



April 2026

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 9th April
in the Atrium Café

Thursday 14th May
in the Atrium Café

Thursday 11th June
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

April

April brings lighter days and a few gentle reminders to look after ourselves and one another.

Stress Awareness Month encourages us to pause, breathe, and take small moments of rest—something we all deserve. And **National Pet Month** - a celebration of the joy pets bring to our lives.

On **World Autism Awareness Day** (2 April), we're invited to learn a little more about how people experience the world differently. A bit of understanding goes a long way in helping families in our community feel supported.

Later in the month, **Earth Day** (22 April) offers a chance to enjoy the beauty of creation—whether that's blossom on a familiar tree or birdsong in the garden. And **St George's Day** (23 April) brings memories of stories, parades, and quiet acts of courage.

Stress Awareness Month: Ways to Feel Calmer



Take a quiet pause

A few minutes with a cup of tea, a favourite chair, or a view from the window can ease the mind.

Stay connected

A short chat with a friend or neighbour can lift the spirits for both of you.

Move gently

A slow walk, light stretching, or pottering in the garden helps release tension.

Breathe deeply

Try a slow breath in for four counts, and out for four. Repeat a few times.

Do something you enjoy

Reading, puzzles, music, knitting—small pleasures make a big difference.

Be kind to yourself

Not every day is easy. A little patience and self-compassion go a long way.



National Pet Month, a lovely celebration of the joy pets bring into our lives. It's a chance to share stories of much-loved companions, remember pets from years gone by, and appreciate the comfort and companionship animals offer. The month also highlights responsible pet care and supports the many charities that help animals in need. A small moment spent with a furry friend—or simply recalling a favourite pet—can bring a surprising amount of happiness.

Contact the Engage Befriending team

Main number: 0118 995 2102 | Email: engage@themustardtree.org

Jackie Curtis: 07887 395115 | Jo White 07437 011764 | 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:



Quiz: How well do you know Reading?

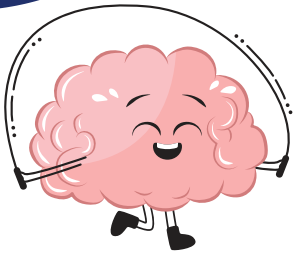


1. Reading was famously known for the "Three Bs" during the Industrial Revolution. What did they stand for?
2. Which famous Victorian author was imprisoned in Reading Gaol, inspiring a world-renowned poem?
3. What is the name of the major shopping centre in Reading that takes its name from a 17th-century workhouse?
4. Reading sits at the confluence of which two major waterways?
5. What is the name of the large lion statue in Forbury Gardens and which battle does it commemorate?
6. Which king is buried in the grounds of the Reading Abbey ruins?
7. According to Old English, what does the name "Reading" (originally Readingum) mean?
8. Which world-famous author attended the Reading Ladies Boarding School in the Abbey Gateway?
9. Before being known as "The Royals," what was the official nickname of Reading Football Club?
10. Which famous Hollywood actress was born at the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading?
11. Which 14th-century church in the town centre is the oldest Franciscan building in continuous use in the UK?
12. Reading is home to a full-size Victorian replica of which famous 11th-century tapestry?
13. Which globally successful sitcom creator and actor was born in Reading and attended Ashmead School?
14. Which member of the royal family was born at Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading?
15. At 86 metres (282 ft) tall, what is the name of the pointed skyscraper that is currently the tallest building in Reading?
16. This narrow, historic street in the town centre is officially called Union Street but is known by locals by a much more "fragrant" nickname. What is it?
17. Which Reading suburb was historically known for its brickmaking industry, supplying distinctive red bricks across the region?
18. The Reading Festival began as part of which earlier event?

Answers below: No cheating!

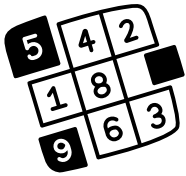
1. *Beer, Biscuits, and Bulls. The town was home to Huntley & Palmers (biscuits), Simonds Brewery (beer), and Suttons Seeds (bulbs).*
2. *Oscar Wilde. He wrote The Ballad of Reading Gaol after being incarcerated there from 1895 to 1897.*
3. *The Oracle. It was built on the site of a 17th-century workhouse of the same name.*
4. *The River Thames and the Kennet & Avon Canal*
5. *The Maiwand Lion. It is one of the largest cast iron statues in the world. Commemorates the Battle of Maiwand - the battle fought on 27th July 1880, where a force of British and Indian troops was overwhelmed by Afghan soldiers and tribesmen, a notorious Victorian military disaster.*
6. *Henry I*
7. *"Reada's People". It refers to an Anglo-Saxon tribe led by a man named Reada.*
8. *Jane Austen. She and her sister Cassandra were students there between 1785 and 1786.*
9. *The Biscuitmen. The name was a tribute to the Huntley & Palmers factory, then the largest in the world. The nickname was officially changed to The Royals in 1976.*
10. *Kate Winslet. She also studied drama locally at the Redroofs Theatre School.*
11. *Greyfriars Church. Completed in 1311, it was built by the "Grey Friars" (Franciscans) who were named for the colour of their habits.*
12. *The Bayeux Tapestry. It is housed in the Reading Museum and was stitched by 35 women in 1885 so Britain could have its own version.*
13. *Ricky Gervais. He often references his Whitley upbringing in his stand-up and shows like The Office.*
14. *The Princess of Wales, Catherine (Middleton). The Middleton family lived in nearby Bradfield Southend and Bucklebury.*
15. *The Blade. It was completed in 2009 and is visible from miles away, including the M4 motorway.*
16. *Smelly Alley. It earned the name because it was historically lined with open-air butchers and fishmongers.*
17. *Tilehurst. Its clay deposits made it a major brickmaking centre, supplying distinctive red bricks across Berkshire.*
18. *The National Jazz and Blues Festival. Reading Festival evolved from this 1960s event before shifting toward rock and later broadening its genres.*

Keeping Your Mind Well and Active



Looking after our mental wellbeing is just as important as caring for our physical health. Feeling low, worried, or “not quite yourself” isn’t simply part of getting older—it’s a sign that your mind may need a little extra care and attention. The good news is that there are many gentle, everyday ways to keep your mind active, steady, and supported.

One of the simplest is **staying connected**. A friendly chat—whether with family, neighbours, or someone from your community group—can lift the spirits and help you feel grounded. Talking things through is often the first step to feeling better, and it’s never too late to start.



Keeping the mind active also plays a big part in wellbeing. Activities like reading, puzzles, crosswords, knitting, or learning something new give the brain a healthy workout. Even small challenges, such as trying a new recipe or exploring a different walking route, can help keep your mind engaged and curious.

It’s also worth remembering how closely mental and physical health are linked. **Gentle movement**—stretching, walking, gardening—can improve mood and reduce stress. Fresh air and daylight, especially in spring, can make a noticeable difference to how we feel.



Life brings changes, and sometimes those changes can feel overwhelming. If you’re finding things difficult, you’re not alone. Many people experience periods of anxiety, low mood, or uncertainty, especially after bereavement or major life events. Reaching out for support is a sign of strength, not weakness. Speaking to your GP or a trusted professional can open the door to helpful support, including talking therapies.

Above all, **be kind to yourself**. Taking things one day at a time, enjoying small pleasures, and staying connected with others can help keep your mind well and active. A little care goes a long way.

More information and keeping your mind active is available from Age UK:

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/mind-body/mental-wellbeing/>

Meet the team... volunteer Ursula



In a former life I was a nurse and a homeopath.

Since retiring, I have tried a number of different volunteer opportunities.

At Engage, I do the final stage of packing up and posting out the newsletters. I enjoy meeting some of the team in the office while doing this.

I also volunteer on Reception at an Advice Centre in Cemetery Junction which is really interesting as we are able to help people with a multitude of different problems.

Hobbywise, I do aqua at the gym, walks with friends and love doing cryptic crosswords (very relaxing). In the midst of all this, I enjoy my 7 young grandchildren, so help out there when required, which can be exhausting at times but it’s lovely to see them growing up.



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.

PUZZLE PAGE

Kings and Queens

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

Albert	Eleanor
Alexandra	Elizabeth
Anne	George
Arthur	Henry
Athelstan	Isabella
Camilla	Margaret
Charles	Mary
Charlotte	Matilda
Edmund	Richard
Edward	Victoria
Edwin	William

Words

How many words of four letters or more can you make from the letters in:

R E A D I N G
 B E R K S H I R E U K

E.g, ABIDE, BARKING, HANKERED, ...

How many more words can you find?

Bonus points: There are at least ten 10-letter words, how many can you find?

Say What You See

<p>1 G N I K A M LOST LOST LOST LOST</p> 	<p>2 EVIL → evil</p>	<p>3  </p>
<p>4 SPREAD2</p>	<p>5  E </p>	<p>6  </p>

MARCH ANSWERS

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

Words in The Mustard Tree

Nine letter words: mutters, rehearsed, restarted, retreated, shattered, shuttered, smattered, stuttered, stuturer, treasured, usherette

Say What You See

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. Back and forth | 4. No one |
| 2. To-do list | understand |
| 3. Rock and roll | 5. Ready to go |
| | 6. Touch up |

Words to use in April

Sprightly – full of life and energy, like the first warm days.
Zestful – lively, enthusiastic, full of spring zing
Lilt – a light, musical rhythm, perfect for describing birdsong.
Sprig – a small shoot or twig; very April
Chirrup – the happy sound of birds returning