

Wellbeing Walk

Reading Town Centre Historical Walk Route Map



Reading
Walking Routes




Reading
Borough Council
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Directions and Details

- A** From Reading Town Hall Walk through the Town square towards St Lawrence Church.




- B** At St Lawrence Church take the footpath on the left of the church through to the churchyard. To the left is a building known as the Hospitium.

-  Pilgrims could stay here for two nights, for free, if they went to services at Reading Abbey. In the late 19th century, the Hospitium became home to University College, Reading, which became the University of Reading.




- C** From the churchyard exit down some steps to The Forbury and into Forbury Gardens. Walk to the Maiwand Lion war memorial, and exit through the main entrance into Abbots Walk, and the Abbey Gateway.

- i** In medieval times Forbury Gardens was open ground where horses grazed, and pilgrims waited for services at the abbey church. The Maiwand Lion sculpture commemorates the soldiers of the Royal Berkshire Regiment who lost their lives at the Battle of Maiwand in 1880.

-  The Abbey Gateway divided the public area of the Abbey grounds (now Forbury Gardens) and the private area where the rest of the ruins are today. A stroll around the Abbey Gateway reveals around 24 sculptures including a dragon, a fox, a Knight Templar, a nun, King Henry I and Queen Matilda.



- D** Return to Forbury Gardens through the same entrance and turn right. Continue to the corner of the park to the beautiful fountain and you will see St James Catholic Church on your left and Henry I memorial cross on your right.

-  Henry I memorial cross is dedicated to King Henry I, who is buried in Reading Abbey ruins.



- E** Walking under the stone bridge will bring you into Reading Abbey ruins where you can walk around and read information about the ruins.

- F** Exit the ruins in the south corner and turn left on Chestnut Walk by the River Kennet. Continue with Reading Goal on your left.

Walk Information

This is a 3 km / 2.8 miles circular walk from Reading Town Hall, taking in some of the many historic and interesting places within Reading. On this walk you will enjoy ornamental gardens, a canalside stroll as well as some of the oldest buildings and churches in Reading before finishing at Reading Museum.

Length 2.8 miles (3km) walk.

Duration 1 hour (approx.)

Difficulty The walking surfaces are a mixture of pavement and shared paths.

Suitability The route includes some steps. Not accessible for wheelchairs, pushchairs or scooters.

Start Reading Town Hall Blagrove Street RG1 1QH
///spice.space.lobby

End Reading museum, Blagrove Street RG1 1QH
///foster.moth.token

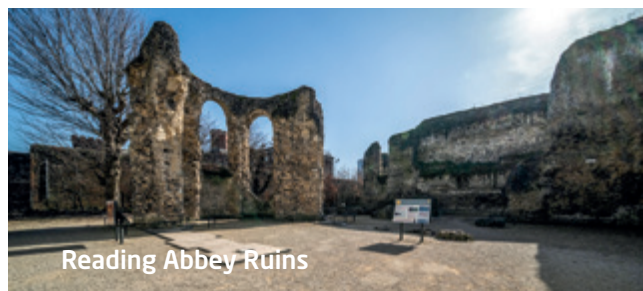
Sustainable Transport This is a circular walk starting and finishing at Reading Town Hall very close to Reading Railway Station and nearby local bus stops in the town centre.

Car Park Queens Road car park or Oracle car park.

Toilet Facilities Available at the Town Hall, Forbury Gardens, The Oracle and at pubs and restaurants throughout the town centre.

Useful Links

reading-buses.co.uk/services
what3words.com/about




Reading Abbey Ruins

- i** Reading Goal sits on the eastern end of the Abbey Quarter and was built over the Abbey hospital.

- G** At the end of Chestnut Walk follow the path under Forbury Road. Continue on Blakes Wharf and Joseph Huntleys footpaths. On the right you will see a small chocolate island with a fisherman statue.

- i** Chocolate Island is named as it was used to store the raw ingredients for the nearby Huntley and Palmers biscuit factory.

- H** Continue until Gas Works Road then turn right and over an old iron bridge. Continue until Kings Road then turn left and pass the Huntley and Palmer biscuit factory. Staying on the pavement, cross the bridge then turn left to go down the steps to join the tow path.

-  This is the only remaining building from the huge Victorian biscuit factory producing biscuits and treats that were shipped all over the world making Reading famous.



- I** At the bottom of the steps, turn left and walk back under the bridge and alongside the River Kennet all the way until you reach the bridge at London Street.

- J** Cross the two zebra crossings and then turn right to Yield Hall Place and back over the canal. Walk through Yield Hall Lane until you reach Minster Street.

- K** Turn left on Minster Street and walk through to the church yard. Turn right on to Chain Street with Minster Church on your left. You can go round to see the front of the church before returning to Chain Street.



- L** Continue up the narrow Chain Street until Broad Street. Turn right and walk along Broad Street and then left into Butter Market when you pass the Alehouse.

- i** Broad Street's original name was Great Street and it was built by Reading Abbey to create a better link with the centre of town.

- M** Continue via Butter Market and Market place towards the town square past St Lawrence Church and the Town Hall until the entrance to Reading Museum on Blagrove Street.

- i** Butter Market: Until the 1860s was densely packed with rows of half-timbered houses. Street names like Butter Market, Pig Market, Fisher Row and Butcher Row are clues to what medieval shoppers could buy here. The Market Place was created by the monks of Reading Abbey who placed it close to the abbey's main entrance gateway next to St Laurence's church.

- N** Reading Museum - the walk ends where you can see exhibitions on the history of Reading. Reading Museum showcases the history of Reading. Entry to the museum is free, and is open 10am-4pm Tuesday to Friday and 10am-5pm Saturday.



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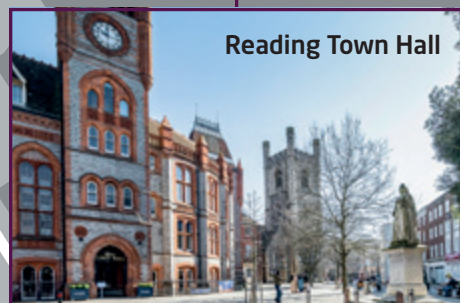
Reading Abbey

Reading Abbey was founded by Henry I in 1121 to be his burial church and was once one of Europe's largest royal monasteries. The Abbey acquired a large collection of saintly relics making it an important destination for medieval pilgrims who contributed to the economy of the abbey and the town. King Henry I died before his Abbey was complete and was buried here in 1136 in front of the high altar. Later the Abbey was closed by King Henry VIII in 1539 when he separated England from the Catholic Church.



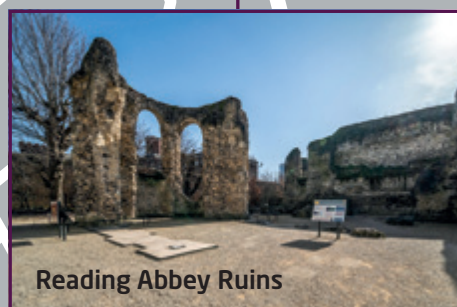
Minster Church

Minster Church of St Mary the Virgin is Reading's oldest church probably founded in the reign of Edgar (959-978 AD). By the 10th century Minster was a title used for the most important church in an area. In 1121 the church and lands were given by Henry I to Reading Abbey.



Reading Town Hall

Reading town hall's façade was designed by Alfred Waterhouse in 1875 and behind this is an even older building from 1786. St Laurence Church, dates from the Middle Ages and it was said that by claiming sanctuary here, confessing their crimes and swearing to leave the country, criminals could avoid the death penalty.



Reading Abbey Ruins



Hospitium



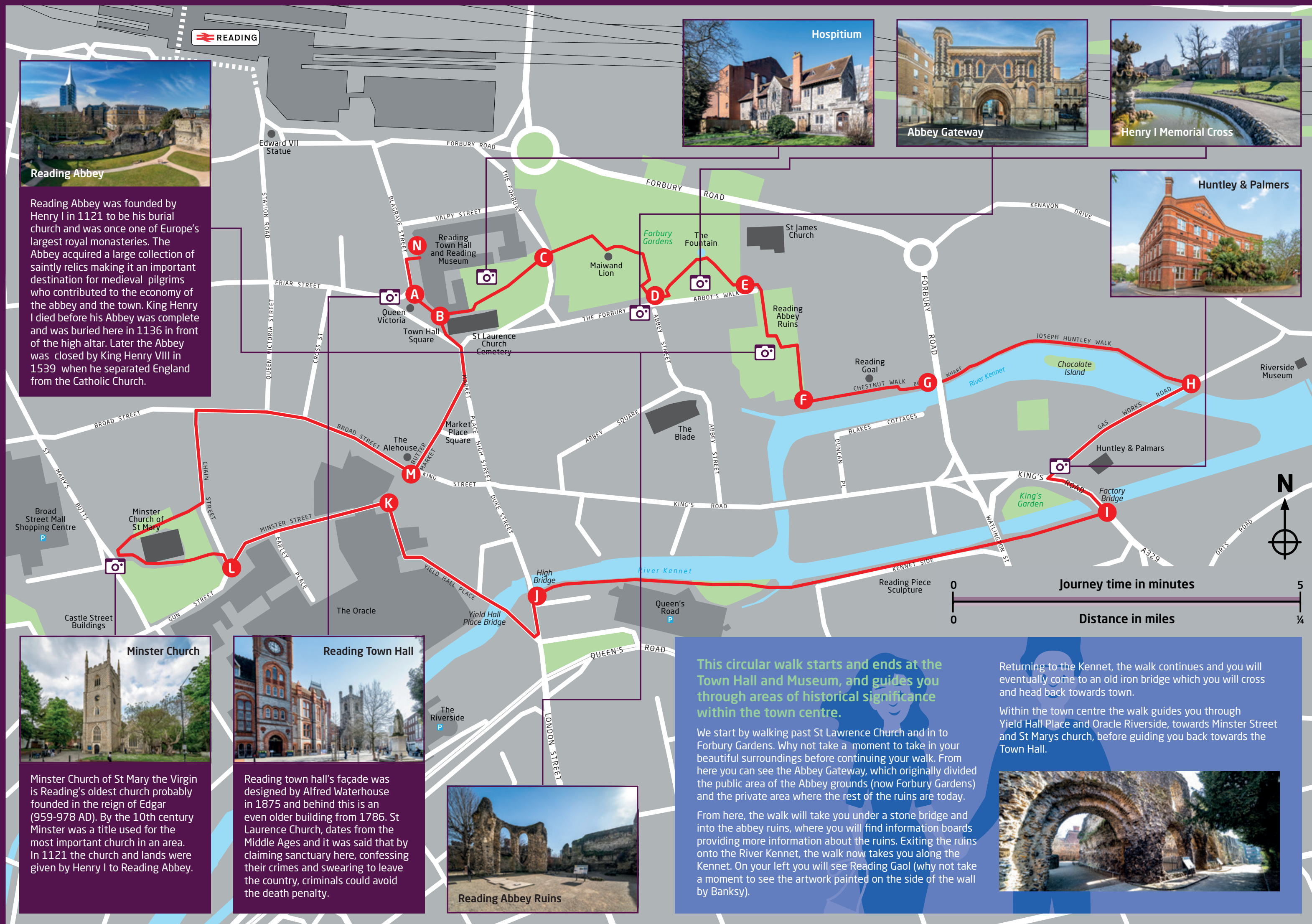
Abbey Gateway



Henry I Memorial Cross



Huntley & Palmers



This circular walk starts and ends at the Town Hall and Museum, and guides you through areas of historical significance within the town centre.

We start by walking past St Laurence Church and in to Forbury Gardens. Why not take a moment to take in your beautiful surroundings before continuing your walk. From here you can see the Abbey Gateway, which originally divided the public area of the Abbey grounds (now Forbury Gardens) and the private area where the rest of the ruins are today.

From here, the walk will take you under a stone bridge and into the abbey ruins, where you will find information boards providing more information about the ruins. Exiting the ruins onto the River Kennet, the walk now takes you along the Kennet. On your left you will see Reading Gaol (why not take a moment to see the artwork painted on the side of the wall by Banksy).

Returning to the Kennet, the walk continues and you will eventually come to an old iron bridge which you will cross and head back towards town.

Within the town centre the walk guides you through Yield Hall Place and Oracle Riverside, towards Minster Street and St Marys church, before guiding you back towards the Town Hall.

