

WINCHESTER HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

2022 Festival Review

The seventh Winchester Heritage Open Days (WHODs) was packed with over 100 free events taking place in Winchester and the surrounding areas. From tours, behind the scenes, and engaging talks, visitors had the opportunity to delve into local history and explore the theme of Astounding Inventions.

How did it go?

Attendees immersed themselves in the art, architecture and history of Hampshire; from marvelling at the large-scale murals of Stanley Spencer at Sandham Memorial Chapel to discovering the stories behind the painted bollards which feature in the Square in Winchester (and finding out how on earth you paint a bollard in the first place!). Record numbers of visitors were noted at events such as the Romsey Signal Box Open Day, where attendees were encouraged to pull levers. The return of the Whitchurch Silk Mill Food Festival tempted over 1,200 people to peruse its selection of local produce and culinary delicacies, and over 1,000 people delved into 800 years of history at the Great Hall.

Behind the Scenes

During our active festival planning period of April-September we had more than 125,000 visits to our website, an extraordinary number of people curious to learn more about the treasures Hampshire holds in its rich history. Our electronic newsletter is at over 1,600 subscribers, who are able to benefit from keeping up-to-date with the latest festival news with how quickly some bookable events can sell out; over 400 tickets were "sold" on the first day of the WHOD Box Office and 9 events sold out by the end of the first day. Some events released a second batch of tickets to meet demands, such as tours at Winchester College. Most events are "Just Turn Up" and do not require a ticket.

WHODs 22 IN A NUTSHELL



125,000+
Website hits
April-Sept



400+
Tickets sold on
the first day of
the Box Office



1,600+
Subscribers to
e-newsletter



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The Festival



The ten-day festival took place during the national period of mourning (9th – 18th September) following the death of the Queen on 8th September. While these unprecedented circumstances inevitably had an impact on the festival, with several highly anticipated events either cancelling or postponing to a later date, the festival went ahead in the spirit of community. There were over 10,000 visits to events, and over 1,000 views and downloads across our digital content during September (YouTube, Facebook Live, HistBites podcast). Attendance was lower than anticipated, which we attribute to the impact of the national period of mourning; attendance was expected to be high at postponed/cancelled events such as the Winchester Combined Court Open Day, Hursley House Open Day and Tours and Hyde900 events.

Sponsors & Supporters



Hampshire History Trust oversaw the coordination of the festival, alongside the release of Season 8 of the Hampshire HistBites podcast. The Trust is tremendously grateful to lead sponsor Winchester College, Winchester BID, the organisations who opened their doors, the individuals who offered their time, and our supportive team of volunteers – we appreciate everyone who contributed in creating such a spectacular festival.

HAMPSHIRE HISTORY TRUST

Charity registration number: 1191377

WHODs 22 IN A NUTSHELL



10 Days



100+ Events



10,000+ Visits



1,000+ Digital views



711 followers



1,775 followers



2,337 followers



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Our Audience



67% of attendees responded that this was not their first WHODs; it is encouraging to see such an appetite to return and learn something new year on year, while also recognising that we are continuing to reach new audiences. Just over half of attendees travel less than 5 miles to attend a HODs event, discovering the history (almost) literally on their doorsteps, while some were prepared to travel further afoot in search of the county's curiosities. Our digital content (e.g. HistBites) reaches an international audience.

Feedback



A consistent theme with feedback from attendees highlights the enjoyment of discovering new places or revisiting familiar places with fresh perspectives.

- Self-directed walks and tours and events where one just 'turns up' and enjoy whatever is available
- Friendliness of people involved
- Knowledgeable/informative guides
- Learning new things about local history
- Ability to visit interesting buildings that are usually not open to the public
- Visiting places they wouldn't normally plan to visit

"Please try to spin the plates again next year, I cannot emphasise enough just how welcome this sheer fortnight of visits and memory making is. Each September I discover new things to spend the winter finding out more about"

"An excellent morning out. The venue was superb, and one I had never heard of or would ever have visited had it not been for HODs".

"thank you to everyone involved for making this such a special day out"

"Just thank you really for all your hard work, we are very lucky to have these days, long may they continue"

"Great opportunity to see a local sight with the family"

