Weston-super-Mare
open days 2019
Friday 13 September – Sunday 22 September

www.heritageopendays.org.uk
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
Weston-super-Mare 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. The High Street’s outdated farm buildings gave way to shopping.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’.

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 200 years, puts Weston under the national spotlight and shows how care of the past could play an important role in the creation of a prosperous future.

There are many places of interest in and around Weston-super-Mare. 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
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.

A Family Store: Walker & Ling

84-86 High Street, BS23 1HU

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

During this event visitors can 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 still-functioning pneumatic cash tubes and the first electric lift in Weston-super-Mare.

Website www.walkerandling.co.uk
Booking no booking required
Opening times
Fri 13, Sat 14, Mon 16, Tues 17, Wed 18, Thurs 19 and Fri 20 Sep: 11am-4pm

#HODS
Museums, Theatres and Giants

2 Weston Museum
Historic Children’s Crafts
Burlington Street, BS23 1PR
As well as celebrating the history of Weston-super-Mare and environs from prehistoric times to the present day, Weston Museum has a special series of free children’s activities and workshops. 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 10am to 5pm every day.
Free entry.
Website www.westonmuseum.org
Booking no booking required
Opening times
Sat 21 and Sun 22 Sep: 10am-5pm

3 Blakehay Theatre
20 Wadham Street, 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.
Guided tours of the theatre 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
Booking no booking required
Opening times
Fri 13: 10am-1.30pm for backstage tours
Sat 14: 10am-12noon
Fri 20: 10am-1.30pm
Sat 21: 10am-12noon for refreshments

www.heritageopendays.org.uk
Gnomus – Caretaker of the Earth – at Weston’s Old Town Quarry

South Road, BS23 2LS

Gnomus is a caretaker of earth, places and stories. Join this lovable giant at Weston’s Old Town Quarry for a guided tour that is the stuff of legend. Natural history, heritage and myth will combine to create an unforgettable event for families.

Presented by Theatre Orchard, North Somerset’s pioneering arts organisation, in collaboration with the brilliant Puppets with Guts who create spectacular puppets and bring important stories to life.

Gnomus will bring his considerable knowledge of Weston-super-Mare to the Quarry – working with local schools and communities to unearth fascinating stories to share with the smaller giants of the town!

The Old Town Quarry was extensively worked during the 19th Century to produce much of the stone which built Weston into a thriving Victorian resort. It ceased trading in the 1950s and is now a nature reserve where cliffs provide nesting sites for a great variety of birds, and where limestone vegetation attracts butterflies aplenty. Having provided stone for the homes of many little giants in the past, it is now providing sanctuary for our natural world.

We encourage visitors to come by public transport where possible or take a 10 minute walk up to the Quarry from the Town Centre through Weston’s historic Grove Park.

As well as these special tours of the quarry, the wildlife area and café are open Wed to Sun 10.30am to 4pm.


Booking no booking required

Opening times each tour last about 15 minutes and starts on the hour:
Sat 21 and Sun 22 Sep: 11am, 12noon, 1pm, 2pm, 3pm, and last tour 4pm each day

#HODS
Parks, Cemeteries and their buildings

5 Grove Park its past, present and future

Grove Park, BS23 2QJ
Friends of Grove Park will have a display board highlighting various activities and achievements with an opportunity to enjoy and learn about the history, biodiversity and management of Grove Park.

Our stall will be situated just outside Grove House, where you can combine finding out about the work of the Friends of Grove Park with a visit to the home of Weston-super-Mare Town Council. From there you will be signposted to our Bug City and can talk with our busy volunteers en route.

Facebook www.facebook.com/groveparkwsm/
Booking no booking required
Opening times Fri 13: 10am-2pm
Sat 14 and Sun 15: 10am-12.30pm
Fri 20: 10am-2pm
Sat 21 and Sun 22: 10am-12.30pm

6 Grove House and Mayor’s Parlour

Grove Park, BS23 2QJ
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 you can view the town’s civic regalia, robes, paintings and heraldic charters.

Website www.wsm-tc.gov.uk
Booking no booking required
Opening times Fri 13: 10am-2pm
Sat 14 and Sun 15: 10am-12noon
Fri 20: 10am-2pm
Sat 21 and Sun 22: 10am-12 noon

www.heritageopendays.org.uk
7 Old Milton Cemetery Chapel
Lower Bristol Road, BS23 2TN
A rare opportunity to look inside this simple, yet dignified, neo-14th century chapel designed in 1856 by Charles Davis, Bath City’s architect. The 1776 bell came from Queen Charlotte’s Chapel in Westminster. The Victorian Garden Cemetery has delightful pathways, native and exotic trees, and an abundance of fascinating headstones. Look for the grave of Alfred Leete, the WWI ‘Your Country Needs You’ poster artist.

Website www.wsm-tc.gov.uk
Booking no booking required
Opening times visits to the chapel: Sat 14 and 21 Sep: 12.30-2.30pm

Churches
8 Victoria Methodist Church
Station Road, BS23 1XU
The original Wesleyan Methodist church opened the year before Queen Victoria died – hence the name, though all was lost to fire in 1934. This replacement, by local architects Fry, Patterson & Jones, opened in 1936, albeit on a north-south trajectory. The neo-late Gothic style with simple window tracery culminates in an architecturally powerful tower complete with louvered sound openings, though without bells. Organ by John Compton. Take a peep behind the church to see the façade of Whitecross House (now a church hall), home to the Parsley family who played an important role in Weston’s early development.

Website www.wsmbos.org/victoria.htm
Booking no booking required
Opening times Fri 13, Sat 14, Fri 20, Sat 21 Sep: 10am-4pm
9 Emmanuel Church
Oxford Street, BS23 1TN
Weston’s second Anglican church was built in 1847 to a design by Bath architects Manners & Gill in the neo-Perpendicular style. It served the less-privileged end of town and in many respects still ministers to those in greatest need. After most nearby housing had been replaced by Dolphin Square the church was radically altered in 1979 by Alan Rome to create a smaller worship area with ancillary social and meeting facilities behind a new internal wall.
The alabaster, serpentine and marble pulpit, font and organ are of notable quality and a particularly fine memorial tablet unusually commemorates all who served, as well as those who died during WW1, and there’ll be an opportunity to find out about a woman whose name appears alongside her male compatriots.
There are activities for families and children including treasure maps, an opportunity to dress up and explore how church would have been during the inter-war years along with craft opportunities. So lots to do for all ages.
Website www.ccwsm.org.uk/about-us/emmanuel.html
Booking no booking required
Opening times
Fri 20 Sep and Sat 21 Sep: 10am-4pm

10 Corpus Christi Catholic Church
Ellenborough Park South, BS23 1XW
Guided tours around the church and see the stained glass windows.
This 2nd of Weston’s catholic churches opened in 1929 to an unashamedly neo-Byzantine design by the younger John Bevan, who worked on several catholic churches in Bristol. The self-confident Portland stone west front gives way to a dignified Flemish-bond brick interior, with rounded arcades, 1960s murals by Jean Clarke, restored Stations of the Cross and, amongst the vivid windows, some fine glass by Harry Clarke. Look for a former parish priest of nearby Bleadon who was put to death at Smithfield in 1540.
Website www.corpuschristiweston.org
Booking no booking required
Opening times
Sat 13 and Sat 21 Sep: 11am-2pm
St Paul’s Church
Walliscote Road, BS23 1EF
A tin church opened in 1897 to serve this rapidly expanding end of Emmanuel Parish. Local architect Peter Fry’s replacement neo-Perpendicular Gothic church opened in 1912 but was severely damaged during the 1941 air raid and for fifteen years it remained a shell until Fry’s partner, Harold Jones, restored the nave and chancel along original lines, though an intended southeast tower was never built.

There has been much recent internal re-ordering. Some fine glass, especially the Great East Window, a stately carved reredos, 114-year old marble pulpit, font, and brass lectern are all worthy of study.

This living vibrant church is opening doors for a peek back at our history. Archive material - pictures and stories - will be on show as we share what’s being done in this 21st Century Church.

Website www.stpauls-weston.org.uk
Booking no booking required
Opening times Sat 21: 10am-3pm

Parish Church of St John the Baptist
Lower Church Road, BS23 2AG
The current parish church stands where its medieval forebear stood until 1824. From outset it wasn’t large enough for the growing town so galleries were added, followed by a north aisle in 1844 and Hans Price’s south aisle in 1890 with a gallery extension. The 1837 chancel was beautifully reordered by Stephen Dykes-Bower in 1961 and contains several memorials including some by Sir Francis Chantrey and Henry Weekes.

The Great East Window contains exquisite 13th century style glass donated in 1837 by Henry Law, Bishop of Bath & Wells. There’s an alabaster, Caen stone and green marble 1905 pulpit and a Norman font.

The 170-year old organ has been rebuilt and relocated several times and though the organ case now sits high in the west gallery, the console is positioned behind the south choir stalls. This is the only town church with a full ring of eight bells.

Website http://www.westonstjohn.org.uk
Booking no booking required
Opening times Mon 16, Tues 17, Fri 20
Sep: 10am-12.30pm

#HODS
All Saints Church

All Saints Road, BS23 2NL

Grade 2* listed building open for viewing. Designed by Royal Academician George Bodley in 1898, the south aisle was added by his pupil, Francis Eden, in 1925. All Saints is a wide, triple gabled building with stately Decorated arcades, simple arched mouldings, and boarded wagon roofs which produce cathedral-like acoustic qualities. Bodley’s intended south-west tower never materialised, leaving this fine building somewhat hidden from view. John Betjeman described it as ‘the finest church of entirely modern foundation in Somerset’.

Excellent glass by Kempe, Eden and others, along with perfectly suited furnishings and tapestries by Bodley and Eden, set in uncluttered space present an open, light and pleasingly dignified space for ceremonial worship and regular concerts.

Large 1930s 3-manual organ by John Compton modelled on the instrument in Downside Abbey.

Outside look in the south porch niche for the 1964 Modernist Madonna and Child by Laurence Broderick – the same artist who sculpted the enormous bronze bull in Birmingham’s revamped Bullring.

Website www.allsaintswsm.org
Booking no booking required
Opening times Thu 19, Fri 20 and Sat 21 Sep: 10am-4pm

www.heritageopendays.org.uk
Visit this ancient church and ascend the tower for breath-taking views towards Glastonbury and Wales.

Overlooking the village of Uphill and the Bristol Channel is the church of St. Nicholas, the former parish church of the village. This Norman church c.1089 sits on one of the earliest sites of Christian worship in the vicinity. Many original features remain, along with medieval and Victorian additions.

After the ‘new’ St Nicholas opened in a more convenient location in 1844 ‘old’ St Nicholas became a mortuary chapel but, despite a period of decay and roof collapse, the old church has been ‘kept together’ over the decades by, amongst others, Thomas Knyfton of Uphill Castle and, since 1989, the Churches Conservation Trust and the Friends of St Nicholas on the Hill.

The nave is now roofless but east of the central tower’s crossing, where a pre-reformation rood screen once stood, there’s a simple chancel and a highly unusual split-font altar (the Norman font was taken to the new church).

There are six bells, four from 1775 and they are to be regularly heard pealing across the countryside.

The tower will be open. You can visit the Bell Room, then climb up the spiral staircase and out onto the roof. Don’t forget your camera.

Website https://uphillvillagesociety.org.uk/town-history/st-nicholas/
Booking no booking required
Opening times Sat 21 and Sun 22 Sep: 12noon-4pm
15 St Andrew’s Greek Orthodox Church

38 Grove Road, BS22 8HE

The Orthodox church of St. Andrew the Apostle was previously St. Jude’s, the former parish church of Milton. Designed by Hans Price in 1887 its external appearance is in the Early English 13th century style with a squat central tower; but step inside and it’s a very different picture; Cyprus bursts forth in white and blue with a gold iconostasis, candles and icons.

A chance to see inside the church and to hear about its history and the history of the Greek Cypriot community in Weston

Website http://greekcommunitywsm.co.uk/church/

Booking no booking required

Opening times Sunday 15 Sep: Visitors are welcome to attend the mass service at 8.45-11am. Visitors are invited to tour around the church from 11am-1pm
Yatton
And special events in Yatton and Clevedon

16 Revealing the secrets of Yatton’s past
Yatton Rugby Football Club, North End Road, Yatton BS49 4AW

An exclusive event showcasing the archaeology and finds from excavations at North End, Yatton.

Experts from Wessex Archaeology and North Somerset Council’s archaeologist will be on hand to discuss the archaeology uncovered during excavations in 2017 and 2018. There will be displays of artefacts and images from the excavations, as well as the opportunity to ask the specialists what they do, and learn about life on this important ridgeway at Yatton over the last 4,000 years.

Children’s and family activities including artefact handling, virtual reality experiences.

Booking no booking required
Opening times Fri 20 Sep: 3-6pm

#HODS
Clevedon

17 Curzon Cinema and Arts, Clevedon & ‘Dare to Dream’ workshop
48 Old Church Road, Clevedon, BS21 6NN

The Curzon is Grade II listed, built in 1912. It is one of the oldest, independent, purpose-built, continuously run cinemas in the country. This is an opportunity to explore behind-the-scenes and discover some fascinating cinematic and social history.

The Curzon will open its doors and let participants explore the hidden history of this culturally important example of cinematic heritage. Our expert, volunteer guides will be on hand throughout the building to impart their knowledge and share our story. You will then have the opportunity to stay on and take part in our ‘Dare to Dream’ craftivism workshop using inspiration from the facts you have learned on your tour.

Website [https://www.curzon.org.uk/](https://www.curzon.org.uk/)
Booking no booking required
Opening times Sunday 15 Sep: 12noon-2pm

www.heritageopendays.org.uk
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 https://historicengland.org.uk/greatwestonhaz

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

For full details about each event visit www.heritageopendays.org.uk