

News and views from the Engage Befriending team



engage
befriending

September 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 10th September
in the Atrium Café

Thursday 8th October
in the Atrium Café

Thursday 12th November
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

Connect More

digital skills programme

Join our **FREE**
digital drop in session

Please bring your own device and we'll show you how to:



Use your phone, tablet or laptop



Shop online



Chat and message online



And much more

When?

10:00 - 12:00

9th September, 14th October

11th November, 9th December

Where?

**Community Cafe, Whiteley
Community Hub
252 Northumberland Ave,
Reading, RG2 7QA**



Older Person's Day 2026

Thursday 1st October, 9:30am - 2pm

Broad Street Mall

Come and celebrate at a vibrant, community-focused event packed with activities for all ages! Whether you're looking to stay active, learn something new, or simply enjoy some good company, there's something here for everyone.

There will be many stalls on the ground floor and first floor of Broad Street Mall. These stalls offer special advice and support for older people, their families, and friends.



Jackie and the mayor of Reading at last year's Older Person's Day

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:



Rediscovering the Power of Friendship

Jo tells us about the friendship seminar she attended



If you find it hard to make friends, you are not alone. 20% of people say they have no close friends, and 51% say they find it difficult to make new friends. However, studies show that close friendships can lower anxiety and depression, bring greater meaning and joy, reduce the risk of heart disease, and extend your lifespan!

I attended a seminar run by **Linking Lives** and **The Friendship Lab** where we looked at friendships and how we can strengthen the friendships we have. Here are some of the things we thought about...



What is a friend?

- Someone to talk to – to share joys and regrets – and to listen to
- Someone to depend on – who could advise you when facing difficult times
- Someone to grow with – who helps you think and learn
- Someone to enjoy – who you can share activities with and makes you laugh!

What are the 5 stages of friendship?

- Acquaintance – people you know from church, work or a local club, but could get to know more
- Casual friend – someone you call a friend but only see a couple of times a year
- Friend – you would invite them to a party or send a Christmas card
- Close friend – you can rely on them and would trust them with your children, or pet
- 2am friend – someone you would turn to in a crisis



What can get in the way of friendship?

Research says:

- Busyness
- Mobility – we don't stay where we were born
- Shyness
- Confusion – not all connections with people we meet are friendships
- Neglect – perhaps through low confidence or fear of rejection

What can we do to build closer friendships?

- Being Generous with our time and attention
- Sharing our hopes and fears and letting people know what they mean to us
- Sharing activities – doing something we enjoy together



Here are some ideas for things you could try to reach out to your friends this month:

- Thank a friend you are grateful for – send a card or a letter or give them a call
- Give someone a compliment
- Help a neighbour – helping others boosts our own sense of wellbeing too!
- Invite someone to do something with you or get together for a catch up

If you have any tips of making friends, friendly places you go, or groups and activities that you've found helpful, then let us know.

Memories from the cinema...



Do you remember any of the old cinemas in Reading, or where you used to live? Most have closed down and been replaced by large multiplex cinemas with little character or sense of magic. If you have any memories, stories or favourite old films, then let us know. Here are some things to get you thinking...

British cinema has given us some unforgettable stories; gentle, heartfelt films that still bring comfort and a smile. Here are a few classics many will remember fondly.

The Railway Children (1970)

A tender tale of courage, kindness, and family. Its Yorkshire landscapes and touching final scene still stir the heart.

Brief Encounter (1945) A beautifully restrained love story set among steam trains and railway cafés. Quiet, emotional, and timeless.

Whisky Galore! (1949)

This cheerful comedy about islanders “rescuing” whisky from a shipwreck remains a favourite for its wit and community spirit.

The Titfield Thunderbolt (1953)

A charming Ealing comedy celebrating determination as villagers unite to save their local railway.

Kes (1969) A moving portrait of working-class life in Yorkshire, remembered for its honesty and the bond between a boy and his kestrel.

The First Film I Ever Saw Many of us remember the excitement of that very first trip to the cinema: the hush as the lights dimmed, the rustle of sweet papers, and the thrill of seeing a story unfold on a giant screen. Whether it was Bambi, The Sound of Music, or a Saturday matinee adventure, those first films often left a lasting impression.

A Cinema Trip I'll Never Forget Perhaps it was a special outing with parents, a first date, or a rainy afternoon treat. Some will recall queueing outside the old ABC or Odeon, clutching a ticket stub and hoping for a good seat. Others might remember the newsreels, the cartoons, or the usherette with her torch and tray of chocolates.

Films We Watched Together For many families, certain films became traditions: Christmas musicals, Sunday afternoon classics, or the comforting favourites shown on the BBC. These shared viewings often created memories as cherished as the films themselves.

The Actor Who Always Made Me Smile Whether it was Margaret Rutherford's delightful eccentricity, John Mills' quiet strength, or the gentle humour of Peter Sellers, everyone has a performer whose presence felt like meeting an old friend.

Some of Reading's Old Cinemas



The Savoy (Basingstoke Road): A popular 1930s suburban cinema in South Reading famous for packed children's Saturday morning matinees before closing in the early 1960s.

The Rex (Oxford Road): A beloved local picture house serving west Reading generations before shutting its doors permanently.

ABC Cinema (Friar Street): Opened in March 1921 as the Central Picture Playhouse. It was the first venue in town to show talking pictures in 1929, later joined the ABC chain. Closed in 1999 before being demolished in 2003.

Odean (Cheapside): Opened in March 1937 with a classic art-deco style. Closed in 1999 and the building stood for years before being demolished in 2022.

The Gaumont / Pavilion (Oxford Road area): Opened in 1929 as a grand cinema complete with an organ and tea lounge, later closing in 1979.

The Grandby (West Reading): Another neighborhood cinema fondly remembered for community screenings mid-century.

Autumnal Wildlife

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

Acorns
Badger
Blackberries
Chrysalis
Cobweb
Conkers
Dormouse
Foraging
Fungus
Hazelnuts

Hedgehog
Hibernation
Migration
Pine Cone
Red Deer
Robin
Squirrel
Starling
Swallow
Tawny Owl

Cross-Maths Puzzle

Like a crossword only with maths calculations
From Linking Lives UK

$$\begin{array}{c} 50 \\ 10 + \square = 15 \\ \square \\ = \\ 67 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{c} 5 \times 5 = \square \\ \square \\ - \\ \square \\ = \\ 16 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{c} 63 \\ 39 - \square = 31 \\ 11 \\ - \\ \square + 6 + 12 = \square \\ = \\ 50 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{c} 11 + \square = 25 \\ 7 \\ = \\ \square \div 11 = 7 \end{array}$$



AUGUST ANSWERS

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



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 by email, phone or letter:

- email: engage@themustardtree.org
- phone: 0118 995 2102 (and leave a message if no answer)
- or send your thoughts to: **Engage Befriending, 4 Sackville Street, Reading, RG1 1NT.**