



Weston-super-Mare
Virtual open days 2020

Friday 11 September – Sunday 20 September

www.heritageopendays.org.uk



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#HODs



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Welcome to England's largest heritage festival, taking place from Friday 11 – Sunday 20 September 2020.

This guide gives you an overview of what is on offer in and around Weston-super-Mare, for more detailed information about each event visit:

www.heritageopendays.org.uk/visiting

All information is correct at time of going to press. Please check the Heritage Open Days website for up to the minute information.

This guide has been produced as part of the Great Weston Heritage Action Zone initiative funded by Historic England.

Enjoy!



Heritage Action Zones
Historic England

Weston-super-Mare

Before wealthy inhabitants of Bristol and Bath began visiting Weston in the late 18th century the village was an isolated, though self-sufficient farming and fishing settlement of about 150 residents. Early travellers came by stagecoach but found little in the way of accommodation or amusement until the first hotel opened in 1810 followed by a health spa on Knightstone Island in 1820.

The railway's arrival in 1841 provided a perfect opportunity for rapid growth. The population doubled each decade such that by 1871 the town had over 10,000 residents with many more seasonal visitors staying in an increasing number of hotels and guest houses. Trade, tourism, services and retirement flourished as did the building industry.



Locally quarried grey limestone and rail-delivered creamy Bathstone gave colour to the town's distinctive architectural style.

Elegant crescents, terraces and hillside villas along with rows of semi-detached and terraced properties quickly obliterated all but a vestige of the old village. High Street's outdated farm buildings gave way to shopping. Churches, schools, social institutions, visitor attractions and local government helped create a sense of worth and civic pride.

Local architect Hans Fowler Price designed over 800 buildings between 1862 and 1912 and is recognised as the creator of our distinctive 'Weston Style'.

Due to Covid-19, this year we have curated a festival that aims to give you the chance to experience some of the many places of interest virtually. So there is a link under each 'event' that takes you to the tour or event information.

This small contribution of local sites affords an opportunity to be part of the National Heritage Open Days: a most worthy celebration of England's built heritage.

Cllr John Crockford-Hawley
Heritage and Regeneration
Champion. North Somerset Council



Welcome to Weston

For this year's Heritage Open Days we are celebrating Weston mainly through virtual tours, although there are some opportunities to get more involved, like the Library Zoom event on Thursday 17 September and 'Susann, the Social Distancing Robot' on Saturdays 12 and 19 September; 'Carboot Disco Bingo' and 'A Ballad of Anchor Head Cove' both on Saturday 19 September.

So let us start with a quick Welcome to Weston video

This video put together by Weston College in collaboration with Sovereign Shopping Centre.

It's a great taste of what Weston's all about, what we're great at, and how much we love our town.

The original music is entitled 'Everyday' and is produced by Lukrembo.

'Welcome to Weston'

<https://youtu.be/9W9uebM-oRY>

Weston-super-Mare:

the Town and its Seaside Heritage

published 2019 by Historic England is available from the Museum, bookshops and on-line (£14.99). It gives a fascinating account of the past 2000 years. It shows how care of the past could play an important role in the creation of a prosperous future.

Weston-super-Mare, also known as Weston, is a seaside town in Somerset, England. It is part of the unitary authority of North Somerset. It lies by the Bristol Channel 18 miles south west of Bristol between Worlebury Hill and Bleadon Hill. It includes the suburbs of Oldmixon, West Wick and Worle. Its population at the 2011 census was 76,143. Since 1983, Weston has been twinned with Hildesheim in Germany.

The local area has been occupied since the Iron Age. It was still a small village until the 19th century when it developed as a seaside resort.



High Street Heritage

Weston-super-Mare High Street is full of beautiful buildings but you'll need to look up to see the variety of original windows, carvings and other details, including a Shakespearian quote and Egyptian elephant heads.

The newly refurbished Italian Gardens provides a spot to sit and relax among Italianate balustrading, modern fountain (kids love it!) and lawns. Spot Weston's first hotels (now The Royal and Olea), the 1860s Florentine palazzo style bank (now Sass Bar) and University Centre Weston's modern addition to the 1920s Winter Gardens Pavilion.

Visit Walker & Ling department store adjoining the gardens. The original building was lost to bombing but the post-war replacement store continues the 127-year old family business.

From here it's a two-minute stroll past Lloyd's Bank and the 1969 Playhouse Theatre to the relaxing former manorial grounds of Grove Park.



I A Family Store: **Walker & Ling**

**Walker & Ling, 84-86 High Street,
WsM BS23 1HU**

Walker & Ling is a family-run department store, established in 1892. This year, we are opening up the archives and giving folks the chance to learn about our unique history.

During this event visitors can safely view a display of our archives, including photographs from 1904, hundred-year-old headed paper and adverts from the 50s. Our team will be on hand to talk about the store's history, and 5th generation owner Sam Walker will be available to demonstrate the first electric lift in Weston-super-Mare.

Website www.walkerandling.co.uk

Booking no booking required

Opening times

Fri 11, Sat 12, Mon 14, Tues 15, Wed 16,
Thurs 17 and Fri 18 Sep: 11am to 4pm

Virtual tours

2 Weston Museum

Burlington Street, WsM BS23 1PR

This year we celebrate the history of Weston-super-Mare and environs from prehistoric times to the present day, through a special video from Weston Museum.

The Town Council's superbly restored former gas company workshops house the North Somerset Collection as well as regularly changing exhibitions of national, regional and local interest. Countless items of archaeology, geology, art, and seaside history are displayed in well-lit modern cabinets and walk-through galleries.

Don't miss Juicy Payne's 'flatner', or the exquisitely beautiful gold 'Clevedon Torc', on long-term loan from the British Museum. Next door Clara's Cottage shows life in a small town centre Victorian house and in the relaxing atmosphere of



the museum courtyard reward yourself with refreshment at Clara's Café.

Museum open 12-4pm. Thursday to Saturday. Free entry.

Please do not visit if you live in a local lockdown area, if you have any symptoms of Coronavirus, if you are awaiting a test result, or if you have been contacted by NHS: Test and Trace

Website westonmuseum.org

Facebook @westonmuseum

Museum tour

<https://bit.ly/326ArDq> | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_ZXeBUazfo

3 Blakehay Theatre

20 Wadham Street, WsM BS23 1JZ

The 207-seat Blakehay Theatre was converted from an 1850 Baptist church into a theatre by Weston Civic Society in the 1980s and, following acquisition by the Town Council, was extensively refurbished in 2010-12.

Comedy, drama, music, film, presentations, public meetings, dance and yoga all take place in this friendly and intimate town centre theatre.

The video tour gives you a snap shot of its history and will take you from front-of-house into the auditorium, Juliet balconies, newly designed upper studios, behind-the-scenes dressing rooms and the bar.

Website www.blakehaytheatre.co.uk

Facebook @BlakehayTheatre

Blakehay Theatre tour

<https://youtu.be/inbOuZMcZWE>



4 Grove House and Parlour in Grove Park

Grove Park, WsM BS23 2QJ

The home of Weston-super-Mare Town Council.

The Mayor's Parlour at Grove House is all that remains of the former Smyth-Pigott manorial home which was bombed in 1941. In the Parlour and adjoining Meeting Room one can view the town's civic regalia, robes, paintings and heraldic charters.

If you are in Weston, why not spend some time in the open air and enjoy Grove Park – see more about the park under event number 15 page 13.

Website www.wsm-tc.gov.uk

Facebook [@groveparkwsm/](https://www.facebook.com/groveparkwsm/)
Grove House tour

<https://youtu.be/YoN3w3iQJRw>

5 Worlebury Hillfort

Worlebury Camp (also known as Worlebury Hillfort) is an Iron Age hillfort on the northern edge of Weston-super-Mare, and covers an area of approximately 10 hectares at the westernmost end of Weston Woods.

Worlebury Camp was designated as a Scheduled Monument in 1915, making it one of the earliest archaeological monuments to be added to the list under the 1913 Ancient Monuments Act, and is described as 'an outstanding monument of its class'.

Excavations in the 19th century recovered artefacts such as pottery, weapons, tools and grain, which would have been stored in many of the 93 stone-cut pits within its interior. The remains of 18 individuals were also discovered in these pits. Many of these artefacts are on display in Weston Museum, originally established as a permanent home for finds from the hillfort.

The following video, narrated by Cat Lodge (Senior Archaeologist for North Somerset Council), provides a birds eye view of the wonders of the hillfort.

Hillfort aerial tour

https://youtu.be/3CteGX_POO4





6 The Winter Gardens Pavilion

The Winter Gardens Pavilion is a significant part of Weston-super-Mare's seafront and its history as a major player in British seaside tourism. The Pavilion was designed in 1924 by notable garden designer and town planner Thomas Mawson and town surveyor Harry Brown. It was opened on the 14th July 1927 by Sir Earnest S. Palmer, deputy chairman of the Great Western Railway. During the late 1970s and '80s the Winter Gardens was struggling to compete with other venues, particularly in nearby Bristol, which offered better facilities and better acoustics than the Winter Gardens.

In January 2015, North Somerset Council approached Weston College with the proposition of transferring the building to the College's ownership in order to secure its future by restoring the historic 1920s portion of the building, and redeveloping the little-used 1980s conference facilities into an educational centre for its Law and Professional Services Academy and University Centre Weston.

Take a look at the virtual tour to see what the building now looks like with interesting insights into its past.

Winter Gardens virtual tour –
from 10 September onwards
<http://www.westonwintergardens.co.uk/transformation/>

Walking in Weston

7 In the footsteps of Hans Price

This walk provides a snapshot of some of Hans Fowler Price's architectural work in Weston-super-Mare.

The walk has been devised by North Somerset Council in partnership with Historic England as part of the Great Weston Heritage Action Zone initiative.

The walk starts on the corner of Station Road and Graham Road. Close to the railway Station.

The walk is all on flat terrain and will take about an hour. You can make it a full day out and take time throughout the walk to visit the Museum, Grove Park, The Promenade and enjoy Weston's cafes and shops.

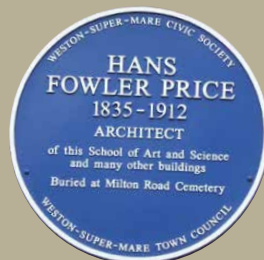
The route highlights just some of the many Hans Price buildings. The map also shows other Hans Price buildings to give some sense of how much influence Hans Price had on the architecture of Weston.

Walk www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-07/Hans%20Price%20walks%20leaflet.pdf



In the footsteps of Hans Fowler Price

A walk through
Victorian
Weston-super-Mare



Events

Stories from Weston's streets and shores

This September, to mark Heritage Open Days, Culture Weston and Theatre Orchard are bringing free entertainment and unique experiences to the streets and shoreline of Weston-super-Mare. The Weston events showcase natural beauty spots and reveal stories and history to celebrate the town's rich heritage.

8 **Susann, the Social Distancing Robot**

Weston High Street

On Saturday 12 and 19 September, look out in the afternoon on the High Street for 'Susann, the Social Distancing Robot', providing a surreal and futuristic twist to daytime shopping. This walkabout from 'Cat and Mouse' Theatre is perfect for our times as Susann interacts with the public from a safe distance, engaging and surprising shoppers with her fun, quirky robot personality. Intrigued by the history of the area, she will ask and respond to questions and magically reveal facts about Weston and the heritage of the town centre.

Dates

Saturday 12 and Saturday 19 September

Website cultureweston.org.uk



Image: Clare Cannon

9 Carboot Disco Bingo

Italian Gardens

Get set for Saturday afternoon fever on 19 September at the Italian Gardens. 'Carboot Disco Bingo' will bring together two popular family activities, bingo and disco dancing, in a special, socially distanced version of this popular, interactive extravaganza. With two performances at 1pm and 3pm, 'Carboot Disco Bingo' provides classic, seaside entertainment and features feel good pop tracks from the 60s and 70s when Weston's golden pavements were trodden by the likes of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones.

A collaboration between artist Megan Clark-Bagnall and Jasmine Loveys, players cross the numbers off the bingo card and learn the disco dance moves attributed to each number drawn throughout the game, in a part dance lesson, part bingo performance guaranteed to be lots of fun.

Date Saturday 19 September, 1 and 3pm
Book via cultureweston.org.uk

Places are limited and must be booked in advance.



Image: Zakariya Gandawolf

10 A Ballad of Anchor Head Cove

In Anchor Head Cove, a series of stories exploring the coast's past heritage will unfold in a new, sound work led by Weston-based artist Sam Francis and artist Phil Owen who grew up in the area. 'A Ballad of Anchor Head Cove', commissioned by Culture Weston for Heritage Open Days, will uncover a unique soundtrack for this small beach spot situated on Weston-super-Mare's coast between Knightstone Island and Birnbeck Pier.

The piece explores the history around a swimmer; Kathleen Thomas, the first person to swim from Penarth to Weston in the 1920s; a song 'The False Bride' by peasant folk singer Lucy White (1849-1923) and memories of a former hotel at the Cove.

People can join the artists for a walk-and-talk around Anchor Head. Taking place on Saturday 19 September at 11.30am and 2pm, each socially distanced tour will last approximately 45 minutes, with the chance to find out more about the inspirations behind the work.

The audio, created to be listened to in location for Heritage Open Days, will be available to download at cultureweston.org.uk and direct to mobile phones through a QR code on posters for the event which will be locally displayed.

Date Saturday 19 September,
11.30am and 2pm

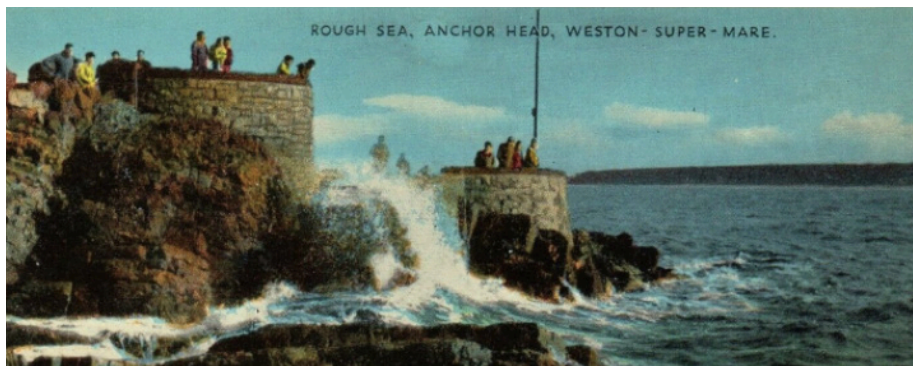
Book via cultureweston.org.uk

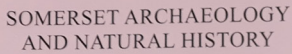
Places are limited and must be booked in advance.

The Culture Weston and Theatre Orchard events will be socially distanced and organised according to Covid-19 Secure Government guidelines, with marshalls in place to ensure public safety and numbers limited where bookable. They are also subject to change according to the Covid-19 advice in place at the time.

THEATRE
ORCHARD

CULTURE
WESTON





What is in the Frederick Wood room? Who uses it?

Date _____

Thursday 17 September: 11-11.45am

Booking Pre-book our Zoom session on Eventbrite and we will send you joining information the day before.

<http://n-somersetlibraries.eventbrite.com/>

Archive films about Weston

We have a selection of films made about Weston for you to enjoy.

12 One Summer in Somerset (1968) – BFI National Archive

Ah, the good old days – when hitchhiking and driving without a seatbelt were as safe as houses, and the average English seaside resort town was “clean, spacious, with the air of distinctive elegance”. Sceptical? Then follow the West Country wanderings of one broke Aussie student, who thumbs a lift to sunny Weston-super-Mare in his quest for a good time (and a tour of local historical monuments), and finds himself a surprisingly glamorous travelling companion.

The technique of building a mini-fiction into a travelogue profile of an area wasn't uncommon, and is quietly effective here. Janet in her sports car and our Australian friend may not be the most convincing characters in cinema history, but the jaunty narrative carries us through this promotional film for the local area more effectively than an objective voiceover might have done.

This video is part of the Orphan Works collection. When the rights-holder for a film cannot be found, that film is classified as an Orphan Work.

<https://youtu.be/5l6wa4rSpBA>

13 Betjeman's West Country – Weston-super-Mare

An episode of the 1962 British documentary series, which aired locally on “Television Wales and the West” (TWW), a defunct station which operated from 1958 to 1968. The series was filmed in various parts of Southwest England.

The series starred John Betjeman

Unfortunately, this episode is missing the opening and closing titles. The series itself was originally aired as a 15-minute show.

Website <https://archive.org/details/BetjemansWestCountryWestonSuperMare>



Hidden Nature

Uncovering stories, sites, places and people that traditional history has overlooked or forgotten has always been at the heart of Heritage Open days. This year we turn our focus to the natural world. Join us in celebrating some of the parks we have in Weston and beyond.



HIDDEN NATURE

14 Prince Consort Gardens

Prince Consort Gardens is a Green Flag awarded park overlooking Bimbeck Island with its pier and has views across the channel to Wales. The Gardens were gifted to the local authority by the Smyth-Piggott family for the free use of the public in 1883. Today it is a registered town green, and is owned by North Somerset Council.

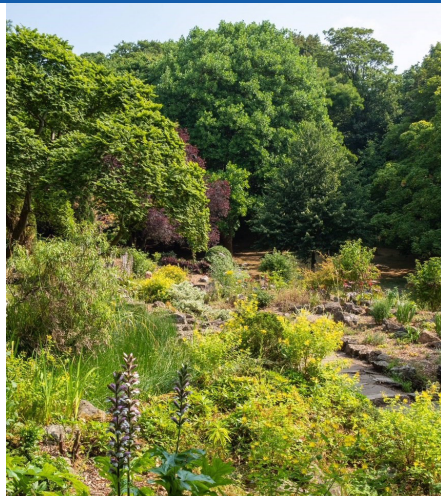
The top plateau consists of lawns, a fish pond, flower beds, a line of 'architectural' Phormiums, and wave topiary hedge. Below the plateau is a lower pathway accessed by steps, with Victorian shelter, exposed rock face with distinctive geology, and coastal plants.

To the southern end is a wildlife pond for amphibians, dragonflies, and native plants. If you are lucky you may see Smooth newts, Emperor and Common Darter dragonflies, and Blue-tailed damselflies. There are hidden artworks placed in the rocks around the wildlife pond for children to find and count. The flower beds (and much more) are maintained by the Friends of Prince Consort Gardens.

See the latest news and photos on:

Facebook @cynthianewnsfopc/





15 Grove Park

Grove Park is the most centrally located park in Weston-super-Mare initially the gardens of one of the families founding the development of Weston-super-Mare and became a public park in 1891. The park is cared for by a very small group of volunteers, Friends Of Grove Park who are keen to protect and enhance the park to support as much biodiversity as possible.

The friends group have created a conservation area around one of the ponds of the rockery with (possibly) the largest bug hotel and a covered viewing area.

Working with Avon Wildlife Trust, Friends of Grove Park is also developing a wildflower area and along with North Somerset Council areas of rewilding to encourage biodiversity.

Website

<http://friendsofgrovepark.co.uk/index.html>

Facebook @groveparkwsm/

16 Avon Wildlife Trust – Walborough Reserve, Uphill

Avon Wildlife Trust is committed to enabling wildlife to survive and thrive across the region. We work together with volunteers to make our local area wilder and make nature part of life, for everyone.

Walborough is a beautiful limestone grassland and is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) with exceptionally rich plants including a number of nationally rare species.

The best areas of grassland are on the steeper slopes, where you will find dozens of butterfly species in summer.

Young people, aged 14-18 years can join us at Walborough Reserve in Uphill on 19th September to explore the site and find out the animals that live there.

Date Saturday 19 September, 10.30am-12 noon

Booking There are limited numbers so please sign up:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/walborough-wildlife-walk-for-young-people-tickets-116870564003>





Heritage Resource

17 Know Your Place

In light of the current circumstances, you may be struggling to find something interesting to fill your extra time but Know Your Place (North Somerset) could change that!

Know Your Place is the online mapping resource that is putting your neighbourhood's heritage on the map. You can explore your neighbourhood's heritage online through old maps, historic images and historical data and contribute to the published information yourself.

To access the map and start exploring, head to www.kypwest.org.uk, click 'Explore the map' and scroll down to 'North Somerset'.

Find out more about the depth of history of your street or village, and explore historic maps going back further than 1840 to see when your house was built!

Do you have any historic photos of places around North Somerset, or old family snaps that you've been meaning to sort through and would like to share? You can upload your images unto the community layer.

For parents with children at home, there is a downloadable Learning Pack, aimed at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. This pack contains 6 themed lessons, each with a choice of activity that can be adapted, as well as case studies.

Lessons are linked to history, geography and creative writing and mean that you can showcase and celebrate your local heritage.

Know Your Place website

www.kypwest.org.uk

Know Your Place Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/638416113618702/>

Know Your Place learning pack

www.kypwest.org.uk/learning%20packs

Great Weston Heritage Action Zone

Great Weston Heritage Action Zone covers the Town of Weston-super-Mare. Great Weston Heritage Action Zone aims to boost economic growth and keep Weston on the map as a great place to live, work and visit.

The Heritage Action Zone initiative is funded through Historic England.

To find out more about Great Weston Heritage Action Zone visit historicengland.org.uk/greatwestonhaz

Conservation Area

Weston-super-Mare was adopted as a Conservation Area in 2019.

To find out more about the Conservation Area visit:

www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-02/Great%20Weston%20conservation%20area%20introduction.pdf

Shopfront Design Guidance

If you are interested in shopfront design and how we aim to encourage excellence in North Somerset check out of adopted policy on Shopfront Design: www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-03/Shopfront%20design%20guide%20adopted.pdf

North Somerset Council

Keep up to date with North Somerset Council Facebook page:

[@northsomersetcouncil/](https://www.facebook.com/northsomersetcouncil/)

Stories bring heritage to life. Whether you are visiting the places you love or discovering something new, we want to hear about it.

So share your experiences and thoughts on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter or Pinterest using: [#westonHODS](https://www.instagram.com/westonHODS)

For full details about events for Heritage Open days visit

www.heritageopendays.org.uk

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