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PRESS RELEASE

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS OFFERS DIGITAL EVENTS FOR THE FIRST TIME

Explore the places and spaces on your doorstep - and further afield

www.heritageopendays.org.uk

11th – 20th September 2020

For the first time in its history, England's largest festival of heritage and culture will feature online events as well as in-person activities. Heritage Open Days (HODs) returns in September, thanks to support from players of People's Postcode Lottery.

Uncovering stories, sites, places and people that traditional history has overlooked or forgotten has always been at the heart of HODs. This year people can experience virtual tours and take part in online discussions as well as visiting historic places and green spaces in person. This means visitors can just as easily explore events across England, as those on their doorsteps.

The introduction of digital events marks a significant shift for HODs and its network of volunteer organisers.

Annie Reilly, Head of Producing at Heritage Open Days, said: "The festival is about connecting people so we can share in the amazing stories of the places, spaces, nature, heritage and history around us. The last few months have shown us how online events can bring us together even when we have to remain apart."

"For many of our organisers, our encouragement of digital events has meant them thinking differently about their activities and trying technology they haven't used before. The feedback is very encouraging and we've had a sneak peak at some brilliant tours and behind-the-scenes experiences".

One such organiser is 62-year-old retired teacher, Tim Sunter. He and his fellow volunteers organise HODs events in Brierley Hill near Dudley. This year he is using tools such as *Google Street View* and *artsteps* to create virtual tours of local places of worship which highlight points of interest and the stories behind them.

Tim Sunter said: "In January, several local organisations got together to discuss plans for community events for the year. Then along came Covid, which has been frustrating. I looked at some online tours for inspiration and had a go at creating something myself. My first attempt failed but I tried again and with a bit more time and patience I got there."

Motivated by [DAWNS](#), a recent live-streamed musical experience commissioned by the National Trust in partnership with HODs, Tim is also working on an audio event which will be streamed at sunrise during the festival, as well as a downloadable walking tour.

He said: "When I see what other people have done I get inspired. You don't need to be a computer whizz kid - nothing we have done entails any coding at all. We have looked at the tools that are out there and played around until we have got to grips with them.

"HODs has been really important for bringing people together, strengthening partnerships and creating stronger networks in our community. What we're doing this year is going to help us to reach even more people."

The event directory is live on the HODs website now. Among the digital events registered so far are:

- **Naughty by Nature, Torre Abbey, Devon**

Discover the naughty side of Hidden Nature at Torre Abbey, with this virtual horticulture trail.

From Latin names that will make you blush, to plants that look a bit saucy, this Naughty by Nature tour will reveal the gardens in a whole new light.

Fri 11 - Sun 20 September, available anytime

- **Rediscover Britain's Lost Foods, Winchester**

Journey through the historical cookbooks of drinks innovators, Proudfoot & Co. Participants for this live online recipe demonstration will learn about lost ingredients that can still be found in the wild, while learning how to make a variety of creative non-alcoholic drinks.

Sat 12 and Sat 19 September, 7pm

- **Virtual Journey Through the Garden at Whirlow Spirituality Centre, Sheffield**

Take a digital walk through the 'secret' gardens in Whirlow. Accompanied by an audio meditation with a violin and cello soundtrack, participants can virtually experience sitting on the front lawn or exploring the plants and pathways of this beautiful and peaceful space.

Fri 11 – Sun 20 September, available anytime (booking required)

- **Rubbish to Resource, Recycle for Greater Manchester, Manchester**

Discover what happens to your recycling once the bins have gone. The interactive online event will show participants how state of the art technology sorts and separates the recyclables, with a chance to find out more in a myth busting Q&A.

Wed 16, Thurs 17 and Fri 18 September, various times (booking required)

- **Live from Abingdon Museum, Abingdon County Hall Museum, Oxfordshire**

Join a virtual tour around the galleries and through the history of England's oldest continually inhabited town, from the iron age to car manufacturing. Visitors can meet the staff, ask questions and even join a live streamed character illustration masterclass with a local children's book author.

Sat 19 September, from 10:30am

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. This year's theme is Hidden Nature.

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.

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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 in Britain and internationally. Players have raised more than £600 million so far. For details of the charities and good causes which are promoting and benefitting from the lottery draws, please visit 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 proceeds. 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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