WELCOME TO WHITEKNIGHTS
A guide for visitors to the University of Reading Whiteknights campus

HISTORY
Whiteknights has been in existence since the Norman Conquest when it was known as the Manor of Earley. It was owned by a succession of families, becoming the Whiteknights Estate during the 14th century. In 1606 it passed to the ownership of the Englefield family where it remained for nearly two centuries. In 1798 the estate was acquired by the Marquis of Blandford who spent vast sums on library acquisitions and elaborate gardens. However by 1817 the Marquis, then the fifth duke of Marlborough, was in debt. As a result in 1819 the estate was dispersed and the original house demolished in 1840. In 1867 the estate was divided into 6 leaseholds and a smaller house constructed in each. Finally in 1947 the freehold was purchased by the University. In its present form the Whiteknights campus covers 123 hectares, including Whiteknights lake, meadows and woodlands.

ARCHITECTURE
The park has several listed buildings. The University has recently sympathetically restored Foxhill House, originally built by Alfred Waterhouse in 1867, architect of the Natural History Museum. There are examples of classic 1960s architecture such as the Palmer Building. In contrast the Henley Business School is an excellent example of a contemporary building.

WILDLIFE
Whiteknights has an area designated as a Wildlife Heritage Site due to its varied mosaic of habitats. Whiteknights lake is a haven for fish, birds and insects.

ENVIRONMENT
The University actively manages the numerous habitats found at Whiteknights which is renowned for its collection of trees some of which are over 200 years old, including an interesting collection of Oak species.

THE UNIVERSITY OF READING
The University of Reading has been part of the town of Reading for more than a century. It began as an extension college of Oxford University in 1892. The College at Reading in Valpy Street managed the schools of science and art, which quickly expanded and gained university college status in 1902. Four years later, with over 1,200 students, the college moved into premises still in existence in London Road, presented by the Palmer family. The college was granted its charter and therefore created a university in its own right in 1926. The University of Reading acquired Whiteknights Park in 1947. Since that time, the University has maintained the natural beauty of the campus and preserved the lake, trees and open spaces that give Whiteknights its unique character.

PEOPLE
A small dedicated, professional team of gardeners maintain the 123 hectares of Whiteknights as well as all the other areas of University land. The maintenance staff take care of the upkeep of the University’s grounds, maintaining the sports areas to county standard.

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