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Image Credit: Golden Hinde, Cadbury's Archive, Crewe Lyceum, How Stean Gorge

PRESS RELEASE

OVER 5400 EVENTS AS HERITAGE OPEN DAYS PROGRAMME CELEBRATES 30 YEARS

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

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, it has grown 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.

The festival features thousands of events and activities across the country including a wide range of places that usually charge, free sites that put on extra special events for the festival and places that aren't usually open to the public.

There's plenty on offer. Explore a limestone ravine that's meant to be explored, not just admired at [How Stean Gorge](#). Get your sweet fix at the [Cadbury Archives](#) where there is a treasure trove of artefacts, documents and memorabilia showcasing the history of the Cadbury business. Explore the historic haunted [Crewe Lyceum Theatre](#) like never before. [Meet the Engineers](#) at Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust's landmark project to protect the bridge's 180-year-old suspension chains. Enjoy rare access to the specialist skills and knowledge involved in preserving the film and TV heritage of the nation at the [BFI National Film & Television Archive](#). Hop aboard The Golden Hinde, a full-size reconstruction of the first English ship to circumnavigate the globe, as it transforms into a 'floating dance floor' for the night with [The Golden Hinde: Silent Disco](#)

Laura Chow, Head of Charities at People's Postcode Lottery, said: "We are thrilled to be celebrating 30 years of this wonderful festival. Our players are helping to keep the doors open and free for everyone. We hope even many more people will come out to explore, celebrate and enjoy England's national heritage."

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.

ENDS

**A selection of photos from previous HODs events is [available here](#)
Photos from events in this release are [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); Open Doors Days in Wales (www.cadw.wales.gov.uk/opendoors); and European Heritage Open Days in Northern Ireland (www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/european-heritage-open-days).

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