

# Hidden Nature

*Your guide to staging an event around our annual theme*



In partnership with

 **National Trust**

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# Our Theme



We are delighted to announce that our theme for 2020 is Hidden Nature.

Uncovering stories, sites, places and people that traditional history has overlooked or forgotten has always been at the very heart of Heritage Open Days. This year, we are turning our focus onto the natural world – and we're asking you to join with us in celebrating our extraordinary natural heritage, from centuries-old trees to farmer's fields steeped in history, from clifftop walks to urban oases and everything in between.

Nature, in its myriad forms, needs cherishing and championing more than ever, and this year HODs will encourage people to discover its histories and stories. We want Hidden Nature to encompass the broadest possible spectrum of events, opening up areas of the countryside that aren't normally accessible to the public and revealing the hidden history of not just our natural landscapes, but also gardens, green spaces, urban parks, orchards, vineyards, farms and forests.

It's important to say, however, that theming your event around Hidden Nature is entirely optional. If you have other ideas, or the theme simply doesn't appeal, that's not a problem. As ever, we hope for the widest spread of events across the festival – some of which will be Hidden Nature themed, many of which won't.

We believe nature is everywhere, but sometimes it can be challenging to find it. So we've put together a whole range of suggestions, tips, ideas for events and ways to explore the nature that surrounds us. Have a look through the following pages to see just how broad the possibilities are – we guarantee you'll have an event in mind by the time you've finished reading!

Your national HODs team,  
Sarah, Andy & Alex



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# Resources

We've created a range of resources to help you stage a Hidden Nature event. All of these are available to download from your [Organiser area](#) and will help to publicise your event both online and offline...

## Hidden Nature Logo and Designs

We've created a special logo to celebrate our Hidden Nature theme, as well as little icons of each of the elements featured within it. If you are holding a themed event please think about including this on any posters, flyers or other printed materials you produce and online.



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Click [here](#) to download the logo and icons.

## Social Media Sharing Pack

Want to shout about your Hidden Nature event on social media, but don't know where to start?

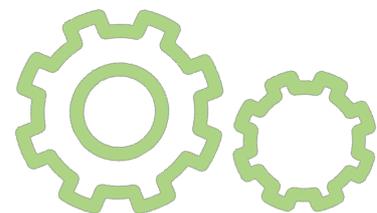
[Download](#) our social sharing pack, which contains post ideas, images and cover photos for you to use across Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



## Resource Kit

We're hoping to produce some physical resources to support your Hidden Nature event.

These are still in the pipeline, but keep an eye on your email inbox for further information.



Don't forget to use **#HiddenNature** when talking about your story or event on social media

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# Finding Stories

There are so many stories on our doorsteps just waiting to be uncovered...but knowing where to start can be like finding the end of a roll of sticky tape. So to help you get going, here are some suggestions...



1

## Introducing the Five Pathways to Nature

Encouraging people to engage with nature is more important than ever, and new research from the University of Derby, produced in conjunction with the National Trust, has created a framework of five ways to help people connect with the landscapes around them.

These include making use of all our senses, understanding the power of nature's beauty and how the environment that surrounds us can affect our emotions. This unique way of engaging with nature is a great starting point for creating an event that has a deeper and more lasting impact. [Click here](#) to find out more.



2

## Consult the experts

There are loads of great resources out there to help you find out more about the natural areas and wildlife near you. Here are just some of them:

- [RSPB](#) – provide loads of information to help you identify birds and other wildlife in your local area
- [Natural England](#) – A treasure trove of data into all things nature related in England, from designated sites to protected species
- [Woodland Trust](#) – Have you covered with anything tree related and more. They have advice on how to spot an ancient tree and even a special tree ID app!
- [The Ramblers](#) – One of the best places to find lists of local walking trails
- [The Gardens Trust](#) – A mine of knowledge about gardens and parks in your area, both family favourites and lost wildernesses
- [The Wildlife Trusts](#) – Inspiration on how to help (and identify) all the birds and beasts that live alongside us, including guides to identify dabbling ducks and pool!



3

## Google it!

When in doubt, running a search on Google can help narrow your questions and spark others.

- a. Look up the history of your local park or nature reserve
- b. Find out what wildlife is native to your region and migrates through it
- c. Research the hidden inhabitants that lurk in our cities, towns and buildings



## Site Type

## Story potential



**Faith**

- What stories within your faith relate to the natural world?
- What plants/wildlife live in the graveyard?
- Is there any nature iconography within any of the carvings, stained glass or paintings within your building?



**Museum**

- What objects within your collections relate to nature?
- Do you have to protect your collections from being damaged by nature (mould, insects etc.)
- Were there any famous botanists, naturalist or entomologists who contributed to your collections or museum?



**Industrial**

- Have older parts of your site been taken over by nature?
- What (perhaps surprising) natural materials are used in your production process
- What has been the impact of the industry on the wider landscape?



**Theatre/Cinema**

- Have you shown any iconic films, plays or other performances that relate to nature?
- Are there any interesting natural materials used in the props and set design?
- How are natural sounds and other effects created for films and performances?



**Historic House**

- What natural materials have been used to build the house and its contents?
- What creatures and plants live in the outbuildings and gardens?
- Does the house contain any paintings or furniture with a nature connection?
- What were the more unusual ingredients that were formerly used in the kitchens?

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# Develop your Event

Now that you have your Hidden Nature story, it's time to start developing your event. Don't worry, this doesn't have to be something completely new, as many existing types of events can be staged with a Hidden Nature twist. Here are 10 ideas to help you get started....



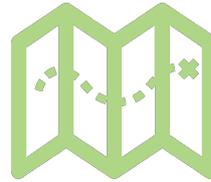
Get active with a group run, cycle or kayak that takes people through stunning hidden natural locations



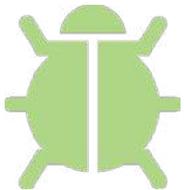
[Get crafty](#) using nature and natural materials as inspiration



Bring the community together to help build an [urban garden](#) and welcome nature into your place



Organise a nature [Scavenger Hunt](#) to challenge visitors young and old



Build a [bug hotel](#), birdfeeder or other wildlife sanctuary



Host a film screening of an iconic nature documentary



Put on a tour of a usually inaccessible or secret part of a garden or landscape



Organise a talk on how a garden or landscape has developed and changed over time



Hold an outdoor mindfulness or yoga session to connect with nature on a more spiritual level



Get involved in one of our additional Hidden Nature strands. Check out [our website](#) for the latest updates on these

# Case Studies



## Hands on heritage in the Land of Oak & Iron

Outdoor demonstrations and activities included green woodworking, willow weaving, charcoal making, wool spinning, clay tile and pot making and flint napping. Also on display were vintage forestry vehicles and heavy horse logging, giving the opportunity for the whole family to enjoy the fantastic natural heritage of the region..

## Berkhamsted's Rectory Lane Cemetery Project

Tours looked at how stories and nature are being brought to life within the cemetery space. Discussing the conservation works, landscaping, wildlife enhancement, and community activities that are transforming it into a contemporary garden of commemoration and environmental haven.



Organising a Heritage Open Days event doesn't have to be a solo experience and we encourage you to think of ways in which new collaborations can help to make your event a success. Depending on what type of Hidden Nature event you have planned, you may want to reach out to the following types of organisations/individuals in your local area...



Local special interest groups (birdwatching societies, ramblers, scouts etc.) that could advise or even lead events on your behalf



Local nature organisations (woodland centres, animal conservation charities, wildlife trusts etc.) who might be able to provide guest speakers or experts to lead your event



Biologists and other academics who could help with your research or even become a part of your event



Local musicians, artists or yoga/meditation instructors to help add another dimension to your event

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# Rangers Reveal

Rangers Reveal is an additional strand to our Hidden Nature theme and an opportunity for those who work on, and in, our natural landscapes to share their knowledge of stories, wildlife and places that are not always accessible to the public, rarely visited or simply overlooked.

## Why create a Rangers Reveal event?

Our Rangers Reveal events are a great way to build links and raise the profile of local nature/environmental organisations, and to engage with different sections of the community, who may not come to more traditional HODs events. We'll be highlighting some of the Rangers Reveal events in our Hidden Nature media campaign, so creating an event that will fit into this strand may mean local/national press coverage.

## What do we mean by 'ranger'?

We are using the word in its widest sense; you might work as a ranger for the National Trust, or the RSPB, or be part of a voluntary countryside group, protecting landscapes and footpaths. Having the official job title of 'ranger' is not a requirement to organise a Rangers Reveal event.

## What types of activities could it involve?

- Bug/insect walks or pond dipping
- Guided tree climbing
- A 4x4 tour across terrain that is not accessible on foot
- A talk on the secret history of a place, or the secret wildlife that lives within it
- A sunrise 'dawn chorus' walk or talk
- A children's trail or treasure hunt
- A guided walk across land that is usually protected/private, or rarely visited
- An exhibition or photo gallery of little-known places, areas, footpaths etc.

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# Twilight Tales

Twilight Tales is an additional strand to our Hidden Nature theme and a way to offer a new perspective on familiar landscapes, or reveal the secret lives of parks, green spaces, gardens, woodland, farmland or forest.

## Why create a Twilight Tales event?

As Twilight Tales will be evening events, this is an opportunity to offer a new and different type of event to both first-timers and regular HODs visitors. Outdoor events are great for attracting families, and as the Twilight Tales will be a national programme of walks/talks etc, we'll be making it one of the highlights of our media campaign, with the possibility of national coverage for those events taking part.

## Why Twilight?

No other time of day is as magical and secretive as twilight, when the sun has dropped below the horizon, but our atmosphere allows small particles to scatter light from the final rays across the land. This is the hour when much of the natural world shifts from sleeping to waking, providing fascinating opportunities to discover rarely seen wildlife and experience familiar places in a different light.

## What types of activities could it involve?

Twilight Tales is open to interpretation – it's however you want to share the place, scenery, wildlife or stories at this enchanting time of day. During the HODs festival, twilight will occur approximately between 7-8pm, getting slightly earlier as the festival progresses.

Ideally, all Twilight Tales will be held at this time and could include:

- A guided wildlife walk
- An evening [bug hunt](#)
- A spoken word event, themed around twilight
- A talk on a local naturalist/historical figure
- An alfresco astronomy evening
- A candlelit musical performance
- An artistic workshop creating pictures of twilight
- A walk around a place/landscape/area that is usually only accessible by day

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# Going Green

Having a theme of Hidden Nature makes it more important than ever to consider and reduce the environmental impacts of holding an event during HODs. We want this year's festival to celebrate our natural world and heritage, whilst at the same time having a minimal impact upon our fragile landscapes and ecosystems. We appreciate that this can be difficult to achieve, but hopefully the following steps will provide a good starting point in helping to make your event an environmentally friendly as possible...



Think about the different areas of work that feed into making your event happen. This could include the following...

- Travel to the event
- Food and beverage
- Communications and marketing
- Visitors and staff



Consider the potential for each of these areas to impact on the environment. Here are some starting points...

## Travel

- The % of visitors using cars to reach your event
- The noise pollution created by cars and other vehicles
- Damage to the landscape caused by vehicles

## Food & Beverage

- The packaging that is provided for food and drink
- Where the items are sourced and how far they've travelled
- Unsold food/drink left over after the event

## Comms & Marketing

- The materials used to print advertising materials
- The distance materials have to travel from the point of production

## Visitors & Staff

- Damage to the land and wildlife from footfall
- Litter and other waste left behind after the event





Building from the previous steps, take action to minimise the potential environmental impacts you identified. Here are a couple of examples of the types of (often simple) measures and actions you could take...

## Travel to the event



The site is over a mile away from the nearest train station, meaning that most visitors will have to drive to the event



- Suggest an attractive walking route between public transport hubs and your event.
- Offer incentives (e.g. a free cup of tea) for visitors who arrive by public transport
- Offer a shuttlebus service to and from public transport hubs (there might even be a fun opportunity to partner with a vintage bus service)

## Visitors & Staff



The increased footfall to the site is likely to cause more litter and damage to what is a usually pristine location



- Manage the types of food and beverage containers allowed into the site in the first place
- Provide clearly labelled general waste and recycling bins at regular intervals, including the entrance to the site
- Make litter collection a part of the event (e.g. within a scavenger hunt)



If you're looking for further advice on making your event as eco friendly as possible, [Julie's Bicycle](#) have some great case studies or you can find an in-depth guide [here](#)

# Creating Legacy

Heritage Open Days may be a once a year occurrence, but that doesn't mean that all your research, networking and creativity can't have a lasting impact. Here are just some of the ways that you can help ensure a legacy for your work...

1

Share your experiences with us at HODs HQ – send in your evaluation, your stories, photos and videos to feed in to the national report. You could inspire future organisers, with your work featuring on our social media, website and other channels.

2

Keep the conversations going. If you built any new partnerships, can you keep in touch and continue to involve them in HODs or in other aspects of your work?

3

Can your Hidden Nature event be repeated outside of Heritage Open Days, enabling visitors to see your site and place during different seasons?

4

If you produced a temporary exhibition/installation, could it tour, or can a more permanent home be found?

5

Share your research locally – a local conservation charity or wildlife group might find it useful for future exhibitions, events and research.

6

Share your research globally! – [Wikipedia](https://www.wikipedia.org/) is the people's encyclopaedia, meaning YOU can edit and add information to it. Are the people and events from your Hidden Nature research featured? If not, add them in, and help new audiences discover them.

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# Fancy a chat?

We pride ourselves on always having a person on the end of the phone or email - you won't find any automated responses from us!

## Get in touch

[info@heritageopendays.org.uk](mailto:info@heritageopendays.org.uk)

020 7824 7180

## Get the latest news

[www.heritageopendays.org.uk](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk)

Twitter: [@heritageopenday](https://twitter.com/heritageopenday)

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

Instagram: [@heritageopendays](https://www.instagram.com/heritageopendays)

Newsletter: <https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/about/contact/hods-newsletter>

## Meet the team...

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