

A beginner's guide to...

The HODs Discussion Forum



What is a discussion forum and why is it useful?

In a sense, it is the digital equivalent of one of our networking events!

- You can connect directly with other participants from across the country.
- It's a place to discuss the issues that matter to you, swap ideas and ask advice.
- Conversations can cover broad issues like fundraising or be more specific such as where can I get a cheap supply of pink balloons?!
- A forum will only work if people use it. It's yours, give it a go. The HODs team will intervene if necessary but we hope the exchange will be led by you.

How does it work?

- **Structure**

Forums are organised like trees to help people find things. Here are the levels:

1. **Forum (TRUNK)** – we just have one at the moment 'Hot Topics'.
2. **Topic (aka 'Thread') (BRANCHES)** – we've created one to get us started for general discussion of anything: 'What's on your mind?' A burning issue, say 'Funding' or 'Anniversary celebrations', can become a topic or thread on its own.
3. **Post (LEAVES!)** – an individual comment on a thread.

- **Finding your way around**

- Click on titles highlighted in pink to go through to the topics and see the posts.
- A 'breadcrumb trail' in pale grey shows where you are, and clicking on one of the links here allows you to navigate between topics easily.
- Or you can use the 'back to previous' page link, also in pale grey.

- **What do the buttons do?**

- **Add a comment:** Add a comment to a conversation.
- **Quote this comment in your reply:** Allows you to comment on a particular post within a conversation. You'll see the comment you want to refer to at the top of the message box. Bring the cursor below that to start typing your comment.
- **Start a new topic:** Create a whole new topic of conversation.
- **Report:** If you think a comment is inappropriate you can report it to the HODs team, click the button, fill in the little form to explain the issue and this sends an email to us; we'll take it from there.

Helpful hints

- There is a text limit on a post, but it's very generous. You will see the counter going down as you type. Remember the forum is designed for conversation not extended essays!
- The most recent post will be highlighted in the forum and topics table, and you can skip straight to it by clicking on its pink title.
- You can **share documents and images by attaching files** to your post. If you are attaching more than one you need to click 'preview post' before attaching the second.
- There is a search function if you are looking for a particular topic. If you can't find it then why not try to start a new conversation about it by creating a new topic?
- The Heritage Open Days forum can only be reached by logging in to the Organisers Area so it is not a public one, only HODs organisers and promoters can access it.
- If you get stuck or have a query you want to broach outside the forum, then please do [get in touch!](#)