



DEVERON DRIVE



DEE ROAD FIRE STATION



LYON SQUARE

Some of the pen & ink drawings of local landmarks by Kate Lockhart, commissioned as part of the Happy Museum project and added to Reading Museum's permanent art collection in 2013

Visit Reading Museum at the Town Hall on Blagrave Street
(behind Marks & Spencers)

Admission is FREE!

Opening hours:

Tuesday to Saturday - 10am to 4pm

Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays - 11am to 4pm

(Closed on Mondays except on Bank Holidays and during school half-terms)

www.readingmuseum.org.uk



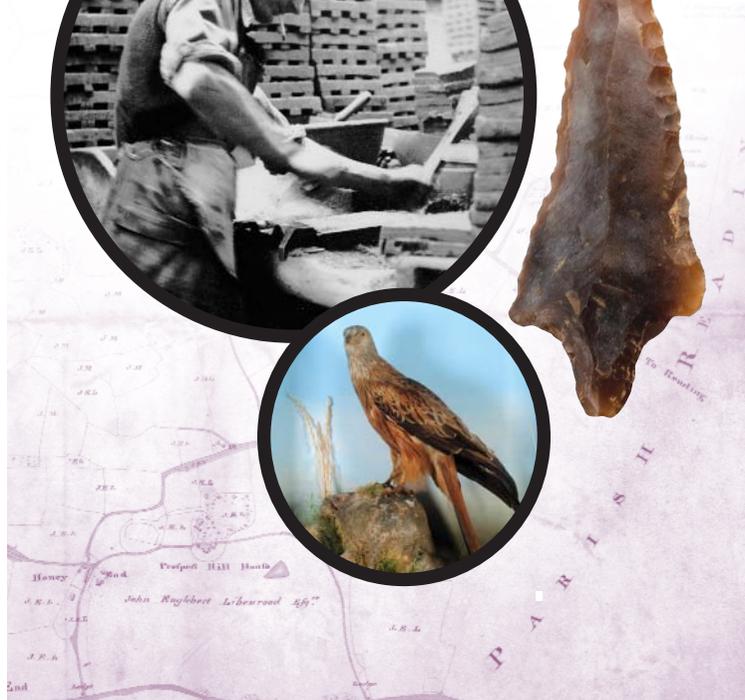
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Funded by the Happy Museum project. Researched and compiled with the assistance of local residents.

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Revealing Reading's Hidden History

Take a closer look at **YOUR** local heritage...

Dee Park



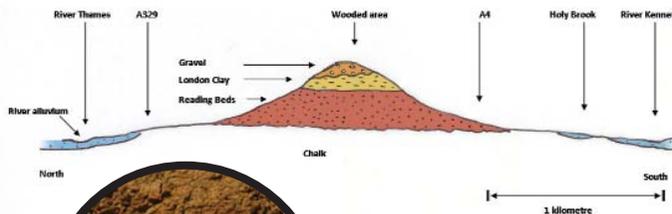
Geology:

About 90 million years ago the Dee Park was covered by a warm, shallow, tropical sea. This is when chalk was deposited. Chalk is made of limestone and microscopic fossils called Coccoliths.



The Reading Beds, which would provide the sands and clays for brick making in the 19th century were deposited in an estuary about 60 million years ago.

The characteristic red bricks made from the Reading Beds can shrink on firing so it is usual to mix chalk with them to prevent this. This is why there are so many chalk mines in Reading.

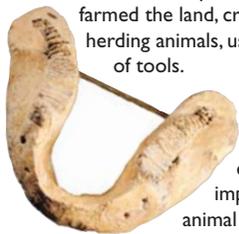


On top of the Reading Beds is another clay bed, the London Clay. This is a sea water deposit and the bricks made from it are the pale yellow bricks, more usual in London. The hill is capped with gravels dating from between 1 million and 500,000 years ago.

Stone Age:

A variety of flint implements, dating between about 4,000 BC and 2,000 BC have been found in the Dee Park area, providing evidence of Neolithic settlements.

In the Neolithic period, communities farmed the land, creating fields and herding animals, using a variety of tools.



In the wider surrounding area, even earlier implements and animal remains, including the fossil of the jaw bone of a young mammoth have been found in gravel pits. These date from the Ice Age, over 10,000 years ago.



Romans:

Its proximity to the Roman town of Silchester, which is land locked, has led to the conclusion that Reading served as an inland port during the Roman period and several local archaeological finds provide evidence of Roman occupation.

For instance, at Grovelands Brickworks a hearth containing Roman pottery sherds, beads and an urn was discovered. Roman coins from the reign of Vespasian (70 AD to 79 AD) and Antoninus Pius (100 AD to 200 AD) have also been found nearby.



Medieval Times:

It is possible that the name "Tilehurst" means 'a wooded hill where tiles are made'. Certainly tiles and bricks have been made from clay in the area for many centuries.

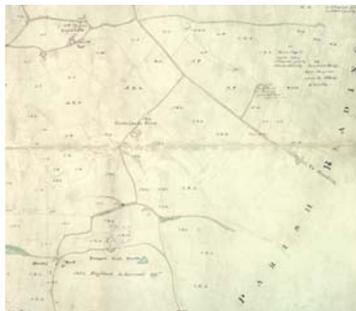


From the 13th century until the dissolution of the monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII, Tilehurst Manor belonged to Reading Abbey. The Abbot of Reading was lord of the manor and held certain rights; including cutting gorse plants on the heath, to use as fuel.

Changing Landscape:

At the beginning of the 19th century the enclosure of the area put all land in the ownership of individuals. This change meant that common land and meadows were not available for the use of everyone in the area. In an attempt to alleviate the hardship that resulted for local people who did not own land, areas were set aside such as that allotted to 'Tilehurst Pools'.

The aim of the land enclosure was to improve the efficiency of farming and commercial exploitation of the land. The landscape changed as this required new roads to be built and fences and hedges erected to partition fields.



At that time most of the area around Dee Park including Grovelands Farm, was owned by John Englebert Liebenrood. He built the mansion house on Prospect Park in 1800, the road running alongside bears his name. The other large farm shown on the map was Nortcot (Norcot) Farm, which existed from 1327.

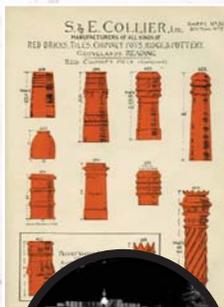
In 1873 J. E. Liebenrood sold the Grovelands estate. The catalogue description said, "The estate is beautifully undulated and well timbered, and particularly worthy of the attention of Gentlemen and Capitalists".

Brickworks:

In the 19th century the population within the modern boundaries of Reading grew from a town of just over 20,000 in 1841 to over 70,000 in 1901. This generated a demand for bricks to build new housing which was met by brickworks around the town such as those in the Dee Park area.

The largest brickworks was S&E Collier's, which opened in the early 1870s and operated at Grovelands until 1967. The variety of locally made bricks can be seen in the houses on Brisbane Road, which acted as a showcase for their products.

Clay for bricks was excavated from areas such as Lyon Square resulting in the hollowed out centre of the Dee Park Estate. Later, clay was taken from further afield on the other side of Norcot Lane and many local people remember the buckets that carried the material across to the works.



Allotments and Golf Course:

At the end of the nineteenth century most of the area west of Grovelands Road was farmland, allotments and gravel pits. In 1898 Reading Golf Club constructed a nine-hole golf course on the land and the course remained until the end of the First World War. By then, a new 18-hole course had been developed at Emmer Green.



1911 and Reading:

In 1911 this part of Tilehurst became part of the Borough of Reading. The population of Tilehurst was increasing as new homes were built. However it was still decades before areas such as The Moor, after which Moorlands School was named, were built on. The route taken by Dee Road was to remain an unnamed track passing through fields until the development in the middle years of the 20th century.

Grovelands Co-op Bakery:

In the 1920s, the Co-op erected a large new bakery at Grovelands to serve the Reading area. Deliveries of bread and cakes were made to homes, shops and depots throughout Berkshire. The site originally included stables when distribution was by horse drawn vehicles. The modern factory employed 200 people at the end of the 1940s and produced 200,000 loaves per week. There was also a grocery warehouse and during the Second World War this was used by the Ministry of Food to store stocks of food.



Ranikhet Army Camp:

Ranikhet Primary School was named after the army camp that was built on the land in 1940. The camp took its name from a hill in Northern India where the Royal Berkshire Regiment was stationed in the 1920s. The school's badge, a Chinese Dragon, is also taken from the regiment which adopted the emblem after the Opium Wars of the mid 19th century.



As the Second World War went on Ranikhet Camp expanded for use by American troops stationed in the area in preparation for the D-Day landings in 1944.

After the war Reading's housing shortage meant that squatters occupied some of the buildings. The camp continued in use by civilian and military staff until houses were built on it in the 1960s.



Ecology:

Lousehill Copse on the ridge to the south of Dee Park includes an area of ancient woodland, dating back over 300 years.

This area is a designated nature reserve, abundant with plants and wildlife.

A new block of flats in Dee Park takes its name from the Red Kite, a bird which was extinct in Reading until a breeding program began in the early 1990s.



The Building of Dee Park:

The Dee Road Estate, as it was then called, was built to house 3,500 people who were either on the council's housing register or being re-housed as a result of re-developments in Reading town centre. Work started on 3rd April 1967 and the total cost was £3,378,000. The estate was officially opened by the Duchess of Kent on 4th November 1969. Around 900 houses and flats were built.

As well as traditional methods of construction, the infamous Bison Wall Frame system was used for the flats. Widely used by councils in the 1960s there were many problems with these buildings making them unfit to

live in. The National Bison Tenants' Organisation was formed to lobby government to take action. The problem flats were demolished in the 1980s.

Problems on the Estate:

At the beginning of this century a wave of anti-social behaviour made the estate an unpleasant place to live. After a concerted effort by residents, local police and the council, which included the first use of Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) in Reading, the situation improved.



Today:

In 2005 the Dee Park Community Regeneration Action Group (CRAG) was formed working with the council on the Dee Park Regeneration Project. The transformation of Dee Park is in progress. The £150 million eight-year project to transform Dee

Park started in 2010. The first phase is well advanced and many locals and newcomers to the estate have already settled in.