



UK's maritime heritage celebrated with two new Heritage Harbours coming on board during Heritage Open Days

Gloucester and Ramsgate officially become Heritage Harbours on Saturday 7th September 2024, joining twelve other locations across the UK already recognised for their contribution to saving our maritime heritage. The Heritage Harbours project is supported by National Historic Ships UK, Historic England and Maritime Heritage Trust.

"We are very pleased to welcome on board Gloucester Docks, and Ramsgate's Royal Harbour, during Heritage Open Days 2024, the largest festival of history and culture in the UK," said Henry Cleary, Heritage Harbours' convenor and chair of Maritime Heritage Trust.

"Heritage Harbours are about capturing the interactions between navigable water and the land and buildings alongside it. No other designation does this and we now have locations which represent the main types of historic port from the Roman period to the 19th century."

Gloucester and Ramsgate join Bideford, Bristol, Buckler's Hard, Chester, Exeter, Faversham and Oare Creeks, Ipswich, Maldon and Heybridge, Sandwich, Shardlow, Stourport, and Wells next the Sea in the Heritage Harbours National Working Group.

Gloucester, a Roman town in origin, will be celebrating its Heritage Harbour status on Gloucester Day, Saturday 7th September, with a procession through the city and proclamation by the town crier, rounding off with cannon fire from the Sealed Knot re-enactment society.

Tony Conder, Chair of the Gloucester Docks Bicentenary Working Team, said: "Heritage Harbour designation is an amazing achievement for Gloucester, building on the work of the City Council, Canal & River Trust, previously British Waterways, in bringing new life to the waterfront. It offers fantastic opportunities for all the current partners engaged within the historic Port of Gloucester to celebrate the Bicentenary in 2027 and to go on to strengthen the Gloucester Docks businesses and enhance the enjoyment of visitors to this maritime heritage site into the future."

Councillor Jeremy Hilton, leader of Gloucester City Council, said: "The docks have played a crucial role in the history of Gloucester and its importance as a beautiful and historic city, so it is only fitting that this is recognised. When they were established 200 years ago they opened up trade from all over the world contributing to a boom in manufacturing and kick-starting Gloucester's industrial revolution. Today the quays are a vibrant visitor attraction and place for local people to enjoy that continue to grow in popularity with the recent arrival of the Food Dock backed by the council, which is an exciting new addition."



Ramsgate's Royal Harbour is Grade II* listed and is the only royal harbour in the world, an honour bestowed by King George IV in 1821.

"We are thrilled to receive the Heritage Harbour designation," said John Walker, Chair of the Ramsgate Heritage Harbour Working Group. "It's wonderful that our amazing maritime

heritage, combined with the activities of a working harbour and thriving cafe culture, has been recognised nationally. Ramsgate is a great place to work and to visit.”

Many of the Heritage Harbours are staging maritime events during Heritage Open Days. In Ipswich, Suffolk, on Saturday 7th September, and Maldon, Essex, on Saturday 14th September, both ancient ports dating back to Saxon times, visitors can clamber aboard Thames sailing barges and experience the highs and lows of life on the water.

In Exeter, River Radio will be streaming live on Friday 13th September from 8am-8pm; Bideford has an open day on Sunday 15th September on the restored Steamship *Freshspring*.

And in Ramsgate, throughout the week, there will be lighthouse and ship open days as well as walks, talks and tours. [More detailed summary of events given below].

For more information on all the Heritage Harbours, and a map showing the locations, see www.maritimeheritage.org.uk/heritage-harbours/location-map

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Notes to Editors

1. Photos

Photo caption: Life on a Thames barge, carrying grain from East Anglia to London, was very much a family affair. This photo comes from the Ipswich Maritime Trust's archive of over 2,000 digitised images from private collections, including some of the oldest photos ever taken.

Photos of Gloucester Dock are available on request.

2. For further information on all the Heritage Harbours, and a map showing the locations, see www.maritimeheritage.org.uk/heritage-harbours/location-map

3. Summary of free events in Heritage Harbours during HODs:

- **Ramsgate:** Friday 6th – Sunday 8th September and Friday 13th – Sunday 15th September: Clock House Museum exhibition with stories from the people from the Royal Harbour's past. Saturday 7th & Sunday 8th September: music at the Sailor's Church. 9th September: talk on Heritage Harbours; 13th September talk on Ramsgate's royal connections. 7th and 14th September: guided tours of the Royal Harbour and its historic figures, vessels, buildings and landmarks, with a self-guided audio tour, available free on all smartphones from the USEEUM app. See <https://ramsgate-society.org.uk/events/> and search for "Ramsgate" on <https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/whats-on/search-2024-events.html> for other Heritage Open Day activities and events.
- **Buckler's Hard:** Friday 6th - Sunday 8th September, including: Friday and Sunday, talk by Mary Montagu-Scott about work to preserve the world's only surviving wreck of a ship built at Buckler's Hard (at the *HMS Agamemnon – Navigating the Legend* exhibition in the [Shipwrights Workshop](#); exhibition [The Art of Buckler's Hard](#); original [Shipwright's Cottage](#) and [St Mary's Chapel](#).
- **Ipswich:** Saturday 7th September. Explore Sailing Barge *Victor*, exchange maritime stories with Ipswich Maritime Trust, visit the Window Museum and displays in the Old Custom House, and sing along with the Shefarers, Orwellmen and Shotley Wailers shanty singers. www.ipswichmaritimetrust.org.uk
- **Shardlow:** 7th – 8th September: Shardlow Inland Port Festival https://www.facebook.com/groups/144705997759926/?locale=en_GB
- **Gloucester:** 7th September. Procession on Gloucester Day led by Town Crier who will proclaim Gloucester's designation as a Heritage Harbour. 7th, 14th and 15th: Below Deck aboard *Kathleen & May*, West Country Coastal Schooner, lying in Gloucester Docks - Guided Tours & Vintage Archive Film. 13th September: Origins and History of Mariners Chapel, led by Robert Kingston – Talk. 14th & 15th September - LV14 SULA Lightship, Llanthony Wharf - Guided Tours. 13th & 14th September - Walking Tour of the Historic Docks from National Waterways Museum Gloucester. 14th September - Gloucester's Docklands Railway History - Circular Docks Walk, from the North Warehouse, Gloucester Docks. 14th September - Sailing for a Living - led by historian Tony Conder at the Ed Shed at the Folk Museum.

- **Exeter:** Sunday 8th September: Tales of the Land and Songs of the Sea; <https://exetercustomhouse.co.uk/event/tales-of-the-land-and-songs-of-the-sea/> Friday 13th September: River Radio will be streaming live, 8am – 8pm. <https://artworkexeter.org.uk/projects/river-radio/> Saturday 14th September: Shanty festival <https://exetercustomhouse.co.uk/event/quayside-shanty-festival-2/>
- **Maldon:** Saturday 14th September: activities on board barges and other vessels for all age groups, including talk by Huw Wahl, producer of *Wind, Tide and Oar* film on engineless sailing. www.M3ha.org.uk
- **Bideford:** Sunday 15th September. Heritage Open Day on Steamship *Freshspring* (www.ssfreshspring.co.uk) plus a seafarers day during the Appledore Book Festival (15th – 22nd September) www.thewharves.org

For further details on each, go to www.heritageopendays.org.uk/whats-on/search-2024-events and enter the location or date.

4. **The aims of Heritage Harbours** are to help safeguard the harbourside, buildings, facilities and businesses that are vital to support our working maritime heritage vessels. Supported by The Maritime Heritage Trust, National Historic Ships UK and Historic England, local communities in each location are developing outline plans to maintain and enhance the historic port area, its environmental features and the facilities such as shipyards and dry docks which vessels need to operate.

5. **The UK Heritage Harbour National Group** (individual ports and national partners) manages the scheme and has adopted criteria. Further applications for the scheme, which is not a legal designation, are welcome. More information from:

info@maritimeheritage.org.uk <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1810140832395343>
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100095373729993>

6. The Heritage Harbour concept started in northern Europe as a way of providing free or low-cost mooring to historic vessels in exchange for public display. In the UK the idea has evolved to include a wider range of local community links such as encouraging heritage skills eg, wooden boatbuilding and cultural heritage activities as well as maritime festivals and events which benefit traders and visitors.

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Quotes from national partners

Historic England *welcomes the inclusion of Gloucester and Ramsgate to the Heritage Harbours initiative. Local communities are key to the safeguarding of historic harbours and working harbour facilities. Historic England are working to provide resources to help communities make the most of their maritime heritage.*

National Historic Ships UK *Hannah Cunliffe, Director, said “I am delighted to see the further expansion of the Heritage Harbour community with the addition of these two locations, both of which have a depth of history and long-standing maritime associations that fully warrant their inclusion in this scheme. The survival of Britain's historic vessels depends on harbours and ports such as these which provide vital infrastructure to service and maintain ships and boats into the future. NHS-UK supports the development of Heritage Harbours in line with its Shipshape Network initiative which promotes the regeneration of traditional maritime skills and connects projects across the UK.*

The Maritime Heritage Trust *said “We need to ensure that new waterside development is sensitive to the needs of traditional vessels so that maritime trades, workshops and slipways can continue. A lively waterfront can attract visitors, bring increased community activity with open days, events and trails and help regenerate an area in a sustainable way. This in turn can support the skills, volunteering and enterprise which bring maritime heritage to life.”*