



## HERITAGE OPEN DAYS CELEBRATES 30 YEARS WITH A FESTIVAL OF ROUTES, NETWORKS & CONNECTIONS

The country's largest festival of history and culture returns with a packed programme of free events

[www.heritageopendays.org.uk](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk)  
6th-15th September

Heritage Open Days (HODs) returns this September with thousands of free events and experiences. Brought to you by the National Trust, supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery and run by thousands of local organisations and volunteers, HODs brings people together to celebrate their heritage, community and history.

From historic houses to factories, museums to music halls, formal gardens to graveyards, places and spaces will again open for free this autumn. Across the country, thousands of intriguing events and fun new experiences will happen as part of Heritage Open Days, the country's largest festival of history and culture, which they have been since 1994 – the same year the world's first smartphone came to market, the Channel Tunnel opened, and Sunday trading was legalised in England.

Over the three decades since Heritage Open Days began it has grown in scope and scale. What began as a weekend dedicated to revealing buildings not normally open to the general public has exploded into a ten-day festival, celebrating a myriad of different aspects of heritage and culture. With more than 100,000 events and over 39 million visits across 30 years, growing from just 700 events in the first year to over 5,250 in 2023. Still committed to its founding principles of free access and being community led, it's a much-loved event that many look forward to every year.

Hundreds of activities will adopt this year's theme, *Routes – Networks - Connections*, bringing together the past and present in a festival that includes workshops, talks, hidden spaces, walks and activities for all the family.

Liam Montgomery, Heritage Open Days Marketing & Projects Manager says: "The scale and diversity of Heritage Open Days is just incredible – every year thousands of passionate people help visitors to make doorstep discoveries and connect with history and heritage in every part of England. This year though, it will be extra special as we celebrate three decades worth of stories and all the brilliant people and places that have made it, and continue to make it, all possible!"

**The festival will again feature thousands of events and activities across the country including:**

- Explore the history of Joseph Whitwell through the paths and waterways at Hollybush Conservation Centre with a self-guided tour celebrating his legacy in Yorkshire as the world's largest forced rhubarb producer.
- In Gosport, you can try your hand at shipwreck archaeology on the beach! Under guidance from the Nautical Archaeology Society learn how to record a real shipwreck, then use that information to discover the history of the vessel when it was still afloat.
- Join the team at Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre as they celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Centre! Discover the history of this remarkable site and why they tell the story of two of Britain's most famous Kings.
- Go behind the scenes of helicopter emergency medical services at the East Anglian Air Ambulance base and discover how every second counts with this life-saving charity's work. Learn how to save a life with CPR taster sessions and see the service in action with the hangar, crew's rest facilities and the interactive simulation suite to explore.
- Discover a castle that's not a castle, on an island that's not an island. Venture across the causeway to Holy Island and discover the magic of Lindisfarne Castle with a garden designed by Gertrude Jekyll blooming with summer flowers, 19th-century industrial lime kilns, and shoreline walks.

Founded in 1994, Heritage Open Days has been capturing imaginations for 30 years. Last year, more than 45,000 organisers and volunteers ran over 5,000 events across the country, attracting one million visits. Around one-third of visitors had not visited a heritage site/event in the past year while 80% of festival-goers said their visit made them more proud of their local area.

Laura Chow, Head of Charities at People's Postcode Lottery, said: "I'm delighted we're able to support Heritage Open Days for another year, giving people across the country the chance to explore, celebrate, and enjoy England's national heritage. With hundreds of activities on offer there's something to suit everyone. And best of all - thanks to money raised by Postcode Lottery players - they can all be enjoyed for free!"

Some organisations have been involved from the start, such as The Regency Town House in Brighton, Heritage Trust Lincolnshire and Gosport Heritage Open Days.

Terry Rhodes, Chair of Gosport Heritage Open Days says: "Gosport is proud to have been a pioneer of this heritage festival, and 30 years on we still provide a really popular and varied program for Heritage Open Days in our small town with a big history. We are thrilled with this year's theme and have many interesting walks, talks, and displays depicting unique local links to historic transport routes, important military networks, and fascinating maritime connections, plus lots more. As always, we try to make our events as accessible as possible for all to enjoy and look forward to welcoming people from near and far for HODs."

Heritage Open Days is brought to you by the National Trust with support from players of People's Postcode Lottery. Every single Heritage Open Days event is free, including access to many sites that usually charge for admission.

For further information, and to register your event, visit: [www.heritageopendays.org.uk](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk).

**ENDS**

**A selection of photos is available [here](#) and [here](#)**

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**Notes to editors:**

#### **About Heritage Open Days**

- Heritage Open Days is England's largest festival of history and culture. Running for ten days every September, the festival offers free access to heritage events and activities across England.
- Heritage Open Days is brought to you by the National Trust, supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery, and delivered locally by a large range of organisations (including civic societies, heritage organisations and local councils, community champions and thousands of enthusiastic volunteers)
- Heritage Open Days is England's contribution to European Heritage Days, taking place across 50 countries. Other events in the UK are Doors Open Days in Scotland ([www.doorsopendays.org.uk](http://www.doorsopendays.org.uk)); Open Doors Days in Wales ([www.cadw.wales.gov.uk/opendoors](http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk/opendoors)); and European Heritage Open Days in Northern Ireland ([www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/european-heritage-open-days](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/european-heritage-open-days)).

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