

European Heritage Open Days weekend brings history to life

Planning what to do this weekend (Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 September)? Why not get involved in European Heritage Open Days? With free entry and some properties opening to the public this weekend only, you might get the chance to explore somewhere you otherwise wouldn't get the chance to see.

Something for everyone

With more than 360 historic buildings and places of interest opening their doors, including historic cottages, mills, private houses, and castles, there really is something for everyone.

Bun na Margáí Friary, Ballycastle

Experience the golden stones and stories of Bun na Margáí Friary, Ballycastle through expert guided tours and lectures.

Built by Rory MacQuillan in 1500, the rival MacDonnell clan claimed the Friary in 1588 and the coffin of Sorley Boy MacDonnell lies here.

See and hear the stories of the Friary through Gaelic clan warfare and World War, or discover its links with the Spanish Armada.

Marlacoo House, Co Armagh

A private home, this charming two-storey Georgian House is 200-years-old. Situated beside Marlacoo Lake, where Hugh O'Neill kept his wife and valuables safe on a crannog during the nine years' war.

Knockbracken Healthcare Park

A guided tour of selected buildings of the former Purdysburn Villa Colony, a former 'asylum' for mentally ill patients built between 1902 and 1913.

Purdysburn was laid out as a suburban-style settlement in an innovative design that was based on German colony asylums of the late 19th century.

The tour will consider how the buildings were built to maximise patient health.

Cockle Row Cottages, Groomsport

Cockle Row Cottages are restored fishermen's cottages dating back to the 1600s, beside the harbour in the picturesque village of Groomsport. They are home to a living history exhibition.

There will be free entertainment, including a magic show, sand art workshop, and a demonstration of traditional skills over the weekend.

Fermanagh historic graveyards

Explore by bus the stories hidden within two historic graveyards.

This trip visits the old graveyard on Cleenish Island, Upper Lough Erne, which has links to the heritage of St Columbanus.

It also will allow you to discover the history of Aghalurcher Church and graveyard (see pic above), and enjoy the performances of the history of these graveyards.

Tower Museum

Discover the Story of Derry exhibition, covering the history of the city from 5,000 BC to modern day.

Why not take part in Paper Quilting Workshop?

See behind the scenes of the museum's vast collection of items not currently on display and see how objects and archives are stored and cared for on this short family-friendly bus trip.

Woodrow Wilson Ancestral Homestead, Co Tyrone

Explore the rich Ulster-American connections and learn how the fate of Woodrow Wilson, 28th President of the United States, was to lie in the hands of local man James Wilson.

Artefacts on display include a wide selection of household furnishings, kitchen utensils, and farm implements.

Enjoy storytelling, craft demonstrations and short talks.

European Heritage Open Days events

To find a full list of European Heritage Open Days building openings and events you can either [use the map viewer](#) or [download a brochure for more information](#).

You can also pick up a brochure from your local tourist information centre, council office, or from museums and libraries.

More useful links