

## About The Friends of Reading Abbey

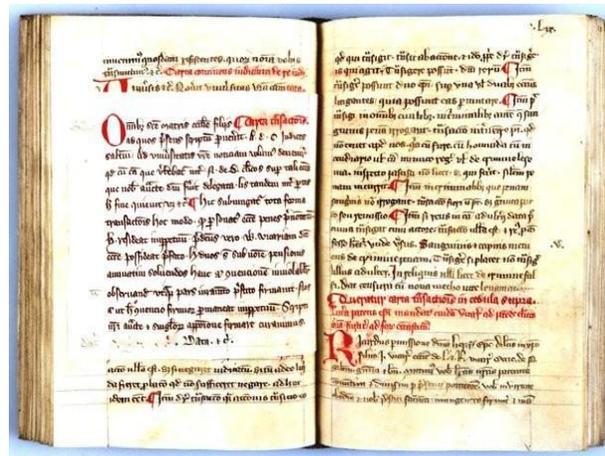
President: Professor Brian Kemp FSA

The Friends of Reading Abbey was founded to promote awareness of the Abbey's importance, to encourage interest in and understanding of its history and architecture, and to support the preservation of the ruins.

It sponsors public lectures on subjects associated with the history of the Abbey twice a year; publishes a regular newsletter and organises a summer outing.

The Friends have been active supporters of Reading Borough Council's successful Reading Abbey Revealed project, which won Heritage Lottery Funding to conserve the Abbey Ruins and Gate and to allow public access from 2018.

In 2013 the Friends helped to purchase a rare fourteenth-century Abbey Manuscript, pictured below. This is held in the Berkshire Record Office.



You can support this work by joining the Friends.

Visit our website: [www.readingabbey.org.uk](http://www.readingabbey.org.uk)



# Friends of Reading Abbey



PHOTO © CHRIS WOOD

## Supporting and promoting the Abbey



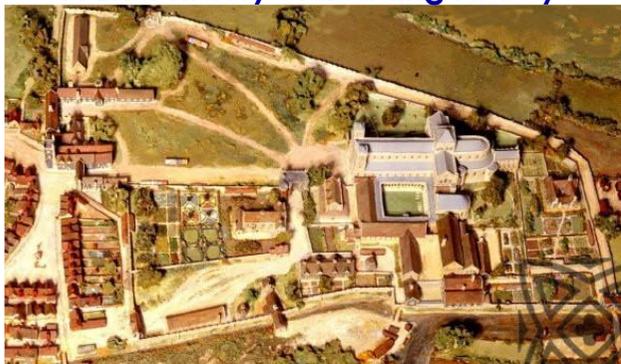
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PHOTOS BY KIND PERMISSION OF READING MUSEUM



## A Brief History of Reading Abbey



Model of the Abbey as at 1500 (Reading Museum)

**Reading Abbey** was a famous royal abbey of Benedictine monks, founded on a lavish scale in 1121 by one of the greatest of medieval English kings, Henry I. It contained the tomb of that king and remained under royal patronage until its dissolution in 1539.

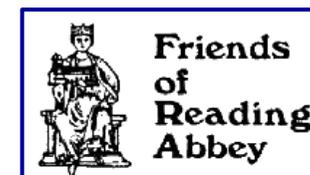
Conveniently situated on major communication routes, it witnessed many important royal and other historical events, including the marriage of John of Gaunt to Blanche of Lancaster in 1359, and the publication of Edward IV's secret marriage to Elizabeth Woodville in 1464.

The abbey was richly endowed by the royal family and others, and held estates and churches in many English counties. The abbey's presence helped the little town of Reading, which was under its lordship, to grow and prosper. Monastic life came to an end in 1539.

The last abbot, Hugh Cook *alias* Faringdon refused to surrender his abbey to Henry VIII and was found guilty of treason and executed near the abbey gate in November, 1539.

## Why is Reading Abbey Important?

- Founded by Henry I, it was among the wealthiest and most significant abbeys of medieval England
- Renowned for its nationally important Romanesque carvings (some of which may be seen in Reading Museum)
- The famous round *Sumer is icumen in* was written here in the thirteenth century
- A venue for Parliaments and Church Councils
- An important influence on the development of the town of Reading
- Impressive and evocative ruins



## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Memberships run from 1 Sept to 31 Aug and current subscriptions are:**

- **Family:** £10.00 p.a.
- **Single:** £ 7.00 p.a.
- **Society/Commercial** £15.00 p.a.
- **Life:** £105.00

Please send your completed form and subscription to:

The Honorary Treasurer,  
Francoise Le Saux,  
25 The Crescent, Earley,  
Reading RG6 7NW  
treasurer@readingabbey.org.uk

Cheques payable to 'The Friends of Reading Abbey'

I consent to the Friends contacting me on its legitimate business, including membership and events.

Our Privacy Statement is published on our website:  
[www.readingabbey.org.uk](http://www.readingabbey.org.uk)