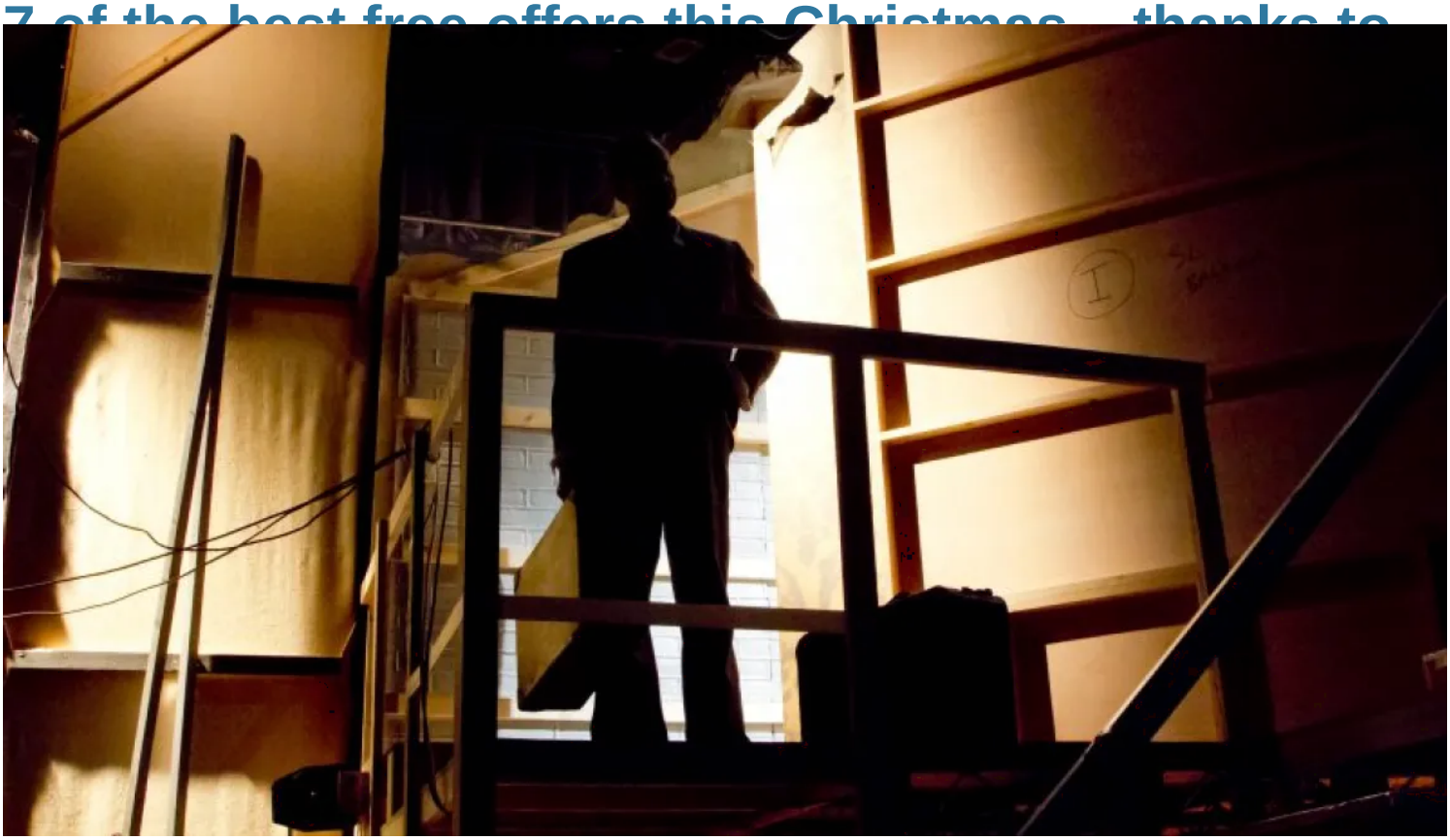
7 of the best free offers this Christmas – thanks to



Take a backstage tour at Colchester's Mercury Theatre

We never miss an opportunity to say thank you to National Lottery players for all the support they give to heritage across the UK.

This Christmas we're pulling out all the stops. From 3-9 December, hundreds of venues and attractions across the UK are opening their doors with free entry or offers to say a huge 'thank you' to National Lottery players. There's something for everyone - here are seven of our favourites:

1. Bag a free tree!

Skipton Castle Woods are giving away free trees outside Skipton Town Hall, Friday 7th December 12noon – 2.30pm. A National Lottery grant has helped thousands of people visit Woodland Trust Skipton Castle Woods and learn about the heritage on their doorstep – this is their way of saying thank you.

2. Go on a hard-hat tour of a London palace

Excited about the National Lottery-funded restoration of Fulham Palace? Book a behind-the-scenes hard-hat tour while renovations are underway, providing a glimpse of the hidden interiors that are not normally open to visitors. This tour takes place in the spaces which will form the new museum in the Tudor Courtyard.

3. Try bird watching for beginners

Are you struggling to tell an oystercatcher from a spoonbill? If so, this could be the one for you. Discover the wonders of bird watching with a winter walk in the Holes Bay Nature Park with Dorset Wildlife Trust.

4. See behind the scenes at the Severn Valley Railway

Get up close and personal to some of the rolling stock that is currently under restoration, see heritage skills in action, meet some of the volunteers and apprentices who make it all happen and round off the morning with tea and biscuits in the engineers' mess room. It's all happening on Thursday 6th December – move quickly if you want to be one of the lucky few.

5. Find out about Life in the Dark at a top London Museum

This year some of the capital's biggest museums and galleries have exclusive offers for National Lottery players. Meet the creatures that thrive at night, in pitch-black caves and deep in the sea at the Natural History Museum's Life in the Dark exhibition. All you need is to bring a UK National Lottery ticket valid for 2018 to the exhibition entrance and you and up to three children can see the exhibition for free, 3-7 December.

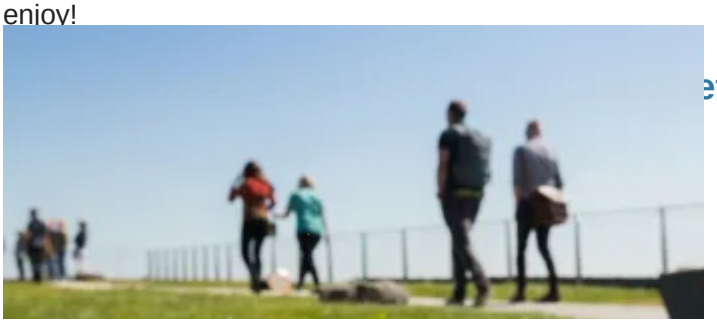
6. See the giant Lovell Telescope at Jodrell Bank

Our most popular attraction during last year's Thanks To You week! Come armed with a National Lottery ticket and you can explore the wonders of the universe and learn more about the workings of the Lovell Telescope. Jodrell Bank was recently awarded £12.2million from HLF to develop its ambitious new First Light Project – this is their chance to say thank you.

7. Take a backstage tour at the panto

Ever wondered what goes on backstage during panto season? (Oh yes you have!) A backstage tour at Colchester's Mercury Theatre allows you to step on the stage and get up close to the set of Jack and the Beanstalk. Their guide will tell you about the history and operation of the theatre. You will hear about theatre superstitions, the design process, and you can ask any questions you like!

See our online map for more inspiration. While some offers are open all week to anyone turning up with a National Lottery ticket, others must be booked in advance, with limited tickets available. Be sure to check websites for details – enjoy!



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The living grassland roof at The Sill, Northumberland National Park

Seven top heritage days out for a sunny day

Remembrance Reinvented - Devizes and Wiltshire