

# MEET READING

The location for **modern business** which goes back 1,000 years

**AT THE HEART  
OF THE ACTION**

**MeetReading.co.uk**

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# AT THE HEART OF THE ACTION

Welcome to Reading, a very modern town which goes back 1,000 years.

Step off a train at Reading Station 22 minutes after leaving Paddington Station and you can walk to the burial place of King Henry I of England or the offices of SSE, stroll along the Thames or join a conference of 700 in Reading Town Hall's Concert Hall. And it's only a few minutes further to the University of Reading, Reading's numerous business parks, the football stadium or the countryside.

Reading is home to...

- a 900 year abbey, a King of England and **Microsoft's UK HQ**
- the birthplace of the Ginger Nut and **the home of Virgin Media**
- the schoolroom of Jane Austen and **Nokia's UK base**
- the cell of Oscar Wilde and **a major PepsiCo office**
- An idyllic stretch of the River Thames which **Thames Water's HQ overlooks**
- where Brunel built one of his original railway hotels and **the western terminal of the new Elizabeth Line**

**Reading is at the heart of it!** A central destination in which to host your meeting or conference. Easy to reach and easy to get around, offering venues ranging from small group meeting spaces to conferences for up 700 people and with lots to keep your delegates diverted, Reading should be your first choice for a meeting outside London.

## LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Reading is one of the best-connected meeting locations in the UK. We are 40 minutes west of London (even less by train), close to Heathrow Airport and at the heart of the Thames Valley, the most vibrant economy in the UK.



From London by train, Reading is just 22 minutes on the Great Western Mainline from Paddington and Reading is also served by direct trains from London Waterloo as well as the new Elizabeth Line, which means you can travel direct to Reading from Canary Wharf, the City or West End without changing trains. Reading is a national rail hub and is reachable directly from over 250 stations across the UK.

By car, Reading is just two miles north of the M4 Junction 11 and we are also close to the M3 and A34. For delegates arriving by air, Reading is 40 minutes from London Heathrow Airport by RailAir or the Elizabeth Line and is served by direct trains to Gatwick Airport, Southampton Airport and Birmingham Airport.

## A BUSINESS POWERHOUSE

Reading consistently features as one of Europe's powerhouse economies. With major clusters of IT, pharma, finance, energy, business services and now film businesses, you'll find many of the world's big business names here as well as many of the next generation. From Bayer to PepsiCo, Virgin Media to SSE, Thames Water to Ericsson, Microsoft to PwC and now Shinfield Studios, Reading is a thriving business hub.



## A UNIVERSITY TOWN

Reading University is among the world's top 200 universities with world-leading research in many areas including climate change research, agriculture and business. As well as providing a highly skilled workforce for Reading, the University's Thames Valley Science Park is a hot bed of innovation and creativity.

# KEY BUSINESS SECTORS IN READING

## Technology and communications

Reading's strong mix of tech businesses and a highly-skilled workforce sits at the heart of Europe's largest tech cluster in the Thames Valley. From global giants to high growth SMEs and tech start ups, Reading's tech sector specialises in software, telecoms, cyber security, cloud computing, big data and the Internet of Things. Reading has the highest digital density in the UK.

## Creatives and film

The Geography of Creativity report highlighted the major growth in employment in the creative sector in Reading with the second highest growth in employment in the UK after London. Reading is fast becoming a major film production location with new studios opening at Shinfield Studios and the University of Reading's Cine Valley, as well as other industry-leading facilities recently opened.

## Biopharma and biotech

Located within the wider 'golden triangle' of UK life sciences activity, Reading is increasingly seen as a major player in attracting life sciences businesses. The opening of the Thames Valley Science Park and the development of pharma clusters on a number of Reading business parks is adding to that offer. Menarini Pharma, Proton Partners, Bayer, PRA Health Sciences, Pierre Fabre, Britannia Pharmaceuticals and Sanofi are among the pharma businesses located here.



## Energy and renewables

Reading's competitive business advantage is aided in the energy sector by the University of Reading's world leading research in climate change and meteorology, energy grids and urban sustainability. Based in Reading are SSE, Thames Water, Wood, European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasts, Royal Meteorological Society and Anesco.

## Business and financial services

Reading has grown into a regional and national hub for financial and business services. All the top business consultancies have their Thames Valley offices in Reading, Prudential have had a long association with Reading while finance houses Barclays, VISA, HSBC and Macquarie are all here. There is also a strong legal representation in central Reading from firms such as Olswang, Shoosmiths, Clarks Legal, Boyes Turner, Blandy & Blandy and Field Seymour Parkes.

## Defence

With world-renowned research at the University of Reading and the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) just outside Reading, a strong cluster of defence related businesses has grown up in and around Reading. Blue-chip aerospace and defence organisation Collins Aerospace are based at Winnersh Triangle, while French technology business Thales, which operates across aerospace, defence, digital security, transport and space, are based at Green Park.

## Retail and logistics

Reading town centre has always been among the top performing retail spaces in the South East, anchored by The Oracle and Broad Street Mall. Reading also boasts offices for Hammerson, who operate many shopping centres, the UK Primark HQ, a Tesco distribution centre and capacity to grow the logistics infrastructure further around the edges of Reading.

## A WIDE RANGE OF VENUES UP TO 700 CAPACITY

Reading has a wide range of business hotels, dedicated conference centres and more unusual venues to choose from. The many town centre venues are all a short walk from Reading's impressive railway station while venues to the south of the town centre are easily accessible by road from the M4 or rail from the new Green Park Station.



Capacities range from 2 to 700 with small to medium size meetings a particular strength. But if you are looking for a venue for a few hundred up to 700, Reading can host you in comfort. And with over 2500 hotel bedrooms, we can also ensure delegates are accommodated on site.



Conference centres south of the town centre include Green Park Conference Centre and Wokefield Park, as well as Hilton Reading, Crowne Plaza Reading East and Voco Reading, all close to Green Park business park and the University of Reading. While the University boasts its own conference facilities at Venue Reading.

In the town centre, Reading Town Hall has the largest capacity in Reading (700), while town centre hotels the Penta, Novotel and the boutique Roseate Reading can cater for events for a few hundred or a Board Room meeting and cinema screening for 12.

Looking for somewhere a bit different? Cruise while you do business on a Thames Rivercruise boat, complete with lunch and an idyllic Thames backdrop or walk two minutes from Reading Station to meet in the Edwardian splendour of Thames Lido.

As well as great choice, Reading's venues offer excellent day rates, room rates and venue fees, which compare very favourably with those in nearby London, making Reading a good value alternative to the capital.



## INCENTIVE IDEAS

The Times has heralded Reading as one of the best places to live in the UK, describing Reading as feeling "increasingly vibrant and youthful." At the end of the day, or even as an alternative to the traditional meeting, why not explore what Reading has to offer your delegates.

With great shopping, a vibrant nightlife, a wide range of dining options and activities such as alpaca walking, Thames cruises and theatrical team building events, Reading will also keep your delegates entertained beyond the meeting room.

Make use of the River Thames location, take advantage of the UK capital of escape rooms, take a walking tour, make cocktails, undertake physical team building challenges at Wokefield Park, visit local breweries, distilleries and vineyards. And at the end of the day, dine out in style and choose from a global restaurant offer.

## A CREATIVE HUB

While Reading is still known as the Silicon Valley of the Thames Valley, it is the investment in the creative industries that are making many of the waves of late. The Shinfield Studios, a state of the art, purpose-built studio facility located close to Reading, is already making Netflix and Disney productions on its nine new stages. By spring 2024, there will be a total of 16 studios rivalling Pinewood for major productions.



Alongside the new film studios, three of the world's best known academic organisations are setting up research and collection storage facilities. The British Museum will be the first to open in Reading, followed by the Natural History Museum and Kew Gardens.

Alongside these household names, Reading has gaming companies, design consultancies, a vibrant homegrown cultural community, resident professional theatre companies, independent cinemas, orchestras and much more, as befits a town linked to Oscar Wilde, Jane Austen and Fox Talbot.



## EATING AND DRINKING

Reading's cuisine reflects its multicultural nature. Working dinners, relaxing drinks, bonding exercises over food or just great places to eat, you can eat your way round the world without having to go more than a few hundred metres.

Looking for formal dining, that's covered at places like The Reading Room. Just want street food and a beer, Reading's very own street food container village, Blue Collar Corner, will do the trick.

Other highlights include much-reviewed Clay's Kitchen, Thames Lido, L'Ortolan, House of Flavours, Pepe Sale and OXBO at the Hilton. Reading's own micro-breweries produce a mean pint, Stanlake Vineyard has award-winning wines and there are a number of real ale pubs, pub gardens, trendy bars and coffee houses to satisfy a large conference!

## TOP 10 REASONS TO CHOOSE READING

- 1 Location, location, location** – 22 minutes from London and probably the best connected location outside the Capital
- 2 Excellent quality venues** – major brand hotels and bespoke conference centres to accommodate up to 700.
- 3 An excellent value alternative to London** – many of the benefits of the big city without the drawbacks and cheaper!
- 4 The world of business is already here** – you'll be amazed how many global brands have offices in Reading
- 5 A youthful and vibrant location** – a great lifestyle makes Reading the relocation choice for millennials and families
- 6 A waterways town** – both the Thames and Kennet/Kennet & Avon canal flow through the heart of Reading with lots of activities on the water
- 7 Catering for meetings and conferences from 2 to 700** – the wide range of venues can accommodate any size event up to 700.
- 8 The best-connected town in the UK** – you can get to Reading directly by train from 250 different locations.
- 9 The second best 5G speeds in the UK** – as befits a tech town, Reading is ahead of the game with 5G networks
- 10 A centre of innovation and creativity** – Reading is a magnet for innovative businesses says the 2023 'Innovation hotspots, Clustering the New Economy' report

# UNIVERSITY OF READING VENUE READING



Situated just outside Reading town centre, Venue Reading is part of the University of Reading and in a prime location to meet beyond London with excellent transport links (buses even run through the heart of campus). Venue Reading has everything from traditional buildings rich in heritage to modern state-of-the-art meeting rooms offering all year-round conferencing facilities. Venue Reading is set up for small to large meetings and has over 2,000 premium ensuite halls bedrooms for use over the summer. The 321-acre green, award-winning campus has a variety of function spaces, seminar rooms, classrooms, and lecture theatres for up to 400 delegates.



**Bedrooms: 2,000**

**Theatre capacity: 400**

**Boardroom capacity: 50**

☎ 0118 378 5657

✉ info@venuereading.com

📍 University of Reading, Whiteknights, Reading RG6 6UR

🖱 [venuereading.com](http://venuereading.com)



# THE ROSEATE READING

Described as the 'UK's Sexiest Townhouse Hotel' by the Evening Standard, The Roseate is recognised for its artistic design and luxury. The hotel prides itself on its attention to detail, immaculate service and hospitality. The building, along with its wide hallways, vaulted ceilings, cornice mouldings and the original lift shaft have all been precisely restored to their original glory. The Roseate Reading has 55 well-appointed rooms and suites, four private meeting and event spaces, three spa treatment rooms, gym and a restaurant that promises a delightful dining experience featuring the best European cuisine prepared using fresh, local and seasonal ingredients.

**Bedrooms: 55**

**Theatre capacity: 50**

**Boardroom capacity: 24**

☎ 0118 952 7770

✉ events.tflr@roseatehotels.com

📍 26 The Forbury, Reading RG1 3EJ

🖱 <https://www.roseatehotels.com/reading/theroseate>





# DE VERE WOKEFIELD ESTATE

Set in 250 acres of Berkshire countryside, De Vere Wokefield Estate has been completely transformed following a £20 million refurbishment. Wokefield Place is a modern, purpose built building, home to 222 bedrooms and 31 meeting spaces including our largest meeting room, the Wokefield Suite. Wokefield Estate has a total of 2 bars and 2 restaurants. Outside, you'll find an 18-hole championship golf course, all-weather driving range and putting green. Conveniently located, Wokefield Estate is just 10 minutes from Junction 11 of the M4 and 40 minutes from Heathrow Airport.



**Bedrooms: 222**  
**Theatre capacity: 400**  
**Boardroom capacity: 100**

☎ 0118 933 4030  
 ✉ [camilla.bailey@devere.com](mailto:camilla.bailey@devere.com)  
 📍 Goodboys Lane, Mortimer, Reading RG7 3AE  
 🖱 <https://www.devere.co.uk/wokefield-estate/meetings-events>



# GREEN PARK CONFERENCE CENTRE

The Conference Centre at Green Park is a great meeting place for business. Located at 100 Longwater Avenue it is an ideal venue for a variety of events. If you're planning a one-to-one meeting, a small-group seminar or even a large annual conference, you can join the many discerning companies across the UK who have enjoyed our conference facilities. The building in which the Conference Centre is located hosts a front reception, 24 hour security, free ample car parking, free WiFi and Byte Cafe which offers a variety of refreshments and is open for breakfast through to late afternoon.

**Theatre capacity: 250**  
**Boardroom capacity: 30**

☎ +44 (0)118 945 0122  
 ✉ [conference.centre@greenpark.co.uk](mailto:conference.centre@greenpark.co.uk)  
 📍 Longwater Avenue, Reading RG2 6GP  
 🖱 [www.greenpark.co.uk/conference-centre](http://www.greenpark.co.uk/conference-centre)



## THAMES RIVERCRUISE



Thames Rivercruise operate on the beautiful reaches of the upper Thames, located in Caversham, Reading. We have the ideal venue for smaller conferences from 10-50 attendees offering classroom, boardroom and theatre style seating. We are also able to offer a pre or after conference cruise for delegates where they can enjoy themselves in a relaxed atmosphere away from the business hub. Each charter is personal, and we create an itinerary and experience on the river just for you. Casual, cool or formal – the Thames is an amazing flexible venue.



**Theatre capacity: 50**

**Boardroom capacity: 30**

☎ 0118 948 1088

✉ [bookings@thamesrivercruise.co.uk](mailto:bookings@thamesrivercruise.co.uk)

📍 Caversham Pier, Reading RG1 8BD

🖱 [www.thamesrivercruise.co.uk](http://www.thamesrivercruise.co.uk)



## VOCO READING

Voco boasts three flexible and modern meeting rooms for up to 66 guests as well as 32 additional event spaces at the onsite Conference Centre for up to 500 people. Voco Reading is adjacent to Reading Football Club's Stadium, perfectly located just minutes off the M4 and on the doorstep of Green Park and other Reading business parks. Free parking, with 4 electric car charging points. Spacious guest rooms and leisure facilities including a swimming pool, sauna, steam room and gym. Voco boasts the Atrium Bar, brasserie-style restaurant Le Café and a private dining room Cilantro (see image left).

**Bedrooms: 201**

**Suites: 10**

☎ +44 1189 253 814

✉ [paul.liczbinski@vocoreading.com](mailto:paul.liczbinski@vocoreading.com)

📍 Select Car Leasing Stadium, Reading RG2 0FL

🖱 <https://www.ihg.com/voco/hotels/gb/en/reading/xrerd/hoteldetail/meetings-events>



# THAMES LIDO



Thames Lido is the result of a three-year sympathetic restoration project of a historical landmark in Reading: the Edwardian Kings Meadow swimming baths which first opened in 1902. Tucked away behind a leafy path right by the River Thames, our urban retreat is open to the public all year round. Visitors are welcomed with a quirky and colourful design, honouring the building's original architectural features. Our spacious and versatile venue is designed to cater to all business needs, offering a range of packages that are ideal for any type of gathering, whether it's a small team meeting, a large conference, or a stylish networking event.



**Theatre capacity: 70**  
**Boardroom capacity: 26**

- ☎ 0118 2070 640
- ✉ [events@thameslido.com](mailto:events@thameslido.com)
- 📍 Napier Road, Reading RG1 8FR
- 🖱 [www.thameslido.com](http://www.thameslido.com)



# HILTON READING

Just off the A33 and within two miles of The Oracle, Select Car Leasing Stadium, and the University of Reading, Hilton Reading boasts 210 spacious and contemporary guestrooms and event space for 500 people. Easily accessible by road or public transport, Hilton Reading has complimentary on-site car parking, newly refurbished health club and our stunning new OXBO Bar, Kitchen and Café, all under one roof.

**Bedrooms: 210**  
**Theatre capacity: 500**  
**Boardroom capacity: 120**



- ☎ 01189 169 000
- ✉ [reading.events@hilton.com](mailto:reading.events@hilton.com)
- 📍 Drake Way, Reading RG2 0GQ
- 🖱 <https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/lhrhrhi-hilton-reading>

## PENTA READING

If you're in the market for meeting rooms in Reading then we're here to help. We have 11 event spaces, kitted out with all the tech you need and a helpful team of advisors to make the day run smoothly. Each room is accessible via the ground floor, naturally lit and we can hold up to 250 people. The Pentalounge is always available for breaktime, dinnertime, or playtime – with pool tables and playstations. We also have 40 Penta Plus rooms and a Penta Suite if you need more space. Our WiFi and 24-hour gym is free.



**Bedrooms: 206**

**Theatre capacity: 250**

**Boardroom capacity: 50**

☎ 0118 903 5930

✉ [uk.sales@pentahotels.com](mailto:uk.sales@pentahotels.com)

📍 Oxford Road, Reading RG1 7RH

👉 <https://www.pentahotels.com/hotels/united-kingdom/reading/meetings>



**Bedrooms: 150**

**Theatre capacity: 100**

**Boardroom capacity: 40**

☎ 0118 952 2600

✉ [h5432-sb@accor.com](mailto:h5432-sb@accor.com)

📍 25b Friar Street, Reading RG1 1DP

👉 <https://all.accor.com/hotel/5432/index.en.shtml>

## NOVOTEL READING

Perfectly situated in the heart of Reading. The guests can choose from executive and superior rooms, all boasting airy, contemporary designs and warmth. Our ten versatile meeting rooms can accommodate up to 110 guests. Whatever type of meeting you are organizing, you can optimize the chances of its success by benefiting from the Novotel network. Our years of experience have let us build a great expertise in meetings organization. Leisure facilities include a gym, sauna, steam room, and indoor heated pool.



# READING TOWN HALL



Welcome to Reading's historic Town Hall. Right in the heart of Reading, this beautiful Grade II\* listed building boasts a stunning Victorian Gothic facade by celebrated architect Alfred Waterhouse, and state-of-the-art facilities within to accommodate your event. From our beautiful Concert Hall, seating up to 700, to meeting rooms for 5, we have a space and a package tailored just to you.

Explore the spaces we have on offer or take a look at how we can help you to plan your concert, conference or special event. We're situated right in Reading's bustling town centre, less than a 2 minute walk from Reading's train station, with excellent bus links, and an easy distance from the M4.



Theatre capacity: 700

Boardroom capacity: 50

☎ 0118 937 3400

✉ [conferencing@reading.gov.uk](mailto:conferencing@reading.gov.uk)

📍 Blagrove Street, Reading RG1 1QH

👉 <https://www.readingtownhall.co.uk/venue-hire>



# CROWNE PLAZA READING EAST



Bedrooms: 174

Theatre capacity: 260

Boardroom capacity: 78

☎ 0118 944 0444

✉ [events@cpreading.co.uk](mailto:events@cpreading.co.uk)

📍 Wharfedale Road, Winnersh Triangle,  
Reading RG41 5TS

👉 [www.cpreading.co.uk](http://www.cpreading.co.uk)

Exceptional new, fully refurbished 4 Silver Star Crowne Plaza Reading East offering 174 spacious luxurious bedrooms with King-size beds and 50" TV. New 2 AA Rosette Restaurant & Terrace and Bar/Lounge serving modern British and authentic Asian cuisine. Esprit Wellness & Spa with 19m indoor heated pool, sauna, steam room, extensive gym with Life Fitness equipment offering Monu spa treatments. 8 state of art meeting rooms with latest wireless technology, breakout areas and natural light. Minutes from M4, walking distance to adjacent Train Station, ideally located for Reading, Bracknell, Wokingham, and London Heathrow.



## OTHER VENUES



- **Reading Football Club Conference Centre**

Select Car Leasing Stadium, RG2 0FL

<https://www.readingfc.conferenceandevents.co.uk>

- **St Laurence Church**

The Forbury, RG1 3EJ

<https://www.stlreading.org/venue-hire>

- **Revolucion de Cuba**

138-141 Friar St, RG1 1EX

<https://www.revolucionde.cuba.com/bar/reading>

- **The Narrowboat**

Blakes Lock, Gas Works Road, RG1 3EQ

<https://www.narrowboat.reading.co.uk/functions>

- **Reading Doghouse**

150 Friar Street, RG1 1HE

<https://www.tcuk.co.uk/dog-house>

- **South Street Arts Centre**

South Street, RG1 4QU

<https://whatsonreading.com/venues/south-street/venue-hire>

- **Co-space**

Broad Street Mall, RG1 7QE

<https://www.co-space.co.uk/>

- **Watlington House**

44 Watlington Street, RG1 4RJ

<https://www.watlington.house.org.uk/room-hire>

- **Reading Business Centre**

Queens Walk, RG1 7QF

<https://readingbusinesscentre.com>

- **The Biscuit Factory**

1 Queens Walk, Broad Street Mall, RG1 7QE

<https://www.readingbiscuit.factory.co.uk>

- **Market House**

1-2 Market Place, RG1 2EG

<https://www.markethouse.reading.com>



- **Malmaison Reading**

18-20 Station Road, RG1 1JX

<https://www.malmaison.com/locations/reading>

- **The Pavilion**

143 Oxford Road, RG1 7UY

<https://www.thepavilion.org.uk>

- **Crowne Plaza Reading**

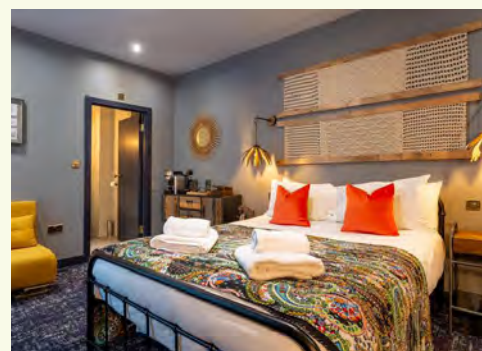
Richfield Avenue, RG1 8BD

<https://www.cp-reading.co.uk>

- **Holiday Inn Reading South**

500 Basingstoke Road, RG2 0SL

<https://www.ihg.com/holidayinn/hotels/gb/en/reading>



# INCENTIVES IDEAS

## Corporate team building at Wokefield Park Estate

Onsite team building from low ropes to archery

<https://www.devere.co.uk/wokefield-estate>

## Stanlake Park Wine Estate

Vineyard tours and cheese and wine tasting

<https://stanlakepark.com>

## Alpaca Walking at Bozedown Farm

Group tours leading friendly alpacas

<https://www.walkanalpaca.co.uk>

## Walk Reading

Choose from a range of guided walking tours of Reading

<https://www.walk-reading.co.uk>



## Terry's Reading Walkabouts

A wide range of guided themed walks around Reading

<https://readingwalkingtours.co.uk>

## Tours 2 Order

Blue Badge Guide Graham Horn offers a range of guided walks in the area

<https://tours2order.com/>

## Time Trap Escape Rooms

Interactive team building activities

<https://www.timetrapescaperooms.com>

## Rabble Theatre Corporate Activities

A whole corporate training programme from Reading's professional theatre company

<https://rabbletheatre.com/corporate>

## Double Barrelled Brewery

Brewery tour and tastings

<https://doublebarrelled.co.uk/>

## Thames River Cruise

Private sailings with drinks, food and entertainment

<https://www.thamesrivercruise.co.uk/private-charter>





Contact us

**07860 779166**

**[alex.brannen@reading.gov.uk](mailto:alex.brannen@reading.gov.uk)**

**[MeetReading.co.uk](http://MeetReading.co.uk)**



**MEET READING** – part of REDA

Reading's Economy and Destination Agency