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PRESS RELEASE

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS UNCOVERS HIDDEN NATURE

Annual festival of people, places and community heads outdoors

www.heritageopendays.org.uk

11th – 20th September 2020

England's largest festival of history and culture will return in September and, with support from players of People's Postcode Lottery, Heritage Open Days (HODs) is heading outdoors to discover Hidden Nature.

Uncovering stories, sites, places and people that traditional history has missed or forgotten has always been at the heart of HODs. This year people are being encouraged to open their gates as well as their doors and celebrate England's extraordinary natural heritage, which has never felt more vital than now.

A recent YouGov poll commissioned by the National Trust revealed:

- Interest in nature has risen by a third (33 per cent) since the start of lockdown.
- More than two-thirds (68 per cent) of adults either agreed or strongly agreed that spending time noticing the nature around them made them feel happy during lockdown.
- More than half the population (55 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed that they plan to make a habit of spending as much time in nature once things go back to normal.

It's hoped HODs Hidden Nature events will encourage people to spend time outdoors and discover green spaces they were unaware of or had previously overlooked. Activities will open up areas of the countryside that aren't normally accessible and reveal the stories of not just wide-open spaces, but smaller green environments such as community gardens, urban allotments, orchards and vineyards, and city farms.

Events aren't limited to those accessible in person either. For the first time, the Heritage Open Days (HODs) programme will feature digital events, enabling nature lovers to take tours and explore the natural world from the comfort of their sofa.

Among the nature-inspired events registered so far are:

- **Naughty by Nature - Torre Abbey House and Gardens in Torbay, Devon**
From blush-inducing Latin names to plants that look a bit saucy, this virtual trail will reveal the gardens at Torre Abbey in a whole new light.
Digital event
- **Botanical drawing for beginners - The Carnegie in Thetford**
This class offers an introduction to botanical drawing: the art of depicting the form, colour, and details of plant life.
In-person event on Thursday 17 September from 2:30-5:30pm
- **Walking tour of the water meadows with the River Keeper - Winchester College, Winchester in Hampshire**
Led by River Keeper, Mark Sankey, this tour of the water meadows on the banks of the River Itchen highlights the area's significant biodiversity and explains how the river and floodwater are managed.
In-person event on Thursday 17 September from 10:30-11:30am
- **The Secret Garden open morning - Wolverton in Milton Keynes**
An urban oasis created on a previously derelict site, the Secret Garden features a cherry orchard, woodland areas and large artworks created by a local community artist.
In-person event on Tuesday 15 and Thursday 17 September from 10:00am-12:00pm
- **Urb Farm open afternoon - Wolverton in Milton Keynes**
Explore this haven for wildlife large and small which is frequented by foxes, toads, woodpeckers and hedgehogs who come to feed, live and find shelter.
In-person event on Tuesday 15 September from 3:00pm-5:00pm and Thursday 17 September from 1:00pm-3:00pm

Annie Reilly, Head of Producing at Heritage Open Days, said: “Over the last few months, as we have coped with various restrictions and limits on our lives, access to nature has become even more important to many of us and HODs will give us all something to look forward to.

“From socially distanced ‘netwalking’ and rural rambles, to nature-inspired art collections, scavenger hunts, food and craft events, we’re excited to see how the theme of ‘Hidden Nature’ is being interpreted and used to create exciting online and offline events and activities.”

Heritage Open Days is coordinated and promoted nationally 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.

Every year around 50,000 volunteers give their time and effort to help create the largest cultural grassroots festival in the country. Last year 5,700 events were organised which welcomed more than 2.4 million visitors.

For further information visit www.heritageopendays.org.uk.

ENDS

A selection of photos from previous HODs events is [available here](#).

For media enquiries and access to images contact:

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Notes to editors:

About Heritage Open Days

- Heritage Open Days is coordinated and promoted nationally by the National Trust with support from players of People’s Postcode Lottery, and run 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 (www.cadw.wales.gov.uk/opendoors); European Heritage Open Days in Northern Ireland (www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/european-heritage-open-days); Open House London (www.openhouselondon.org.uk)

- Heritage Open Days will continue to monitor government guidance and public health advice in respect of the coronavirus pandemic and act in accordance with the requirements. The HODs website will be updated accordingly; please check the site regularly for updates.

People's Postcode Lottery

- People's Postcode Lottery manages multiple society lotteries promoted by different charities and good causes. People play with their chosen postcodes for a chance to win cash prizes. A minimum of 32% from each subscription goes directly to charities and good causes across Great Britain and internationally - players have raised over £500 million so far. For details of the charities and good causes which are promoting and benefitting from the lottery draws, please visit <https://www.postcodelottery.co.uk/good-causes/draw-calendar>
- It costs £10 a month to play and winning postcodes are announced every day. The maximum amount a single ticket can win is 10% of the draw proceed. For details, please visit www.postcodelottery.co.uk/prizes
- New players can sign up to pay using direct debit by calling 0808 10 9 8 7 6 5. New players who sign up online at www.postcodelottery.co.uk can pay using direct debit, debit card or PayPal.
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