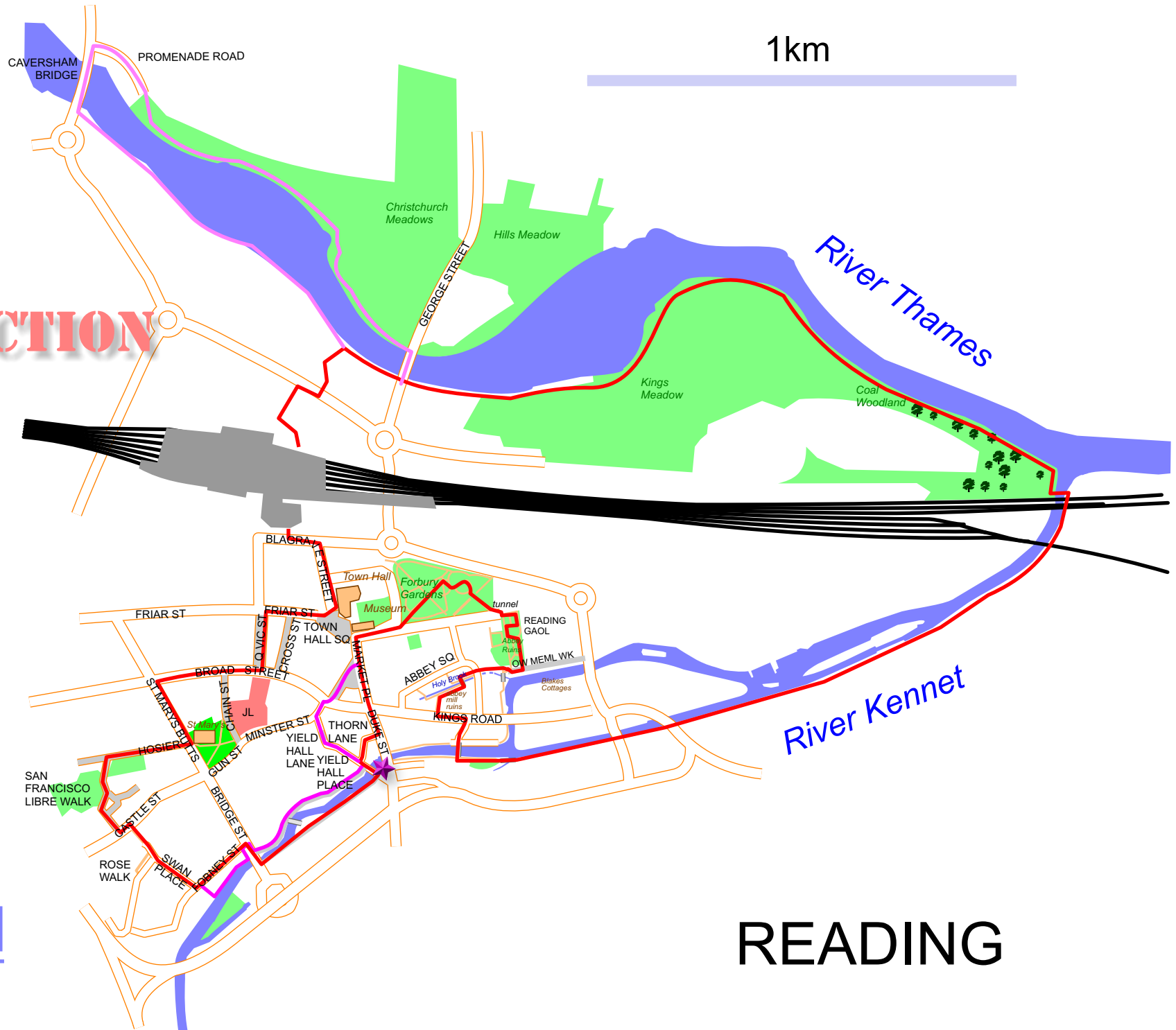


UNDER CONSTRUCTION



READING

READING

- inner walk route (7.5 km)
- options (walk to Caversham adds 2.2 km)
- foot paths
- shopping areas
- pedestrian areas

references to notes

0.5 km



This is an ancient city, first mentions of which belong to the 8th century. At that time this was a small village, which was mostly developing due to the foundation of the Abbey. However, just several centuries after the foundation Reading was already one of ten largest cities of the country. In the 18th century large deposits of iron ore were discovered near the city. This fact has given rise to building of first industrial plants. In this city have survived numerous old buildings, churches and cultural institutions. The oldest architectural places of interest of Reading are the Cathedral and Church of the Virgin Mary, which is located nearby. In the 7th century a small wooden chapel stood on the site of the church. Then a large-scale construction started here, but the architectural ensemble was completed only in the 11th century. Another important historical monument is the abbey, which was damaged severely in 1538. Nowadays visitors can see the survived parts of walls and gates, the main church and a mill during an excursion. One more religious place of interest is located in the center of Reading. This is St. James Church, the building of which took place in 1840. Despite the fact that the church is considered relatively "young", it is no less popular among tourists comparing to old churches and temples. Continue your acquaintance with the history of the city by making an excursion to the old school opened yet in the 12th century. It is worth noting that the school works even today. This is not the only educational facility that may be interesting to visitors. In 1892 here was opened a university; nowadays this university is considered one of the most beautiful and prestigious in England. It is worth noting numerous museums of Reading. The most popular and frequently visited are Archaeological Museum and Museum of Zoology. An old factory, built in the early 19th century is symbolic of the city. This factory produced famous Huntley and Palmers cookies. At the time of its foundation, it was one of the largest industrial enterprises in the city. Nowadays, you can see an old prison nearby. Oscar Wilde was serving his

punishment there and thus brought it worldwide renown. It was within the walls of the prison that he wrote his letter to Lord Douglas. In the Middle Ages the city of Reading was a significant political and religious center of the country. In the 12th century an abbey was established on its territory, and it was the most significant and rich in the country at that time. Today the Reading abbey is the main symbol of the city and one of its remarkable sites. In the middle of the 16th century the powerful abbey was abandoned, so local folks unbricked its building and used the bricks for house building. Despite the fact that the abbey was destroyed many centuries ago the ruins of its scale construction still impress tourists and city guests. In close vicinity to the ruins of abbey tourists will find majestic Forbury Gardens, which were established in the middle of the 19th century. The main decoration of the Victorian park is a stone statue being the restoration of the Maiwand Lion. This memorial was established as a tribute to the memory of the dead in the Afghan war. Near the abbey tourists will discover another significant religious landmark being the St. Laurence's Church. The church has preserved its initial look till nowadays, being an interesting place to visit and explore considering its archeological value. Another remarkable historical building siding with the abbey is the Prison of Reading. Oscar Wilde served his sentence exactly in this prison. This fact has added to the worldwide popularity of the house. The most popular cultural establishment of the city is located in the city center. The Museum of Reading is open for public every day featuring free entrance. The museum exposition is devoted to the most important historical events, among the showpieces of the collection tourists will see age-old books and maps, historical documents and armory. Not far from the museum tourists will find the Concert Hall, which usually holds interesting cultural events. The Hexagon complex is a good place to

visit for cultural leisure. The complex venues include not only a great modern cinema hall but a theater as well where various fantastic plays are performed. In the warm seasons the majestic Forbury Gardens turn into scaled open-air cultural center holding bright festivals and ethnic celebrations.

In the center of the city is located an ancient Greyfriars church, built in the early 14th century. Initially, the church was part of a large monastery. Later, the monastery was destroyed, and the church was used for a variety of purposes. In the 16th century, it housed the town hall. After that the building was used as a hospital for the poor. A prison was opened in church, as well. Only in 1863, the church returned its religious status. Despite the complicated history, it managed to preserve a number of old interior elements. Nearby, is situated a cultural and entertainment center bearing the same name. It has a restaurant, several shops, and exhibition halls.