

Curating Luton

Our town-wide Heritage Strategy 2021-2031

Heritage Strategy Launch and Open Day
Programme of Events
Saturday 11th - 19th September



As part of Heritage Month, we are proud to launch our new town-wide Heritage Strategy for 2021-2031, alongside a programme of open days to celebrate Luton's rich and unique heritage.

Our Heritage Strategy has been co-produced with residents and partners across Luton, and has been made possible by funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This strategy sets out our collective ambition to curate Luton, as part of our wider plans to transform lives through arts, culture and heritage to achieve our vision for Luton 2040.



Heritage Open Days – Programme of Events 11-19 September

To celebrate Heritage Month and the launch of our new Heritage Strategy, our partners will be holding a series of Heritage Open Days from Saturday 11 September – Sunday 19 September.

Booking Details:

To book your place on any of the events, please go to:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/lilly-smith-lbc-heritage-enabler-31590944415>

Pre-booking is required for all events, subject to limited availability. Booking opens at 9 am on 17 August 2021.

The full programme of events is detailed below.



Plaiters Lea – Guided History Walk

The Hat Factory Arts Centre, 65-67 Bute Street, Luton, LU1 2EY

Saturday 11 September 10:00

Join local historian and Chair of the Luton Heritage Forum, Paul Hammond, for a guided walk around the town's Plaiters Lea Conservation Area, also known as Luton's Historic Hat District. During the Victorian Era, Luton was home to over 1,000 hat manufacturers, employing over a third of the town's population. Today, while only a handful of hat makers remain, the heritage of this once booming industry is immortalised in the fabric of the buildings in and around Guildford Street.

This guided walk will also take in the influence of the train station and former warehousing, as well as several ghost signs and the iconic streets of Cheapside and Barber's Lane.



St Marys Church Open Day - Celebrating 900 Years at the Heart of Luton

St Marys Church, Church Street, Luton, LU1 3JF

Saturday 11 September 10:30-13:00 & 14:30-17:00

To celebrate the construction of St Marys Church, which began 900 years ago this year, come and enjoy its beauty, be inspired by its history, or take a quiet moment to reflect on life. There will be a short service to commemorate the 20th anniversary of 9/11, followed by two 45-minute tours taking place at 11:30 and 15:00, with refreshments provided. All visitors will be asked to wear a mask to ensure we are Covid-secure.



Memorial Park – Historical Walk & Talk

Bailey Hill Water Tower, 28 West Hill Road, Luton, LU1 3LY

Saturday 11 September 16:00

Join local historian, Howard Chandler, for a walking tour of the wonderful Luton Hoo Memorial Park. Attendees will learn about the site's rich history, which was presented to the people of Luton by Lady Ludlow in 1920, in memory of her son Alex Piggot Werner, who was killed in action during the First World War. The site includes several important features, such as the war memorial and the Bailey Hill Water Tower, built after the drought of 1898.



Luton Town Football Club in the Victorian Era – Walking Tour

Starbucks Coffee Co (UK) Ltd, Station Road, Luton, LU1 2LT

Sunday 12 September 10:30

Join local historian, Brian Webb, to explore the rich history of Luton Town Football Club on a walking tour that traces the footsteps of the club's formation. Attendees will get to pound the pavements of Luton to learn about LTFC's formation and history, including the locations of the former Dallow Lane Ground pitches, grandstand and pavilion and a sprinkling of information about the hat industry.

Brian Webb is the founder of The Straw Plaiters, a website devoted to Luton Town Football Club in the Victorian Era. He also sits on the committee of Hatters Heritage, which encourages the preservation and appreciation of the heritage and history of Luton Town FC.



Rothesay Road Cemetery – Historical Walk & Talk

Luton General Cemetery, Rothesay Road, Luton, LU1 1QX

Sunday 12 September 12:00

Join local historian, Howard Chandler, for a walking tour of the beautiful Luton General Cemetery on Rothesay Road. Opened in 1854 to serve Luton's non-conformist community, which at the time outnumbered Anglicans by more than three to one, Luton General Cemetery is a wonderful example of the period. Attendees will have the opportunity to see the original Gothic style lodge and gates, as well as to explore the ornate headstones and monuments throughout the site and the opportunity to learn about some of the prominent local figures that have been laid to rest here.



Tour of the Council Chamber and Mayor's Parlour at Luton Town Hall

Luton Borough Council, Town Hall, George Street, Luton, LU1 2BQ

Sunday 12 September 14:00

Come and visit the recently restored Council Chambers at the heart of Luton's Grade II Listed Town Hall. This neoclassical style building, incorporating Art Deco features, was officially opened by the Duke of Kent in 1939. Attendees will enjoy a tour of rooms seldom open to the public, with features including the town's collection of silverware, the Mayoral Chains of Office and Luton's visitor book, which includes the signatures of notable guests including Queen Elizabeth II and The Beatles.



Arts in the Town Centre

The Hat Factory Arts Centre, 65-67 Bute Street, Luton, LU1 2EY

Sunday 12 September 16:00

Join local artist, Caroline Wallace, for a tour of Luton's public art, including works by acclaimed public artist Tom Pearman; Turner Prize nominee Mark Tichner; and revered graphic artist John Barnbrook, who has produced album covers for David Bowie, among others. Caroline Wallace is a curator and artist, currently working for the Culture Trust.



An Audience with K-Splash at Little Red Arts

Little Red Arts, 32a George Street, Luton, LU1 2AZ

Sunday 12 September 19:00

Come and join a live audience with local Luton Urban Radio DJ, K-SPLASH, as she shares her latest exciting project – a podcast series that aims to bridge the gap between generations in our town, by sharing inspirational interviews with successful and aspirational Lutonians. Attendees will have the opportunity to see K-SPLASH in action and hear from some of her guests.

To thank National Lottery Players for making projects like this possible, attendees who bring along a National Lottery ticket will also receive a complimentary drink, canapés and an exclusive goody bag.



Welcome to Bury Park – Walking Tour

The Moor, New Bedford Road, Luton

Friday 17 September 13:00

Explore the heritage of the lively Bury Park area with local guide, Fahim Qureshi. Bury Park has transformed from a predominantly residential area at the turn of the 19th Century, to a thriving epicentre of Luton's South Asian community, which over time has included many shops, two cinemas and the football ground.

Attendees will enjoy a historical guided tour of the area, featuring a special emphasis on places of worship, retail and entertainment, as well as exclusive access to examine a number of important buildings at close quarters. They will also be able to enjoy mouth-watering samples from local food establishments and visit locations featured in the critically acclaimed 2019 film, *Blinded by the Light*.



Marsh House Heritage Open Day

Marsh House Community Centre, Bramingham Road, Luton, LU3 2SR

Saturday 18 September 15:00

Come along to Marsh House and immerse yourself in the history of this culturally important Luton landmark. Marsh House is located close to the source of the River Lea and the scheduled ancient monument, Waulud's Bank. Originally a farmhouse for Marsh Farm, the building now sits within Leagrave Common, a County Wildlife Site.

Attendees will be treated to a series of heritage talks and tours around the house and surrounding area, coordinated by Glenn Jenkins and his associates at Marsh Farm Outreach, as well as an opportunity to see vintage films and photographs relating to the site.



The Bricklayer's Arms – Blue Plaque Unveiling

The Bricklayer's Arms, 16 High Town Road, Luton, LU2 0DD

Saturday 18th September 18:00

Come along to the Bricklayer's Arms on High Town Road to celebrate the venue's long-standing relationship with Luton Town Football Club, as we honour it with a Blue Plaque as part of a new pilot scheme in the town. 'The Brickies', has been serving pints to Lutonians since 1834 and is one of only four pubs remaining on High Town Road.



Music at Marsh House

Marsh House Community Centre, Bramingham Road, Luton, LU3 2SR

Saturday 18 September 19:00

Join us as we step back in time to the late 1970s for an evening of music to celebrate the history of the Green Barn at Marsh House. Over the past 40 years, Marsh House has been at the centre of youth culture in Luton, with the Green Barn hosting infamous punk rock gigs and regular underground jazz-funk discos, attended by hundreds of young Lutonians in the 70s. This event will pay homage to this era, with talks from those who experienced the glory of the Green Barn first-hand, as well as music and DJ sets to transport attendees back to those times.



Luton Central Mosque – Blue Plaque Unveiling

Luton Central Mosque, 2 Westbourne Road, Luton, LU4 8JD

Sunday 19 September 18:00

Come along to Luton Central Mosque to celebrate the history and significance of this iconic Luton landmark being honoured with a Blue Plaque as part of a new pilot scheme in Luton.

Established in 1982 in response to the town's growing Muslim population, this building was one of the first purpose-built mosques in Britain and the largest in modern Europe at the time of opening. After almost 40 years on the site, this building has become synonymous with Luton's skyline and was immortalised on the silver screen in the 2019 critically acclaimed film, *Blinded by the Light*.

COVID-19 Considerations: All in-person events will run in line with local and national government guidelines at the time of the event.