

# SPOTLIGHT ON READING ABBEY QUARTER



PROJECT UPDATE

NOVEMBER 2017

## NEW READING ABBEY GALLERY UNDERWAY



The blue is a silicon mould which we will use to extend the cloister reconstruction.

If you've been to Reading Museum recently, you may have noticed that work has begun to create an exciting new 'Story of Reading' gallery on the ground floor. During this first phase, the area beyond the lift has been closed off by hoarding and some larger features, such as the well and turret, have been demolished to create new time zones reflecting the Abbey Quarter's history from pre-1100s through to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Featuring interactive displays, hands-on objects, reconstructions and new gallery information panels, this area will tell the stories of important events, the daily lives of monks and townspeople and mini biographies of significant people in Reading's history. We've also planned the gallery around the most popular themes that emerged from the public consultation when we planned the 'Reading Abbey Revealed' project.

The new-look gallery re-opens in February 2018, when little-seen treasures from our store and collections will be installed. This will include a coin hoard, torcs and jewellery as well as popular artefacts that were recently on display in the *Reading Abbey Quarter: Then & Now* exhibition.

To find out more, get a birds-eye look at the work from the Bayeux Gallery or join a gallery tour every Saturday at 12noon.

## COULD YOU OWN A PIECE OF READING ABBEY HISTORY?

The Hidden Abbey Stones Project (HASP) is an exciting new venture which aims to learn more about the lost and hidden stones of the Abbey that were removed following its dissolution in 1539. Many of the stones that once formed the Abbey still exist in Reading today, built into walls or houses or simply unrecognised in rockeries and flowerbeds.

Stones have been found across Reading in public spaces as well as in back gardens! The Reading Abbey Revealed project is supporting the HASP in spreading the word and encouraging you to look differently at the stones around you – you never know what you might find!

Visit [www.readingabbeyhistory.com](http://www.readingabbeyhistory.com) for more information about the project or to let us know about a suspect stone that you have found!

## EVENTS

### Reading Abbey Lecture Series

25 November:

Professor Peter Stoneley –  
Garden Party and Prison Cell:  
Oscar Wilde in Reading

2-3.30pm

Reading Museum

£5 – Call 01189373400

### Reading Abbey Gallery Launch

Re-opens Monday 12<sup>th</sup>  
February 2018!

Join us for a variety of medieval inspired, family activities all throughout Half Term to celebrate the new gallery!

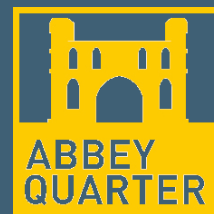
Full details will be updated on our website.

Get the latest updates online  
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## THE MYSTERY OF THE MOUND IS SOLVED?

The Forbury Mound has always been something of an enigma. a monument to a slain Viking warrior, a castle motte hastily constructed during a period of civil war in the 12th century, or was it the mutilated remains of a 17th century gun emplacement? The origins of Forbury Mound remained mystery until this summer, when in June the Round Mounds team came to investigate.

By collecting a core sample through the mound the project was able to date the mound. The core samples from Forbury Mound were full of archaeological material – detritus from everyday life in the past.

The presence of certain tile types meant the mound is unlikely to be earlier than 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century – ruling out the possibility that the mound was a Norman castle or any earlier monument. The abundance of tiles suggest the mound is at least partly made up of demolition rubble, likely from the demolished Reading Abbey!

Therefore this evidence confirms the mound is part of Civil War defences, something that we knew from maps from the time. Though there is an important point to remember; this evidence does not prove that earlier mound did not exist, it just means that evidence for anything earlier no longer remains. So we shall never know the origins of our mysterious Forbury mound!



Visit the Round Mounds website for more information about their project: <https://roundmoundsproject.wordpress.com>

Dr Jim Leary with the equipment used to collect the core samples (University of Reading)

## EVENTS

Every Saturday

### Gallery Tours: Reading Abbey Quarter

Join one of our trained volunteers for an introductory tour to the galleries. Our volunteers will begin the tour with an update on the Abbey Quarter project, so you can find out about the exciting plans to transform Reading's Abbey precinct into a unique historical and cultural destination. This will be followed by a fascinating insight into some of the objects the Museum has on display.

**All ages, 12pm – 12.45pm**

**Donations welcome, drop in**

**For our full events list, please visit our website or pick up the latest copy of**

## THANK YOU!

Did you spot the Tudor maiden and Benedictine monk in town recently? Our volunteers and staff spoke to more than 100 people over two weeks in September, to get their views on the second version of the interpretation panel on Chain Street, explaining Reading Minster's link with the Abbey.

The feedback from these consultations will be used to help the external designers tailor the other interpretation panels, so thank you for your comments if you took part.

## HISTORIC COSTUME WORKSHOP

Our sewing volunteers and staff recently enjoyed a training day with Past Pleasures, who make historic costumes and provide interpretation for venues such as Hampton Court Palace. They learnt about medieval clothing and sewing techniques to give them the skills for making costumes for next year's tours when the Reading Abbey Ruins re-opens next summer.



LOTTERY FUNDED

