

# SPOTLIGHT ON READING ABBEY QUARTER



## PROJECT UPDATE

MAY 2017

### SCAFFOLD HOARDING WRAPS THE ABBEY GATEWAY

You may have noticed the growing scaffolding around the Abbey Gateway. This has now been wrapped in vibrant banners, showcasing the historic Abbey Quarter and our exciting 'Reading Abbey Revealed' project.

The scaffold hoarding includes information panels as well as an audio device where passers-by can listen to key figures from the history of the Gate. Thank you to our volunteers who were recorded for the audio!

This new temporary interpretation highlights the rich history of the Quarter, as well as the ongoing works and future plans for our project.

We welcomed councillors and volunteers to see the new display as it was unveiled. Next time you are in the Reading town centre, make sure you go and see it for yourself!



Project staff and volunteers see the new scaffold hoarding for the first time.

### NEW EXHIBITION AND TRIAL INTERPRETATION

Our new exhibition opens this month! Come and see 'Reading Abbey Quarter: Then and Now' at Reading Museum from 20 May to 23 September.

As work gets under way to reopen the Reading Abbey site in 2018, this exhibition shows how the Abbey Quarter has changed over the centuries through artworks in the Museum's collection.

Within the exhibition will be a trial interpretation stand. As part of the project, information boards explaining the history of Reading Abbey will be installed across the town. You can see a trial version of this interpretation within the exhibition. This provides you with an opportunity to comment on the design. We want as much feedback as possible so please do take the time to share your thoughts.

### EVENTS

Saturday 17 June

#### **Tea and Talks at Two: Reading Abbey Gatehouse in Context**

The Reading Abbey Gatehouse is an iconic part of the town. As part of our new Reading Abbey Lecture Series, come to the Museum to hear Dr Harriet Mahood from the University of Reading present her exciting new research into monastic gatehouses. Refreshments will be provided.

Adults, 2pm - 3.30pm

£5, booking essential (0118 937 3400)

Saturday 22 July

#### **Tea and Talks at Two: Introducing Jane Austen**

Join Joy Pibworth from the Jane Austen Society to mark the 200th anniversary of Austen's death in this introduction to Jane Austen and her novels, and learn about her relationship with Reading and the Abbey Quarter. Part of the Reading Abbey Lecture Series. Refreshments will be provided.

Adults, 2pm - 3.30pm

£5, booking essential (0118 937 3400)

To access an electronic version of this newsletter or to find out more about the project, please visit: <http://www.readingabbeyquarter.org.uk/>

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## CONSERVATION UPDATE



Chris Forsey

Looking down on work in the South Transept.

It is full steam ahead for the conservation of Reading Abbey! Our contractors CRL Restoration set up in February, firstly beginning work in the ruins and then on the Gateway in March following the half-marathon. The focus in the ruins has so far been on the former South Transept and Treasury, but will soon move to the iconic Chapter House.

The work in the ruins involves adding sedum capping to the walls to stop further water penetration, re-pointing of the masonry, and restoring fallen flint. Book onto a conservation tour to find out more!

## ABBAY ON WHEELS

Our outreach programme 'Abbey on Wheels' had its first outing to Dee Park in April. We have collaborated with the charity RG Spaces who are kindly supporting us with the delivery of this programme, as well as loaning us their wonderful information tricycle (based on the tea tricycle from Palmers Café at Reading Museum)!

The aim of 'Abbey on Wheels' is to spread the word about our project and to get everyone in Reading excited leading up to the re-opening of the ruins. It will be a changeable programme with activities such as object-handling and virtual-reality headsets. We will be taking 'Abbey on Wheels' to events such as Waterfest and the East Reading Festival so if you spot us, come and say hello!

We will be recruiting events volunteers to help us out. When we begin recruiting we will load a role description to our website.

## EVENTS

Saturday 20 May – Saturday 3 June (daily)

### Reading Abbey Then and Now: Short Tours

Enjoy a 20 minute tour of the exhibition led by one of our trained volunteers and gallery staff, learning about Reading's rich heritage through the photographs and paintings of the Abbey Quarter. The tour will include an opportunity to feed back on the new display panels being planned across the site.

All ages, starting at 11.15am, Art Gallery

Donations welcome, drop in

For full event details and event listings such as our gallery tours visit:

[www.readingabbeyquarter.org.uk/abbey/whats-on](http://www.readingabbeyquarter.org.uk/abbey/whats-on)

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