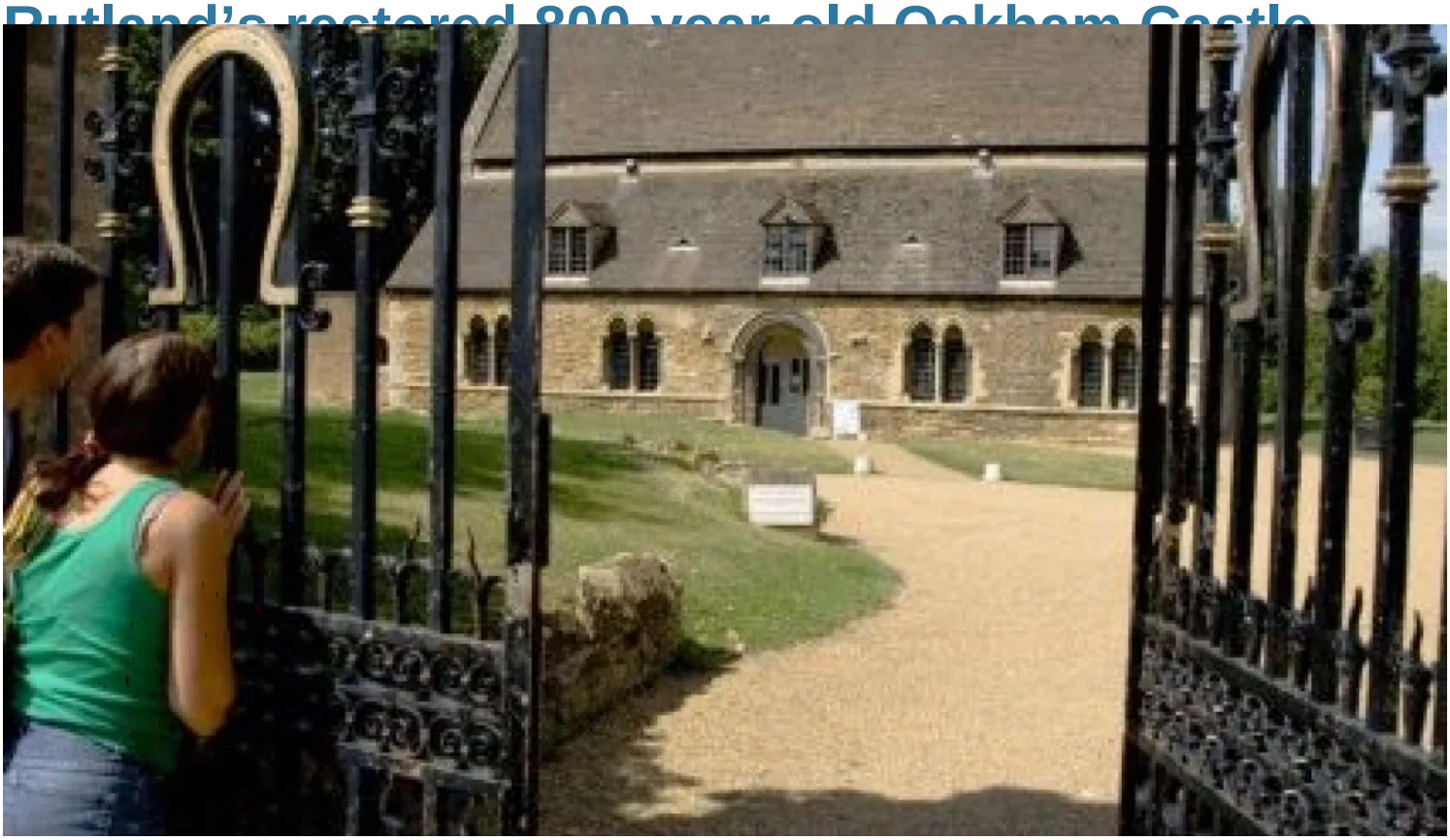
Rutland’s restored 800-year-old Oakham Castle



The Great Hall, Oakham Castle

Oakham Castle, one of England’s best surviving Norman buildings, will reopen its doors to the public this bank holiday Monday following an extensive National Lottery-funded restoration.

Built between 1180 and 1190, the castle sits at the heart of the historic county town of Rutland and is one of the most popular places to visit in the East Midlands.

Thanks to a £2.1million HLF grant, the site has been carefully restored and improved over the last six months. A 12th-century curtain wall has been rescued from damaging tree roots and the Grade I listed Great Hall has been lovingly re-pointed, repainted and cleaned.

The hall hosts the castle’s famous collection of over 200 horseshoes. These were donated by visiting peers and monarchs over the last 500 years, with the first believed to have been given by Edward IV in 1470.

[quote=Jonathan Platt, Head of HLF East Midlands]“From the unique horseshoe collection to its importance in the UK’s Norman and judicial history, Oakham Castle is one of Rutland’s finest heritage treasures.”[/quote]

The hall is also the oldest court building in England that has remained in continuous use, with evidence of trials occurring there as early as 1229 and crown courts still taking place biennially.

Alongside the restoration works, we are funding a programme of events and family activities to open up the castle's important history for visitors to explore.

The grand reopening will transport visitors back to Norman England with chances to have a go at Norman coin striking, falconry, archery and weaving. Events run from 11am-4pm on 30 May.

Jonathan Platt, Head of HLF East Midlands, said: "From the unique horseshoe collection to its importance in the UK's Norman and judicial history, Oakham Castle is one of Rutland's finest heritage treasures.

"The extensive restoration works have made such a difference to the site, equipping it to welcome many more visitors from nearby and further afield. Thanks must go to National Lottery players for making our investments possible."