



Department for
Communities
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An Roinn
Pobal

Department fur
Commonities

EUROPEAN HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 2023

SATURDAY 09 &
SUNDAY 10 SEPTEMBER

  /loveheritageni  @loveheritageni



 **Love
HERITAGE^{NI}**

European Heritage Open Days 2023 Report



European Heritage Open Days are held in Northern Ireland as part of the annual European wide festival. Historic Environment Division within the Department for Communities coordinates this event. The purpose is to promote public interest in heritage and to raise awareness of its cultural significance and benefit to the community.

Forward



The European Heritage Open Days (EHOD) event takes place every year during the second full weekend in September. It is a time for all to discover or rediscover the wonderful treasures of our national heritage and to understand the rich legacy of the past.

EHOD celebrates all forms of heritage whether artistic, archaeological, industrial, agricultural, river, or built. It is an opportunity to discover public buildings steeped in history and some normally not open to the public. EHOD continues to flourish with more events every year reflecting the rich and diverse heritage of Northern Ireland and its communities.

EHOD is inclusive of all communities and welcoming to all, it generates cooperation and participation between organisations, property owners and the general public. It also involves engaging the support of volunteers.

On EHOD weekend 9 & 10 September 2023, 61,929 visitors were able to enjoy exceptional openings, guided tours and original activities throughout Northern Ireland. By understanding the value and benefits that our historic environment and heritage can bring to everyone, it helps to ensure that it is protected and treasured now and for our children's children.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many individual organisers, groups and volunteers who allow access to these wonderful places and events which capture our heritage. Without their enthusiasm and generosity EHOD would not be possible.

Paul Price

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Price'.

**Director Historic Environment Division
Department For Communities**



Statistics **61,929** in person visitors

Each year we collect statistics to measure the success of EHOD. Here is a snapshot of the main statistics gathered from Organisers and marketing programmes.

Events Organised



258
properties and events registered



4
Digital, online only



254
Physical open doors

EHOD WEBAPP



10,341 Views
241 average views per day

The WebApp digitally showcases all that the event has to offer along with providing a list of participants and a searchable map enabling users to search for events by location to help plan their day out.

DFC EHOD Web Page



19,652 Downloads
PDF Downloadable Brochure

Tourism NI Website



17,818
Page views

The most popular landing page on DNI website over the weekend of EHOD!



Statistics

Press Office Statistics



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Interview bids and Media Enquiries:

- **14/08/23** - BBC Your Place or Mine- European Heritage Open Days
- **14/8/23** Jade Beecroft, Belfast Telegraph

DFC Twitter/X



173

Total engagements

10,861

Total Impressions

14

Total retweets

7

Daily and Regional Press articles

22

Online coverage articles

Love HeritageNI Social Media Stats



51

Posts

491,538

Reach



29

Posts

11,461

Reach



40

Posts

292,452

Reach





Support for the event

The EHOD team provided marketing materials, both printed and digital, to support event organisers. We provided guidance on delivering events, how to promote events through social media and how to complete risk assessments and general promotion of events. It also included advice on promoting the open days on national media platforms.

A downloadable brochure was produced and this along with The WebApp proved to be a great resource as it was easily accessed on a mobile enabling visitors to see what was on in an area very quickly and easily.

Organiser quotes



It was a fantastic weekend at Greencastle with a good turn out for each of the five walks

Thank you for what you do. We are so pleased to be involved in a European initiative. We had Ukrainian families visit us for EHOD – lovely!

Maybe we could get some additional posters, they still work. Maybe try and target younger people by encouraging events for younger people.

It was a great event-well done.



Programme highlights

With 258 events registered for European Heritage Open Days 2023 it is difficult to showcase all of these fantastic events, so we have selected a very small snapshot from across the region showing the variety of the type of events that are organised for EHOD annually by our wonderful volunteers.



Draperstown and An T-Ionad Wine Centre

Visitors enjoyed a walk around the Top Row, Draperstown, starting and ending at An T-Ionad Fiona Wine Center on the Row. The tour explained the history and legacy of the Top Row, High Street, Draperstown and the current use of the Top Row buildings between 1834 and 1839.



Castle Coole

Visitors to Castle Coole experienced free access to the estate, gardens and a house tour of one of Ireland's finest Neo-classical houses; giving a glimpse into what life was like in the home of the Earls of Belmore.



Linen Biennale Events

'The Longest Linen tablecloth-in the Making.' The Linen Rooms Lisburn above R-Space gallery with Artist Emma Whitehead and with other makers & stitchers, began work on the longest linen tablecloth in N. Ireland. Visitors were welcomed to join in around the big table or simply watch. The Linen Biennale was made possible by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Programme highlights



The Ballance House

The Ballance House is a restored 19th century homestead in the rural countryside of Glenavy. The Ballance House showcases the many special connections between Northern Ireland and New Zealand and works to develop cultural links and interchange between the two countries. The Ballance House was restored in the early 1990s with a focus on preserving original features and the original stones were repurposed in the rebuild. Visitors were welcomed to take self-guided tour around the House and chatted with knowledgeable guides who were on hand. Home-baked refreshments were provided in the Tea Barn.



National Trust - Divis and the Black Mountain

A walk was organised for visitors giving the opportunity to explore the archaeology of Divis & the Black Mountain with the National Trust. Participants learnt about the history of Divis and the Black Mountain, walked through ancient stone cairns and heard about the recent archaeological digs on site.



No 5 Vicars' Hill and Armagh Robinson Library

Situated close to each other two 18th century buildings are worthy of a visit in their own right. Originally the Registry, No 5 was built by Archbishop Robinson to hold Church of Ireland and civil records. It was restored in 2011 to display examples of the library's collections. Visitors enjoyed a self-guided tour of these wonderful buildings and all they had to offer including Roman and Medieval coins, Neolithic stone tools, Bronze Age weaponry and Irish hand bells used in early Christian worship. Also on display were examples of 18th century fine art, including prints, medals and gems!"



CARLETON TRAIL

The Carleton Trail is a 10-mile circular route around the village of Carleton. It is a well-maintained path that is suitable for all ages and abilities. The trail is a great way to see the village and its surroundings. It is a great way to get some exercise and enjoy the scenery.

You are now at this point
The Forth Chapel

2





Quotes from Visitors and Volunteers



2 Royal Avenue: Have to say a great job since it was Tesco's. A lovely building inside and out, also a very interesting history. Many thanks to Paul for the tour.

It was an absolute joy to visit this building as part of Love Heritage NI

Enjoyable visit to Shiels Institute property Armagh today

Brilliant day lads , well done really enjoyed it on the Saturday

Just lovely to see Tyler Playfair at Downpatrick. My brief visit on Saturday was most enjoyable

Had an amazing trip to Rams Island in Lough Neagh yesterday. Thank you to Kevin (boat driver and guide) and to all the volunteers who made us so welcome. They provided delicious scones and tea/coffee upon arrival on the island. Very interesting tour of ruined caretaker's cottage, remains of a monastic round tower and the decaying sporting lodge along with carvings into the barks of trees of US airmen (and their Irish sweethearts) during WW11.

★★★★★ Review from me

Thank you for all your hard work to make our wee country so special to live in and visit.

Very much looking forward to the tour of this lovely, but sadly disused landmark in Royal Avenue. I have always admired this building and so glad it is to be restored to house what looks to be a fascinating heritage project.

What an iconic landmark and great to see it still functioning today!



Coordination

European Heritage Open Days has been celebrating heritage and built environment in Northern Ireland for 26 years. It is delivered by the Department for Communities Historic Environment Division; it involves strong partnerships with a range of organisations such as Tourism NI, Museums NI, National Trust, Libraries NI, other government and voluntary bodies and individuals.

Contact Us

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SAVE THE DATE!

EHOD 2024 14-15 SEPT

Take part in 2024 & theme

Are you interested in organising an in person or online event or opening the doors of an interesting building in your community?

Contact the EHOD team:

ehod@communities-ni.gov.uk

Find out more:

European Heritage Open Days



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