Scotland’s largest free festival of places, history and culture to return in September

Monday 16 August, 2021

2021 marks the 32nd year of Doors Open Days, a festival that sees organisations and volunteers offer free access to hundreds of sites and events across Scotland. The festival aims to make Scotland’s built and cultural heritage accessible to everyone living in and visiting the country.

Doors Open Days is coordinated nationally by the Scottish Civic Trust, and is part of European Heritage Days. Local coordinators from civic trusts, heritage organisations and local authorities create and manage programmes in each region.

Dr Susan O’Connor, Director of Scottish Civic Trust, said: “Hundreds of venues across the country are busy behind-the-scenes organising events, planning walking tours and creating videos and other virtual activities for visitors. We’re particularly excited to welcome visitors back into buildings so we can all enjoy our shared history in-person once again.”

The launch of the 2021 festival was marked by an afternoon reception on 12th August at the Scottish Maritime Museum in Irvine. Visitors to the museum’s Doors Open Days weekend on 11 and 12 September will be able to explore the museum and participate in a 'Build Your Own Iconic Scottish Door' workshop.

Nicola Scott, Events and Exhibitions Officer at the Scottish Maritime Museum, added: “We are thrilled to host the launch of this year’s Doors Open Days and open up the Scottish Maritime Museum in both Irvine and Dumbarton for free in celebration of Scotland’s rich cultural and built heritage.”

“As well as exploring our nationally recognised collection of maritime heritage, which features historic vessels, artwork and engineering inventions which influenced shipbuilding across the world, visitors will enjoy a look behind the scenes at our Scottish Boat Building School. Everyone can also enjoy the built heritage of the buildings themselves. In Irvine, the vast, glass roofed A-listed Linthouse was formerly a shipyard engine shop in Govan. In Dumbarton, our museum features the world’s first commercial ship model experiment tank which was built by the renowned William Denny Shipyard.”

The 2021 Doors Open Days programme is now live at www.doorsopendays.org.uk. Visitors will be pleased to see the return of some old favourites, like Glasgow’s Britannia Panopticon, as well as the addition of new hidden gems, like a modernist football stand in the Scottish Borders and the world’s oldest surviving sea-washed lighthouse in Angus.

COVID-19 restrictions

Doors Open Days only encourages people to attend in-person events in accordance with the latest Scottish Government COVID-19 guidance. The events and buildings that will be open for physical visits in September will ensure safe access according to the most current guidelines.

ENDS

Notes for editors:

For interview and image requests, please contact Erin.Burke@scottishcivictrust.org.uk.

About Doors Open Days

Doors Open Days is Scotland’s largest free festival that celebrates Scotland's places, history and culture, new and old. Each September, the festival offers access to over a thousand sites and events across Scotland. The aim of Doors Open Days is to ensure that Scotland’s built and cultural heritage is made accessible to people living in and visiting the country. Doors Open Days is supported by Historic Environment Scotland, and is part of European Heritage Days. For more information about Doors Open Days: www.doorsopendays.org.uk.

About Scottish Civic Trust

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Scottish Civic Trust's mission is to celebrate Scotland's built environment, take action for its improvement and empower its communities. Founded in 1967, the Civic Trust supports people to connect with their built heritage and take a leading role in guiding its development. In its infancy, it successfully campaigned for the restoration of Edinburgh's New Town and was instrumental in the revitalisation of New Lanark – both now part of Scotland's network of six World Heritage Sites. In addition to these major milestones, Scottish Civic Trust was also the first to bring Doors Open Day to the UK, which celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2019. For more information about the Scottish Civic Trust: www.scottishcivictrust.org.uk.

About European Heritage Days

Celebrated in the 50 signatory States to the European Cultural Convention, the European Heritage Days highlight the diversity of local skills, traditions, architectural styles and works of art that constitute shared European heritage. Launched by the Council of Europe in 1985 in France, the Days have been organised as a joint initiative of the European Commission and the Council of Europe since 1999. Enabling citizens to explore a wide range of cultural assets through a number of themed events, European Heritage Days help uncover histories of people and places that have contributed to shape the culture and heritage of Europe. For more information about European Heritage Days: https://www.europeanheritagedays.com/Home.aspx

About Historic Environment Scotland

Historic Environment Scotland is the lead public body established to investigate, care for and promote Scotland's historic environment. They are responsible for more than 300 properties of national importance, which combined draw millions over visitors each year. Their conservation experts provide guidance, training and technical research into Scotland's built environment. Through their outreach programme, Historic Environment Scotland promotes community and individual learning engagement with Scotland's heritage. They contribute to the Scottish Government's strategy to tackle climate change and reduce Scotland's carbon footprint. For more information: www.historicenvironment.scot/

About the Scottish Maritime Museum

Established in 1983, the Scottish Maritime Museum is home to Scotland's nationally recognised collection of maritime heritage, a new national art collection and the Scottish Boat Building School. The Museum has two sites - on the Harbourside in Irvine, North Ayrshire, and in Dumbarton. The collection includes some of Scotland's most historic vessels, the country's largest collection of shipbuilding tools and engineering and inventions which influenced maritime history across the world. Vessels include MV Spartan, the only surviving Scottish-built 'puffer' in Scotland; SY Carola, possibly the world's oldest seagoing steam yacht; and MV Kyles, the oldest Clyde-built vessel still afloat in the UK and recognised as one of Britain's most important historic vessels. The Scottish Boat Building School was established in 2014 to provide education and qualifications in both traditional and modern boat building and repair and was the first organisation in Scotland to recruit an apprentice for Scotland's new Modern Apprenticeship in Boat Building and Repair, which launched in 2019. For more information about the Scottish Maritime Museum: www.scottishmaritimemuseum.org

For further information

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