



heritage **open** days



Impact Report

2016 – 2017



'Let's open the doors! Heritage Open Days is an exercise in public consciousness. You can't love and protect something unless you know about it!'

Patron, Loyd Grossman OBE

8 – 11th September 2016 saw the 22nd annual Heritage Open Days festival weekend. And what a weekend! Millions of people across England took the opportunity to connect with the culture and heritage of their local places.

Coordinated by the National Trust, and supported by funding from players of People's Postcode Lottery, this year's festival saw grassroots organisers focusing on the theme of 'Treasure your Treasures' – a clarion call for visitors to vote with their feet and show their support for the heritage on their doorstep.

Why?

TREASURE
YOUR
TREASURES

The theme responded to rising concerns that treasured local heritage and cultural spaces are coming under increased threat due to economic and planning pressures. 'Treasure your Treasures' invited people, from all walks of life, to share what they value in their local area. The national festival team has once again been astounded by their fantastic response.

2016's Headline Figures

- ▶ 5293 events across England
- ▶ 2073 local organisers and coordinators, majority of whom are volunteers
- ▶ 40,000 volunteers
- ▶ An estimated 3 million visitors*
- ▶ Over £10 million added to local economies



Evaluation

This year's survey demonstrates people passionately care about their local places with **86% saying that their main reason for visiting was to support their local heritage.**

Key emerging themes



Numbers Up

- ▶ The festival featured **9% more events than 2015**: a record high including walks, talks, tours, performances and opportunities for storytelling and creative engagement.
- ▶ Events and activities were created by **2073 people across the nation**, working and volunteering locally, **an increase of 23% on 2015.**
- ▶ And we estimate Heritage Open Days 2016 generated a total of around **£10.2 – 15.4 million for local economies.**



Connecting Communities and generating wellbeing

- ▶ 72% of visitors to Heritage Open Days events live locally
- ▶ 76% of volunteers taking part felt an increased pride in their local area/heritage. 53% of those volunteers were taking part for the first time, an increase of 26% on 2015.
- ▶ 84% of volunteers said that as a result of their involvement they were more likely to volunteer for a heritage organisation in the future. And most incredibly, almost 100% of the festival's volunteers fully enjoy their volunteering experience.
- ▶ Heritage Open Day volunteers also report an increased sense of wellbeing due to their involvement with the festival: with 69% feeling more relaxed and 64% active and healthier

"It was a real privilege to help with this project and I felt valued. They were some of the happiest days I have had for quite some time...I loved sharing the local knowledge I had learned, with visitors to the exhibition, it was a very proud time and I look forward to being involved in a similar event in the future!"

(Volunteer comment: Stories of Sneinton Market, A Walk Through Time, Nottinghamshire)

New Places

Participation in the festival is spreading with an 11% increase in new organisers staging events for us. A significant number of new larger coordinated hubs have also been nurtured this year including Knutsford, Buxton and Winchester.

New Faces

Heritage Open Days has consistently demonstrated its power in acting as a gateway to culture and heritage, and 2016 has been no different. 51% of organisers reported an increase in the diversity of visitors to their sites as a result of Heritage Open Days. Perhaps most powerfully, 62% of visitors were experiencing Heritage Open Days for the first time and 40% of all visitors had not visited a heritage site in the past 12 months.

"We had a brilliant time at both the visitor centre and the Paddington site – amazing work you all do and explained the history so well – our 10yr old was blown away!! Thank you all x"

(Visitor Comment: Friends of Williamson's Tunnels Paddington Site, Merseyside)

Communication

PR Power

The festival garnered extensive media coverage across local, regional and specialist publications and BBC and independent local radio, including: ITV Granada – West Midlands and East Midlands; Martin Lewis Money Saving Expert online, ITV Daybreak & Good Morning Britain; and a feature on our partnership with the Central Council of Church Bellringers on Songs of Praise.

Virtual Visitors

This year saw the launch of a mobile friendly website. With a responsive and intuitive design, it's pleasing to see **an increase of 24% in digital visitors**, with a total of **5.6 million page views**.

So Social

September saw engagement soar, with a record breaking rise in followers and reach across all channels. The festival's partnerships with the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Capability Brown 300 festival and the Central Council of Church Bellringers were all celebrated and supported online by the #treasureyourtreasures campaign. **A 'thunderclap' for the campaign achieved a social reach of 1,147,899.**





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Photography by Chris Lacey and Rahil Ahmad

*Visitors figures adjusted for weather impact. The HODS Saturday saw downpours across England, significantly impacting visitor numbers. When the sector as a whole experienced a consistently wet summer season in 2012, visitor numbers were impacted by an average of 20%

**Visitor evaluation for 2016 based on telephone omnibus survey of c.1000 adults in GB and 424 face-to-face interviews at 16 locations across England. Volunteer findings based on feedback from 218 volunteers and 511 organisers.

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