



AUDIO GUIDE

Scan the QR code above to download the
YourTour Guide

1. In the app, search for the tour
“Reading Old Cemetery”
2. Choose the ‘Start the tour on-site’
or ‘Listen in Simulated Mode’
3. Enjoy the tour!

Accessibility: There are areas of the site that are inaccessible and some paths are uneven. It was important for us to ensure that the guide would be downloadable and accessible from home as well.



This guide was supported by the Community Fund,
University of Reading.

Reading Old Cemetery is an early example of a Victorian Garden Cemetery. It was built as a response to concerns about public health from the burial conditions in the town's three overcrowded churchyards. Following a private Act of Parliament in 1842, Reading Cemetery Company, a joint-stock company was established to set up and manage the site. The first interment was on 1st May 1843 for the funeral of Elizabeth Jacobs. The site passed on to Reading Council in 1959. It is now considered a 'closed' site with burials taking place only if families have existing plots. It was originally set up with 20,743 burial plots. It was extended to its far east side in 1877. It is estimated that around 120,000 people are buried in the site.

CONTACT DETAILS

Reading Old Cemetery History, Heritage & Education Group

Web: <https://readingoldcemetery.uk/>

Instagram: [readingoldcemetery1843](https://www.instagram.com/readingoldcemetery1843)

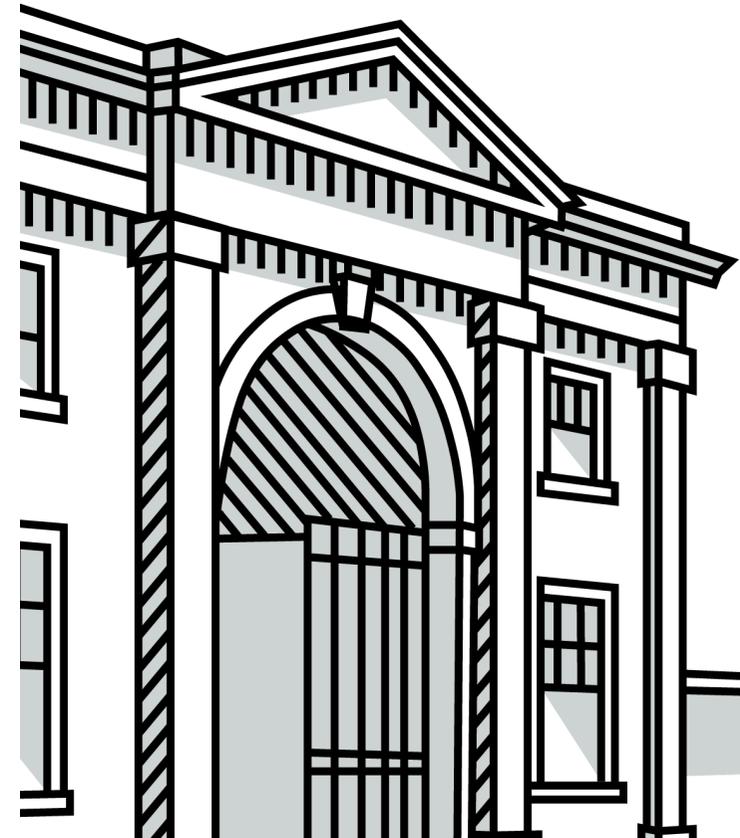
Email: readingoldcemetery1843@gmail.com

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/httpsreadingoldcemetery.uk>

READING OLD CEMETERY TOUR GUIDE

WOMEN OF READING OLD



1. **ELIZABETH JACOBS, (1822–1843)**
SECTION 8
ROW B
NUMBER 15
 The first person buried in the cemetery on 1 May 1843. The youngest daughter of Thomas Jacobs, librarian for Reading's Literary, Scientific and Mechanic's Institution. Active member of the Wesleyan Church in Broad Street (now Waterstones)..

2. **MARY GORDON BURNETT (1858–1925)**
SECTION 12
ROW C
NUMBER 2
 Philanthropist, social justice advocate and the last of the wealthy Hargreaves family. She chaired the Passive Resistance League in Colne, founded Colne Blind Aid Society, President of Dr Barnardo's Homes, Reading, co- led the Reading Blind Association with Mr Walford.

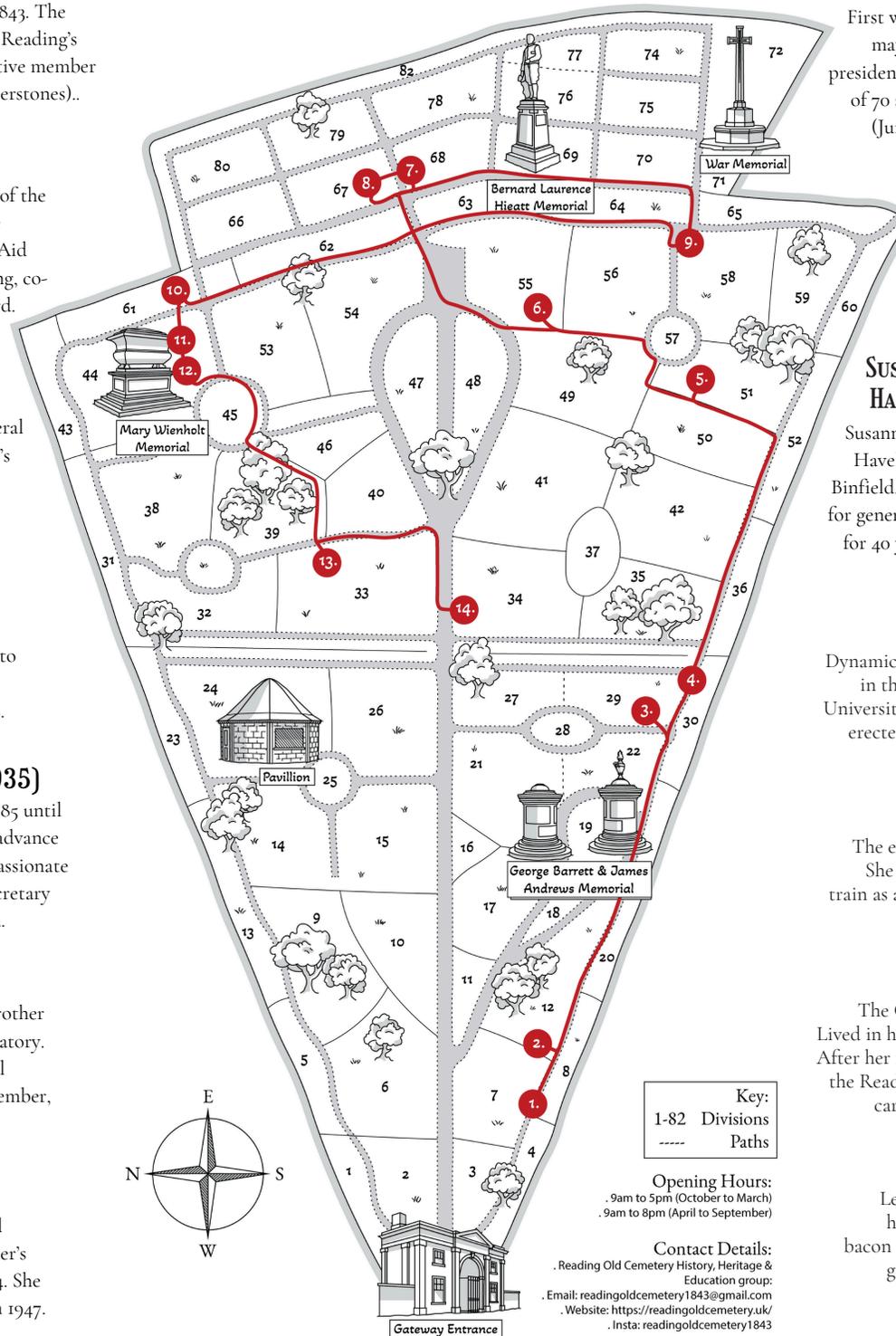
3. **ELIZABETH JACKSON (1848–1911)**
SECTION 29
ROW C
NUMBER 1
 Key figure in Reading's public life, co-founded the Ladies' Working Society and led the Women's Liberal Association. As Mayoress, she championed women's education, working alongside her husband, Mayor Edward Jackson.

4. **ELIZA RATCLIFFE (1821–1886)**
SECTION 30
ROW B
NUMBER 5
 Head of the Burlton House for Ladies School. Advocate for girls' education, signed the 1864 petition asking for University Local Examinations to be opened for girls. The only signatory from Berkshire of the Women's suffrage petition of 1866.

5. **CAROLINE GERTRUDE RUNDELL (1852–1935)**
SECTION 51
ROW A
NUMBER 38
 Headteacher of the Kendrick Girls' School from 1885 until retiring in 1913. Known for her untiring efforts to advance the school. Her portrait hangs in the Large Hall. Passionate about missionary work. For years the honorary secretary of the Reading Branch of the Police Court Mission.

6. **ANNE SHEEPSHANKS (1789–1876)**
SECTION 55
ROW F
NUMBER 31
 Amateur astronomer, lived with her astronomer brother Richard at London Road, where he built an observatory. Donated to Cambridge University for astronomical research. Honorary Royal Astronomical Society member, commemorated by the Sheepshanks moon crater.

7. **BETTIE TURNER**
SECTION 68
ROW -
NUMBER -
 Well-known herbalist and member of the National Institute of Medical Herbalists, continued her father's practice at 447 Oxford Road after his death in 1924. She ran the business alone after her mother's passing in 1947.



8. **EDITH SUTTON (1862–1957)**
SECTION 67
ROW E
NUMBER 1
 First woman councillor in England, first female Reading mayor and Reading's first female Justice of the Peace, president of the Reading NUWSS branch. Headed a group of 70 suffragists to the London NUWSS Suffrage March (June 1908). Was made a Freeman of Reading in 1954.

9. **ANNIE NEISH (1886–1918)**
SECTION 58
ROW C
NUMBER 7
 Red Cross V.A.D. nurse in WWI. Served at Reading War Hospital 1 where she died of sepsis after nursing for a soldier. Her registered war grave also honours her brother killed at Gallipoli.

10. **SUSANNA MARIA HAVELL (1822–1844) AND HANNAH RAMPTON BINFIELD (1809–1887)**
SECTION 61
ROW B
NUMBER 35
 Susanna, musician and music teacher from the renowned Havell family, worked with her aunt, composer Hannah Binfield. The Binfield family shaped Reading's music scene for generations. Hannah, organist at St. Lawrence's Church for 40 years, co-founded the Royal Berkshire Academy of Music with composer Joseph Milton Wellings..

11. **MARY WIENHOLT, (1778–1859)**
SECTION 44
ROW I
NUMBER 29
 Dynamic, prosperous and well-known philanthropist; lived in the 'Acacias', now part of the London Road campus, University of Reading. Her Grade II listed sarcophagus was erected by her nephews and nieces. It is an underground vault where she is buried with 3 of her nieces.

12. **MARIE SMART (1842–1849)**
SECTION 44
ROW -
NUMBER -
 The earliest known Sierra Leonean resident of Reading. She came from a noble family from Eastern Nigeria to train as a teacher. Tragically, died within a year of arriving in Reading.

13. **SELINA SMITH (1812–1912)**
SECTION 33
ROW -
NUMBER -
 The Queen of the Berkshire Roma died at the age of 100. Lived in her caravan for 50 years, travelling as a fortune teller. After her funeral, her caravan and belongings were burned on the Reading Fair Ground, in line with Roma traditions. The caravan was likely a Reading vardo by Dunton & Sons.

14. **MARTHA ANNIE VENNER (1840–1921)**
SECTION 34
ROW D
NUMBER 4
 Led a thriving butter and provision business with her husband, expanding into sausage manufacturing and bacon curing. Under her leadership, the company thrived, gaining a reputation for quality and innovation even adopting early telephony..