

# Oxford Road

## Timeline

- 871 AD: A Viking army sets up a Winter Camp at Reading
- 1006: A Saxon nunnery at St Mary's Butts burned to the ground
- 1066: Abbess Elveva owns farmland where Oxford Road would eventually develop
- 1071: The new Norman king, William the Conqueror, had taken the nunnery's land and given it to his newly founded Battle Abbey at Hastings
- 1121: Reading Abbey is built
- 1800: At the start of the 19th century, the land either side of Oxford Road (then also known as Pangbourne Road or Lane) were a mix of fields and market gardens, interspersed with the occasional larger property for the wealthier families of Reading.
- 1800-1900: The land between the Oxford Road and Castle Hill to the south, which had been market gardens and nurseries, was also developed with a range of properties to house wealthy businessmen, artisans and labourers. A grid of streets gradually infilled the whole area between the two main roads.
- 1815: The Swallow family started to develop their land as housing for some of Reading's wealthiest families. Russell Street was laid out on the eastern boundary of their former market gardens linking Castle Hill to the Oxford Road, while Prospect Street linked Oxford Road and Tilehurst Road on their western boundary. Baker Street was laid out as a westward continuation of Back Lane to form the main east-west route in the new street grid.
- 1830: Mrs. Zinzan's fields were sold off and Waylen Street and Zinzan Street were laid out. The Jesse family were involved in many of these new developments, including Jesse Terrace.
- 1847: Berks and Hants railway built and original Reading West Bridge
- 1850s: Two-storey shops mixed with earlier residential terraces had largely filled the Oxford Road frontage between Howard Street and Prospect Street.
- 1900: Reading's elite were moving away from the area and plots began to be subdivided or large houses demolished to make way for new developments of smaller properties.

- 1826: Holy Trinity was built on Oxford Road with its main façade facing the newly constructed Russell Street.
- 1840: Zinzan Street was created
- 1844-47: William Henry Fox Talbot Photograph Studio established at 55 Baker street and then 8 Russel Terrace
- 1845: A stone façade, steep gable and bell turret added to Trinity Church by architect John Billing
- 1853: Jesse Terrace built for well off people
- 1859: More nonconformist churches such as the Providence Chapel are built on Oxford Road
- 1867: Battle Workhouse is opened to relieve the acute crowding in Reading's other poor law houses.
- 1869: Carey Baptist Chapel opened as well as Bridge Hall for Reading's Open Brethren group.
- 1870: Trinity Church became a parish church
- 1870: Schools act passed
- 1877: The Keep was built in 1877 as part of Sir Edward Cardwell's Army reforms, which enhanced the role of local regiments.
- 1880: Oxford Road Community School built
- 1881: Brocks Barracks is completed
- 1890: A regular tram service is in operation Reading
- 1896: Elm Park Stadium built
- 1900: Reading Synagogue built
- 1906: Yeomanry House built and established a Yeomanry Headquarters. A riding school was established in the land surrounding the house
- 1903: McIlroy's Apartments (Reading's Crystal Palace is built)
- 1906: Reading West Station is built
- 1908: Battle Library is opened

- 1917 - Battle workhouse is converted to a hospital to receive wounded soldiers. (By 1930 it becomes a standard hospital)
- 1929: Pavillion cinema built
- 1939: Iron bridge at Reading West was built. There used to be a sign on the bridge to warn open-top tram passengers on the top deck to “Keep Your Seats” to avoid unpleasant accidents.
- 1939: Trolley bus operates on Oxford Road
- 1950s: Irish, Eastern European and Caribbean men and women moved to the area looking for employment opportunities. They found affordable housing on the Oxford Road
- 1955: McIlroy’s apartments closed, part of it taken up by Reading’s first supermarket - Whites
- 1968: Trolley bus stops operating on Oxford Road
- 1971: Broad Street Mall built opposite where McIlroy’s apartments was situated.
- 1979: Pavillion cinema closes and becomes a snooker hall
- 1980: The Keep becomes an artists’ studio
- 1998: Elm Park stadium closed
- 2005: All hospital departments at Battle Hospital are transferred to Royal Berkshire Hospital
- 2013: The pavilion is re-opened by the Lifespring Church
- 2013: Abu Bakr Masjid is opened on part of the land from the Battle Hospital
- 2017: The former Battle Hospital is demolished and replaced with a Tesco