News and views from the Engage Befriending team

August 2025 www.engage-uk.org

Engage Befriending Drop-In

The Engage team would like our volunteers and Engage friends to come to our Engage Befriending drop-in

Thursday 14th August
in the Atrium Café

Thursday 11th September
in the Atrium Café

Thursday 9th October
in the Atrium Café

From 10.30am to 12 noon
Pop in for a cuppa, say hello and meet other volunteers, Engage Befriending friends, and the team.

We'd love to see you there.

The **Atrium Café** is at Greyfriars Church, Friar Street, RG1 1EH

August Drop-In - Old Baby Photos!

Thursday 14th August, 10.30am to 12 noon
In the Atrium Café at Greyfriars Church

At the August Drop-In, if you have a photograph of yourself as a baby or a child then you are invited to bring along and give it to Jo or Jenny, then we'll all try and guess who is who!

A couple of things happening in October

Wednesday 1st October is **Older People's Day** at **Broad Street Mall** in Reading.

Come along and meet the Engage Befriending team plus other charities and organisations that offer help and advice to older people. Plus there will be activities and demonstrations. More details later.

Thursday 9th October at the monthly **Engage Befriending Drop-In**, **Remap** will be joining us for a chat. They are a charitable company that makes free bespoke disability aids for those situations where no commercial aid is available. Where one does exist but does not work for your particular circumstances, they will adapt it to suit.

Contact the Engage Befriending team

Main number: 0118 995 2102 | Email: engage@themustardtree.org
Jackie Curtis: 07887 395115 | Jo White 07437 01164 | Sheila Cox 07516 254916
If you would like a large print version of this newsletter, please let us know.

Engage is part-funded by many organisations including:

COMMUNITY FUND

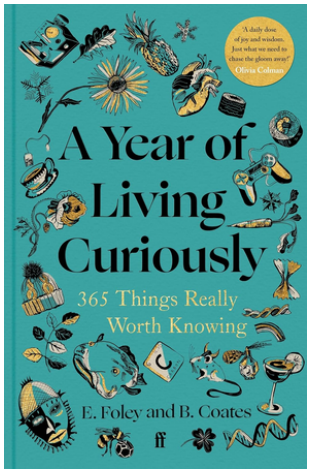
Reading Borough Council

A Year of Living Curiously

Beth Coates & Elizabeth Foley

Book Club

Something slightly different for this month's Book Club. Not a a novel or story, but a book of daily facts.



A book of daily short snippets of random knowledge to amuse and expand your mind. You'll learn what the Japanese mean by 'kuchisabishii' and how the Victorians communicate through flowers; you'll start to get quantum computing and discover the secret history of the bobble hat. There are tales of footballing bees and Viking mice, the beginning of the thesaurus and the end of the library of Alexandria. And that goats have accents specific to their social group, that modern overcoats have only been fashionable since the 1800s (before this, people wore capes!) and find out the reason why leaves turn colourful in the autumn.

Sunset Poem

The beauty of a sunset
Is for everyone to see
No matter who you are
Or where you live
It can be accessed.

Today it has shown me the
beauty of the world
The expanse of it
The majesty of the skies
The grandeur of nature
The untold beauty.

Words cannot fully explain,
The tears that come to my eyes
It is just a feeling
When I see the roaring sea
And an awesomely colourful
sky.

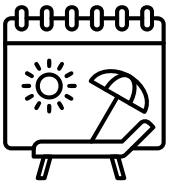
Sure, it can be like life
We don't always see the beauty
It is hidden by the clouds
But in time, the clouds clear
And beauty can be seen again

Take the time to see it
Don't be too busy
Doing stuff that doesn't matter
See the everyday beauty,
It is there, waiting to be
discovered.

Jackie

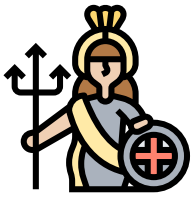
August Facts

Anglo-Saxons called August "Weod Monath" (Weed Month) because of the rapid growth of plants and weeds during this time

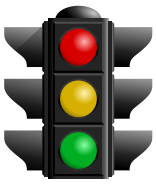


The August bank holiday was initially on the first Monday of the month, but it moved to the last Monday in 1971

Unpredictable Weather: Despite being a summer month, the weather in the UK can be unpredictable



In 1740 'Rule Britannia' sung for the first time in public, in Thomas Arne's 'Masque Alfred'.



In 1926 Britain's first set of electric traffic lights appear on the streets of London.

In 1963 Britain's Great Train Robbery – £2.6 M stolen from Royal Mail.

1919 World's first international daily air service begins between London and Paris.

Community, Craft & Companionship at Reading Men's Shed

formerly known as The Silvers' Workshop

Do you remember the comforting hum of your garden shed—wood shavings underfoot, that reassuring sense of purpose? That's exactly what **Reading Men's Shed** (formerly **Silvers' Workshop**) brings back—but with the added warmth of friendship and community spirit.

Reading Men's Shed is part of a national movement of over 900 sheds in England and Wales—growing at 2–3 new sheds per week. The UK Men's Sheds Association highlights how these hubs:

- Offer "health by stealth"—boosting mental wellbeing through practical activity
- Combat loneliness and depression—a recent survey showed 97% of shed participants report making new friends; 89% feel less depressed.

What they do

- **Make, mend, create** – Members work on personal projects—be it crafting cigar-box guitars, restoring garden furniture, building toys for grandchildren, or repairing electric scooters—alongside group projects like chicken coops for MERL museum or charming barrel-to-cabinet conversions.
- **Share skills—safely** – Workshops are equipped with wood- and metal-working tools. Newcomers are always shown how to use machines properly, so safety and learning go hand in hand.
- **Enjoy friendly camaraderie** – There's a cosy seating area with free tea and coffee; plenty of banter, encouragement, and mutual support.

Who is it for?

While open to all men, the shed particularly offers an inviting haven for retired people missing that sense of daily purpose. Importantly, it combats loneliness, offers peer support and bolsters mental wellbeing.

This isn't just a woodworking space—it's a vibrant, life-affirming community. Whether someone's a lifelong tinkerer or never picked up a hammer before, Reading Men's Shed offers purpose, support, and new friendships. It's a place where conversation flows naturally "shoulder to shoulder," and where health, happiness, and hope are built one project at a time.

Getting Involved

- **Where & When:** 37 Hilcot Road, Reading RG30 2SX; open weekdays 10 am–2 pm.
- **Costs:** Members pay £70 annually plus £3 per session to help cover tea, tools, and utilities.
- **Thinking of dropping by?** Go ahead—no referral needed. You're welcome to tour the workshop and see if it feels like the place for you .
- **Contact them:** ring 0118 391 3545 or email contact@readingmensshed.org.uk
- **Websites:** Reading - thesilversworkshop.org.uk UK - menssheds.org.uk

Members are generous: Everyone is welcome to donate tools, materials—or even sponsorship—which all help the workshop thrive

Tell Tony!

Tony is eager to hear from you! He is a member of the Engage team responsible for assembling this newsletter. Feel free to share any local happenings, suggest content ideas, write an article, or ask a question that we can address for you—just reach out!

You can contact us via email at **engage@themustardtree.org** or send your thoughts to: Engage Befriending, 4 Sackville Street, Reading, RG1 1NT.

Word Search - Found in the bedroom

N L O P S R O B O S P D D S
I E O R L R A S I P S R H W
R I S D I E N H D U N E N A
G U R A P C R E A N I S N R
A O A E P H E L R I A S T D
L R O D E B O F N G T I E R
A M I R R O R T N H R N D O
R I L E S S E T O T U G D B
M W A M S H S O D S C G Y E
C O M O H E S M M T D O B T
L L P C T E H A T A R W E R
O L R R S T T E H N L N A E
C I M T E S O L C D R E R T
K P U B S D L P L T E V U D

alarm clock
bed
closet
curtains
dressing gown
duvet
lamp
mirror
nightstand
photo
pillow
radio
rug
sheets
shelf
slippers
teddy bear
wardrobe

July Word Search Answers

Match the baby photos

Can you match the baby/child photos with the member of the Engage Befriending team?

Don't forget to bring any photos you have to the Drop-In on August 14th.