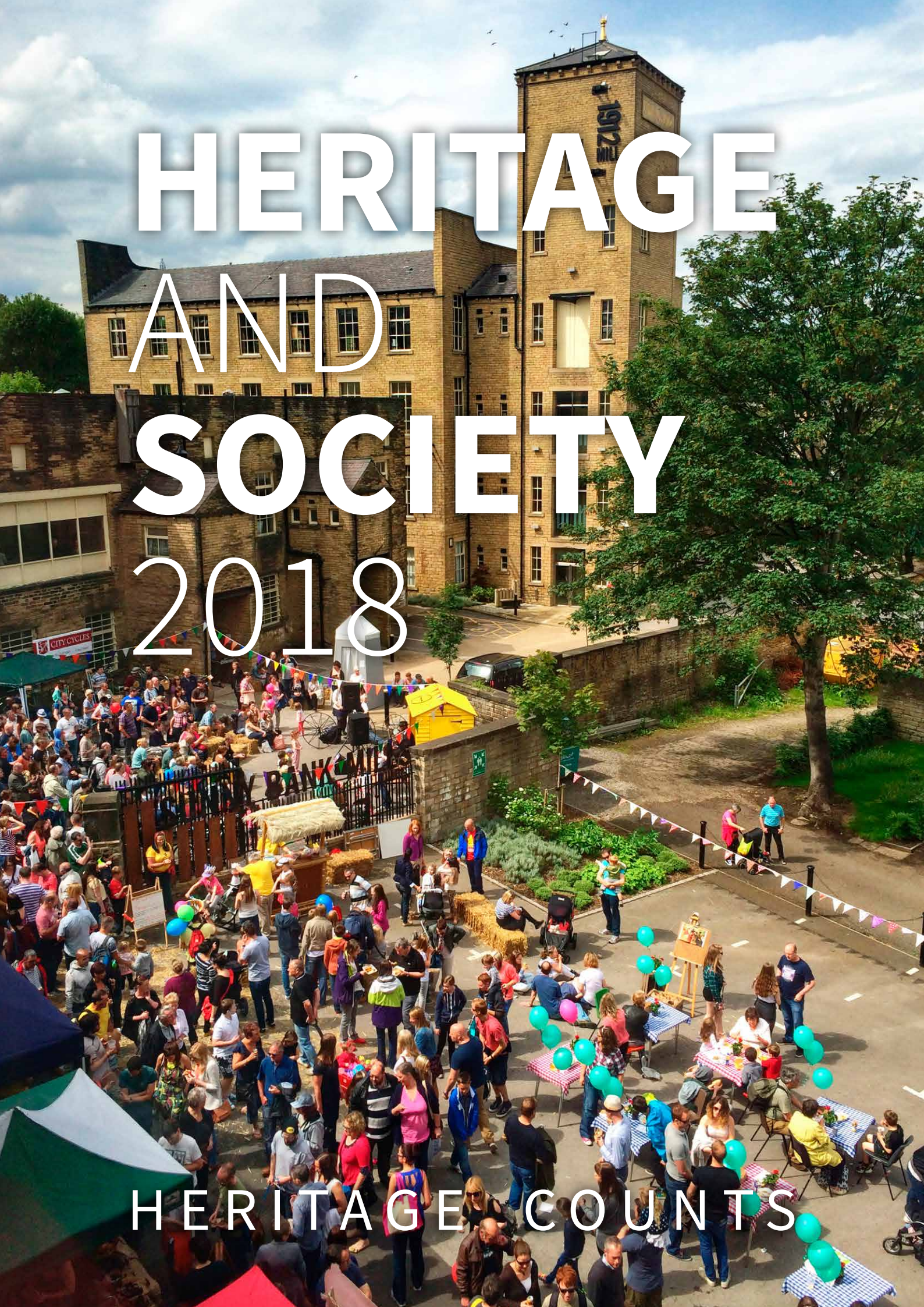


HERITAGE AND SOCIETY 2018

An aerial photograph of a large outdoor festival held in a courtyard. In the background is a large, multi-story brick building with many windows. A tall, narrow tower on the right side of the building has the year '1912' written vertically on its side. The courtyard is filled with a large crowd of people of various ages. There are several tables set up with blue and white checkered tablecloths, decorated with colorful balloons (blue, pink, green). Some people are sitting at these tables, while others are standing and walking around. There are also some stalls or displays, including one with a sign that says 'CITY CYCLES'. The sky is blue with some white clouds.

HERITAGE COUNTS



England's heritage is loved and cared for by millions; for its beauty, for the fascination it inspires, and for the benefits it brings us all.

.....

As **individuals**, the historic environment enriches our lives. It's a source of pride and identity; it provides a deep emotional connection, it is a focus for shared experiences.

As a **society**, understanding our heritage helps make sense of our place in the world. It helps create a sense of familiarity and belonging, bringing communities together and connecting us to our shared past, in all its diversity.

Heritage and Society presents evidence on the ways that the historic environment benefits individuals and communities. It is gathered from a wide range of reliable sources including major household panel surveys, systematic literature reviews, bespoke evaluation studies and public opinion surveys.

The evidence is structured around seven topics:

1. England's historic environment **is enjoyed by millions** (p.4)
2. Members of the public **deeply value the historic environment** (p.6)
3. The historic environment **is important for our health and wellbeing** (p.8)
4. The historic environment **creates a strong sense of place** (p.12)
5. The historic environment **influences how we perceive places** (p.14)
6. The historic environment **brings people together** (p.16)
7. The historic environment **inspires learning and understanding** (p.20)

The evidence presented here includes recent research findings as well as past seminal pieces thus forming part of the heritage sector's rich, multidimensional knowledge base. The evidence is presented as brief bite-sized facts with links to the detailed evidence sources for more technical readers, or those with more specific evidence needs.

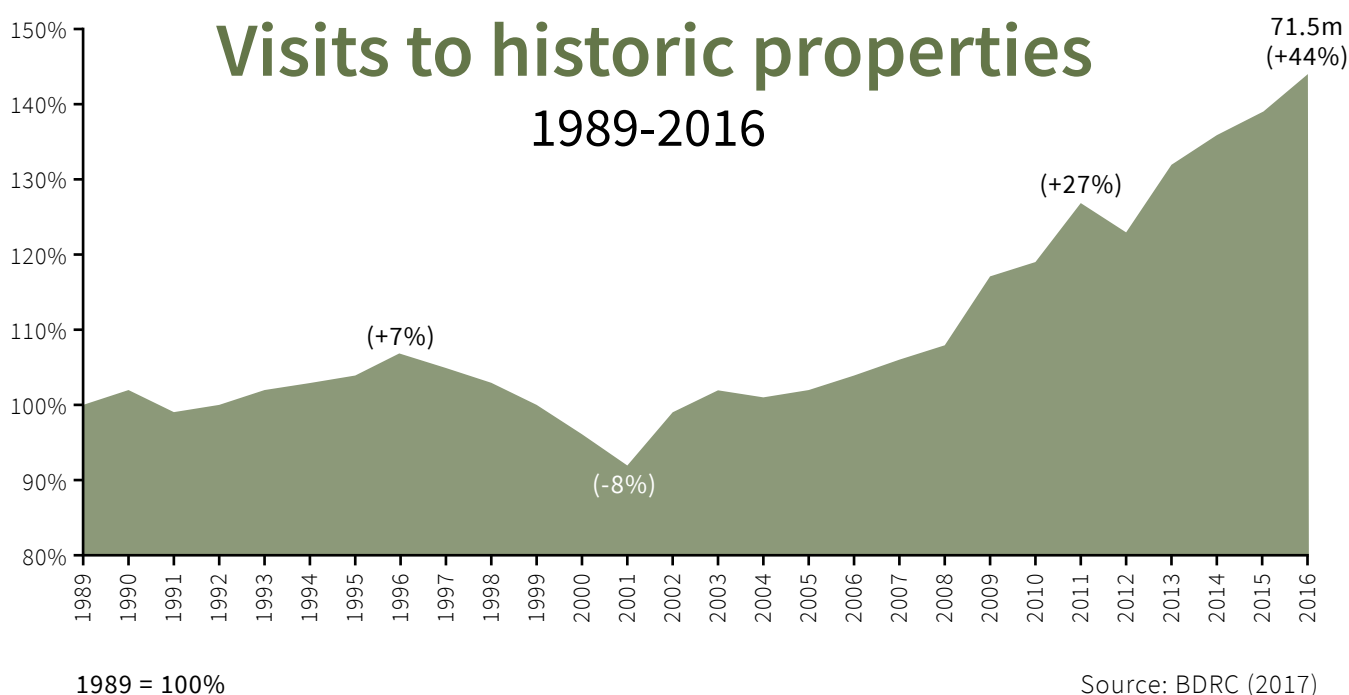
Together with [*Heritage and the Economy*](#), *Heritage and Society* can be used by anyone to make the case for heritage.

1. England's historic environment is enjoyed by millions

.....

With 99.3% of people in England living less than one mile from a listed heritage asset, the historic environment is within reach of us all (**Historic England 2015**). It represents not only a daily presence but also acts as a tangible connection to the past, telling the story of local places and the nation collectively.

- In 2016/17, almost three quarters (74.8%) of adults in England or 33 million adults had visited a heritage site at least once during the year. (**DCMS 2017**)
- Each year, Visit England conducts a survey of visits to visitor attractions in England, including visits to historic properties. The survey reports over 71.5 million visits to historic properties in 2016. (**BDRC 2017**)
- The Visit England survey also reports that there were over 1.6 million school visits to historic properties in 2016. (**BDRC 2017**)
- Membership to heritage organisations continues to grow in England with the National Trust, English Heritage and Historic Houses Association's Membership reporting annual membership increases of 5%, 11% and 11% respectively between 2016 and 2017. In 2017, the National Trust reported over 5 million members while membership of the English Heritage Trust exceeded 1 million for the first time. (**Historic England 2017 a**)



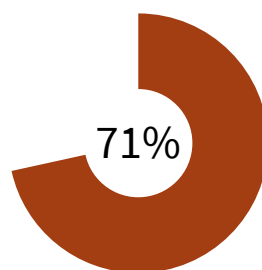


2. Members of the public deeply value the historic environment

.....

England's heritage inspires passion, intrigue and fascination. This stems from a deep emotional connection we have to the past, helping us to make sense of our place in the world and creating a sense of belonging and attachment to places.

■ A recent survey of 1,731 adults in England found that **71% agreed with the statement, 'I am interested in the history of the local area where I live'.** (YouGov 2018)



'I am interested in the history of the local area where I live.'

■ The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) **Taking Part household survey** found that **94.2% of adults in England agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'it is important to me that heritage buildings or places are well looked after'.** (DCMS 2017)

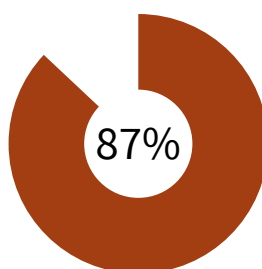
■ For members of the public, the strength of their connection with places creates a strong desire, and need, to protect these places for future generations. A survey of over 2,000 people found that 75% would like to pass on their love of their place to significant others (National Trust 2017.)

■ A survey of more than 5,000 adults in England found **almost two fifths (38%) of the public have taken action to protect a local historic building or local place from damaging change, or from becoming derelict or disused,** with action including signing a petition, joining a membership group, fundraising/donating for local heritage and attending a public meeting about local heritage. (Historic England 2015)

■ **87% of 1,731 adults in England agreed with the statement that 'finding new uses for historic buildings is better than demolishing them',** with only 2% disagreeing with this statement. (YouGov 2018)

■ New evidence gathered for Heritage Counts 2017 showed that conservation areas are a popular planning tool amongst members of the public. Three quarters of all adults (74%) in England believe Local Authorities should have the powers to restrict changes to buildings and streets in order to protect the character and appearance of Conservation area (YouGov 2017)

■ It is the success in conserving the historic character and architectural features of the conservation areas that adds value, rather than the designation itself. 88% of conservation area residents agreed or strongly agreed that **"conservation area designation is effective in protecting the character and appearance of my area."** (YouGov 2017)



'Finding new uses for historic buildings is better than demolishing them.'

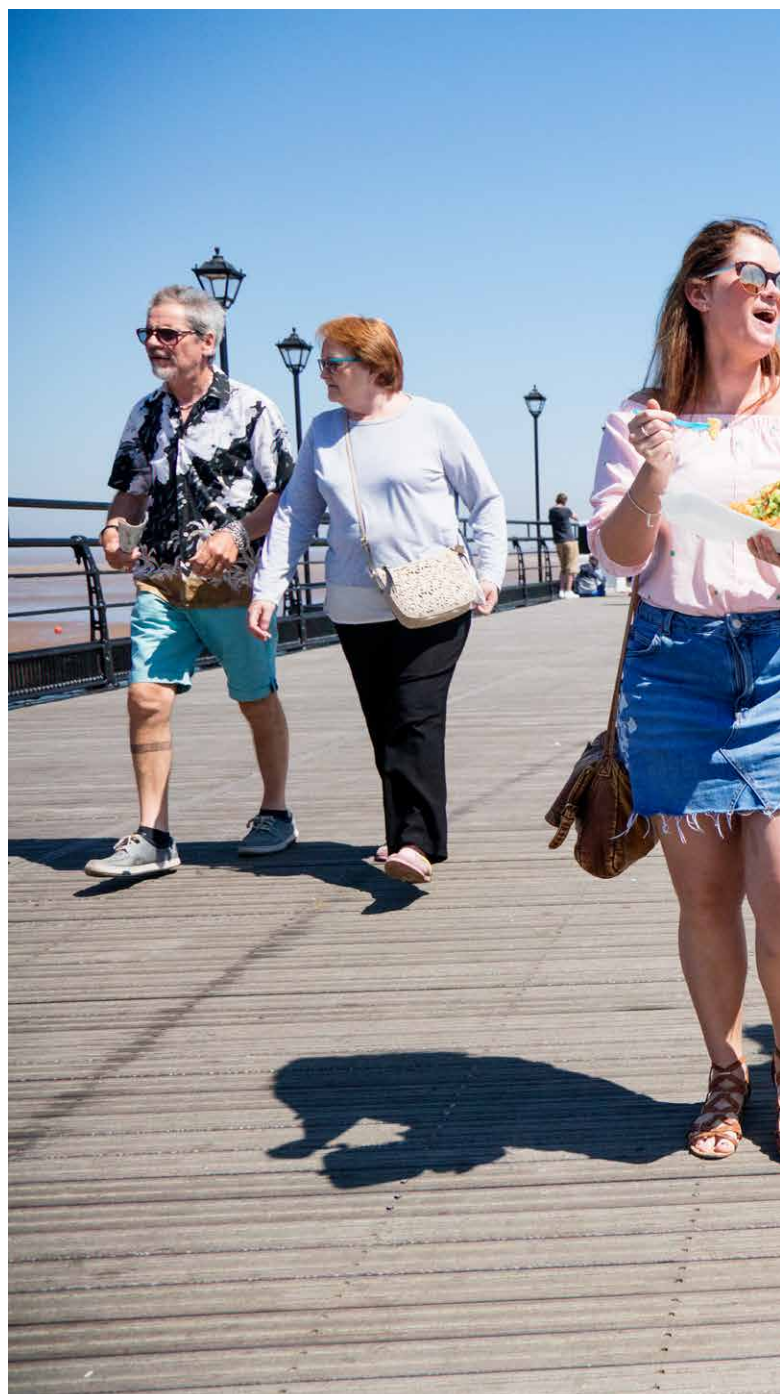


3. The historic environment is important for our health and wellbeing

.....

There is a growing evidence base and recognition that the historic environment has a role to play in maintaining and improving our mental and physical health. This is true for individuals as well as communities at large.

- In 2016, The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published its *Culture White Paper*. This paper sets out the government's strategy for the cultural sectors which includes the nation's heritage and historic environment. A central tenet of the government's strategy is the way in which culture and heritage '*has an intrinsic value through the positive impact on personal wellbeing*', and that it makes '*a crucial contribution to the regeneration, health and wellbeing of our regions, cities, towns and villages.*' (DCMS 2016)
- Analysis of the *Taking Part* Survey demonstrates that *visiting heritage sights a few times a year or more is a significant predictor of life satisfaction, happiness and anxiety*. People who visited heritage sites *reported higher life satisfaction and happiness scores than those who did not, and also reported lower anxiety*. (DCMS 2015)
- A recent study assessing the impacts of archaeological excavation on wellbeing found that *personal, practical and voluntary involvement in archaeological excavations has the potential to positively influence wellbeing and personal happiness*. Specifically, it is the physicality of excavation and the active engagement in the process of archaeological discovery and learning that supports the growth of positive personal attributes, which can result in an increased sense of wellbeing (Sayer, F 2015)



■ The wellbeing benefits of participating in and engaging with heritage is increasingly being recognised in the public health sector. In 2017, Halton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), who are responsible for delivering local NHS services, published its first Cultural Manifesto. The manifesto advocates for a new approach to healthcare that focuses on ‘wellness not illness’ and addresses ‘root causes and not just symptoms’. It argues that *‘it is the context in which people live their lives that is the most important determinant of life expectancy and this requires a more than medicine approach.’*

■ The Cultural Manifesto specifically identifies heritage as a *‘crucial context in which people live their lives’* and supports a *‘powerful sense of place, of being and purpose’*. For these reasons, Halton CCG along with many others is increasingly making use of social prescribing, a means of enabling GPs, nurses and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services such as, volunteering, group learning, gardening and other cultural, heritage and sporting activities. (Halton NHS Clinical Commissioning Group 2017)



Cleethorpes Pier, Cleethorpes, Lincolnshire.

- Evidence from *Understanding Society*, a major household longitudinal survey, demonstrates that **people who participate less often in heritage-related activities have lower life satisfaction and poorer physical and mental health**. Furthermore, people who ceased visiting heritage sites also reported significant declines in physical health, mental health and life satisfaction. (NatCen 2018)
- The same study found that young people who visited heritage sites were more likely than non-visitors to report high levels of self-esteem and to feel that they have something to be proud of. (NatCen 2018)
- The What Works Centre for Wellbeing argues that reducing wellbeing inequalities has a greater impact on people's lives than reducing the inequality of income. The Centre's research finds that **engaging in heritage activities is associated with lower wellbeing inequality**. This evidence demonstrates that heritage has a role in reducing the wellbeing gap between people. (What Works Centre for Wellbeing 2017)
- In 2018, the Canal and River Trust commissioned research to assess the impact of waterways usage on people's wellbeing. The study found **that spending time by water, including historic canals and rivers in our cities, is associated with higher levels of happiness and greater life satisfaction**, corresponding with other evidence presented here. The Canal and River Trust are using this evidence to promote England's historic waterways as a means of improving the nation's health and wellbeing. (Simetrica 2018)
- A study assessing changes in psychological health parameters experienced after walking in different National Trust sites found that these sites are important assets for **enhancing social and physical health and psychological wellbeing**. This is in addition to the fundamental part they play in helping to preserve and conserve the natural environment. (Barton et al, 2009)

Excavations of a late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age midden site at Chisenbury, Wiltshire, during a project by Wessex Archaeology working with Operation Nightingale and Breaking Ground Heritage
© Wessex Archaeology – Steve Thompson



CASE STUDY: OPERATION NIGHTINGALE

Operation Nightingale is a military initiative established in 2012 *‘with the intent of utilising both the technical and social aspects of field archaeology in the recovery and skill development of soldiers injured in Afghanistan and other warzones’*. To evaluate the efficacy of this programme, quantitative psychological assessments were carried out with a group of early-returned injured infantry requiring post-tour group activity psychological decompression (GAPD) for symptoms of anxiety, depression and trauma. The assessments found that soldiers reported a mean of 13%-18% improvement across the self-reported domains. ([Finnegan et al. 2014](#))

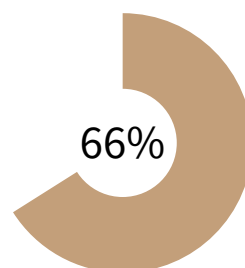


4. The historic environment creates a strong sense of place

.....

‘Sense of place’ is a term used to describe the ways in which people attach meaning and values to specific locations. It is a characteristic applied to places where the environment evokes positive feelings such as belonging, identity and pride.

- In 2017, the National Trust commissioned academics from the University of Surrey’s Department of Psychology to use brain imaging technology to investigate the emotional connection between people and places.* Researchers measured volunteers’ brain activity as they were shown pictures of landscapes, houses, other locations and personally meaningful objects. They found that **places rather than objects with strong personal ties caused a greater response in the areas of the brain associated with emotional responses.** (National Trust 2017)
- The study also involved in-depth interviews with volunteers, and a nationally representative survey of 2,000 people. The qualitative and quantitative study found that people’s **favourite places stimulated a feeling of belonging, of being physically and emotionally safe, and a ‘strong internal pull to the place’.** (National Trust 2017)
- In 2009, English Heritage commissioned Newcastle University’s Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CURDS) to review the link between the historic environment and sense of place. The review concluded that **the historic environment contributes towards a distinctive sense of place and a sense of continuity which can support a greater sense of people’s self-esteem and place attachment.** (CURDS 2009)
- A 2010 study into the impact of historic environment regeneration found that **people who live in areas with more heritage assets are likely to have a stronger sense of place:**
 - Adults and young people that live in areas with more heritage assets or cite a local building or monument as special are more likely to have a stronger sense of place (after controlling for other socio-economic factors that impact on sense of place). (Amion and Locum 2010)
 - 92% of respondents to the on-street survey in areas that had seen significant historic environment led regeneration felt that the heritage projects had raised pride in the local area and 93% said that it had increased their sense of place. (Amion and Locum 2010)
- Two-thirds (66%) of adults in England agree with the statement that **‘Historic buildings are a source of pride in the local area where I live’.** This is based on a nationally representative survey of 1,731 adults in England (YouGov 2018)



‘Historic buildings are a source of pride in the local area where I live.’

* Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) was used to track regional changes to areas of the brain associated with emotional processing.



St Peter's Cathedral, The Close, Exeter, Devon.

5. The historic environment influences how we perceive places

.....

England's built heritage is renowned for its **aesthetic value**, its beauty and character. The local diversity of styles and materials, the quality of its craftsmanship and its compelling sense of longevity makes historic buildings and structures an attractive part of the built environment. Its presence in our rural and urban landscapes has an attractive power that draws people and has an impact on their quality of life.

- Evidence gathered for [Heritage Counts in 2016](#) found that Business Improvement Districts use local heritage to convey authenticity, distinctiveness and bring credibility to place.
- In a recent survey of 1,731 adults in England on the quality of the built environment, the majority of respondents (58%) agreed with the statement that *'the age of a building makes a difference to the way I perceive its quality and design'*. ([YouGov 2018](#))
- Older buildings are considered to be of a higher quality than new buildings. Over two-thirds (68%) agreed with the statement *'historic buildings were generally built to a high standard'*. In comparison only 26% of adults agree with the statement *'new buildings are generally built to a high standard'*. ([YouGov 2018](#))
- The Heritage Lottery Fund's (HLF) report *20 Years in 12 Places* summarises research into what people think about heritage and the local projects HLF have supported:
 - 93% of 4,223 people surveyed said that local heritage has an impact on their quality of life.
 - 80% of people they surveyed think local heritage makes their area a better place to live.
 - 56% of adults surveyed said that their local area's heritage is important for their personal sense of identity. ([HLF 2015](#))

"The historic city is a fundamental part of the city identity and a huge asset ... It gives uniqueness to the place particularly when the retail centres we are competing with all have the same brands. We look different; offer a better quality visitor experience, plus the heritage tourism potential of the assets. This cannot be created without the heritage assets, which bring differentiation to the place brand."

Lincoln Business Improvement Group



Boroughgate, Appleby in Westmorland, Cumbria.

- A study into the impact of heritage-led regeneration found that 93% of respondents of a local survey felt that their local heritage-led regeneration project improved their perceptions of the local area and 91% felt that it had improved the image of the wider town. ([Amion and Locum 2010](#))
- In 2014, The Prince's Foundation conducted a review of 26 projects to understand what people want from new housing developments. The report identifies '*a desire for a strong sense of place and neighbourhood*' and a '*desire to respect historic form, style and materials*' as being amongst the most popular considerations in the design of new housing, (85% and 84% respectively). ([Prince's Foundation 2014](#))
- In a nationally representative survey of 1,731 adults in England, 84% of adults agreed that '*better quality buildings and public spaces improve people's quality of life*' ([YouGov 2018](#))

Which buildings
are perceived
to be built to a
higher standard?

26%

New buildings

68%

Historic buildings

6. The historic environment brings people together

.....

The historic environment has an important role in bringing people together, whether it is through providing attractive places to meet and relax together or by forming a common cause to gather around.

- Research suggests that incorporating community elements into heritage led projects can **enable people to feel more connected to the people and the places around them**, and result in increased wellbeing and personal happiness. (Sayer, F 2015)
- Almost two-thirds (64%) of adults in England agree with the statement, *‘public spaces (e.g. parks, public squares, etc.) are important for interacting with people in my neighbourhood’*. (YouGov 2018)
- A recent evidence review by the What Works Centre for Wellbeing found that projects or interventions that provide a focal point, or targeted group activity, may help to promote social cohesion between different groups and overcome barriers that may prevent some people (in marginalised groups) from taking part. (What Works Centre for Wellbeing 2018)
- The What Works Centre for Wellbeing’s evidence review also found good evidence that a range of place-based interventions from regenerating community assets to projects that provide the opportunity to access green and blue space can lead to a range of positive outcomes, including:
 - improved social interactions and social networks
 - positively affect a sense of belonging and pride in a community
 - improved skills and knowledge(What Works Centre for Wellbeing 2018)
- A 2013 survey of 2,001 people on the role of community organisations and heritage properties found that **69% of UK adults believe that heritage buildings and sites are important to their local community**, equivalent to approximately 35 million people. (Cebr 2013)
- An evaluation of heritage-led regeneration projects found that **over 90% of people living in areas where significant heritage-led regeneration had taken place, agreed that investment in the historic environment had resulted in a nicer place in which to live, work and socialise**. (Amion and Locum 2010)

“The memories, histories, rituals and sites are what bring people together. They remind communities of who they are, the values they share and the future they might collectively build”
(Ward 2017)



- According to the DCMS *Taking Part* survey, **there were an estimated 615,500 historic environment volunteers in 2016/17**, representing 1.6% of the population and 4.9% of all volunteering in England. (DCMS 2017)
- The Heritage Lottery Fund's (HLF) evaluation of volunteering on its funded projects found that volunteers reported benefits from socialising with others. Over 90% of HLF volunteers surveyed said they had **benefitted from socialising on heritage projects** and 35% sustained friendships outside of the project. (BOP Consulting 2011)
- From October 2013 to December 2016 IWM North and Manchester Museum delivered a volunteering, training and placement programme across 10 heritage venues in Greater Manchester. Research consultants carried out a longitudinal study following a Social Return on Investment methodology and found that:
 - Over 75% of volunteers reported a significant increase in wellbeing after a year
 - Almost 60% reported long term sustained wellbeing improvement over 2-3 years
 - 30% gained employment or other new opportunities for getting into work
 - For every £1 invested, the programme generated £3.50 in social and economic value
- The final evaluation report also concluded that, 'in the Manchester context, the project has demonstrated that heritage spaces can be highly effective settings for tackling social needs and supporting essential local services to unlock sustained long-term improvements in public health, wellbeing, as well as in employability'. (Envoy Partnership 2017)
- A recent impact evaluation of heritage projects funded by the HLF between 2002 and 2007, found that 45% of projects reported a sustained increase in the numbers of volunteers for at least five years after their projects completed. (HLF 2017)

Heritage Volunteers

2016/17



615,500

historic environment
volunteers

= 1.6%

of population

= 4.9%

of all volunteers
in England

Volunteer group and stone masons at Brandy Bottom Colliery, Parkfield Colliery, Pucklechurch, South Gloucestershire.



7. The historic environment inspires learning and understanding

.....

Cultural engagement can help shape reflective individuals, facilitating greater understanding of themselves and their lives, increasing empathy with respect to others, and an appreciation of the diversity of human experience and cultures (**Crossick and Kaszynska, 2017**)

- In 2015 the Heritage Lottery Fund published research of the impact of its national heritage investment programme over the last 20 years. The findings reveal that 83% of residents who had visited heritage sites or projects in their area, agreed that **visiting had helped them understand more about the history of their area.** (HLF 2015)
- The findings also suggest that local heritage sites and projects can broaden horizons as 67% of visitors agree that visiting has made them **have a better understanding of other people's cultures.** (HLF 2015)
- A previous HLF evaluation of volunteers showed that 72% of HLF volunteers surveyed reported increased contact with older adults. And 23% stated that volunteering helped them to increasing their understanding of over 65 year olds. (BOP Consulting 2011)
- A study into public spaces, social relations and wellbeing by public health academics demonstrates that public spaces such as streets and market places are important assets for developing tolerance and 'inter-ethnic understanding' within local communities. Public places such as historic markets and parks are important 'social and cultural arenas' that provide opportunities for unstructured interaction between different groups within communities. (Dines et al. 2006)



Detail of painted mural showing busy market scene by Gloria Ojulari Sule Grosvenor Road, St Paul's, Bristol

CASE STUDY: HERITAGE SCHOOLS

Heritage Schools is a Historic England initiative funded by the Department for Education to help school children develop an understanding of their local heritage and its significance.

Evidence from Historic England's Heritage schools programme evaluation shows that learning about local heritage inspires creativity and results in children who are increasingly proud of where they live. The evaluation of the 2016-17 Heritage Schools Programme surveyed participating teachers and cultural partners and several reported impacts for participating pupils ([Historic England 2017 b](#)):

- 99% agreed learning about local heritage improved pupils' sense of place
- 97% agreed learning about local heritage improved pupil's sense of pride
- 89% of teachers surveyed agreed that their pupils have an increased knowledge and understanding of local heritage
- 92% of teachers agreed that their pupils are more connected to the place they live in



Stonehenge Project. Neolithic Huts, Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wiltshire. School visit.

CASE STUDY: ANOTHER ENGLAND

The **Another England** project has been exploring England's heritage through the perspective of people of colour. The project is looking to better understand the buildings and places that are significant to the story of black and Asian people in England over the past hundred years through a mixture on online crowdsourcing, interviews and a series of public workshops in London, Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Newcastle, Liverpool and Bristol. The project will culminate with substantial online content, an exhibition and an event at the V&A in October.



Attendees at an Another England workshop event at RIBA North, Liverpool.

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(Alexander.Hayes@HistoricEngland.org.uk)

Front cover: © Sunny Bank Mills – located in Farsley, Leeds, the former mill ceased producing woollen cloth in 2008 but remains an important asset in the local community since being converted to house over 70 businesses including designers and textile artists. It also hosts an annual community festival, drawing thousands each year.



Historic England