

Heritage Open Days 2025

Held from 12 to 21 September 2025, this year's theme is Architectural Heritage: Windows to the Past, Doors to the Future.

Visitors are invited to explore the stories behind buildings that shape who we are today.

Tewkesbury's blend of medieval architecture, riverside settings, and passionate local heritage groups make it a standout location within the events programme. Whether you're curious about architecture, interested in conservation, or simply seeking a family-friendly day out, there's plenty to explore. Events this year include:

Tewkesbury Abbey, Church Street, Tewkesbury, GL20 5RZ

Friday 19th September from 9:30 – 4pm.

All of our events for this day will be free to all, but some events require pre-booking online to manage numbers.

Discover the stories, treasures, and hidden corners of one of England's greatest medieval churches — from royal tombs and battlefield relics to secret marks, soaring architecture, and more

Displays available throughout the day – no booking required

- Discover the nobility who once ruled England and tour their tombs in the Abbey.
- Marvel at the Abbey's unique collection of Copes, liturgical vestments, which will be on display.
- See behind the door of the Sacristy, common to many churches, but the one at Tewkesbury is unique in that it is covered with medieval battle armour, scavenged from the battlefield in 1471.
- Step back to 1471: in only ten minutes our tabletop demo brings the Battle of Tewkesbury to life, right where history was made. The clash that changed the Wars of the Roses forever. **Every hour at 45min past, starting at 10.45.**

Pre-bookable activities (free, but places must be reserved)

- Join author, Brian Hoggard, for a tour and talk about the protection marks in the Abbey which over the years people have added to protect the spaces from supernatural harm. These marks are more properly known as apotropaic marks and known in the popular press misleadingly as 'witch marks'. Bring a torch with you and discover the hidden world of protection marks. www.apotropaios.co.uk
9:30am and 2pm will be 45 minute ground level tours.

3pm will be a one hour tour, going above ground, for keen enthusiasts join us for a special early tour that takes in protection marks in some of the above ground spaces, not normally accessible to the public. Limited places, please read accessibility information online when reserving your place.

- Tewkesbury Abbey Highlights Tour – take in the Abbey’s most remarkable features, from the soaring Norman architecture to medieval stained glass and hidden treasures with a 45 minute highlight tour at **10am and 12pm**.

- **Tewkesbury Town Hall, High Street, GL20 5AL**

Step inside the historic Council Chamber for a special guided tour led by John Dixon, president of the Tewkesbury Historical Society. This engaging tour will explore the art and symbolism of political portraiture, the role of Tewkesbury MPs in Britain’s imperial part, and how local history fits into national and global contexts.

Saturday 20th September 11am No pre-booking required.

- **Turning back the clock; unwrapping Tewkesbury buildings**

Event focuses on the wonderful, ancient, yet evolving building environment, town model buildings and unique features including a newly restored Raspberry and Acanthus ceiling, and wattle and daub. Between **12-3pm daily** (*except Sunday 14th and Wednesday 17th September*) at Tewkesbury Museum, 64 Barton Street, GL20 5PX.

- **Royal Hop Pole Hotel, 94 Church Street, GL20 5RS**

Enjoy a guided tour of this 15th Century, Grade II building, including the restored Medieval Banqueting Hall and paintings.

Tours are available to book at on

Sunday 14th and Saturday 20th September 11.30am and 1pm

This event must be pre-booked.

Graham Court, Oldbury Road, GL20 5NZ

Wednesday 17th September 10am-1pm

View the beautiful stained-glass window in this Grade II listed building.

Behind the Scenes tour, Bookworm 150 High Street, GL20 5JP

Friday 12th – Tuesday 16th September 11am-3pm

Access to 3 floors showing stained glass windows on landings, corner cupboards

Join the Commonwealth War Graves Commission for a free tour of Tewkesbury Cemetery.

Saturday 13th 11am

There are 10 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war including a new one in 2018 and ten of the 1939-1945 war. We also have five burials for the period following WW11. **This event must be pre-booked.**

<https://www.cwgc.org/visit-us/events-tours-and-talks/>

Selected other local events

- Rippling with life – St Mary’s Church, GL20 6EY

Discover the largest medieval church in Worcestershire! St. Mary’s is a Grade I listed 12th century church situated in a conservation area.

Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th September 10am-4pm on for tours of the church and bell tower, view 15th century unique misericords, and speak to Sealed Knot society members.

Nature In Art, Wallsworth Hall, Twigworth, Nr Gloucester, GL2 9PG

A fine Georgian mansion situated just north of Gloucester, it featured in Simon Jenkins’ acclaimed book “England’s 1000 Best Houses”. Since 1988 the Hall has been the home of Nature in Art, the world’s first museum dedicated to Art inspired by nature.

HODs visitors have free entry to an exhibition about the history of Wallsworth Hall in our education centre. However, there is an admission fee if you wish to visit the house.

Friday 12th, Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th 11am-3pm each day

Jet Age Museum. Meteor Business Park, Staverton, GL2 9QL

The Jet Age Museum exists to promote and preserve the history of Gloucestershire's contribution to world aviation from the early days of flight. The collection includes a replica of the 1920s Gloster Gamecock biplane fighter, a 1930s Gloster Gladiator fighter undergoing restoration, a replica of Britain’s first jet powered aircraft, the Gloster E28/39, which first left the

ground at Brockworth airfield in 1941 and other aircraft including original Gloster-built Meteor and Javelin fighters. The Museum's Vulcan bomber cockpit and Trident airliner cockpit and cabin will be open subject to availability.

Saturday 13th & Sunday 14th September 10am-4pm

Croome (National Trust) Croome d'Abitot, Severn Stoke, Worcestershire, WR8 9DW

Walks, Tours and Open Days

Free Entry: A secret wartime airbase, now a visitor centre, was once a hub of activity for thousands of people. Outside is the grandest of English landscapes, 'Capability' Brown's masterful first commission, with commanding views over the Malverns.

Free Open days Monday 15th, Tuesday 16th, Wednesday 17th, Thursday 18th and Friday 19th 9am-5pm

Free Garden Tours - Wednesday 11am and Thursday 18th 2pm (Please book in advance for the garden

tours) <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/worcestershire-herefordshire/croome/events>

Cleeve Hill – The Cotswold Health Resort Walk

Cleeve Hill Golf Club, Cleeve Hill, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL52 3PW

This walk led by local historian David Aldred will use the architecture of buildings to tell the tale of how the community developed as a holiday resort and affluent outer suburb of Cheltenham in the last century. Please wear sturdy footwear as the ground is uneven

Saturday 13th 10.30am Pre booking Required

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/cleeve-common-trust-12949043210>

Cleeve Hill – A late summer stroll

Cleeve Hill Golf Club, Cleeve Hill, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL52 3PW

A guided walk with some of the Cleeve Common Trust team exploring themes which made the Common such a special place for people and wildlife. Please wear sturdy footwear as the ground is uneven.

Thursday 18th September 5.30pm Pre booking is required

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/cleeve-common-trust-12949043210>