

# From Engagement to Empowerment: The Future of England's Heritage Open Days



Applications are invited for a collaborative doctoral research studentship starting in October 2019 funded by the White Rose College of the Arts & Humanities.

This studentship is a collaboration between Heritage Open Days/The National Trust and the Centre for Critical Studies in Museums, Galleries and Heritage in the School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies at the University of Leeds<sup>1</sup>

## The Research

Spanning the public, private and voluntary sectors, Heritage Open Days (HOD) are England's largest participatory festival. The annual event offers the public free access and activities to celebrate local heritage, history and community. In 2017, HOD brought together 5,500 sites, 2,100 organisers, 46,400 volunteers and 2.52 million visitors. HOD are run by a specialist team and coordinated nationally by The National Trust. Established in 1994, HOD are part of European Heritage Days, an initiative of the Council of Europe which dates back to 1985 and involves the European Commission and 50 signatories of the European Cultural Convention.

Despite their popularity and success, HOD face a number of challenges:

1. At the local level, HOD encounter a range of evolving contexts. New measures have to be developed to future-proof the festival. Critical reflection is needed to widen engagement and rethink how heritage, community and history can be understood in contemporary society.
2. HOD manage and support large numbers of organisers and have significant expertise in participation and citizen-led heritage activities. HOD seek to become a more widely recognised voice in the sector at the national level in order to strengthen the advocacy and agency of their participants who ask for a greater say in heritage decision-making.

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<sup>1</sup> If you are selected by the CDA project team to be put forward to WRoCAH, your application will be considered competitively within the main WRoCAH competition. Being put forward for consideration is not a guarantee of funding.

3. On an international level, questions arise about the implications of the UK's departure from the European Union for heritage policy and practice generally and the European Heritage Open Days in particular. In view of Britain's leading role in heritage (research), HOD need to position themselves and respond to post-Brexit circumstances in Europe and beyond.

The studentship will explore, analyse and address these challenges, drawing on new and existing data, additional findings generated through ethnographic enquiry, debates about the politics and policies of participation, cultural theory and scholarship in heritage studies.

There is flexibility in the project to allow the student to develop their own ideas, but areas of enquiry and key questions could include:

- What qualitative and quantitative insights into the motivations and interests of participants (organisers and visitors) can be gained from existing HOD data? Which areas require additional investigation?
- How do the findings relate to the understanding of heritage, participation, inclusion and co-production in politics, policy and scholarship?
- Which strategies can be employed to reach younger and more diverse social groups without estranging HOD's long-term supporters?
- How can expectations of participants that reach beyond the festival experience be harnessed and taken forward?
- How can HOD cultivate symbiotic relationships between grassroots groups and establishment organisations (e.g. The National Trust, Historic England, major museums, universities)?
- What wider role can HOD play in the democratisation of heritage decisions and the empowerment of active citizens in Britain?
- To what extent are HOD 'English' or an expression of Englishness? What are the implications of a 'national character' for the festival and its participants?
- How are HOD understood and conducted (differently) in other parts of the United Kingdom and other European countries? What are the outstanding features of HOD England from a comparative point of view?
- What has been the relationship between HOD and the European Heritage Days in the past? Do post-Brexit policy changes impact on the festival or the organisation?
- What is the future role of HOD as an organisation and large community of heritage makers and shapers in Europe?

The research focuses on engagement with heritage across geographic and demographic difference and will contribute significantly towards the understanding of existing and future possibilities of co-creation and public history, redefining heritage (festivals) and the democratisation of heritage-related processes.

### **Supervision and research environments**

This full-time studentship will be supervised by Dr Claudia Sternberg, University of Leeds, and Annie Reilly, Manager of Heritage Open Days.

The successful applicant will be primarily based at the University of Leeds and be a member of the postgraduate research community at the School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies. S/he will be affiliated with the Centre for Critical Studies in Museums, Galleries and Heritage, which offers a dynamic environment for researching and studying at the intersection of theory, history, art practice and museum and heritage studies. The student will benefit from the substantive networking and training opportunities available through the University of Leeds Doctoral College as well as the comprehensive WRoCAH development programme.

Heritage Open Days will host the researcher for 2 x 3 months during the festival seasons of 2020 and 2021 at their offices. These are part of the National Trust premises in London. As the HOD festival is held across England, the student will also visit regional coordinators and join the organisational team during activities outside London. S/he will join the group of postgraduate researchers at The National Trust and take part in the Trust's annual symposium and networking events.

### **What are we looking for from applicants?**

Applications are invited from individuals with a background in a diverse range of arts and humanities disciplines. Applicants will normally be expected to have obtained a first- or upper second-class honours degree or equivalent and to have completed (or be about to complete) an MA in a relevant subject. They should be able to demonstrate an active interest in public history, heritage, participation and/or cultural policy. Experience in the application of quantitative and qualitative research methods and/or a working knowledge of one or more European languages other than English are welcome, but these are not essential.

The doctoral studentship may also appeal to professionals currently working in the cultural and heritage sectors who wish to return to academic research. It is recommended that applicants who fall into this category and may hold qualifications different from those referred to above enquire about their eligibility.

### **Financial support**

Full-time AHRC Competition Studentships for doctoral research are 3 years in duration (or 5 years part time). Awards are subject to satisfactory academic progress. Awards must be taken up in October 2019. No deferrals are possible. Awards will comprise UK/EU fees at Research Council rates and, for eligible students, a maintenance grant (£14,777 in 2017/8).

### **Eligibility**

Strong applicants will have a good first degree in an appropriate subject, as well as a Master's degree and professional experience relevant to the scope of the project (or experience of belonging to a collaborative team).

Please note that all applicants should meet the AHRC's academic criteria and residency requirements (<http://wrocah.ac.uk/new-student/2019-cda/>).

## How to apply

Before applying for any WRoCAH Studentship, please first ensure that you have read the WRoCAH webpages about Collaborative Doctoral Awards, the WRoCAH training programme and requirements

<http://wrocah.ac.uk/new-student/2019-cda/>

Please note that the selection of Collaborative Doctoral Award applicants is a two stage process:

### STAGE 1

**Applicants must apply for a place of study**

[http://www.leeds.ac.uk/info/130206/applying/91/applying\\_for\\_research\\_degrees](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/info/130206/applying/91/applying_for_research_degrees), clearly stating to which project you wish to apply, by the deadline given below.

To assess your academic ability to undertake three years of independent research you may be required to provide the following evidence:

- Project Statement (a two-page statement that conveys your motivation and enthusiasm for the project and demonstrate your suitability for the intended study)
- Curriculum Vitae
- Transcripts of marks for undergraduate and postgraduate degrees plus certificates where available
- Two academic references  
[http://ses.leeds.ac.uk/download/1484/reference\\_template-research\\_degrees](http://ses.leeds.ac.uk/download/1484/reference_template-research_degrees) from referees who will be able to provide their references by the deadline for Stage 1
- IELTS Certificate (if applicable)

Interviews will then take place to select a suitable candidate.

### Deadline for STAGE 1 applications

2 January 2019

### Date of interviews

10 January 2019

### STAGE 2

**Apply for funding to WRoCAH**

Candidates selected after Stage 1 then liaise with the project supervisory team to submit a WRoCAH studentship application via the WRoCAH online application form by the **5pm on Wednesday 23 January 2019 deadline**.

*NB: Candidates who have been unsuccessful in Phase One can submit a separate WRoCAH application as a non-CDA applicant.*

**For more information about this project contact**

Informal enquiries can be made by contacting Dr Claudia Sternberg at the University of Leeds ([c.sternberg@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:c.sternberg@leeds.ac.uk)) or Annie Reilly at Heritage Open Days ([Annie.Reilly@heritageopendays.org.uk](mailto:Annie.Reilly@heritageopendays.org.uk)).