



heritage open days

**Tavistock Heritage Open Days**  
12<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> September 2025

**YOUR  
GUIDE TO  
36 LOCAL  
EVENTS**

# Heritage Open Days is an annual celebration of England's history, and this year it runs from Friday 12<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September.

Each September thousands of volunteers across the country invite you to experience local history, architecture and culture and ALL FOR FREE.

This year, the national theme for Heritage Open Days is: “Architecture – Buildings, Bridges and Beehives” — and Tavistock Heritage Trust and the heritage organisations across the town are exploring the stories behind the structures that shaped our town.

From the soaring arches of our medieval abbey to the hidden history behind a humble garden wall, Tavistock is bursting with architectural treasures. Over ten days, we're opening doors, revealing secrets, and shining a spotlight on the makers, the menders, and the materials that built our community.

## Friday September 12<sup>th</sup> – Sunday September 21<sup>st</sup>

### Ruins and Monuments

Robing Room, Tavistock Guildhall

“Ruins and Monuments” is an ongoing project that combines photography with graphic work and paintings. The subject is the legacy of the Cornish and West Devon mining industry, the way this has impacted the landscape and way the landscape is reclaiming the remains.

### Images of Tavistock's Architecture

Tavistock Library

A display of images of Tavistock's amazing architecture in the library runs throughout the festival.

### Tavistock Museum

Exhibitions with a focus on Bedford Cottages and John Taylor and the Canal. Children's activities throughout the festival.

## Friday September 12: 18.30

### Festival Opens

The Guildhall, Guildhall Square, Abbey Place, Tavistock

Official Festival Opening by Mayor of Tavistock, Steve Hipsey

## Friday September 12: 18.35 – 19.35

### Ruins & Romance: How Artists Reimagined Tavistock's Lost Abbey

The Guildhall, Guildhall Square, Abbey Place, Tavistock

Join Dr Geri Parlby from Tavistock Heritage Trust for a talk on “Ruins & Romance: How Artists Reimagined Tavistock's Lost Abbey”. Step into a story where crumbling abbey walls meet artistic ambition, vanity publishing, and a dash of scandal!

## Friday September 12: 10.00 – 16.00

### Tavistock Subscription Library - Open Day

Guildhall Square, Abbey Place, Tavistock

Read, learn, discover. Heritage Open Days give you a rare chance to enjoy the tranquil atmosphere of Tavistock's heritage library. Read books from 17th to 21st centuries. Learn how to use the online catalogue. Discover the authors who wrote about Dartmoor and the Tamar Valley and made it their home.

## Friday September 12: 11.00 – 16.00

### Museum of Policing in Devon and Cornwall

Court Gate, Bedford Square, Tavistock

After exploring the Guildhall — once Tavistock's police station and magistrates court, where justice was served for generations — pop over to the Museum of Policing to delve deeper into crime and punishment through the ages. Discover historic policing displays, hear stories of local law and order, and get hands-on with a fun family craft activity: “Design a Cell”.

## Friday September 12: 16.00 – 17.30

### Mount Kelly Tour

Parkwood Road, Tavistock PL19 0HZ

Offering the opportunity to enjoy the beautiful grounds at Mount Kelly College, to see around the historically significant buildings, meet some of the pupils, and gain an insight into the realities of life in a modern independent school.

## Saturday September 13: 10.00 – 16.00

### Tavistock Subscription Library - Open Day

Guildhall Square, Abbey Place, Tavistock

Read, learn, discover. Books from 17th to 21st centuries.

### Saturday September 13: 11.00 – 15.00

#### Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church Open Day

Callington Road, Tavistock

A very distinctive church originally built by William 8th Duke of Bedford and designed by Henry Clutton, to accommodate the miners who settled in Tavistock when working in the Devon Great Consols mines. This Open Day is supported by parishioners.

### Saturday September 13: 10.00 – 12.00

#### Tracing your Family History support sessions.

Tavistock Library, Plymouth Road

Learn and develop your “Who do you think you are?” skills.

### Saturday September 13: 11.00 – 15.00

#### Museum of Policing in Devon and Cornwall

Court Gate, Bedford Square, Tavistock

Get hands-on with a fun family craft activity: “Design a Cell”.

### Saturday September 13: 14.00

#### Stones & Styles: Tavistock's Architecture through the Ages

A New Walk for Heritage Open Days 2025 – led by eminent architect and historian, Sue Spackman.

Explore Tavistock's story told in stone on this gentle hour-long walk. From medieval abbey cloisters and Georgian vicarages to neo-classical streetscapes and a splash of Art Nouveau, discover how national trends in architecture shaped our historic town. See familiar streets in a new light as we trace the buildings' designers, uses and the craftsmanship that still makes Tavistock stand out today.

### Saturday September 13: 11.00 – 15.00

#### Tavistock Museum

Court Gate, Bedford Square, Tavistock

Exhibitions on Bedford Cottages and Tavistock Canal, with fun activities for children.

### Sunday September 14: 11.00 – 15.00

#### Museum of Policing in Devon and Cornwall

Court Gate, Bedford Square, Tavistock

Get hands-on with a fun family craft activity: “Design a Cell”.

### Sunday September 14: 14.30

#### Chapel of Rest and Old Mortuary

Plymouth Road Cemetery

A guided tour from Chris Bellers of both the cemetery, and the usually closed Chapel of Rest and Victorian mortuary.

*Numbers are limited so pre-booking is essential for this unique historical experience.*



[Book FREE tickets here](#)

### Wednesday September 17: 10.00 – 16.00

#### Curworthy Cheese

Country Cheeses Tavistock, Market Road, Tavistock PL19 0BW

Richard from Curworthy Cheese will be outside Country Cheeses. He will be demonstrating and talking about a cheese that they make from a 17th Century recipe, only using 17th Century methods and implements.

### Thursday September 18: 14.00

#### 19th Century Gothic or triumph of recycling?

The Guildhall, Guildhall Square, Abbey Place, Tavistock

A guided tour of Tavistock Guildhall complex and its architectural features and uses over the centuries.

### Friday September 19: 11.00 & 15.00

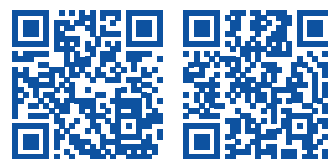
#### Explore Ancient History

at the Vicarage Garden

Vicarage Garden

Join Tavistock Heritage Trust at the Vicarage Garden to view three rare 6th Century Memorial Stones and delve into their fascinating history.

*Numbers are limited so pre-booking is essential.*



11.00

15.00

[Book FREE tickets here](#)

### Friday September 19: 10.00 – 16.00

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### Friday September 19: 10.30 & 15.00

#### Guided Tours of St Eustachius'

St. Eustachius Church, Tavistock PL19 8AU

Explore Tavistock's splendid parish church, learning something of its 700-year history and seeing some of its most important artefacts.

### Friday September 19: 16.30 – 17.30

#### Mount Kelly Tour

Parkwood Road, Tavistock PL19 0HZ

Offering the opportunity to enjoy the beautiful grounds at Mount Kelly College to see around the historically significant buildings, meet some of the pupils, and gain an insight into the realities of life in a modern independent school.

### Saturday September 20: 10.00 – 16.00

#### Living in the Abbey – Creative Workshop for Young Explorers

Guildhall Courtroom, Guildhall Square, Abbey Place, Tavistock

Step back in time this Heritage Open Days with a special hands-on workshop for primary school children, set in the atmospheric Courtroom of Tavistock's historic Guildhall. Discover the sweet secrets of beekeeping and rebuild the Abbey block by block.

Inspired by the daily life of medieval monks and townsfolk – including calligraphy and herb growing.

Bring your budding historians and artists along for a memorable day of discovery!





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## Saturday September 20: 10.00 – 16.00

### Tavistock Beekeepers

Guildhall Square, Abbey Place, Tavistock

Get hands on with beehives! with Tavistock Beekeepers who will have a live observation hive where the queen and workers can be seen going about their busy days. Find out about the honeybees, their lives and hierarchy in the hive.

## Saturday September 20: 10.00 – 14.00

### Tavistock Players

Guildhall Square, Abbey Place, Tavistock

Meet some of the characters from Tavistock's past, courtesy of Tavistock Players.

## Saturday September 20: 10.00 – 16.00

### Tavistock Subscription Library Open Day

Guildhall Square, Abbey Place, Tavistock

Read, learn, discover. Books from 17th to 21st centuries.

## Saturday September 20: 11.00 – 16.00

### Tavistock Museum

Court Gate, Bedford Square, Tavistock

A full range of fun children's activities.

## Saturday September 20: 11.00 – 15.00

### Museum of Policing in Devon and Cornwall

Court Gate, Bedford Square, Tavistock

Get hands-on with a fun family craft activity: "Design a Cell".

## Saturday September 20: 14.00 – 15.30

### Abbey School to Tavistock College

This guided walk – from Abbey School to Tavistock College – gives insights into Tavistock students' stories and their places of education. Led by Simon Thompson and Will Hay as part of the National Lottery funded Three Schools Project. This walk will use stories from students who attended schools in Tavistock during the 20th century (and earlier), and show how their experiences reflected wider social change.

## Saturday September 20: 14.00

### Tavistock Players

St. Eustachius Church Yard, Tavistock PL19 8AU

Medieval dancing with Tavistock Players. Fun for all the family with medieval dancing and music – audience participation encouraged!

## Saturday September 20: 10.30 & 15.00

### Guided Tours of St Eustachius'

St. Eustachius Church, Tavistock PL19 8AU

Explore Tavistock's splendid parish church, learning something of its 700-year history and seeing some of its most important artefacts.

## Saturday September 20: 11.00 – 15.00

### Catholic Church of Our Lady of the Assumption & St Mary Magdalene tour

Callington Road, Tavistock

An open day at this remarkable church designed by Henry Clutton.

## Sunday September 21: 14.30

### Guided tour of Hurdwick Quarry

Hurdwick Quarry PL19 0LL

A very rare opportunity to gain privileged access to Hurdwick Quarry. Discover this hidden gem of Dartmoor's industrial past with an exclusive guided tour of Hurdwick Quarry, just outside Tavistock.

This evocative site once provided the distinctive Hurdwick Stone that helped shape the town's finest buildings. *Numbers are limited so pre-booking is essential.*



Book FREE  
tickets here

## Sunday September 21: 19.00 – 21.00

### Echoes of St Eustachius: An Evening of Music

St. Eustachius Church, Tavistock PL19 8AU

A celebration of the musical heritage of the parish church that has stood at the heart of Tavistock for over 700 years. The church's magnificent organ, installed in 1846, is remarkable for its elaborately carved organ-casing as well as its wonderful sound. The programme will include organ recitals and choral works performed by the Church Choir and friends.

There will be a brief closing address from the Mayor of Tavistock, Steve Hipsey.

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