



Image Credit (L-R): Norfolk Museums Service; Wigan Athletic Community Trust; English Heritage; Bradford Heritage Connection CIC; ©National Trust Images/Derek Hatton; Image courtesy of People's History Museum; Paul Harris/Heritage Open Days; Bletchley Parks Trust.

PRESS RELEASE

OVER 6,200 FREE DAYS OUT! HERITAGE OPEN DAYS UNVEILS ITS BIGGEST-EVER FESTIVAL

From days out at Silverstone, Lyme Park and the British Library to ancient woodland walks, crash courses in gynaecology, tours of mystery tunnels and even free football tickets

11-20 September 2026

www.heritageopendays.org.uk

Heritage Open Days returns this September with thousands of free events and experiences taking place across England. Each year, millions of people take part in a nationwide celebration of their heritage, community and history. The festival is brought to you by the **National Trust** and supported by **Postcode Lottery** players, with an exciting

programme of events delivered locally by thousands of organisations, community groups and volunteers.

Many of England's best-known attractions and destinations are ready to welcome visitors this year, such as Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery, Silverstone Museum and Lyme Park. There are plenty of great free days out to be had, whether it's watching the British Library's robotic retrieval cranes in action in Leeds, becoming a Bletchley Park recruit during their interactive family day, enjoying free tickets to a Wigan Athletic match or sharing a traditional Langar lunch at the Sikh Museum Northampton and SGSS Gurdwara.

What exactly is a fogou? Come curious, because there is always something new to discover across Heritage Open Days! What was life like in an Iron Age village? How can analogue computers predict the tides? Find answers at Chysauster Ancient Village, the National Oceanography Centre and Halliggye Fogou, then take a crash course in gynaecological history at the Vagina Museum, decide the fate of the accused in an immersive historic trial at Crime Unlocked or experiment with Arabic calligraphy using Bradford-made pigments.

More than 2,400 events are embracing this year's theme, Everyday Histories, which is presented by Findmypast. The theme celebrates the working lives and daily routines that have shaped the places around us. At seven flagship events visitors can explore their own family histories at Norwich Cathedral and Manchester's People's History Museum, learn about the generations of traders behind Newcastle's Grainger Market, or discover the women who powered Ironbridge's ceramic industry. They can also follow laundress Queenie Frankpit through a working week at the National Trust's Killerton, explore life above and below stairs at Pippbrook House, and hear how nurses and frontline soldiers became Everyday Heroes at The Guards Museum.

The festival is about more than just looking back at history with visitors encouraged to get stuck in and join the conversation about heritage and what it means today. Vanny Radio in Coventry will share live interviews inviting visitors to be part of a community heritage recording, young people will reveal previously hidden LGBTQ+ stories through Voices for Pride in Gosport, and visitors will be invited to create a mini-zine celebrating local women as part of the 20,000 Women Zine Project at Her-Place. You can explore Black British identity through music, fashion and lived experience at Rhetoric, Rhythms & Roots, contribute to a large-scale mosaic which will be created at Bradgate Park based on visitor drawings and responses to nature, or help weave personal experiences of migration into the wider history of Chesham at Migration Stories.

Annie Reilly, the National Trust's Audience & Engagement Director, said: "*England's largest festival of history and culture is back. Heritage Open Days opens the door to thousands of extraordinary stories, places and experiences on your doorstep. With over 6,200 free events across the country, millions can discover the places around them in new and -often-surprising ways. By inspiring curiosity today, the festival helps build a stronger sense of connection, care and action for the future*"

Founded in 1994, Heritage Open Days has been making history and culture more accessible for more than three decades. Last year over 2,500 organisers and 44,200 volunteers ran 5,879 events across the country, attracting over one million visits. Around one-quarter of visitors had not visited a heritage site/event in the past year while 83% of festival-goers said their visit made them more proud of their local area.

Laura Chow, Head of Charities at Postcode Lottery, said: "It is fantastic that Postcode Lottery players have been supporting Heritage Open Days for 14 years, allowing millions of people to explore England's rich heritage for free. This year's theme of 'Everyday Histories' shines a light on the workers who helped shape the country we know today and are often missing from history books. Through an exciting programme of special events, experiences and activities, visitors will have the chance to discover more about these unsung heroes and their extraordinary lives!"

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

To find events visit www.heritageopendays.org.uk.

ENDS

**A selection of photos from previous HODs events is [available here](#)
Photos from events in this release are [here](#).**

press@heritageopendays.org.uk

Liam Montgomery and Jade Watson

Heritage Open Days Marketing & Projects Team

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 Postcode Lottery players, 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); Open Doors Days in Wales (cadw.gov.wales/visit/whats-on/open-doors); and European Heritage Open Days in Northern Ireland (www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/european-heritage-open-days).
- Tailored lists of events (by topic or location) with images are available on request (press@heritageopendays.org.uk).

In partnership with
 **National Trust**



Full link list of events mentioned:

- [Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery](#)
- [Silverstone Museum](#)
- [Lyme Park National Trust](#)
- [Behind the Scenes at the British Library](#)
- [Bletchley Park Family Fun Trail: Become A Bletchley Park Recruit](#)
- [Wigan Athletic Heritage Museum - with free match tickets!](#)
- [Sikh Museum Northampton & SGSS Gurdwara](#)
- [A Guided Tour at Chysauster Ancient Village](#)
- [Tide and Time Open Afternoon](#)
- [What is a fogou?](#)
- [Full Exposure: Touring the Vagina Museum From A to V](#)
- [Crime Unlocked](#)
- [Arabic calligraphy using Bradford-made pigments](#)
- [Findmypast live at Norwich Cathedral](#)
- [Findmypast Live x People's History Museum](#)
- [Grainger Market - Everyday Histories exhibition](#)
- [Industrious Women \(Coalport\)](#)
- [Industrious Women \(Broseley Pipe Works\)](#)
- [National Trust - Killerton 'The Laundry Week'](#)
- [Pippbrook House](#)
- [Pippbrook House Tours](#)
- [The Guards Museum: Everyday Heroes](#)
- [Vanny Radio - Community Broadcasters](#)
- [Voices For Pride](#)
- [20,000 Women Zine Project at Her-Place](#)
- [Rhetoric, Rhythms & Roots](#)
- [Make Your Mark on Bradgate Park's Heritage](#)
- [Migration Stories - Joining the Threads of Chesham's History](#)