

Wisbech Heritage Weekend 2010 and heritage open days

... bringing people and places together, encouraging you and thousands of others to explore the buildings on your doorstep and to become an active member of the community. Most of these properties are made available to the public with the help and dedication of volunteers.

"Heritage Open Days is about people and places; it celebrates community and reflects the importance of the built environment in our lives and to our quality of life. It is organised by local people who dedicate their spare time to opening properties and staging activities, and it is their knowledge and enthusiasm that makes Heritage Open Days happen"

Dr Simon Thurley, Chief Executive, English Heritage



All Saints' Church, Church Road, Walsoken, Norfolk, PE13 3RA

01945 587952

All Saints has been a centre of worship since 1146. Situated exactly 1 mile from the centre of Wisbech, the church has been described as 'The grandest Norman parish church in Norfolk'. Flower Festival themed 'Stamping it out in church' related to British stamp issues. An official First Day Cover produced on 16th in conjunction with the Post Office issue of Train Stamps. The connection is through Richard Young, Mayor of Wisbech and director of the Great Eastern railway. He is buried in All Saints' churchyard and has a stained glass window dedicated to his memory in the bell tower. Talk by Peter Wadlow on the 'Treasures of Walsoken Church' on Saturday, plus bell ringing and organ recitals. Walk in an English country churchyard guided by Peter Wadlow on Sunday followed by Songs of Praise service.

Saturday 11th September: 10am-4pm, Talk 2pm
Sunday 12th September: 12noon-4pm, Walk 2pm

St Leonard's Church, Leverington, Gorefield Road, PE13 5AS

01945 581778

The stone church was begun in the 13th century. The lower sections of the tower, the arcades separating the chancel and south chapel, and part of the south wall stand from this time. The porch was added in the 14th century and the nave was rebuilt in the 15th century, when a north aisle was added. Most of the building is of Barnack stone. The most striking features of the building are the west tower and spire, and the quite wonderful 14th century embattled porch, which boasts lovely vaulting and Early English embellishments. The porch stands two stories high, and is practically a building in its own right. The vaulting is amazingly delicate, and seems too fine to support the parvise above the entry chamber. The south chapel contains a variety of historic monuments, primarily to the Swaine family, the original owners of Leverington Hall. The windows of the Swaine Chapel contain some very nice 15th century stained glass, including likenesses of local gentry Sir Bartholomew and Agnes Everard, and Sir Lawrence and Margaret Everard.

Saturday 11th September: 9am-5pm
Sunday 12th September: 12noon-5pm

Fenland & West Norfolk Aviation Museum, Old Lynn Road PE14 7DA

07939299288

Fenland & West Norfolk Aircraft Preservation Society is responsible for setting up the museum and was formed in the mid 1970s. The museum holds many interesting collections of aviation archaeology.

All the exhibits (except the aircraft) are housed in purpose built premises comprising of three large themed halls, with interactive displays, well lit cabinets and structured themes.

Saturday 11th September: 9.30am-5pm
Sunday 12th September: 9.30am-5pm



Guyhirn Chapel of Ease, High Road, Guyhirn PE13 4EF

01945 410775

Also known as Guyhirn Old Church or Guyhirn Puritan Chapel, the Chapel of Ease is a plain, finely proportioned, small rectangular building constructed partly of brick and partly of Barnack stone. Both its exterior appearance and the austerity of its internal arrangements, with the original narrow wooden pews to prevent kneeling still in place, proclaim the building's Puritan origin. It was in fact designed at the end of the Cromwellian Commonwealth, when the Puritan mode of worship was the accepted one, but by the time construction was completed in 1660, the Restoration had come and Anglicanism had resumed its place as the official (and only legal) form of English religious observance. Because of the circumstances of the time the Chapel was probably never consecrated. Following the Restoration, the Chapel was adopted by the Church of England as a Chapel of Ease in the charge of the Vicar of Wisbech St Peter until 1854, when Wisbech St Mary was created a separate parish. The area around the Chapel was consecrated as a burial ground by the Bishop of Ely in 1840. The Chapel moved into its third parish in 1871 when the parish of Guyhirn with Rings End was created. It continued to be used for services until the new church of St Mary Magdalene was built in the village in 1878. From that time the Chapel was rarely used and became in effect, a mortuary chapel. By 1960 the building had become derelict and unsafe. The last service was held there on the 5th November 1960. The rebirth of the Chapel began in 1971 due mainly to the initiative of the Reverend Donald Dickinson, then Vicar of Guyhirn. The Redundant Churches Fund was approached and on the 26th October 1973, the Chapel was formally declared redundant as a place of worship. Its restoration to its original form was then undertaken by the Fund, as a building "of such historic and architectural interest it ought to be preserved in the interest of the nation and the Church of England". At a Thanksgiving service in 1975 the Bishop of Ely, Dr. E K Roberts, re-dedicated the Chapel. In 1973 the Friends of the Guyhirn Chapel of ease was formed under the presidency of Sir John Betjeman, the Poet Laureate, who on his death was succeeded by the well known author Edward Storey.

Saturday 11th September: 10am-3pm
Sunday 12th September: 10am-3pm



Heritage Open Days is your chance to visit thousands of buildings and places across England which are usually closed to the public or charge for admission. To find out what's on in your region, go to www.heritageopendays.org.uk or call English Heritage on 0870 333 1181.



Wisbech Heritage Weekend Incorporating heritage open days

'Capital of the Fens'

Every September buildings of every age, style and function throw open their doors to celebrate the history and heritage of Wisbech. Visitors are able to enjoy fantastic architecture and culture with free access to properties that are usually closed to the public or normally charge for admission. It is a once-a-year chance to discover hidden architectural treasures and enjoy a wide range of tours, events and activities which bring to life local history and culture.

The weekend will be launched on Thursday evening at Octavia Hill Birthplace House with the presentation of the awards for the Heritage Treasure Trail from the Wisbech Photographic Festival and Community Photographic Challenge.

Properties Open 2010

All Saints' Church, Walsoken		Saturday	Sunday
Angles Theatre	Friday		
Fenland & West Norfolk Aviation Museum, West Walton		Saturday	Sunday
Friends Meeting House		Saturday	Sunday
Guyhirn Chapel of Ease		Saturday	Sunday
Octavia Hill Birthplace House		Saturday	Sunday*
Peckover House		Saturday	Sunday*
St Leonard's Church, Leverington		Saturday	Sunday
St Peter & St Paul's Church, Wisbech	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Vivien		Saturday	Sunday
Wisbech & Fenland Museum	Friday	Saturday	
Wisbech Council Chamber	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Wisbech General Cemetery			Sunday
Wisbech Grammar School			Sunday
Wisbech Masonic Lodges		Saturday	Sunday
Wisbech Social Club & Institute	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

* Normal entrance fees apply

Please note that whilst every effort will be made to keep to this programme, organisers reserve the right to vary or cancel due to circumstances beyond their control.

For locations and opening times of the properties taking part this year please see overleaf.

Please check the opening times carefully to avoid disappointment.

You are advised to contact individual properties for last minute information.

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ENGLISH HERITAGE

**Peckover House North Brink PE13 IJR**

01945 583463

Peckover House is a secret gem, an oasis hidden away in an urban environment. A classic Georgian merchant's townhouse, it was lived in by the Peckover family for 150 years. The Peckovers were staunch Quakers, which meant they had a very simple lifestyle; yet at the same time they ran a successful private bank. Both facets of their life can be seen as you wander through the house and gardens. The gardens themselves are outstanding – 0.8 hectare (two acres) of sensory delight, complete with orangery, summerhouses, croquet lawn and rose garden with more than 60 species of rose.

The Fenland Family History Society will be in the Reed Barn on Saturday 11th. There will be displays of family history materials and experienced researchers will be available to give guidance, help and advice. Peckover House Conservation in Action demonstration during afternoon.

Saturday 11th September: 12noon-5pm**Sunday 12th September: normal opening hours and entrance fees apply****Wisbech Grammar School, North Brink PE13 IJX**

Wisbech Grammar School was founded in 1379 by the Guild of the Holy Trinity and is thus one of the oldest schools in the country. Its origins are enshrined in the school badge. For more than six hundred years the school has played its part in the life of the town, and its presence was the vital factor in the granting in 1549 of a Charter for Wisbech. The first scholars met in 1379 in a small room over the south porch of the Church of St Peter and St Paul. The school has occupied a number of sites in the town, but by 1898 it was located in premises on the South Brink of the River Nene. In 1905 Wisbech High School was established in Harecroft House on the North Brink, formerly a home of the Peckover family. The High School provided the same educational opportunities for girls that the Grammar School offered to boys. For sixty-five years the two schools developed along parallel lines and in 1970 they were amalgamated. The boys moved across the river to share extended premises on the North Brink, and the new school has continued to build upon the traditions of both former establishments. On 12 January 1983 the Secretary of State for Education and Science granted Independent Status for the school with effect from 1 September 1983. When independence was regained a decision was taken by the Governors to increase the size of the school roll. The number of pupils has risen from 400 to nearly 600 and includes approximately 150 in the sixth form.

Sunday 12th September: 1000-1600

01945 583631

Octavia Hill Birthplace House, South Brink, PE13 IJB

01945 476358

Octavia Hill (1838-1912) was a woman ahead of her time. An artist and a radical, she was a pioneer of affordable housing and can be seen as the founder of modern social work. Her formidable achievements as an environmental and open space campaigner led to her co-founding the National Trust, which today protects over 300 historic properties and keeps 250,000 hectares of land open to all. Her life and work is documented in Octavia Hill's Birthplace House in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, a handsome Georgian house facing the river Nene. The house and its displays demonstrate this remarkable woman's influence on our life today: her fight against poverty and disease and her quest to bring peace and beauty into the lives of ordinary working people. The Museum has recently completed the major building programme, which restored the Georgian Grade II* listed building to its original size.

Saturday 11th September: 11.30am-4.30pm, Last admission 4pm**Sunday 12th September: normal opening hours and entrance fees apply**

Throughout Wisbech you may see numbered plaques set into the pavement. These correspond to those on the map shown in blue and identify the **Wisbech Merchants Trail**.

For full details see <http://www.strideguides.com/Wisbech/index.html>

Please note: Not all properties shown on the Merchants Trail are open on Heritage Weekend.

Wisbech Council Chamber 1 North Brink PE13 IJR

01945 461333

The building was erected in 1811 as an Exchange Hall on a site previously occupied by the Nag's Head public house. The upper rooms which comprise Wisbech Town Council Chamber and offices were originally a gentlemen's club billiard room and newspaper room. They have been in use for Council business since 1836 and the passing of the Municipal Act when the town was divided into two wards was denominated a borough and the homely Town Bailiff and Capital Burgesses were succeeded by a more aristocratic body of Mayor Aldermen and Councillors'. The Council Chamber is still a working building used for meetings of Wisbech Town Council. There are now 18 councillors and seven wards within Wisbech parish. The Council Chamber houses many works of art, artefacts and official documents which reflect the civic history and accomplishments of Wisbech.

Friday 10th September: 10am-4pm**Saturday 11th September: 10am-4pm****Sunday 12th September: 10am-4pm****Friends Meeting House 21 North Brink PE13 IJX**

01945 773181

Built in 1854, the Friends Meeting House replaced an earlier building made from two thatched cottages in which local Quakers had worshipped since 1711. The plainness of this newer building, still in regular use, reflects something of the fundamental simplicity of the Quaker faith. The Meeting House was built by Algernon Peckover, who was an amateur architect. Behind it is a small graveyard where many members of the Peckover family are buried. Another grave is that of the reclusive Jane Stuart, an illegitimate daughter of James II, who came to live in Wisbech and died here in 1742, aged 88.

Saturday 11th September: 12noon-5pm**Sunday 12th September: 12noon-5pm**

"Vivien" the Leyland fire engine, which was proudly serving Wisbech from 1932 until 1963. Named after the Mayoress at the time, Vivien was regarded as one of the most up-to-date fire engines in the district. It featured the distinctive "Borough of Wisbech Fire Brigade" lettering and the Borough of Wisbech armorial bearings on the side. Vivien will be parked outside Wisbech Town Council Chamber on North Brink and an exhibition will be on display in the Chamber.

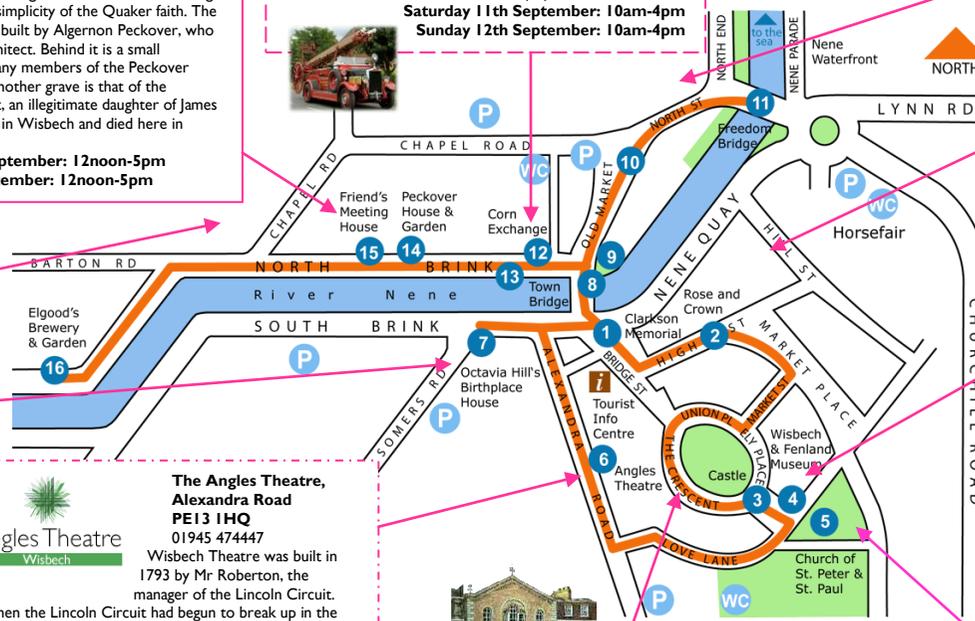
Saturday 11th September: 10am-4pm**Sunday 12th September: 10am-4pm****Wisbech General Cemetery, North End**

Wisbech TIC 01945 583263



Wisbech General Cemetery was set up in 1836 primarily as a cemetery for non-conformists. The land was purchased from one of the leading nonconformists of the day, Mr Joshua Bland, and the cost was defrayed by the selling of shares in what was hoped to become a profitable company. The land was laid out as a formal garden, copying the design of the first public cemetery at Kensal Green in London. Over the next 100 years many prominent citizens of Wisbech were buried here; Samuel Smith, (it was he who took the now famous photographs of the chapel), together with his wife and family, members of the Dawbarn family, Ollards, Southwells and Gardiners.

Friends of Wisbech General Cemetery will be on hand with maps and lists of names if anyone is interested in family research. There will also be a maintenance working party who can show people round the site.

Sunday 12th September: 10am-4pm**The Angles Theatre, Alexandra Road PE13 1HQ**

01945 474447

Wisbech Theatre was built in 1793 by Mr Robertson, the manager of the Lincoln Circuit. When the Lincoln Circuit had begun to break up in the 1840s a 'Sale Notice' is recorded as being posted on the theatre and the last recorded performance of that era was in 1846. Between 1846 and 1977 the theatre had many different uses including: chapel for Wesleyan Methodist Reformers, grain store, store for a tent maker, public baths, a school of Science and Art, town library, and as a Christian Spiritualist Church. In 1978 the then recently formed 'Angles Theatre Company' rediscovered the theatre and leased it from the owners. They established a Council to administer the theatre. A Constitution for the Theatre Council was approved by the Charity Commissioners "to foster and promote the maintenance, improvement and development of the Angles Theatre, and its knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the Arts in Wisbech and its environs."

Friday 10th September: 12noon-4pm**Wisbech Masonic Lodges, The Crescent PE13 1EH**

01945 420115

A former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, opened in 1803, and now a Masonic Temple. A rare opportunity of view the interior of this Georgian building, along with a display of regalia.

Saturday 11th September: 10am-3pm**Sunday 12th September: 10am-3pm**

Not Only ... But Also ... See over the page for other local heritage gems: some new for 2010

Wisbech Social Club and Institute, Hill Street PE13 1AP

01945 587437

Founded by Jonathan Peckover in 1864 for the local Temperance Movement, the Institute's emblem bore the legend Labour, Learning, Love. A movement for a working men's club started in 1863, the parent body being the Young Men's Total Abstinence Society. An inaugural meeting on 5th January 1864 produced £24 16s in subscriptions. During the first year 90 members joined, and by 1866 the club had 267 members. Its first headquarters were in hired rooms in Upper Hill Street, but in 1867 the club moved to its existing premises at Alfred House, Lower Hill Street. The new building was purchased for £800, of which £600 was subscribed by the Peckover family, who throughout its existence have been generous patrons. A new hall was built in 1871-2 and a gymnasium in 1873. By 1875 the membership amounted to 800. In 1898 the Wisbech Working Men's Club and Institute was the most financially successful of all English working men's clubs, having 1,136 members, a revenue of £1,818 and investments of £5,901. In 1904 there were 1,304 members, 376 of them women. This building has numerous rooms and passageways and a landmark Clock Tower. **An exhibition of photographs from the Lilian Ream archive will be on display.**

Friday 10th September: 2pm-5pm**Saturday 11th September: 10am-5pm****Sunday 12th September: 10am-4pm**

Any tours of the building will be in controlled groups.

**Wisbech & Fenland Museum, Museum Square PE13 1DT**

01945 583817

Wisbech & Fenland Museum is one of the oldest museums in the United Kingdom. It is very unusual because it is not only a museum, but also home to two historic libraries and a substantial archive, holding diocesan and borough items. The collections were initiated by the town's Literary and Museum Societies which were formed in 1781 and 1835 respectively. Since the Museum opened in 1847, the collections have continued to grow, but the essence of the Museum remains virtually unchanged. So come and discover a treasure house of rare and unusual artefacts, illuminating history, both local and worldwide, recent and ancient.

Friday 10th September: 10am-4pm**Saturday 11th September: 10am-4pm****St Peter's & St Paul's Church Church Terrace, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, PE13 1HB**

Description
St Peter's & St Paul's is set in the very heart of the Fenland market town of Wisbech. The present church was first built in 1187AD when a Norman stone castle was erected to replace an earlier wooden structure. The church of St Peter's & St Paul's is unique in that it possesses a double nave, and twin chancels, the construction reflects the wealth and prosperity of the medieval guilds that built the original church. Just to the right of the altar some finely carved misericords can be found where the priests would have sat, just above these are the only remaining medieval stained glass windows left in the church. Hiding one of the chancels is the magnificent organ which was built in 1951 by Harrison and Harrison, from pipework of earlier instruments. It is felt that the organ is one of the finest examples to be found within East Anglia.

The church tower will be open from 2pm to 3.30pm on Saturday 11 September. Access is via a narrow, steep spiral staircase and caution should be taken.

Friday 10th September: 12noon-4pm**Saturday 11th September: 9am-4.30pm****Sunday 12th September: 12noon-4pm**

Please reserve a place on the church tower tour by calling the Church Office on 01945 582508.

