



PRESS RELEASE

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Heritage Open Days in Somerset and Devon

As part of national Heritage Open Days, the South West Heritage Trust will be giving behind-the-scenes access to some of its sites in Devon and Somerset on two weekends this September. Heritage Open Days are England's largest festival of history and culture, bringing together over 2,500 organisations, 5,000 events and 40,000 volunteers.

At the Trust's Heritage Centres in Taunton and Exeter there will be special guided tours on Friday 14 September. The Heritage Centres hold vast archive collections dating from the 8th century to the present day and are essential for anyone researching the recorded history of the two counties. Somerset Heritage Centre also contains the museum reserve stores. During the tours visitors will hear about the collections from experts and will also view some hidden treasures. Booking is required.

The Trust's museums will also be holding special events. At Somerset Rural Life Museum in Glastonbury there will be a free Open Day on Saturday 15 September. The Museum re-opened in 2017 after a £2.4 million redevelopment and is a destination for all the family. It includes the extraordinary Abbey Barn, a remarkable treasure of West Country medieval architecture.

At Taunton Castle, home to the Museum of Somerset, there will be guided tours on Saturday 15 September. Visitors can go behind the scenes at the 12th century castle and can

The South West Heritage Trust is a charity supported by Somerset and Devon County Councils and other generous funders

South West Heritage Trust is a charity and a company limited by guarantee registered in England.
Registered office: Somerset Heritage Centre, Brunel Way, Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton, Somerset TA2 6SF
Company number: 09053532 Charity Number: 1158791 VAT Registration Number: 197221592

also see the free exhibition 'From Spinning Tops to Space Hoppers'. Through photographs, costumes, toys and games the exhibition tells the story of growing up in Somerset over the last 150 years. Booking is required for the castle tours.

The Trust will be running a guided Bridgwater Heritage Walk on Saturday 8 September. Booking is required.

Tom Mayberry, Chief Executive of the South West Heritage Trust, said: "Heritage Open Days are a wonderful opportunity to see hidden aspects of the West Country's remarkable heritage. We're delighted to be participating in this national initiative and look forward to welcoming visitors to these special occasions."

For further information see swheritage.org.uk

Booking Information

Somerset Heritage Centre tours, 10.00 am–11.30 am Booking required on 01823 278805.

Devon Heritage Centre tours, 10.30 am–12.00 pm, and 2.30 pm–4.00 pm. Booking required on 01392 888700.

Taunton Castle tours, 10.30 am, 12.00 pm, 2.00 pm and 3.30 pm. Booking required on 01823 255088.

Bridgwater Heritage Walk, 2.00 pm. Booking required on 01823 278805.

All events are free.

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For further information please contact Beth Jerrett, PR & Communications Lead Officer, beth.jerrett@swheritage.org.uk or 01823 347418.

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Notes to editors

1. The South West Heritage Trust

The South West Heritage Trust is an independent charity committed to protecting and celebrating Somerset and Devon's rich heritage. As well as the widely-praised Museum of Somerset and the redeveloped Somerset Rural Life Museum, in Glastonbury, the Trust manages state-of-the-art facilities in Taunton and Exeter to care for the extraordinary archive collections of the two counties. The Trust also provides essential advice about the historic environment and manages historic sites. Individuals and businesses are invited to support the charity through its Supporters' scheme. Visit swheritage.org.uk #SWHTdiscovery

2. Heritage Open Days

Heritage Open Days are co-ordinated and promoted nationally by the National Trust with funding by 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 are 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/?lang=en); European Heritage Open Days in Northern Ireland (www.ehsni.gov.uk); Open House London (www.open-city.org.uk).

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