



# Friends of Reading Abbey

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Patrons:  
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The M.P. for Reading West  
  
The Vice-Chancellor,  
Reading University  
  
President: Prof. Brian  
Kemp

11 March 2016

To whom it may concern

## UK CLUNIAC FORUM - LETTER OF SUPPORT

The Friends of Reading Abbey (FORA) are happy to support the development of a UK Cluniac Forum.

Reading Abbey was a Royal Cluniac foundation, by Henry I in 1121, and later his place of burial. It was situated at the heart of the town of Reading, and its influence on the socio-geography of the modern town is still very evident. As a Royal Abbey, it was visited regularly, throughout the Middle Ages, by the King, court and Parliament, and witnessed a number of events of national significance. After the reformation, it was retained by the crown as a royal palace, which use was ended by damage caused during the Civil War, when the Abbey was in the front line of Reading's defences.

The Abbey has continued to be of local, regional and national interest and significance. Reading Museum, run by the Borough of Reading, has on display an extensive collection of Romanesque capitals which are original to the Abbey's C12th foundation. In December 2015 the Abbey Quarter was the subject of a successful Heritage Lottery Fund grant, which will conserve and interpret the Abbey Ruins and have them re-opened for regular public access by 2018, in good time to celebrate the Abbey's 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2021.

We welcome the development of a national Cluniac Forum, to help raise awareness of Cluniac sites across the country, to support the sharing of information and knowledge, to make connections between sites, and to promote academic study. We also recognise the opportunity to raise the profile of individual sites, and to engage public and visitor interest.

Yours faithfully

John Painter  
Secretary, Friends of Reading Abbey

Cc: Jill Greenaway, Reading Borough Council