



Presented by
FindMyPast

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

in **READING**

11-20 SEPTEMBER 2026



**Everyday
Histories**

heritageopendays.org.uk
whatsonreading.com



**VISIT
READING**

Heritage Open Days

in READING

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 showcases 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.uk** before travelling to check accessibility. Many of these heritage sites have limited wheelchair accessibility and there is full detail of access arrangements on the **heritageopendays.org.uk** 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 Everyday Histories.

All the events are listed in date order.



KEY:



EVENTS CELEBRATING
EVERYDAY HISTORIES



ONLINE
EVENTS ONLY

1. ST MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHAPEL



Self-guided tours of this interesting chapel, which was first opened for worship in 1798. Search for your ancestor in the baptismal register (1884-present). A selection of pots and glassware, dating from the time when the site housed the County Gaol, will be on display.

14 Castle Street, RG1 7RD

No booking required



Sat 12 Sep 09:30 - 17:30

Thurs 17 & Sat 19 Sep 10:30 - 12:30

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. Today you will see a flourishing Parish Church re-built in 1872 in the Gothic style along with some more modern features.

Southampton Street, RG1 2SB

No booking required

2. SAINT GILES CHURCH

Sat 12 & Sat 19 Sep 10:30 - 15:30



3. THE MONKS AND PILGRIMS OF READING ABBEY CAMINO WALK



Sat 12 Sep 10:00 - 13:30



A 5 mile walk along the St James' Way (part of the Camino de Santiago), uncovering the heritage and lived experiences of monks and pilgrims, past and present, at the once magnificent Reading Abbey. The walk will stop at pilgrimage sites, old and new, before setting off along the Camino route for 4 miles to The Cunning Man pub. Return to Reading by bus. Pilgrim Passports available to buy on the day.

Reading Museum, Blagrove Street, RG1 1QH

Pre-booking required:

david.sinclair1200@btinternet.com

4. ST LUKE'S CHURCH

Sat 12 Sep 10:00 - 16:00

Erleigh Road, RG1 5LH

No booking required



St Luke's Church is a Victorian church built to serve the growing population of the Redlands area of Reading. Today, the Church continues to engage with the local multicultural community. Built in red brick, it complements the surrounding housing in the area. Information about the history of the building, music and stained glass windows will be on display. A number of Church registers (marriage and military service) will be available for visitors to search for family connections to St Luke's. Refreshments available.



The tour will take you behind the scenes to experience archive strongrooms and visit staff areas. You'll discover more about the services on offer, the collections and how to visit to use the archives yourself. The tour will finish in the conservation studio where conservators will show you items that they have been working on and explain their different techniques and processes.

9 Coley Avenue, RG1 6AF

Pre-booking required:

archives@reading.gov.uk or 0118 937 5132

5. BEHIND THE SCENES TOUR OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE ARCHIVES

Sat 12 Sep 10:30



6. BERKSHIRE HERITAGE

Sat 12 Sep 11:00 - 15:30

Mon 14 & Tues 15 Sep 11:00 - 16:00

Sun 20 Sep 12:00 - 16:00



The Family Research Centre, home of Berkshire Family History Society, will put on a display of everyday lives in Berkshire. A team of experienced volunteers can assist you with their knowledge and expertise to discover the past, whether it be your own heritage, or family, local, house or military history. Refreshments available.

Building L14, University of Reading,
London Road Campus, Redlands Road,
RG1 5EX

No booking required



7. READING ABBEY QUARTER TOURS

Sat 12 Sep 11:00 - 12:30

Sat 19 Sep 11:00 - 12:30



Starting in Reading Museum, this tour will lead you on a discovery of the history and heritage of Reading's Abbey Quarter, including the Hospitium and the impressive Reading Abbey Ruins. The tour will look at the links of Reading Abbey to Henry I, son of William the Conqueror and Jane Austen to Reading Abbey Gateway where she studied.

Reading Museum, Town Hall,
Blagrove Street, RG1 1QH

Pre-booking required:

readingmuseum.org.uk

Gardeners have played an important but often undervalued role in the running of landed estates right up to the present day. Portraits, old photographs, tools, wage slips and newspaper reports give an insight into the lives of the gardening staff and the often complex relationships between employer and head gardener over the centuries.

Caversham Court Gardens,
Church Road, Caversham,
RG4 7AD

No booking required

8. BEHIND THE GARDEN WALL - GARDENERS' TALES FROM CAVERSHAM COURT

Sun 13 Sep 11:00 - 16:00

Sun 20 Sep 11:00 - 16:00



9. TOUR OF FOXHILL HOUSE AT THE UNIVERSITY'S WHITEKNIGHTS CAMPUS

Sun 13 Sep 11:00 & 12:30



Designed by Alfred Waterhouse, Grade II-listed Foxhill House is a fine example of mid-Victorian architecture. Overlooking the lake on the University's Whiteknights campus, the building now houses the School of Law. The guided tour by members of The Friends of the University of Reading will take you inside to see the hall, rooms in the house as well as the former stable block and the garden.

Shinfield Road, Whiteknights Campus,
RG6 6EP

Pre-booking required: eventbrite.co.uk

10. BASILDON PARK

Mon 14 to Fri 18 Sep

10:00 - 17:00 (last entry 16:00)



Visit the National Trust's Basildon Park for free, including the mansion house, formal garden and 400 acres of parkland this Heritage Open Days. Facilities such as the shop and café will be open as usual to enjoy. The fashion exhibition, Silhouettes of Society, will be continuing in the house and gardens.

National Trust, Basildon Park,
Lower Basildon, RG8 9NR

No booking required

Find out more about how the iconic Green Park Wind Turbine works up close on an expert tour. Suitable for all ages.



11. GREEN PARK WIND TURBINE TOUR

Tues 15 Sep 18:00

South Oak Way,
RG2 6UG

Pre-booking preferred:
greeneducation@hotmail.co.uk

A nostalgic circular walk through the streets of Reading retracing the route of the 1984 RAG Float Parade. Raising and Giving (RAG) has long been at the heart of Reading Students Union's fundraising spirit. The walk will revisit the energy and excitement of past RAG parades through photographs, stories, memories and jokes of the era. The walk is led by Terry's Reading Walkabouts and charitable donations are welcome on the day.

The Museum of English Rural Life (MERL),
6 Redlands Road, RG1 5EX

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

12. READING UNIVERSITY RAG PARADE WALK

Wed 16 Sep 11:00



13. TUDOR TO CIVIL WAR READING WALKABOUT



Thurs 17 Sep 10:00

Sat 19 Sep 10:30



A linear costumed walkabout to discover how the lives of seven kings and queens and the English Civil War impacted Reading between 1485 to 1660. From alms houses to Royal palaces, rich merchant's townhouses to the Oracle workhouse. The walk is led by Terry's Reading Walkabouts and charitable donations are welcome on the day.

Maiwand Lion in Forbury Gardens,
RG1 3EJ

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

14. WORKING LIVES IN JACKSONS DEPARTMENT STORE & SHOPPING TODAY IN THE ORACLE SHOPPING CENTRE



Fri 18 Sep 14:00



A talk by former Jackson's employee and archivist Thomas Macey about the history of the famous Jacksons Department Store including a selection of original archives followed by a talk about shopping in a modern shopping centre today and the issues faced, by Andy Briggs, Destination Director at the Oracle Shopping Centre.

Oracle Management Suite, The Oracle Shopping Centre, RG1 2AG

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

15. THE ARCHITECTURE OF ALFRED WATERHOUSE & VICTORIAN READING



Sat 19 Sep 10:00



An architectural walking tour led by Dr Stephen Gage, Lecturer in Architecture at University of Reading. From early 18th century houses to the iconic Reading Town Hall and Reading School, the walk features the works of Alfred Waterhouse, one of the most notable architects of the Victorian period who lived for a time in Reading and designed some of its key landmarks.

Town Hall Square, RG1 1QH

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

16. READING TOWN HALL'S WILLIS ORGAN

Sat 19 Sep 11:00 - 16:15

Reading Town Hall, Blagrove Street,
RG1 1QH



Whether you are already an organist or simply curious, come along and meet the majestic Father Willis Organ.

- Drop in sessions – 11:00 & 14:00
45 minutes presentation by Reading Town Hall Organ Curator, William McVicker, introducing the organ, its history and how it works. Suitable for all ages. No booking required.
- Organ Lessons for Beginners – 12:15
No musical experience necessary/age 7+. Booking essential: whatsonreading.com
- Organ Lessons for Pianists – 15:15
Age 7+. Booking essential: whatsonreading.com

A flower festival with beautiful displays by talented local florists set in a beautiful and historic church, incorporating self-guided tours of the building and churchyard. Parts of St Michael's date back to the 12th century but it was extensively remodelled in the mid-Victorian era by the church architect George Street and boasts a fine Arts and Crafts stained glass window by William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones.

New Lane Hill, Tilehurst, RG30 4JX
No booking required

17. ST MICHAEL TILEHURST – FLOWER FESTIVAL

Sat 19 Sep 10:00 - 16:00



18. READING QUAKER MEETING HOUSE

Sat 19 Sep
10:00 - 16:30

Talks:

- The history of Quakers in Reading
11:00
- Huntley and Palmers
14:00



As part of the open day, there will be talks and the beautiful garden will be open including the burial ground where members of the Huntley and Palmer families are buried. There will also be an art display, a display of Huntley and Palmer biscuit tins and teas and coffees with Huntley and Palmer biscuits served.

2 Church Street, RG1 2SB
No booking required

19. GUIDED TOURS OF READING OLD CEMETERY

Sat 19 Sep 11:00 & 13:30



Find out about the history of the 183-year old beautiful garden cemetery, its monuments and the life stories of people buried there. Dressing up optional but fun! A family-friendly tour of the site with child-friendly activities included in the walks. An exciting Victorian-style prize for best outfit. Two tours.

Cemetery Arch, London Road, RG1 3AQ
Pre-booking required:
tinyurl.com/hod2026

An exhibition telling the unique craft story of millwrights, who build wind and watermills, at the Mills Archive Trust, including the story of local Reading millwright James Phillips and his family and modern day practitioners. There will also be a drop-in art screen printing and drawing workshop. See inside Watlington House, one of Reading's oldest domestic buildings dating to 1688, and explore its beautiful formal garden.

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

20. MILLWRIGHTING EXHIBITION AND ART WORKSHOP

Sat 19 Sep 11:00 - 15:00



21. READING MINSTER

Sat 19 Sep
10:00 - 16:00

Sun 20 Sep
10:00 - 14:00



Reading Minster of St Mary the Virgin blends Norman foundations, Gothic features and Victorian restorations, reflecting over 900 years of architectural history. It stands as a testament to the town's rich ecclesiastical and cultural heritage. Its continuity, architectural evolution, and ongoing community role make it a gem in Reading's heritage.

Chain Street, RG1 2HX
No booking required

22. ROMANS REIMAGINED DAY

Sat 19 Sep 10:00 - 16:00

Reading Museum, Town Hall,
Blagrove Street, RG1 1QH

No booking required



A drop-in event to celebrate Roman Britain Reimagined in Reading. This new project, which is supported by the National Lottery Fund, will refresh the Museum's Silchester Gallery to tell new stories about the nearby Roman town of Calleva, based on the most recent archaeological research by the University of Reading. Come and find out more about the project – there will be object handling along with dressing up and activities for families.



23. ROMAN BRITAIN THROUGH OBJECTS

Sat 19 Sep 11:00, 13:00 & 14:00

Special handling talks looking at objects from Reading Museum's Roman Silchester collection. Join one of the three collection talks to handle original objects from the Museum's Roman collection normally not on display. Part of the Museum's Romans Reimagined Day.

Reading Museum, Town Hall,
Blagrove Street, RG1 1QH

Pre-booking required:
readingmuseum.org.uk



25. EVERYDAY HISTORIES: THE UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY IN READING

Sat 19 Sep 12:00 - 16:00

21 Sidmouth Street, RG1 4QZ

No booking required



The Ukrainian Community Centre has been part of Reading's social and cultural life since 1959, created by post-war Ukrainian families who made Berkshire their home. Over the decades, the centre has been a place for community gatherings, language, traditions, celebrations, and support across generations. Today, the centre continues this role by welcoming newly displaced Ukrainians. Explore the centre and learn more about the Ukrainian community in Reading. A Ukrainian café will be open serving traditional Ukrainian food and refreshments.



26. EXPLORING THE ARCHITECTURE OF GEORGIAN READING

Sun 20 Sep 10:00

An architectural walking tour of Reading's extensive Georgian architecture led by Dr Stephen Gage, Lecturer in Architecture at University of Reading. Reading has over 400 listed buildings from the Georgian period, representing a substantial part of its built heritage, from early 18th century houses on Castle Street to the Royal Berkshire Hospital and Eldon Square in the 1830s. This 4 km circular walk will encompass an architectural tour of Reading's Georgian legacy.

Town Hall Square, RG1 1QH

Pre-booking required: Eventbrite.co.uk



27. CELEBRATING 100 YEARS: UNIVERSITY OF READING MUSEUMS AND COLLECTIONS

Sun 20 Sep 11:00 & 12:00



A unique chance to view pop-up displays of items from the University of Reading's Special Collections and Art Collections, housed at The MERL and not currently on public display. Material will celebrate the University of Reading's Centenary. The Staircase Hall exhibition space will also be open to view the current Special Collections and Art exhibitions.

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

Pre-booking required: merl.reading.ac.uk

24. BROCK KEEP

Sat 19 & Sun 20 Sep

11:00 - 17:00



Come and see the current art exhibition and join tours around the historic former armoury and gatehouse which is home to artist studios and a contemporary art gallery. Completed in 1877, the Keep 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 that have not been demolished or converted. It is grade II listed and its original features are well preserved.

571 Oxford Road, RG30 1HL

No booking required

28. RISC EDIBLE ROOF GARDEN

Sun 20 Sep 12:00 - 16:00



Discover a small edible roof forest garden that was developed to demonstrate sustainability and our dependence on plants. All 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. Self-guided tours.

35-39 London Street, RG1 4PS

No booking required

Christ Church will be holding a Festival Evensong followed by refreshments. Join us for a beautiful service filled with music sung by our outstanding choir, that is part of a more than 500 year-old tradition.

Christ Church, Christchurch Road,
RG2 7AR

No booking required

29. FESTIVAL EVENSONG

Sun 20 Sep 18:00



30. THE NEW READING LIBRARY AND EVERYDAY LIVES



<https://whatsonreading.com>



Reading Library has recently moved. Watch this film to see where we are, the collections we hold and how the resources reflect the everyday lives of Reading's people.



heritageopendays.org.uk
visit-reading.com
whatsonreading.com

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All information is correct at the time of printing