreshments served.



**SAT 16 & SUN 17 SEPT**

10:00 – 17:00

Queens Walk, RG1 7QF  
No booking required

## Further afield

### 31 Decontamination Suite, Greenham Air Base

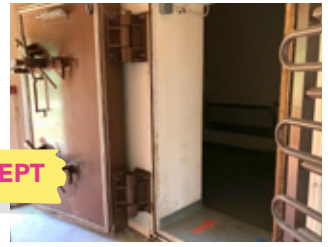
A rare opportunity to gain access to the Decontamination Suite that formed part of the Cold War US Airbase at Greenham Common with guided tours through the facility explaining the history of the building.

SAT 9 & SUN 10 SEPT

11:00 – 16:00

Building 274, Buckner- Croke Way,  
Greenham Business Park, Newbury, RG19 6HX

No booking required



SAT 9 SEPT

10:30 & 13:30

Silchester Roman City Walls,  
RG7 2HP

No booking required.

### 32 Historic Walking Tours at Silchester Roman City Walls & Amphitheatre

Silchester has its origins as iron age Calleva. After the Roman conquest of AD 43 it became the large and important town of Calleva Atrebatum. Unlike most Roman towns, it was never reoccupied or built over after it was abandoned, so archaeological investigations have given an unusually complete picture of its development. Step into Roman footsteps, learn about how the archaeological investigations have brought history to life and how the city walls history has taught us about life as a Roman.

## Online only

### 33 Local Library Treasures



Another of Reading Library's films for Heritage Open Days, this time on the theme of creativity. Reading Library holds all sorts of different items in its archives relating to Reading's past. This film will explore a few of the items and explain a little more about Reading's rich creative history. Watch anytime.

Watch via [whatsonreading.com](http://whatsonreading.com)

Heritage Open Days in Reading  
is produced by REDA



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Reading's Economy & Destination Agency

[heritageopendays.org](http://heritageopendays.org)

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[whatsonreading.com](http://whatsonreading.com)



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