

European Heritage Open Days weekend brings history to life

Planning what to do this weekend (Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 September)? Why not get involved in European Heritage Open Days? With free entry and some properties opening to the public this weekend only, you might get the chance to explore somewhere you otherwise wouldn't get the chance to see.

Something for everyone

With more than 360 historic buildings and places of interest opening their doors, including historic cottages, mills, private houses, and castles, there really is something for everyone.

Bun na Margáí Friary, Ballycastle

Experience the golden stones and stories of Bun na Margáí Friary, Ballycastle through expert guided tours and lectures.

Built by Rory MacQuillan in 1500, the rival MacDonnell clan claimed the Friary in 1588 and the coffin of Sorley Boy MacDonnell lies here.

See and hear the stories of the Friary through Gaelic clan warfare and World War, or discover its links with the Spanish Armada.

Marladoo House, Co Armagh

A private home, this charming two-storey Georgian House is 200-years-old. Situated beside Marladoo Lake, where Hugh O'Neill kept his wife and valuables safe on a crannog during the nine years' war.

Knockbracken Healthcare Park

A guided tour of selected buildings of the former Purdysburn Villa Colony, a former 'asylum' for mentally ill patients built between 1902 and 1913.

Purdysburn was laid out as a suburban-style settlement in an innovative design that was based on German colony asylums of the late 19th century.

The tour will consider how the buildings were built to maximise patient health.

Cockle Row Cottages, Groomsport

Cockle Row Cottages are restored fishermen's cottages dating back to the 1600s, beside the harbour in the picturesque village of Groomsport. They are home to a living history exhibition.

There will be free entertainment, including a magic show, sand art workshop, and a demonstration of traditional skills over the weekend.

Fermanagh historic graveyards

Explore by bus the stories hidden within two historic graveyards.

This trip visits the old graveyard on Cleenish Island, Upper Lough Erne, which has links to the heritage of St Columbanus.

It also will allow you to discover the history of Aghalurcher Church and graveyard (see pic above), and enjoy the performances of the history of these graveyards.

Tower Museum

Discover the Story of Derry exhibition, covering the history of the city from 5,000 BC to modern day.

Why not take part in Paper Quilting Workshop?

See behind the scenes of the museum's vast collection of items not currently on display and see how objects and archives are stored and cared for on this short family-friendly bus trip.

Woodrow Wilson Ancestral Homestead, Co Tyrone

Explore the rich Ulster-American connections and learn how the fate of Woodrow Wilson, 28th President of the United States, was to lie in the hands of local man James Wilson.

Artefacts on display include a wide selection of household furnishings, kitchen utensils, and farm implements.

Enjoy storytelling, craft demonstrations and short talks.

European Heritage Open Days events

To find a full list of European Heritage Open Days building openings and events you can either [use the map viewer](#) or [download a brochure for more information](#).

You can also pick up a brochure from your local tourist information centre, council office, or from museums and libraries.

More useful links

Sharing theme of European Heritage

Open Days weekend

During European Heritage Open Days (EHOD) weekend (8 and 9 September) more than 360 properties across Northern Ireland will be opening to the public free of charge. This year, the theme is 'The Art of Sharing', especially sharing heritage stories through buildings and their connections to locations and people.

Selection of events

Many EHOD events have been organised with a view to looking at new ways of sharing stories, and many of them are not usually open to the public. Below are just a small selection of events on the sharing theme.

Greenmount Campus, CAFRE, Antrim

Explore the 200-year-old walled garden and other heritage garden features and find out how they have been and still are used.

Horticulture skills past and present will be shared and there are guided tours available of the heritage and modern gardens.

Armagh Observatory and Planetarium

Join the celebrations for the Planetarium's 50th year and find out about the history and people behind this attraction.

Enjoy a tour of the Planetarium building and grounds, and explore the heritage of this unique organisation involved in groundbreaking research and that has been exploring the cosmos since 1790.

Historic Great Light Tour, Titanic Walkway, Belfast

Join the interactive tour of the Great Light, which is one of the largest lighthouse optics of its kind ever built.

Your guide will bring to life the story of lighthouses, changes in technology, memories of the light-keepers, and role in the maritime and industrial history of Belfast and beyond.

Annalong Cornmill

Situated by pretty Annalong Harbour, near the foothills of the Mourne Mountains, this once-busy cornmill was in operation from the early 1800s to the 1960s.

There are free guided tours, and you can meet the miller and watch the water

wheel in action to experience life in the Mournes in the past.

Headhunters Railway Museum, Enniskillen

Why not visit the world's only railway museum in a working barber shop? You will find one of the largest collections of Irish railway memorabilia on display.

Starting at the reconstructed booking office, where the ticket collector invites you to step on board, your journey recreates railway travel through Fermanagh and the border counties until the closure of the lines in 1957.

Heritage tour of Moneymore

Join Moneymore Heritage Trust for a tour to discover the hidden beauty of Moneymore.

You will make your way around the village to hear the heritage behind the limestone with visits to unique buildings, including the Common Barn, Corn Stores, Courthouse and Assembly Rooms.

Buildings are opened with the kindness of the community – a true example of the art of sharing.

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More useful links

[Reopening of Department for Communities offices in Castle Court on Thursday 30 August](#)

Date published: 29 August 2018

Following safety checks due to the fire at Primark, normal service will

resume at the Department for Communities (DfC) offices in Castle Court and Royal Avenue Social Security Office on Thursday 30 August.

Offices open

The offices will be open as normal for staff access.

Service to customers will start from 9.00 am for anyone visiting the Royal Avenue Social Security Office or contacting DfC about:

- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- Carers Allowance
- Attendance Allowance
- Welfare Supplementary Payments

Universal Credit

Universal Credit remains unaffected.

Wednesday 29 August

If you need to visit Royal Avenue Social Security office on Wednesday 29 August you can instead use the North Belfast office in the Design Centre, 39 Corporation Street, Belfast.

If you need help, you can also [contact your local Job and Benefits Offices, Jobcentres and Social Security Offices](#).

The Department for Communities thanks all its customers for their understanding and apologises for any inconvenience.

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[Closure of Department for Communities offices in Castle Court on Wednesday](#)

29 August 2018

Due to the fire in Primark, Bank Buildings, Royal Avenue, Belfast and as a precautionary step, the Department for Communities (DfC) offices in Castle Court will be closed until Thursday 30 August.

This decision has been made to allow the necessary safety checks required by Fire safety Teams to ensure that the office is fit for use, in terms of health and safety, before staff return. It is also to avoid compounding any safety issues by bringing large numbers of staff into the area during this incident.

Therefore, DfC staff working in Castle Court should not attend this office on Wednesday 29 August. Normal services are expected to resume on Thursday 30 August.

Universal Credit service is unaffected by this closure and customers can contact us as normal. Jobseekers Allowance customers due to attend Royal Avenue Social Security Office on Wednesday 29 August will be excused and payments will not be affected. Any other customers seeking to use Royal Avenue on Wednesday 29 August should instead use the North Belfast office in the Design Centre, 39 Corporation Street, Belfast.

Unfortunately, there will be a number of services impacted by this closure. They are:

- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- Carers Allowance;
- Attendance Allowance;
- Welfare Supplementary Payments.

Customers for these benefits will not be able to contact the Castle Court office until 9.00am on Thursday 30 August.

Any customer requiring assistance can make contact with their local Jobs and Benefits office or Social Security office.

The Department for Communities apologise for any inconvenience caused.

GCSE results – support and advice

[about your options](#)

Date published: 23 August 2018

The GCSE results are out. Now it's time to make important decisions about your future and there are many options available for you to consider.

Contact a careers adviser

The [Careers Service](#) has a team of professionally-qualified careers advisers who offer impartial careers information, advice and guidance.

To contact a careers adviser, you can:

Careers advisers will be available from 9.00 am to 7.00 pm to provide support to GCSE students on Thursday 23 and Friday 24 August.

Careers advisers can provide advice and guidance on:

- Further and Higher Education
- continuing on at school
- apprenticeships
- CVs
- job applications
- job interviews
- advice on job trends, including occupations which will be important in the future

Information about options

Further information on the many options available to you are also available in the following section:

If you have an issue with a result

If you have a query on any issue relating to your exam results (for example appeals, re-marks or re-sits) then contact your school, college, or the [Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment \(CCEA\)](#) helpline:

The helpline will be open 9.00 am to 5.00 pm until Wednesday 29 August.

More useful links

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