

“The priority is the human interaction, the personal warmth”

PLEDGE TO MAKE MUSEUMS ONE OF YOUR ‘FIVE A DAY’

We aspire to be a hub for our local communities. Our engagement and volunteering programmes are thriving, welcoming and responsive to all ages. They support the ‘five ways to wellbeing’, helping you to connect to others, be active, keep learning, give to others and be mindful.

So join us to explore the varied programmes and opportunities which can make you feel happier and healthier here at The MERL.

FACILITIES

-  **Café** offering hot and cold drinks, sandwiches, cakes and snacks
-  **Garden** with seating and opportunities to explore our sensory garden, woodland area and the opportunity to meet our resident hens
-  **The Nook** quiet and comfy space for study, rest or reflection

COMMUNITY PARTNERS HIRE SCHEME


For our Community Partners, we offer room hire at a reduced rate. Our private rooms vary in size from more intimate spaces (for 10–12 people) to our Conference Room (for up to 40). Please contact merlevents@reading.ac.uk for more information on becoming a Community Partner.

For free options, contact us to discuss using spaces such as **The Nook** or **The Garden** for your group? These public areas are perfect places for groups to meet, relax and chat in an informal environment.

ACCESSING US

We hope everyone enjoys their time at the museum and we aim to provide a warm, friendly experience for all in our fully accessible building. Visit merl.reading.ac.uk/visit-us/accessibility for information and resources which you might find useful ahead of visiting. To discuss any additional access requirements email merl@reading.ac.uk or call **0118 378 8660**

 @TheMERL #TheMERL  @the.merl

 /museumofenglishrurallife



HEART, HEALTH AND SOUL: LIVING WELL AT THE MERL



“a calm place to come and feel accepted...”

merl.reading.ac.uk

The Museum of English Rural Life,
Redlands Road, Reading, RG1 5EX





Memory Making and Memory Sharing reminiscence discussion programmes:

We offer collaborative reminiscence programmes in partnership with community organisations, using our collections as a springboard for discussion and conversation, facilitated by museum staff. Contact our audience development team at merlevents@reading.ac.uk for more information or book.



"Gives people a chance to reminisce about their lives bringing common interests, occupations and life history together to share this with others and promote positive interaction which aids wellbeing."

- Organisation leader

Growing communities:

Our community gardeners represent a range of local communities who design, plant and nurture growing spaces in the MERL garden inspired by the museum's themes. For more information about our many and varied projects, please see merl.reading.ac.uk/communities/community-projects/garden-projects.



Community Platform and Hands On Heritage programmes:

We encourage communities and organisations to collaborate with us on creative projects and programmes on and off-site, many of which result in an exhibition in the museum.

Our long standing community partners have included Elizabeth Fry Approved Premises for Women, Alana House, Reading Mencap and Launchpad.

"It doesn't matter who you are once you are in the group, you get absorbed in what you are doing."

- Workshop participant

Group visits:

We welcome group visits to The MERL. To ensure you have enough space to explore the galleries, advance booking is essential for all groups of over 10 people. We can arrange hands on opportunities such as sensory touch tours, object handling and volunteer supported companion tours, tailor- making your experience to suit your needs.



"Planning a trip to The MERL, it's not just seen as a visit to the museum, it's what activity can we do there?"

- Group leader

Early Birds at The MERL:

If you prefer a quieter museum visit with the interactives and sounds switched off, consider joining us for our regular Quieter Hour programme, Early Birds, see merl.reading.ac.uk/event/early-birds-autism-hour for more details.

Giving your time through volunteering:

Our volunteers get involved in a wide range of roles – from unearthing stories about our collections and archives, to greeting our friendly visitors – all opportunities are featured on our website at merl.reading.ac.uk/communities/volunteer



"It is so fulfilling, doing this to help others. People appreciate you being here to help."

- A MERL volunteer

Contact our Audience Development team at merlevents@reading.ac.uk

or call 0118 378 8660 for more information and to explore the opportunities for your group.