



February 2018

Dear Sir/Madam

European Heritage Open Days 8 & 9 September 2018

Once again, the European Heritage Open Days (EHOD) weekend in September aims to get the public interested in and excited about the built environment. Ultimately we hope that this interest will result in a lifetime enthusiasm for buildings and our historic environment.

The programme last year attracted the attention of the media and huge audiences on social media channels, who were interested in quirky and unusual events. Visits to the EHOD page on the Discover NI website increased again and ranked more popular within Discover NI than last year, attracting locals and other visitors to Northern Ireland. Engagement on Facebook and Twitter also increased mainly thanks to you, the openers, for your photos, comments and stories.

Other feedback from 2017 was also overwhelmingly positive. Visitors thoroughly enjoyed getting inside buildings that are usually closed, and appreciated the intimate knowledge that only you can pass on about your building or event. Buildings and event organisers had many different reasons for taking part. Some wanted to reach out to their local community, publicise a project or increase interest and membership of their organisation. Others just felt it was the right thing to do, because they own a great building, and think the public should have access to it.

Whatever the reason, it's great to plan your event so that you make the most of the opportunity. We can help you with guidance, promotion, insurance, and volunteers.

Once again in 2018, heritage building owners will be invited to open their doors to the public, give a talk or tour, or host heritage events. For EHOD 2018 owners will be invited to explore the EHOD 2018 sub-theme: **"The Art of Sharing". It is an opportunity to share our heritage stories in new ways with new people be it through sharing the stories of our buildings and their connections to location and people, or through workshops, talks, tours, exhibitions, art, literature, song, dance, drama, film, food or craft.**

We will be publishing a 101 Events ideas guide please keep an eye on our website for this great resource in helping you plan your event.

Details of all registered events and buildings, including opening times and addresses, will be included in our widely distributed brochure, which reaches over 30,000 people. The same details will also feature on the EHOD website:

<http://www.discovernorthernireland.com/ehod>

The full brochure will also be available to download from the website from mid-August. EHOD are also on Facebook and Twitter, so you can follow all of our activities leading up to the EHOD weekend in September 2018, and please do interact with us - send us your photos, short video clips, comments and stories!

Have a peek at some of the activity on Facebook and Twitter below:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ehodni>

Twitter; <https://twitter.com/ehodni>

We would be delighted if you can participate in EHOD 2018 and ask you to **Register Online**, by visiting <https://discovernorthernireland.com/EHODregistration> and clicking on "Register now for EHOD".

We would be very grateful if you could please register online or return your registration form **by 13 April 2018** as there is a very tight schedule in place to prepare the brochure for printing. We are very happy to communicate with you by letter or telephone, e-mail, or by enquiries via Facebook and Twitter.

If you are unable to complete you application online, please contact us and we will be delighted to assist you.

If you are looking for ideas to attract more visitors, or if you need extra help on the day, please contact me, Amanda Milligan (contact details below). My role is to support owners, participants and custodians from the registration process through to the event itself, and to offer help and advice on any aspect of EHOD you may need.

If you have any ideas to improve this event or EHOD in general we welcome your feedback before and after the event. Please let us know and we will help you as much as we can.

We very much hope that you will open your property or run an event this year and we look forward to hearing from you.

Amanda Milligan
Historic Environment Division
Department for Communities
Email: ehod@communities-ni.gov.uk
Tel: 028 90 823 207