



The Heritage Alliance



Heritage, Health and Wellbeing

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Photo Credits

Left: The University of Oxford's Harcourt Arboretum © Ian Wallman

Right: Powderham Castle (Member of Historic Houses) © The Curries

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Rewind to the Heritage Debate 2017:
'Is heritage good for your health?'



The Debate explored the following:

1. How can the sector do better to build bridges with the world of public health?
2. What claims can realistically be made for the health benefits of heritage?
3. Where does heritage best intersect with the public health needs of the nation?

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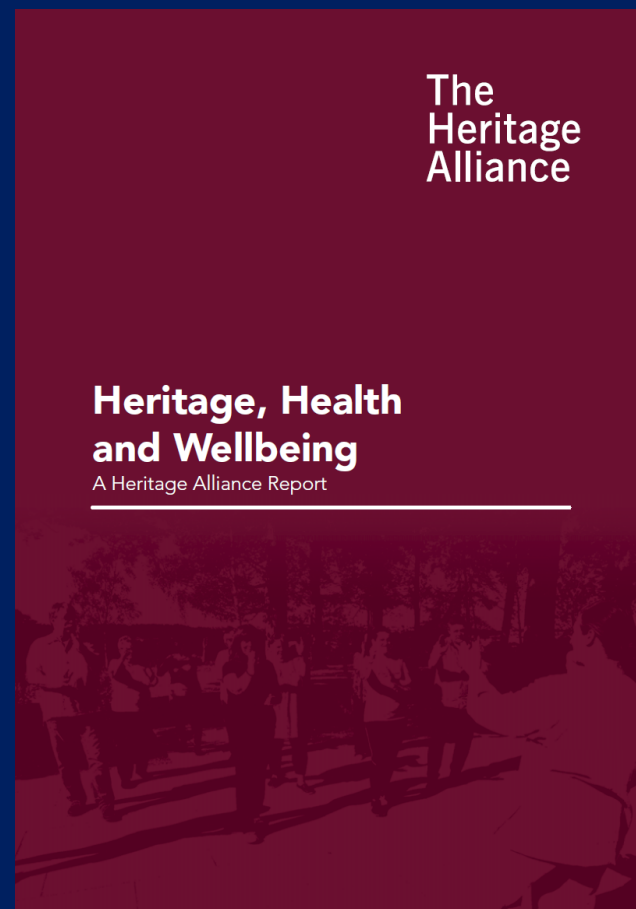
Report Contents:

- Foreword
- Introduction
- What do we know?
- Our Findings
- Case Studies
- Challenges
- Recommendations

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How can heritage support wellbeing?

- Contribute singularly or in combination opportunities for all five of the NEF's wellbeing actions
- Multiple avenues to wellbeing
- Appeal to diverse participant groups
- Transactional benefits and emotional 'intangible' benefits

This case study meets the following 5 Ways to Wellbeing:



Connect



Be Active



Take Notice



Keep Learning



Give

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"Going Viral"

COVID-19 lockdown digital health and wellbeing response



Image: L/R "Well City" Pilot - Drawing of a vision impairment achieved by manipulating a Sketchfab rendering of the artefact. Bath Abbey colouring sheet. Lost & Found session participants. © Wessex Archaeology Ltd

COVID-19 lockdown measures forced Wessex Archaeology to stop all public engagement events. In response, they had to rapidly find new ways to maintain their public benefit outputs by creating innovative digital solutions, and targeting those who could no longer access heritage and whose health and wellbeing was being affected by social isolation.

This case study meets the following 5 Ways to Wellbeing:



The online response was multi-faceted, and costs were absorbed as R&D time. One product was a 'Moment of Calm' series of 360-degree panoramic videos of heritage landscapes uploaded on their YouTube Channel and shared on social media. This simple mindful offering resonated with the public, significantly increasing digital engagement figures. Another was 'Drawing on Heritage': a creative offering on social media converting heritage sites and artefacts into line-drawn versions for colouring, promoted with videos of their production and blogs. A series of webinars were held to deliver heritage talks to online audiences working with partners such as Bristol Libraries. This had the effect of supporting other organisations lacking the resources and increased audience numbers and geographical reach.

A "Well-City" digital pilot was created to see if Wessex Archaeology in partnership with Salisbury Museum could offer an online heritage engagement activity and help fill gaps in routine for individuals with mental health challenges stuck at home and unable to access local support services. For five participants, over the course of five facilitated 90-minute sessions, Wessex Archaeology shared heritage images, videos, participant's work and 360-degree Sketchfab objects, with optional tasks to do between sessions. Evaluation was conducted using the short WEMWBS tool and qualitative assessment forms via email before, after and between sessions. This allowed participants to respond to the session immediately thus enabling us to capture fresh and up to date feedback, all of which was informative and encouraging; the course was having the positive effects we set out to achieve in relation to wellbeing through participation in the programme.

A key insight was creating the psychological safety for this group to participate online via a pre-meet to familiarise participants with the platform. Feedback on access and inclusion informed the development of the Historic England Emergency Fund "Lost & Found" project enabling online participants to discover and learn about artefacts hidden in archives and then selecting objects to be curated via 3-D scanning as exhibits in a virtual museum gallery.

"I like the virtual tour - it made me feel like I want to learn more. A real chance to see behind the scenes One of the joys of this pilot is that there's things to do."

"Good to see everyone again That was therapeutic for my brain - thank you."



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"I realise I probably remember/know more than I thought and can apply that knowledge base to new adventures and projects It has given me hope, which is an amazing thing in itself. Thank you"

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Key Challenges

- Inclusivity and access
- Research challenges
- Capacity
- COVID-19



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Recommendations

For the heritage sector:

- Embed wellbeing into your organisation
- Build in evaluation from the start
- Understand the power of partnerships
- Work with the local community
- Engage with the intended audience from the outset to shape the project
- Accessibility is paramount
- Ensure that your project is sustainable
- Build a compelling narrative
- Share existing expertise through training



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