

SPOTLIGHT ON READING ABBEY QUARTER



PROJECT UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2018

READING ABBEY LAUNCH DATE ANNOUNCED!



It is the moment we have all been waiting for! After being closed for almost ten years, the Reading Abbey Ruins will finally be re-opened to the public on Saturday 16 June with an exciting festival to mark the occasion. This long awaited free event will reveal and celebrate the exciting history of Reading and the abbey. Alongside 'Waterfest', the festival will take over the Abbey Quarter with a varied programme of activities and entertainment for all ages.

On the day, local residents and visitors will have the opportunity to explore the newly conserved ruins, discover new information about the Abbey Quarter as well as enjoy a variety of summer activities. Visitors can indulge in Reading's best street food, take part in historical crafts, family activities and enjoy performances and displays across the site. There will also be the opportunity to visit a living history camp and learn about the lives and history of key characters of the Quarter through our volunteer costumed interpreters.

From this date, the Abbey Ruins will be free to enter and the programme of events and tours will continue throughout the rest of the year to share the history of this internationally important site with local residents and visitors. This will be complemented by the installation of 27 accessible information panels across the Abbey Quarter and town centre in June.

READING ABBEY GATEWAY OPENS ITS DOORS

Another iconic Reading building is set to re-open this year – the restored Reading Abbey Gateway, where Jane Austen went to school, will host a day of activities on Saturday 14 April. Join us for public tours and family activities.

From September it will also become the home of Reading Museum's popular Victorian Schoolroom, where schools and families can enjoy an immersive child-friendly experience. Marketing is well underway and many schools have already booked their sessions for the Autumn term.

EVENTS

Reading Abbey Lecture Series

10 March:

Lindsay Mullaney – Matilda the Empress

2pm – 3pm

Reading Museum

£5 – Call 0118 937 3400

13 April:

Friends of Reading Abbey Talk

Simon Marsh - A Place Strongly Fortified – The Civil War Siege of Reading

7.30pm (doors open at 7pm)

St Laurence's Church

Donations welcome, drop in.

Abbey Quarter, Gateway and Costumed Tours coming soon!

Get the latest updates online
www.readingabbeyquarter.org.uk



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SPOTLIGHT ON READING ABBEY QUARTER



THE STORY OF READING



Cllrs
Hacker,
Williams
and Page
open the
new
gallery at
Reading
Museum.

This month saw the first significant milestone completed for the 'Reading Abbey Revealed' project, with the unveiling of the exciting new 'Story of Reading' Gallery at Reading Museum by the Mayor of Reading, Cllr Rose Williams on 12 February. This new, permanent display about Reading Abbey and its relationship with the town opened on the ground floor of the museum and will serve as the visitor centre for people wanting to find out more about this fascinating heritage site

Starting with objects highlighting the town's history before the Abbey was established, this fascinating new gallery then follows the history of the Abbey itself leading up to its tumultuous closure at the time of King Henry VIII in 1539. It also features little-seen treasures from our collections, including a coin hoard, torcs and a twelfth-century manuscript which are now on permanent display for all to enjoy.

The gallery features interactive displays, hands-on objects and new reconstructions to show how the Abbey might have looked as well as new easy-to-read information panels. The gallery was organised around the most popular themes from the extensive public consultations, when the 'Reading Abbey Revealed' project was being planned, including the daily lives of monks and townspeople. It tells the stories of important events and highlights the scale and importance of the Abbey. A second phase to the gallery will be developed later in 2018 and will tell the history of the town post 1700.

COULD YOU BE OUR JANE AUSTEN?

We are now seeking volunteers to play historical characters from the Quarter and to do costumed tours. Volunteers will research their characters and share fact-based historical information in wonderful replica period costumes. Known as costumed interpretation, these activities will help us share Reading's history to residents and visitors in an entertaining way. If you would like to apply or find out more information, visit: www.readingmuseum.org.uk/explore/get-involved/volunteer-reading-museum

NOMINATE US!

Nominations are now open for the Reading Cultural Awards 2018. We would be delighted if you would consider nominating the Abbey or Reading Museum in one or more of the variety of categories.

We have had much public support so far, and the judges are looking for passion, so we think you are up for the task! Nominate online: www.readingplaceofculture.org/awards/

EVENTS

Saturday 14 April

Abbey Gateway Opening

Join us for tours and an Abbey themed activity cart to celebrate the gateway's opening.

Visit our website for the latest details.

Saturday 16 June

Reading Abbey Revealed

Our re-opening festival will fill the Abbey Quarter with exciting activities and historical re-enactment to bring the site to life.

The celebrations will continue into the evening. We will announce details over the next few months.

For our full events list, please visit our website or pick up the latest copy of 'Reading Arts - What's On' in April.



LOTTERY FUNDED

