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University of
Reading

Giving Day

Giving Day 2026: A Community United by Generosity



Our Centenary Giving Day brought together alumni, staff, students and friends from across the globe in a 36-hour celebration of philanthropy, community and opportunity. The campaign invited supporters to invest in projects that will shape the University’s future and help the next generation thrive.

The response was remarkable. Together, 176 donors raised £37,898, supporting three key initiatives: the Beyond 100 Bursary, which helps students facing financial barriers; the Outdoor Learning Garden, a new space for environmental education and community engagement; and the Centenary Fund, which enables the University to respond to areas of greatest need.

Giving Day demonstrated the truly global reach of the Reading community. Donations were received from supporters in the UK and overseas, including Greece, China, Bhutan and Myanmar, reflecting the enduring connection alumni and friends

feel towards the University, wherever they are in the world.

The campaign was also boosted by a series of challenge gifts. A 150 Donor Challenge unlocked £2,000, while a Power Hour challenge contributed £4,000, encouraging supporters to come together and maximise their impact.

Alongside the fundraising total, Giving Day offered an opportunity to celebrate the stories behind every donation. Donors shared messages about their experiences at Reading, their commitment to widening access to education and their enthusiasm for projects such as the Learning Garden. Their generosity highlighted the power of collective giving and the difference that gifts of every size can make.

As the University marks its centenary year, the success of Giving Day demonstrates the strength of the Reading community and its shared belief in education, research and creating positive change. Thanks to the generosity of 176 supporters, the University is better placed to provide opportunities, inspire learning and make a lasting impact for the next hundred years.

Donor messages

“During my time at Reading, I was in dire need of money and I got help from the University. Today I want to give back a little something and I hope one day I’ll be able to do much more. Reading has been home to me in so many ways. It will forever hold a special place in my heart.”
Dipanwita Saha – Kolkata, India

“This place was never just a university to me- it was where my path quietly began to unfold. Within these walls, I found knowledge that shaped my mind, moments that shaped my spirit, and a love that shaped my life.”
Kamila Tovbaeva – Dushanbe, Tajikistan

“As a Physics PhD student at Reading University I benefitted from financial help to complete my PhD thesis in 1985. I am pleased to know that my donation will help some students in a similar situation.”
Sudesh Bains – Southampton, United Kingdom

“I am a Maths Graduate, I grew up in Purley outside Reading, and am now living in a Kent village in the country. This has made me realise how important the green countryside is to our wellbeing, so I am giving to the Outside Learning Garden to help others appreciate what I know to be true.”
Gillian Heywood MBE neé Beswick – Lyminge, United Kingdom

Your support in action...

The generosity of our supporters continues to transform lives. Over the past academic year, donors like you have made an incredible 6,731 gifts, helping raise more than £1.6 million to make a real difference across the University and beyond.



Welcome

As the University of Reading marks its Centenary year, I am proud to share this special edition of Giving Matters, celebrating the generosity, commitment and impact of the supporters, alumni, volunteers and friends who help our community flourish.



As we mark this Centenary year, I am reminded of the countless people whose generosity, commitment and vision have shaped our University over the past century. Today, that tradition continues through the kindness of our donors and volunteers, who help create opportunities for students, support world-leading research, and strengthen our connection with communities locally and globally.

Throughout this edition, you will read inspiring stories that demonstrate the impact of philanthropy across the University. From scholarships that enable talented students to realise their ambitions, to mentoring and careers initiatives that help prepare graduates for success, your support continues to transform lives.

Our Centenary is not only a celebration of our history, but also a recognition of the people who will define our next hundred years. Thanks to the dedication of our supporters, we can continue to invest in talent, innovation and discovery for the benefit of future generations.

The University has always been proud of its place within the wider community, and it has been wonderful to see so many people joining us throughout our Centenary celebrations. These events have provided opportunities to reflect on our shared achievements and to celebrate the lasting impact of education, research and philanthropy.

On behalf of everyone at the University of Reading, thank you for your continued support. Your generosity is helping to ensure that our second century is every bit as ambitious and transformative as our first.

Professor Robert Van de Noort CBE DL
Vice-Chancellor University of Reading

Growing knowledge and inspiring action

The University of Reading's Learning Garden



A new outdoor education space at the University of Reading is helping to bring climate and environmental learning to life for students, schools and community groups.

Created as part of the University's centenary celebrations, the Learning Garden has been designed as a vibrant hub for discovery, connection with nature and hands-on education. Located within the historic walls of Harris Garden on the Whiteknights campus, it provides an inspiring setting where visitors of all ages can explore some of the most important

“ Welcoming school groups to use the Learning Garden has really brought the space to life. We’ve been able to have some really great discussions about actions they can take back to school inspired by their visit. ”

environmental challenges facing our world today.

While the Learning Garden is now welcoming visitors, it remains an active fundraising project. New features, habitats and learning opportunities will continue to be developed, ensuring the space evolves over time and expands its impact for future generations of learners and researchers.

The garden showcases key themes including climate change, biodiversity, hydrology and food production, helping learners understand how these issues are interconnected at



“ The space offers benefits beyond education. Community groups, charities and youth organisations can use the garden free of charge. ”

local, national and global levels. Through practical experiences and outdoor exploration, visitors can gain a deeper appreciation of our changing natural world and consider the actions they can take to make a positive difference.

For local schools, the Learning Garden provides valuable opportunities

for nature-based learning, particularly for pupils who may have limited access to green spaces. Children can develop fieldwork skills such as habitat mapping and species identification while engaging with curriculum-linked activities in a real-world environment.

The space offers benefits beyond education. Community groups, charities and youth organisations can use the garden free of charge, creating opportunities for lifelong learning, wellbeing and connection with nature. Research continues to demonstrate the positive impact that spending time outdoors can have on physical and mental health, making the garden a valuable community asset.

University students are also beginning to use the garden as a teaching and research environment. Students from disciplines including biological sciences, geography, environmental sciences, agriculture and education can learn in a setting that combines practical experience with world-leading research.

As Professor Robert Van de Noort explains, “the garden forms part of the University’s wider Nature Park vision, creating a lasting centenary legacy that will nurture curiosity, environmental understanding and positive action for generations to come.”

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the project so far, including the following charities and organisations.



Built on Philanthropy

This year we celebrate our centenary; 100 years since we were granted our Royal Charter and gained independent charitable status. But we can trace the generosity of our donors and supporters back much further to before the Royal Charter and can proudly say that we are a university built on philanthropy.

1900

The first scholarship



The first donor funded scholarship was established in 1900 by Edith Mary Sutton, of the Sutton Seeds dynasty and a pioneer for social action. She chaired the Reading Education Committee, fought for women's voting rights and later became the first female councillor in England, and Reading's first female mayor.

The scholarship supported talented students of music and was worth £20 per annum, equivalent to around £3,000 today.

1908

Wantage – our first halls of residence



Sustained growth would not have been possible without a pioneering approach to accommodation. When Wantage Hall opened in 1908 it enabled students from outside of the area to undertake full-time study. The land and the building were gifted by Lady Harriet Sarah Loyd-Lindsay Wantage, together with a fund for its long-term maintenance and a generous scholarship for students in residence.

1911 – 1914

Enhanced/expanded facilities



St Andrew's Hall, our first accommodation for women, opened in 1911 and was made possible by the on-going support and generosity of Alfred Palmer.

Wessex Hall followed in 1913 thanks to Herbert Sutton, Chairman of the Reading College Council, who gifted

property on Upper Redlands Road and encouraged other gifts from anonymous donors.

Dr Jamieson B Hurry, the College Medical Officer, gifted funds for the college gymnasium to provide sports facilities for students.

1892

The Special Fund



When the University Extension College Reading opened in 1892, it had almost nothing to its name. No land, no buildings, no equipment. Evening lectures were held in the Town Hall. Saturday classes were in a few rooms on Valpy Street.

The Special Fund appeal was launched to ambitiously raise £2,000, the equivalent of more than £200,000 today.

Our first major gift



In the same year, George Palmer, owner of the world-famous Huntley and Palmer biscuit factory made the first substantial gift of £500, which provided essential apparatus to equip the first classrooms.

There were also gifts of books to establish a library and donations provided prize funds to exceptional students for their academic achievements.

1902

The New Building Fund



By the turn of the century the college had outgrown its space, and in 1902 The New Building Fund was launched, to raise £80,000 for a permanent new home.

Land at London Road was gifted by Alfred Palmer, second son of George Palmer and head of the engineering department at Huntley & Palmer.

When construction began in 1905 the design of the new campus was practical and modular, allowing for additional buildings to be added once sufficient funds had been raised.

1911

The University Endowment Fund



Greater financial stability for the institution came in 1911 when a transformational joint gift of £200,000 was made to establish the University Endowment Fund.

Lady Wantage, The Rt Hon. George William Palmer and his brother Alfred Palmer helped underwrite the running costs of the institution and balance the books in challenging times, particularly during the First World War.

1922

Reading Citizens Endowment Fund



The people and smaller businesses of Reading were instrumental in helping to secure our Royal Charter.

To become an independent institution, we needed to be able to demonstrate secure funding for future growth. In 1922 The College Principal, Dr W.M. Childs, launched The Reading Citizens Endowment Fund, aiming to raise an investment of £10,000.

Childs was granted a special leave of absence from his other duties to dedicate several months to canvassing local businesses for their support. He worked with the Reading Chamber of Commerce and promoted the appeal via the local newspapers.

His success secured the Charter and that investment fund still provides a contribution to the core running costs of the University today.

#UoR100 reading.ac.uk

From the Caribbean

Donor support is helping scientific horticulturist and PhD researcher Andrew Gdaniec to investigate cacti across the Caribbean.

Europeans first encountered cacti in the Caribbean during Columbus’s initial voyage in 1492. Yet, more than five centuries later, there is still so much more to reveal about the diversity of these distinctive plants.

Cacti are ecologically, culturally and horticulturally important. Island populations become isolated and evolve under distinctive geological and environmental conditions. People often imagine cacti as plants of open deserts, but Caribbean cacti occupy a much wider range of habitats, including coastal limestone, seasonally dry forest and tropical forest. Some species are small and inconspicuous, whereas others develop into trees reaching 15 metres in height.

Andrew has been fascinated by cacti since receiving his first plant at 4 years old. After living and working in several countries, he chose the University of Reading for his PhD because of its strong tradition in botany and plant systematics.

Andrew tells us “Over the past ten years, I have undertaken 17 field expeditions across the Caribbean region. The work has taken me to remote locations and across difficult terrain to document cactus populations – photographing plants and their habitats, recording potential threats, and collecting specimens. It is physically demanding, but I love it because it is revealing previously undocumented diversity among Caribbean cacti.”

Some plants are only found in a single location, such as a miniature cactus from central Puerto Rico that Andrew and his collaborators formally described as *Melocactus pygmaeus*. In evolutionary terms cacti are a comparatively young



“Andrew has co-authored the formal descriptions of ten new cactus species and contributed to several scientific publications.”

plant family, but they serve diverse ecological functions. Their flowers and fruits provide nectar and food, while their stems and branches provide perches, nesting sites and shelter.

Many island cacti are highly vulnerable to habitat loss and threats from land development, invasive species, grazing, and severe storms. Hurricanes are a natural component of Caribbean ecosystems, but the more frequent and more severe storms, due to climate change, can leave slow-growing plant populations insufficient time to recover.

“To conduct this research, I have to obtain the necessary collection permits and

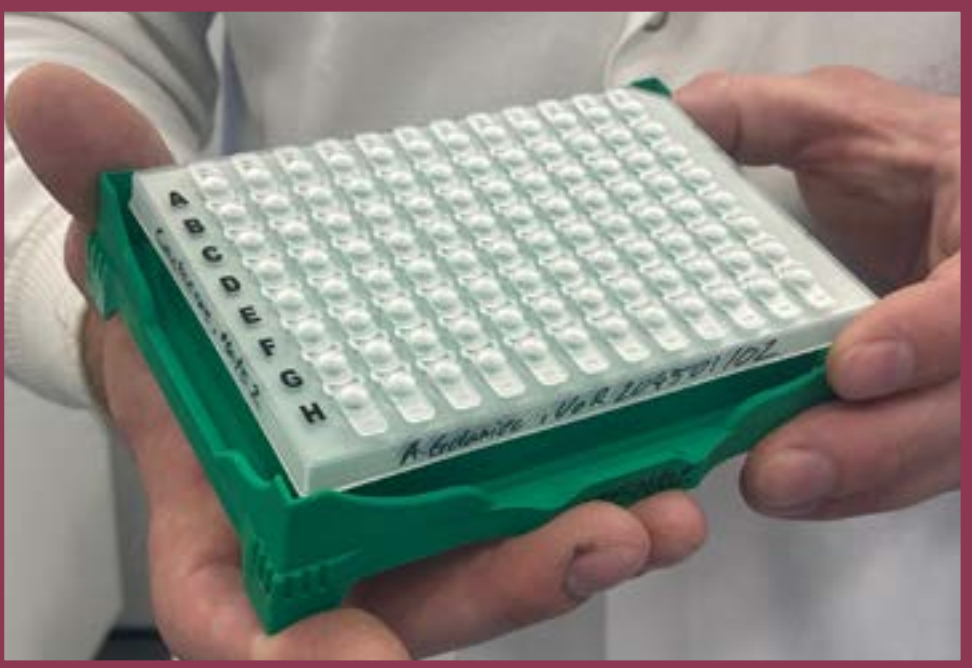
export and import documentation before bringing seeds and other plant material back to the UK. Selected seeds are germinated under controlled conditions on campus and seedlings can be observed throughout their development.”

“Donations have supported DNA extraction and advanced DNA sequencing. By comparing DNA evidence from the nucleus and chloroplasts with morphology, geography, ecology and field observations, I can reconstruct evolutionary relationships and evaluate species boundaries. This is important because accurate species delimitation is critical for effective conservation efforts and for protecting threatened species.”

Andrew’s research is international and collaborative. As part of his Caribbean work, he has co-authored the formal descriptions of ten new cactus species and contributed to several scientific publications.

“I am now approaching the submission of my thesis. I am extremely grateful to the donors, collaborators and institutions whose support has made this research possible.”

to the campus



Support when it matters most

Since our earliest days 100 years ago, generous people have stepped forward to support others by opening doors, easing challenges and creating life changing opportunities.

The Student Support Fund provides for emergency situations. Compassionate hardship support means no student is left to cope alone, as donors provide the necessities when students have no one else to turn to.

Behind every gift to the Student Support Fund is a story of a student who needed a helping hand. Students like Zahra, who is an international student just completing her course.

She tells us “The war back home made an already difficult situation even more challenging for me. However, after everything it had taken to get to Reading, giving up was never an option.

I was fortunate enough to secure an internship in finance. Finding opportunities in this field is extremely competitive, especially for women, who are still often underrepresented in the industry. But the internship was unpaid and I genuinely didn’t know how I was going to afford my commuting costs to London for two and a half months.

At the same time, my part-time job I relied on came to an end as the company was facing serious financial difficulties. Suddenly, my biggest concern every day became how I was going to cope.

For me, the support I received at that moment meant so much more than financial assistance. It gave me peace of



“Changes can happen at any time and it’s important to be able to respond to those. Your generosity really helps students who don’t necessarily have the funds and support at home.”

Emma Heasman, Student Financial Support



mind when I needed it most and allowed me to focus on making the most of the opportunity I had worked so hard to earn. What makes me even happier is that I have now secured a permanent position which I will be starting in

September, once my internship finishes. I truly believe I would not have reached this point without the support I received from the University. It’s been a turning point in my life and I will always be deeply grateful.”



Grace is studying Microbiology

Beyond 100 Bursary

Creating possibilities for tomorrow

To mark the centenary a new bursary scheme was launched this year, to take a proactive approach to helping current students. With the rising cost of living we knew that students were cutting back on important things because student loans don’t stretch far enough.

This new bursary will provide a £1,500 grant to help cover everyday essentials like food, rent, travel and books. It will also support experiences like joining clubs and societies, accessing the Sports Park and good times with friends – all the things that create special memories that last long after graduation.

Thank you to every donor who has made a contribution so far. Our aim is to fund

“This kind of financial support would make a huge difference for me immediately. It would reduce stress and allow me to focus more on my studies and personal growth, instead of worrying about money and the forever rising costs of life.”

100 bursaries and disburse the first awards in early 2027, so the centenary legacy lives on.

Your gifts will help students to bridge the gap between managing and truly thriving and help protect the moments, connections, and experiences that make university life truly transformative.

Students like Grace who tells us “This kind of financial support would make a huge difference for me immediately. It would reduce stress and allow me to focus more on my studies and personal growth, instead of worrying about money and the forever rising costs of life.”



To find out more about the Beyond 100 Bursary scan the QR code

Universal Voices



Department for Education, in front of the Secretary of State for Education, the Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP. The choir sang songs with a climate theme, ending with a new song called Making Change with Climate Ambassadors, with lyrics written by Jessica Gardener from the Department of Meteorology and music by Rebecca Berkley.

Rebecca said: “It was a privilege for the children to perform at the Department for Education. They have worked hard on this programme of songs and it meant a great deal to them. Universal Voices exists to give children in Reading the chance to take part in experiences like this, so I’m thankful to everyone who makes it possible.”

Since its foundation in 2017, Universal Voices children’s choir has been making a powerful impact on and off the campus. The choir is for children aged 7 to 11 from the Reading area and is free for local families thanks to funding provided by generous donations from alumni and local supporters.

During term time the choir meets weekly at the London Road campus, where sessions combine the joy of social singing with a thorough grounding in musical learning. The choir is run by Dr Rebecca Berkley, Associate Professor at the Institute of Education, who explains:

“Musicianship is at the core of our training, using a well-recognised methodology to help children find their musical ear. We start with games, activities and exercises, and then link that to reading and writing music notation”.

The choir also forms an integral part of music education provision for undergraduate and postgraduate students at the Institute of Education.



Trainee teachers volunteer to work with the choir on event management, administration, teaching musicianship and conducting performances. Students learn important professional and leadership skills, which improves their employability as music teachers.

Performance is also a key part of the choir and this year has provided some unique experiences. The choir joined the centenary celebrations and were a colourful part of the town centre RAG Parade in May. Starting in Broad Street, the procession wound through the town centre to Forbury Gardens, with the children and student leaders in costume as a Dragon Samba.

In July, the children performed in London at a stakeholders’ reception at the



Hibah, Master’s student studying Psychology

Career support awards

The Santander Career Support Award provides students with a £250 grant to help cover costs associated with career development opportunities such as travel to interviews, placement opportunities and internships, buying professional clothing and funding skill-building activities.

New for 2026, the aim of this grant is simple: to remove financial barriers and help students take important steps towards their future careers.

For many students at Reading, even relatively small costs can prevent them from accessing valuable opportunities. This award has given recipients the chance to pursue experiences that enhance their employability, build confidence and develop professional networks.

60 students received career support awards in April and have been using the

“The grant has been really useful for me. It meant that I was able to take a break from my hospitality job for a few weeks and focus on writing job applications for clinical roles, as well as meeting with the Careers Team to improve my CV. I have also used the grant to help with travelling to interview locations. I now have two interviews lined up, so receiving this support has been especially helpful during an important period for me. More than anything, the grant gave me time back, which was incredibly valuable and allowed me to focus on my future career.”

funds to access opportunities during term time and beyond. The students range from first-year undergraduates eager to build their vocational work experience to postgraduates preparing for life after graduation.

The impact of the award can be seen in the experiences of students themselves. Hibah, a Masters student studying Psychology explained:



New Art Prize supporting undergraduate excellence

The University of Reading Art Collection holds around 1,500 works of painting, drawing, sculpture and graphic art. This year the University launched a new initiative to support the very best talent in the graduating class from the School of Art.



Leah pictured at the School of Art degree show

Thanks to donors, Leah was awarded a £1,000 prize and one of her works of art has been added to the University’s Art Collection alongside pieces of national and international significance.

Winning artist Leah tells us about herself and her creative methods: “I use crochet to reinterpret photographic imagery, transforming flat images into tactile, time-intensive objects. I experiment with incorporating hot glue, embroidery and chalk pastels into my work.

My practice is rooted in my family’s experience and the role of migrants in

“My practice is rooted in my family’s experience and the role of migrants in shaping contemporary Britain.”

shaping contemporary Britain. I like to use tapestries as a method of storytelling and by focusing on everyday experiences, I aim to challenge dominant narratives that overlook Black British history. The process of making each chart, choosing colours, editing, and then hand making these tapestries is intentionally

labour intensive. Fabric holds cultural significance within Nigerian traditions, and the time-consuming act of creating stitch charts and tapestries reflects the labour undertaken by my grandad and many other immigrants since the 1960’s. Through crochet, labour becomes both subject and method. Winning the graduate award means so much to me, as it not only recognises my work but it also my identity as a Black British Nigerian artist. Representation is extremely important to me. On a more personal level, the award feels like encouragement to keep developing my practice and it’s motivating me to continue building work that connects personal memory with wider cultural narratives.”



“Mèyè kí òghè fótò ówù”, is an Urhobo phrase meaning “I should take more photos”. The work depicts my late grandfather standing in the street in South East London where he lived. In his arm, he holds a bouquet of Costus Spectabilis, the national flower of Nigeria.



Centenary merchandise

A special range of University merchandise produced exclusively for the Centenary is also helping boost fundraising this year. The online shop is proving to be a big hit across the globe, with shoppers browsing the new range from 97 different countries.

For every item sold online a donation is also made to the Centenary Fund. So far the range has raised over £1,200 thanks to enthusiastic shoppers snapping up items from the collection, which blends heritage-inspired designs with a modern style.

The best-selling designs depict an illustration of Old Whiteknights House and the Centenary pattern, both designed by former Typography students and members of the University Creative and Print Services team.

“I feel incredibly connected to this momentous occasion and have been wearing my Centenary hoodie with pride at all our events this year.”

Molli Cleaver, graduate and current member of staff



The most popular items are from the clothing ranges – especially the T-shirts and hoodies, but ceramic mugs, tote bags, notebooks, tea towels and water bottles are also being added to baskets and shipped to alumni around the world. Our top international shoppers are in Canada, Japan, Malaysia, Australia, the USA and in Europe it’s Scandinavian and Greek alumni who are showing their support by buying the most. The ethically sourced Centenary items will be available until December 2026, so there’s still time to visit the online shop to view the exclusive range.



Check out what’s on offer at the teemill site by scanning the QR code and bag yourself a piece of history.



The ripple effect of giving

When an undergraduate takes on an internship it’s hard to know the impact it will have, but for Becky Dillingham, it inspired a new direction as a researcher.

Each year, donations help fund internships for undergraduates who are eager to experience a taster for a career as a researcher. In 2024 Becky was offered a place on a six week summer internship with the Geography and Environmental Sciences department.

“Before the internship I really wasn’t sure what I wanted to do next after graduating. I’d been working for 10 years before coming to Reading, so already had experience of a full time job. My degree was in BSc Ecology and Wildlife Conservation, so this internship gave me a chance to try something related, but a little bit different and I loved every moment. When the chance then came to apply for a PhD it felt so right.”

Becky is now one year into a four year research project funded by donations, which came from a generous legacy

bequest from a University alumnus. Her work is jointly supervised by Dr Jess Neumann from the School of Geography and Environmental Sciences, and Professor Hannah Cloke, Regius Professor in Meteorology, with external supervision from Dr Lewis Campbell from South East Rivers Trust.

The study is focussing on the River Mole in Surrey and is exploring river pollutants and the impacts and implications for both human health and for ecology. The Mole is a tributary of the Thames, which rises near Crawley and flows 80km through Surrey to the Thames at Hampton Court Palace. It’s catchment is diverse and includes built-up areas where there are dense populations, rolling countryside, agricultural land sewage treatment works and Gatwick Airport.

Becky told us more about the project: “The project is highly collaborative and involves a team of around 50 volunteer citizen scientists from the charity River Mole River Watch who help with data collection and measurements at our

sampling sites. I’m evaluating a huge range of data, looking at the physical, chemical and biological aspects and working with data sets already collected over the last three years as well as taking new samples. The study is looking at nutrients – phosphates, nitrates and ammonia, pH, temperature and bacteria. Some of the sampling data is evaluated in situ in the field, whilst other data is verified back in the laboratories in the Russell Building on campus.”

“This study is important because the ecological status of most UK rivers is poor. There are a great number of threats to the health of our rivers, and understanding water quality is the first step in empowering people to take positive steps for better freshwater management”.



To find out more, scan the QR code or visit: rivermoleriverwatch.org.uk

Making waves

Today, Reading University Boat Club (RUBC) is one of the UK’s leading university rowing programmes, but its story began even before the University itself. In 1894, the Reading Women’s Sculling Club became the first sports club established at our institution, an extraordinary milestone for women’s sport in Britain. One year later, RUBC was formally founded. Laying the foundations for what has become one of the UK’s highest performing university-level clubs.



Over the decades, RUBC has built a reputation for excellence on both national and international stages. At the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) Championships in March 2026, Reading rowers delivered an outstanding performance, bringing home five gold medals, three silver medals and one bronze. While, this year’s Royal Henley Regatta, one of the world’s most esteemed rowing events, RUBC won three gold medals across their weekend stint in early July.

“We’ve waited 40 years since our first Henley medals, so to win three in one weekend is a brilliant achievement for the club and caps off our best year yet.”

When asked about this monumental success, University of Reading alumnus and Director of RUBC, Will Rand stated: “We’ve waited 40 years since our first Henley medals, so to win three in one weekend is a brilliant achievement for the club and caps off our best year yet. Our students have shown what’s possible for young female scullers coming through the sport. They should be incredibly proud of themselves.” Achievements like these reinforce RUBC’s standing among the very best university rowing clubs in the country and showcase the talent, determination and commitment of its student athletes.

Impact off the water

Every year, the club welcomes students who have never stepped into a rowing boat before. Through its thriving beginners’ programme, hundreds of students are introduced to the sport, learning new skills while building confidence, resilience and teamwork.

Coaches, student peers, and committee members work tirelessly to create an environment where every athlete can thrive, whether their goal is to compete internationally or simply enjoy being part of a supportive community.

Every gift helps provide opportunities for students to train, compete and grow. Donor support not only strengthens the club’s ability to achieve sporting success, but also ensures that future generations of students can experience the same confidence, friendships and personal development that comes from being part of RUBC.

Thank you for helping Reading University Boat Club continue its journey. Your support is enabling students to excel on the water, represent the University with pride, and carry this extraordinary legacy into the next 100 years.

Opening doors

This year, thanks to the generosity of alumni and supporters, 67 students at Henley Business School have been able to access an outstanding education, benefit from enriching international experiences and contribute to world-leading research.

Supporting access to education

Established in 2024, the GMJB Fund is a powerful example of giving back. The fund provides an annual bursary to support an undergraduate student throughout the three years of their degree, helping those who have demonstrated financial need and for whom studying at Henley may not otherwise be possible. This year the fund has expanded to include the GMJB Scholarship, supporting doctoral research within Henley’s Department of Digital, Marketing and Entrepreneurship. Reflecting on the impact of the scholarship, Dan Xie, its first recipient said:

“As an international PhD student studying in the UK with my two children, this scholarship has significantly relieved the financial pressure on my family. It has allowed me to focus more fully on my academic development and research activities without being overly concerned about the practical challenges of living and studying abroad. Your support has given me both stability and confidence during this important stage of my life. Thank you.”

Broadening horizons

The Beck-Burridge Scholarship, established in memory of Professor Martin Beck-Burridge, celebrates academic excellence on the MSc Management programme. This year, 21 students each received a £2,000 scholarship, together



Students visiting APIVITA, a certified B Corp specialising in natural bee-based skincare

“This scholarship has allowed me to focus more fully on my academic development and research activities without being overly concerned about the practical challenges of living and studying abroad.”

with additional support from Henley Business School, enabling them to participate in the International Applied Challenge study trip to Alba Graduate Business School in Athens. The experience challenged students to solve real-world business problems while working across cultures, developing the global outlook and practical skills that are essential for tomorrow’s leaders.

Creating a lasting legacy

Now in its 11th year, the Alan Rugman Memorial Fund was established by Helen

Rugman in memory of her husband, Professor Alan Rugman, one of the world’s leading scholars in international business.

The fund has become a cornerstone of academic excellence within Henley’s International Business and Strategy department. Originally established to fund scholarships for the department’s Autumn and Spring Masterclasses and an annual Visiting Fellow, it has since expanded to support student prizes and sponsor the biennial International Business Conference. This academic year, the fund has supported 2 Visiting Fellows and 6 masterclass recipients.

Today, the fund continues to bring internationally recognised academics to Henley, inspiring students, fostering collaboration and ensuring Professor Rugman’s legacy lives on through excellence in teaching, research and global scholarship.



Everyone around the world

The Centenary celebrations reached every corner of the globe this spring, as alumni came together to mark 100 years of Reading and the lifelong connections it inspires. Across 21 days in March, 27 alumni-led events took place in 18 countries, bringing together more than 270 graduates to celebrate this historic milestone.

From Cairo to Kuala Lumpur, Seattle to Swindon, alumni gathered in restaurants, cafés, hotels and community spaces to reconnect, share memories and celebrate their shared Reading experience. The largest event was held in London, while alumni in Muscat, Oman, and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, also enjoyed particularly strong turnouts.

Each celebration reflected both the spirit of Reading and the culture of its host location. In Muscat, attendees met in a traditional Omani restaurant, where a special halwa dessert was prepared to commemorate Reading’s

“Our alumni are at the heart of this milestone year, and it’s a powerful reminder that the connections and shared experiences you make at Reading really do last a lifetime.”

100th anniversary. Meanwhile, alumni in Cairo combined their gathering with a community initiative supporting the preparation of 18,000 meals for people observing Ramadan.

The events were made possible by 39 dedicated alumni volunteers who organised venues, coordinated invitations and welcomed attendees. Their efforts created opportunities for graduates from different generations and backgrounds to connect through shared memories and experiences.

Reflecting on the celebrations, Rachel Dean, Alumni Volunteering Officer, said: “It

was so wonderful to see how many of our alumni around the world wanted to get together to celebrate this milestone for the University. We’re particularly grateful for the alumni hosts who did a fantastic job in arranging their events.”

Many alumni remarked on how easily conversations flowed, despite graduating decades apart. Vita Sun, who organised the Beijing event, noted that participants discovered their memories of campus life were remarkably similar, creating a feeling that “different moments in time overlapped .

Dr Caroline Baylon, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International), reflected on the significance of the celebrations: “Our alumni are at the heart of this milestone year, and it’s a powerful reminder that the connections and shared experiences you make at Reading really do last a lifetime.”

As the University enters its second century, these global celebrations highlighted the strength of Reading’s international community and the enduring friendships, opportunities, and sense of belonging that continue long after graduation.



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Speak to a student

Our annual calling campaign will take place in October 2026. To pre-book a call with a current student please email giving@reading.ac.uk

GIVING MATTERS

For more information,
please contact:

The Fundraising Team

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