



heritage **open** days



A festival of free entry heritage experiences
across the Folkestone & Hythe district

11-20 September 2026

Coordinated by:



**New
Folkestone
Society**

A voice for the community

with support from:



supported and sponsored by:

**Folkestone
& Hythe**



District Council

Heritage Open Days is England's largest community led festival of history and culture, involving thousands of local volunteers and organisations. Every year in September it brings people together to celebrate their heritage, community and history. Stories are told, traditions explored, and histories brought to life. It's your chance to see hidden places and try out new experiences – and it's all FREE.

This brochure outlines what events are happening across the Folkestone & Hythe district. Please consult the What's On guide on the Heritage Open Days website for more detailed and up-to-date information, as organisers may have changed information since publication. You can also find out whether events that require pre-booking have reached capacity.

The direct link is:

<https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/whats-on/printable-area-lists/folkestone-and-hythe.html>

Key to Symbols

	Booking required		Some events require booking		No booking required
	Free on-site parking		Free on-site disabled parking		Car park requires payment
	Full wheelchair access		Partial wheelchair access		Free refreshments available
	Toilets		Accessible toilets		Refreshments can be purchased
	Dogs welcome		Assistance dogs welcome		Prams / buggies welcome

List is not exhaustive - see website listings for full details of venues.

Venues

4 North Downs

- 1 Stelling Minnis Windmill, Stelling Minnis
- 2 St John's Commandery Chapel, Swingfield

5 Folkestone

- 3 Parish Church of St Mary & St Eanswythe
- 4 Sunflower House, Folkestone
- 5 Folkestone Old Cemetery

7 Sandgate

- 6 Old Fire Station, Sandgate
- 7 Shorncliffe Military Cemetery, Sandgate

8 Hythe

- 8 St Leonard's Church, Hythe
- 9 Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railway Cafe, Hythe

9 Online

- z Zoom talk

10 Romney Marsh

- 10 Church of St Peter & St Paul, Dymchurch
- 11 Church of St Peter & St Paul, Newchurch
- 12 Church of St Augustine, Snave
- 13 Church of St Thomas Becket, Fairfield
- 14 Church of St Augustine, Brookland
- 15 Church of St George, Ivychurch
- 16 Church of St Nicholas, New Romney
- 17 Church of All Saints, Lydd

14 Festival calendar

North Downs

1 Stelling Minnis Windmill

Mill Lane, Stelling Minnis CT4 6AF

[what3words](#) ///debating.clown.greed

Sunday 13 September

Open Day & Classic Car Show 12-5pm

Tours of the 1866 Grade I Listed smock mill with working engine room and museum will be held throughout the day. A classic car display will be held in the grounds, which also serve as a safe play area for children.



There is a café on site, which will be selling optional cream teas and other refreshments. Optional donations towards the upkeep of the mill are welcome. Please note the site is cash only.



2 St John's Commandery

Stockham Lane, Swingfield CT15 7HG

[what3words](#) ///teardrop.result.nitrogen

Friday 11 - Sunday 20 September

Open Days 9am-5pm

Step inside the flint-walled 13th-century chapel and hall of a 'Commandery' of Knights Hospitallers. Discover the building's rich history, from its monastic origins to later use as a farmhouse, and look up to spot the striking medieval crown-post roof and 16th-century ceilings. The building is usually closed to the public, so don't miss the exclusive opportunity to take a self-guided tour. No booking necessary.



Folkestone

3 Church of St Mary & St Eanswythe

Church Street, Folkestone CT20 1SE

[what3words](#) [///sums.informed.nightcap](#)

Saturday 12 September

St Eanswythe's Fair 10:30am-4pm

Capture the colour and vibrancy of a medieval celebration in honour of our patron saint, enjoying workshops & talks, a dog show, family activities, local music & art. Locally handmade items & refreshments can be purchased also. You may even encounter Lady Isabella de Clare, ready to share stories of medieval pilgrimage or the life of St Eanswythe herself.



Bayle Tours 11am-12pm & 1-2pm

Join local historian & geologist Steve Friedrich on a tour of the ancient heart of the town.

Sunday 13 September

Eucharist 10:30-11.45am - Choral Evensong 4pm

Monday 14 September - Thursday 17 September

The History of Folkestone's Town Cross 12pm

Join us on the steps of the town cross for an illustrated, conversational talk tracing Folkestone's story back to the years just after the Romans departed, revealing how this hillside has shaped not only the town but moments in the nation's history.

Friday 18 September

The Story of the Attwood Clock 12-1pm

This guided session offers a rare chance to get up close to one of the oldest working tower clocks in the country that has marked the passing of time for more than 500 years.

Saturday 19 September

History Tours of the Parish Church 12-1pm & 2-3pm

This guided walking tour uncovers the remarkable story of Folkestone's Parish Church — from its Anglo-Saxon beginnings to its role at the heart of the town today.



book tours via [Eventbrite](#) - see web listing

Folkestone

4 Sunflower House

45 Foord Road, Folkestone CT19 5AE

what3words ///tickling.sounds.biggest

Saturday 12 September

Everyone Through the Same Door: The Sarah Baker Story 11.30am-12.30pm

This one woman performance is a joyous romp through the life of 18th century theatre impresario Sarah Baker, who went from a penniless traveller to one of the 18th century's great businesswomen and creative forces - a touring powerhouse across Kent.

Join Folkestone Performing Arts Company for an open rehearsal to see extracts from their new play, scenes from works from Sarah's era and insights into the Kent locations where her theatres & performances brought communities together.



book at <https://www.fpac.info/contact>

5 Folkestone Old Cemetery

Cheriton Road, Folkestone CT20 1DF

what3words ///drags.loyal.marine

Saturday 12 & Saturday 19 September
Cemetery Open Days & Tours 11am-3pm

Download one of our self guided themed trail sheets to guide you around the cemetery, with themes such as fishermen, ladies & Victoria Cross recipients.... or join a short tour of 15-20 minutes guided by a Friends of Folkestone Old Cemetery member at 11.30am, 12.30pm, 1.30pm or 2.30pm (all different). Treasure Hunts with a simple map & answers can also be downloaded, suitable for all with different difficulty levels - small reward upon completion!



Sandgate

6 Sandgate Old Fire Station

51 Sandgate High Street, Sandgate CT20 3AH
[what3words](#) ///clusters.length.limitless

Saturday 19 - Sunday 20 September From Folkestone to Vimy Ridge 10am-4pm

The Shorncliffe Trust “pop up” exhibit will be telling the remarkable story of how the Canadian Army in WW1 prepared for the legendary Battle of Vimy Ridge at Shorncliffe using photos and rare unseen artefacts, kindly hosted by the Sandgate Society. This exhibit of unseen photos, memorabilia and artefacts show the visitor how the myth about the tactics in WW1 was not true.



7 Shorncliffe Military Cemetery

Sandy Lane, Sandgate CT21 5RX
[what3words](#) ///rainwater.washable.tolerates

Wednesday 16 September Commonwealth War Graves Tour 2-3.30pm

A beautiful cemetery provides the setting for an introductory tour that travels the world, crosses the generations and shows the diversity of service in both world wars with references to British, Canadian, Chinese and South African service personnel as well as civilian deaths. Throughout the tour the history and role of the CWGC is explored.



book at <https://www.cwgc.org/visit-us/events-tours-and-talks>
by 14 September

8 St Leonard's Church

Church Road, Hythe CT21 5DN

[what3words](#) ///envelope.initiated.creatures



Saturday 12 September

Come & Sing Evensong 5-7.30pm

Choral Evensong has formed the bedrock of the Anglican tradition for over 400 years. It's still sung today in Britain's cathedrals, college chapels, and churches, in much the same way it was first sung. This is a wonderful opportunity to join our choir in singing it. We start at 5pm with refreshments before rehearsing from 5:30-6:30pm when the service starts. We then sing in the service, which finishes at approximately 7:30pm. Everyone is welcome, regardless of prior experience or musical ability!

Monday 14 September

Flower Arranging Demonstration 2-3.30pm

One of our highly talented flower team will walk us through how to produce a beautiful and professional flower display. The demonstration will be followed by refreshments.

Wednesday 16 September

Choir Try-Outs: Youth Choir 6.30-7.30pm, Adult Choir 7.30-9pm

Ever wanted to sing in a choir? Come along and spend an evening singing choral music with the St Leonard's Choirs. Youth Choir is for ages 8-17.

Saturday 19 September

Open Day 9.30am-4pm

Come and explore St Leonard's as you've never before! Both towers will be open throughout the day to explore the bells and see Hythe from the rooftop. There will also be churchyard tours, parish records to peruse and the crypt open for longer. Tours of the West Tower to explore the ringing chamber and bells, as well as the churchyard to visit some of the interesting characters who rest there, will be given. The church's vestments will be on display and a talk as to their purpose. An exhibition in the Parvis will offer chance to flick through some of the parish records.

The crypt will be open all day for optional visits (usual charges apply).



9 Light Railway Heritage Hall

Scanlons Bridge Road, Hythe CT21 6LD

what3words ///dame.poetry.shakes

Saturday 12 September

Heritage Film Evening 6:30-9pm

The Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railway Supporters Association Heritage Group will be presenting old film footage of the railway over the years - a rare opportunity to see some seldom seen footage.



The Heritage Hall is at the rear of the Hythe station. Refreshments and snacks may optionally be purchased before the presentation or during the interval.



book at <https://www.rhdr.org.uk/special-events/heritage-open-day/>

z Online Talk via Zoom

Download Zoom from www.zoom.com

Book to receive the Zoom link

Thursday 17 September

Baby Farming: A Family History Talk 7.30pm

Baby farming was widely used in London and some other large towns both in England and Scotland but it was in London and its environs where it was largely practised with criminal intent. Sickly infants were found - as many as possible - usually under the age of three months because life was so dangerous for them that their deaths would appear more natural.

The Folkestone & District Family History Society is pleased to present this talk by professional genealogist Lady Teviot, who has lectured across the globe on the subject and appeared on the BBC's Heir Hunters television programme.



book by e-mailing webmaster@folkfhs.org.uk

Romney Marsh

10 Church of St Peter & St Paul

New Hall Close, Dymchurch TN29 0LD

what3words ///mountains.shelf.gliding



Friday 18 - Sunday 20 September

Guided Tours 10am-3pm

This ancient church is a time-capsule of over 900 years of history, with Norman decorative features aplenty and associations to Russell Thorndike's fictional smuggler Dr. Syn, The Scarecrow of Romney Marsh. Church volunteers will be available to show visitors around.

The Romney Marsh Historic Churches Trust helps care for locations 10-17, each of which hosts one of The Marsh Mosaics, created by local people to celebrate the history and wildlife of Romney Marsh. See www.romneymarshchurches.org.uk for further details.



11 Church of St Peter & St Paul

The Street, Newchurch TN29 0DP

what3words ///something.spice.hissing



Friday 11 - Sunday 20 September

Stories of Newchurch Folk 10am-5pm

Volunteers have created an exhibition about the residents of Newchurch from the 18th to 20th centuries. Self-guided tour materials will be available.

Optionally, there will be a coffee morning on Saturday 12 September 10:30am-12pm, followed by lunches, cakes and hot drinks until 6pm.

On Sunday 13 September there is a service. All are welcome. The Church will be open to visitors from 11am following the service.



Historic Churches

12 Church of St Augustine

Ashford Road, Snave CT21 6LD

[what3words](#) ///fame.spooned.dunk

Friday 11 - Sunday 20 September

Photo Display during the daytime

Especially for Heritage Open Days, visitors can collect leaflets and guide booklets from St. Augustine's and details of what's on. We'll also have on display some beautiful photos by Andy Marshall, highlighting interesting features and artefacts to see at the 14 medieval churches on Romney Marsh. St. Augustine's Church is now entirely maintained by the Romney Marsh Historic Churches Trust. On Sunday 13 September the RMHCT Annual Thanksgiving Service is at 3pm - all welcome.



Please note access is via the chapel door (on the left from the path) not the tower door.



13 Church of St Thomas Becket

Becket Road, Fairfield TN29 9RZ

[what3words](#) ///verges.spotty.intrigues

Friday 11 - Sunday 20 September

Self-Guided Tours during the daytime

Especially for Heritage Open Days, self-guided tour materials will be available in this iconic church, surrounded by fields and waterways. A great photo opportunity! If a guide isn't present, collect the key from the right-hand gatepost to the driveway of Becket House.



Sunday 13, Saturday 19 & Sunday 20

Guided Tours 12-3pm (10.30am-12pm Sunday 13)

A volunteer will be available to show visitors around - no booking necessary.



Romney Marsh

14 Church of St Augustine

High Street, Brookland TN29 9QR
[what3words ///mugs.workbook.grandson](#)



Saturday 19 September

Bell Tower Open Day 3-4pm

It is impossible to miss the enormous wooden bell tower of Brookland church. Here is an opportunity to see inside this unusual structure, to view the bells and the beautiful wooden frame. A member of the church community will be present to guide you to some other highlights within the church. Booking required.

The church is open daily 10am-3:30pm during Heritage Open Days with no booking required, but it will not be possible to access the bell tower other than on 19 September.

   book bell tower visits by e-mailing
admin@romneymarshchurches.org.uk by 12 September

15 Church of St George

Ivychurch Road, Ivychurch TN29 0AL
[what3words ///completed.decide.brief](#)



Friday 11 - Sunday 20 September

Tower & Clock Room Open Day 2-3pm

Visitors can ascend the Tower and look inside the Clock Chamber - booking required. The church is open for visits 10am-3pm and an art exhibition curated by Art in Romney Marsh - no booking required.

Saturday 12 September

Parvis Chamber, Tower & Clock Room Open Day 10am-6pm

The Parvis Chamber will be open for visitors to view. Optional refreshments will be available to purchase. The tower and clock room will be open by appointment as above.

    book tower visits by e-mailing
admin@romneymarshchurches.org.uk

Historic Churches

16 Church of St Nicholas

Church Road, New Romney TN28 8EU
what3words ///point.airfields.cigar

Monday 14 - Sunday 20 September

Volunteer Stewards on Hand 2-4pm

Once a harbour church, St. Nicholas' became land-locked.
The Church is open daily for drop-in visits 10am-4pm.



Thursday 17 September

History Talk 11am - Craft Workshops 3.30-7pm

A short talk on the history of the church will be held subject to sufficient numbers.
Help decorate a Romney Sheep sculpture - part of the Romney Flock local sculpture trail - and make a small memento to take home. Booking required for both activities.



book talk by e-mailing admin@romneymarshchurches.org.uk by 7 September. Book craft workshops at <https://teachmecourses.co.uk>

17 Church of All Saints

Church Road, Lydd TN29 9DX
what3words ///dared.object.frostbite

Saturday 12 September

Tower Open Day 12-4pm

Especially for Heritage Open Days, the tower at Lydd will be open on 12th September 12pm-4pm (weather permitting) - see the view from one of Kent's tallest towers! The Church is open daily for visits 12-4pm. No booking required.



Wednesday 16 September

Craft Sessions 3.30-7pm

Help decorate a Romney Sheep sculpture and make a small memento to take home.



book craft workshops at <https://teachmecourses.co.uk>

Calendar of Events

Daily from Friday 11 - Sunday 20 September

07:00	12	Photo Display St Augustine's Church, Snave
07:00	13	Self-Guided Tours St Thomas Becket's Church, Fairfield
09:00	2	Open Day St John's Commandery, Swingfield
10:00	11	Newchurch Folk Exhibition St Peter & St Paul's Church, Newchurch
14:00	15	Tower Tour & Art Display St George's Church, Ivychurch

Saturday 12

10:00	15	Parvis Chamber & Tower Open Day St George's Church, Ivychurch
10:30	3	St Eanswythe's Fair St Mary & St Eanswythe's Church, Folkestone
11:00	3	Bayle Tour The Bayle, Folkestone (part of St Eanswythe's Fair)
11:00	5	Open Day & History Tours Folkestone Old Cemetery, Cheriton
11:30	4	The Sarah Baker Story Sunflower House, Folkestone
12:00	17	Tower Open Day All Saints' Church, Lydd
13:00	3	Bayle Tour The Bayle, Folkestone (part of St Eanswythe's Fair)
17:00	8	Come & Sing Evensong St Leonard's Church, Hythe
18:30	9	Heritage Film Evening RHDR Light Railway Cafe, Hythe

Sunday 13

10:30	3	Eucharist St Mary & St Eanswythe's Church, Folkestone
12:00	1	Open Day with Classic Cars Stelling Minnis Windmill, Stelling Minnis
15:00	12	RMHCT Annual Thanksgiving Service St Augustine's Church, Snave
10:30	3	Evensong St Mary & St Eanswythe's Church, Folkestone

Monday 14

12:00	3	Town Cross History St Mary & St Eanswythe's Church, Folkestone
14:00	8	Flower Arranging St Leonard's Church, Hythe
14:00	16	Volunteer Stewards on Hand St Nicholas Church, New Romney

Tuesday 15

12:00	3	Town Cross History St Mary & St Eanswythe's Church, Folkestone
14:00	16	Volunteer Stewards on Hand St Nicholas Church, New Romney

See individual listings for further details and to book. Before your visit, check the latest information via the online listings at www.heritageopendays.org.uk

Wednesday 16

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|-------|-----------|---|
| 12:00 | 3 | Town Cross History St Mary & St Eanswythe's Church, Folkestone |
| 14:00 | 16 | Volunteer Stewards on Hand St Nicholas Church, New Romney |
| 14:00 | 7 | CWGC Tour Shorncliffe Military Cemetery, Sandgate |
| 15:30 | 17 | Craft Sessions All Saints' Church, Lydd |
| 18:30 | 8 | Youth Choir Try-Outs St Leonard's Church, Hythe |
| 19:30 | 8 | Adult Choir Try-Outs St Leonard's Church, Hythe |

Thursday 17

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|-------|-----------|---|
| 11:00 | 16 | History Talk St Nicholas Church, New Romney |
| 12:00 | 3 | Town Cross History St Mary & St Eanswythe's Church, Folkestone |
| 14:00 | 16 | Volunteer Stewards on Hand St Nicholas Church, New Romney |
| 15:30 | 16 | Craft Workshops St Nicholas Church, New Romney |
| 19:30 | 2 | Baby Farming: A Family History Talk Online via Zoom |

Friday 18

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|-------|-----------|---|
| 10:00 | 10 | Guided Tours St Peter & St Paul's Church, Dymchurch |
| 12:00 | 3 | Attwood Clock Tour St Mary & St Eanswythe's Church, Folkestone |
| 14:00 | 16 | Volunteer Stewards on Hand St Nicholas Church, New Romney |

Saturday 19

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|-------|-----------|---|
| 09:30 | 8 | Open Day with Tours St Leonard's Church, Hythe |
| 10:00 | 10 | Guided Tours St Peter & St Paul's Church, Dymchurch |
| 10:00 | 6 | From Folkestone to Vimy Ridge Old Fire Station, Sandgate |
| 11:00 | 5 | Open Day & History Tours Folkestone Old Cemetery, Cheriton |
| 12:00 | 3 | History Tour St Mary & St Eanswythe's Church, Folkestone |
| 14:00 | 3 | History Tour St Mary & St Eanswythe's Church, Folkestone |
| 14:00 | 16 | Volunteer Stewards on Hand St Nicholas' Church, New Romney |
| 15:00 | 14 | Bell Tower Open Day St Augustine's Church, Brookland |

Sunday 20

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|-------|-----------|--|
| 10:00 | 10 | Guided Tours St Peter & St Paul's Church, Dymchurch |
| 10:00 | 6 | From Folkestone to Vimy Ridge Old Fire Station, Sandgate |
| 14:00 | 16 | Volunteer Stewards on Hand St Nicholas Church, New Romney |



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This year's festival theme is Everyday Histories, which is sponsored by Findmypast.

Look out for Findmypast Heritage Open Days children's activity sheets at participating venues to start creating your family tree.

Start your family tree today and you could win prizes worth £1,000!

<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/c/heritage-open-days>



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Find my past