

**46th BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF MUSEUMS  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE  
12 - 13 OCTOBER 2019  
HOSTED BY FRIENDS OF READING MUSEUM**

**CONFERENCE THEME  
MUSEUM FRIENDS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:  
CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY**



***Plan of Reading Abbey Quarter - courtesy Reading Museum***

The venue for the AGM and conference is Reading Museum and Town Hall in Reading's Abbey Quarter; a short distance from Reading railway station, bus routes, shops, hotels and restaurants.

King Henry I founded Reading Abbey in 1121 and he was buried in front of the high altar. After a period of closure for safety reasons, the much loved ruins were re-opened to the public in June 2018. A guided tour of the Abbey will be included in the exciting conference events programme.

*'No, Reading is not generally hailed as somewhere to spend your summer holidays. Whether your request is for sparkling glamour or quaint charm you can be reassured that it will not be found in Reading. The fact that people can live and enjoy living in Reading remains one of the great riddles of the universe. And yet, most Reading folk seem to like it here, and some are even downright enthusiastic about it.'* James Matthews in Reading Between the Lines, the unofficial guide to Reading 1987. Quoted in Adam Sowan, A Much-Maligned Town.



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website: [www.readingmuseum.org.uk/explore/get-involved/friends-reading-museum](http://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/explore/get-involved/friends-reading-museum)

conference email: [FoRM2019conf@gmail.com](mailto:FoRM2019conf@gmail.com)

***Images courtesy Evelyn Williams unless otherwise stated.***



***Reading Museum and Town Hall***

The conference programme and speaker selection has been designed to explore the role of museum friends' organisations in community engagement and the associated challenges and opportunities that this brings.

BAfM members support a range of different museums all over the country and we hope that the conference will appeal to its diverse membership.

ForM chair Ann Middleton says "I am delighted that Friends of Reading Museum are hosting the 2019 BAfM AGM and conference and look forward to welcoming all delegates to Reading."



Reading Museum was opened in 1883 with a bequest from local collector Horatio Bland. Today, the museum acquisition policy focuses on objects which reflect all of Reading's communities.

Permanent museum displays include: the Story of Reading gallery; a gallery dedicated to a copy of the Bayeux Tapestry; the Silchester gallery, with items from the archaeological excavations at the nearby Roman town of Calleva, and the Huntley & Palmers collection.

The museum is particularly proud of its loan box collection which takes museum objects out into the community in schools, institutions and at special events.



Image courtesy Chris Widdows

Proximity to London, the situation on the River Thames and the Kennet and Avon canal, together with excellent transport connections, make Reading a popular place to live and locate businesses. Over 150,000 people live within the borough of Reading.

Reading is twinned with Düsseldorf in Germany, Speightstown in Barbados, Clonmel in Ireland and San Francisco Libre in Nicaragua.

Once the home of internationally famous Huntley & Palmers biscuits, H & G Simonds (later Courage) brewery and Sutton Seeds, Reading is now the centre for insurance and hi-tech industries mainly located outside the town centre. Shops, restaurants, cultural and entertainment venues attract visitors to the town from a wide area and it has a thriving night time economy.