RSA

Action and Research Centre

Heritage, Identity and Place

Seven themes from the Heritage Index

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About the RSA

The RSA (Royal Society for the encoruagement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) believes that everyone should have the freedome and power to turn their ideas into reliaty - someting we call the Power to Creatre. Through our research and 27,000-strong Fellowship, we seek to realise a society where creative power is distributed, where concentrations of power are confronted, and where creative values are nutured. The RSA's Action and Research Centre combines practical experimentation with rigorous research to achieve these goals.

About the Heritage Index

The Heritage Index has been compiled by the RSA, as part of the Heritage, Identity and Place project, in collaboration with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The Index should help people understand local heritage better and access relevant data. By taking a broad view – covering a wide range of indicators – this offers a new look at heritage and produces a set of surprising results in many instances. The results are adjusted on a per square mile and per person basis, allowing fair comparison between different parts of Britain.

The Heritage Index is designed to be a resource which helps to forge a stronger link between local heritage and the identity of residents in a place. This can help a place achieve its aspirations to grow and prosper, socially and economically.

It is clear from our previous research into heritage and place-making (*A Place for Heritage*, 2014) that despite some heart-felt enthusiasm for the history and the identity of their places being expressed by local leaders, they often disregard the potential offered by local heritage when developing their local area's economic, cultural or social strategies.

Our current programme of work is designed to stimulate debate about what is valued from the past, and how that influences the identity of current residents in a place. With devolution of political power to cities and counties gathering pace, the need for a richer understanding of place-based identity and local distinctiveness is heightened. Beyond the Heritage Index, further outputs from our Heritage, Identity and Place project will support the role for heritage within development plans and strategies for places across the UK.

Defining and measuring heritage

We define heritage as anything inherited from the past that helps us, collectively or individually, to understand the present, and create a better future

We define heritage as anything inherited from the past that helps us, collectively or individually, to understand the present, and create a better future. In order to build the Heritage Index, we ordered data into seven different categories, as shown in the table below. We maintain a distinction between heritage assets and heritage activities which allows us to calculate results for overall heritage vitality, as well as identify where the opportunities lie. All scores are reported at the district council level (ie lower-tier local authorities), and are reported separately for England, Scotland and Wales.

Example indicators within the Heritage Index framework

Domain	Asset	Activity
Historic built Environment	▪ listed buildings ▪ monuments ▪ World Heritage Sites	
Museums, archives and artefacts	▪ museums ▪ archives ▪ archaeological finds	▪ funding/spending ▪ volunteering ▪ participation ▪ awards ▪ Heritage Open Days
Industrial heritage	▪ railways ▪ canals ▪ continuously trading businesses	
Parks and open space	▪ parks ▪ gardens	
Landscpae and natural heritage	▪ designated protected areas ▪ ancient woodlands ▪ local nature reserves	
Cultures and nemories		▪ Blue Plaques ▪ protected food designations ▪ stability of local resident population
General (Infrastructure)		▪ tourism ▪ civic societies ▪ jobs in heritage industries

The RSA Heritage Index brings together over 100 indicators into a single score of heritage vitality. As well as considering physical and tangible assets, it uses statistics which quantify rates of volunteering and the number of people visiting archives, as well as the number of nights people spend on holiday in a local area. The results are reported in a number of indices:

- A Heritage Assets Index.
- A Heritage Activity Index.
- A combined Heritage Index that sums the scores for each local authority on both assets and activities.
- An index of heritage potential, which shows the difference between heritage assets and the activities that are taking place. This gives an indication of the intensity of use of existing heritage assets.

The Heritage Index includes a vast range of data for local areas:

- The number of listed buildings, historic battlefields, and conservation areas.
- The extent of land designated for protection of wildlife, such as nature reserves.
- Parks, National Parks, and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- The number of local food and drink products which have received special protected status from the European Commission.
- The number of blue plaques which have been put on buildings to mark a famous or important individual who is associated with the building.
- The number of Heritage Open Days which take place.
- The number of young people who are active in heritage, such as through archaeological clubs, through groups which meet at wildlife reserves, or through their school participating in a curriculum to learn outside of the classroom.

The best way to explore the Heritage Index is through interactive online maps, at www.thersa.org/heritage. All data is analysed and mapped at the scale of local authority districts. A separate report explains more about the methodology, and you can also see a list of all the data which has gone into the Heritage Index. You can download the data for yourself to adjust the weightings given to different types of heritage: this will allow you to see the impact on the rankings.

Structure of the report

This short report analyses the results from the Heritage Index, and highlights a selection of interesting stories across England, Scotland and Wales.[1]

The report is structured under seven themed chapters. The first covers a number of surprises – after crunching together over 100 datasets it is clear there are some star performers, beyond the predictable list of well-preserved historic cities and pristine landscapes. Heritage is as much about the scale and intensity of activities that bring history to life, as it is about traditional buildings and sites with protected status.

Digging deeper, in the second chapter we see that several myths about heritage are shattered: local areas rich in heritage assets, and with a vibrant role for the public, exist in both the wealthiest and most deprived corners of Britain. Benefiting from a local focus, the Index shows heritage is as strong in rural areas as in urban areas, and any concerns about a north-south divide are misplaced. While London has boroughs with among the highest heritage scores, Liverpool outperforms all other big cities of the south.

As a clear reminder of our identity as island nations, we also find that **coastal areas** perform particularly well in our Index, with extensive natural heritage assets.

In chapter four we compare the Heritage Index results with what we already know about **the benefits of heritage** to citizens.

Comparing heritage assets with heritage activities allows us to shortlist the **top 10 places with** the greatest opportunity to increase the involvement of people with heritage. This can be found in chapter five.

We conclude by considering how people could work to build upon this first Heritage Index. This includes improving the data they collect, celebrating the intangible heritage of local places, and taking action to ensure that heritage is accessible to local people and an active part of local identity. A stronger understanding of local heritage can help ensure that what is considered important is taken into account by those who influence how a place develops.

1. We were not able to compile an Index for Northern Ireland, as we had hoped to do, for several reasons. The absence of GIS shapefiles for local authority districts in Northern Ireland limits the usability of datasets which are published in GIS format. Secondly, the value of the exercise is diminished in Northern Ireland because of recent reorganisation into 11 local authorities; some datasets compiled in previous years use the smaller, pre-reorganisation district geography, at which scale survey-based data often does not provide reliable sample sizes.

Surprising star performers

Often, we tend to associate heritage with historic structures which have stood the test of time: castles and palaces, museums and country houses, as well as the legacy of industrial Britain. But the places where history comes alive are places where people have activated local history. Heritage doesn't speak for itself – it involves people playing a role to interpret historic resources, so that they are meaningful in the present day. Therefore, we consider that heritage activities are just as important as heritage assets. In the Heritage Index, we've reflected this through the inclusion of both datasets about heritage assets, and about heritage activities. Weighing up all this data together reveals new insights about which areas in England, Scotland and Wales are making best use of their heritage.

In England, the City of London, Kensington and Chelsea, Oxford and Cambridge all appear among the top six districts on the Assets Index, as might be predicted. But so do Hastings and Worcester, whilst the other slots in the top 10 are filled by four coastal towns – Barrow-in-Furness, Southend-on-Sea, Torbay and the city of Portsmouth. And it's Scarborough, parts of Cumbria (taking in much of the Lake District) and Norwich that are the top performers as measured by heritage activity, reflecting both the endeavours of local residents and their success in attracting visitors from elsewhere.

Overall, we found that local authorities where the historic footprint of a town is within tightly drawn council boundaries do better. Examples include Nottingham (109th), among bigger cities, and Worcester (10th), among smaller cities. This is because the Index uses the size of a district (in land area and population) to adjust scores. Scores should therefore be understood as representing the proportion of the district that is considered of heritage value by the indicators used. Because of the calculation of scores at the district level, renowned city centres such as York and Stratford-upon-Avon do not guarantee that their respective districts will top the rankings.

Interestingly, there is no simple direct relationship between places where heritage assets are richest, and places where activities are greatest – suggesting that heritage activity is not constrained by a relative lack of assets. Fenland, East Staffordshire, Cheshire, Blackburn, Plymouth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Leeds are all places where levels of heritage activity are high, relative to their asset base. Several London inner and outer boroughs, the north side of the Thames Estuary and areas of Surrey have low activities compared to their heritage assets.

Star performers

Once we take into account activities, as well as assets, to create the overall Heritage Index, there are more surprises:

- In England, Scarborough ranks 3rd and Hastings 5th, just behind the City of London (1st) and Kensington and Chelsea (2nd) – and above Cambridge (4th) and Oxford (6th).
- World-class museums, university archives, royal parks and dense collections of historic buildings are the well understood assets that put the City, Kensington, Oxford and Cambridge amongst the highest rankings – along with high levels of participation in heritage by local residents and tourists alike.
- For Scarborough, it's natural heritage that helps propel it to the top – local residents' keen interest in nature and wildlife volunteering, the care of its Blue Flag beaches and protected sites for nature, and its position on the edge of the North York Moors National Park, all of which attract high numbers of visitors, seeking to enjoy its heritage.
- Hastings is particularly strong in areas of social history and industrial heritage, as well as parks and green space – the heritage of the town is marked and celebrated through some of the largest number of Heritage Open Days and blue plaques in the country.
- Hastings achieves this high ranking despite facing high levels of deprivation. It is not alone. Portsmouth (12th), Southend (18th) and Blackpool (28th) score among the top 10 percent of England's 325 local authorities on the Heritage Index, despite having areas of high deprivation. Industrial heritage and museums are particular strengths in Portsmouth and Blackpool. For Southend, its position on the edge of the Thames Estuary provides rich tidal habitats with the highest levels of European protection.
- Many other coastal areas score particularly highly, including Dorset's Jurassic Coast, Torbay in Devon, and the Cumbria coast.

- Within Scotland, it's Dundee that comes top. Heritage volunteering and events are high in the city, whilst there has been heavy investment in the city's heritage by the local authority.
- The Orkney Islands follow – home to a globally-recognised World Heritage Site which includes Skara Brae, a well-preserved Neolithic village older than Stonehenge or Egypt's pyramids.
- The cities of Edinburgh (3rd) and Glasgow (5th) make up two of the other top five slots. The last is taken by Eilean Siar (4th) – the Western Isles, or Outer Hebrides – which also ranked second highest in Scotland's 'happiness' index.[2]
- Out of the 22 Welsh districts, Swansea (8th) finishes just ahead of Cardiff (9th); breaking this down into assets and activities, we see that despite the richer concentration of heritage assets in Cardiff, Swansea performs better in its levels of heritage

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2. Calculated using ONS data covering three subjective well-being questions (on life satisfaction, happiness, and whether respondents felt their lives were worthwhile).

activities.

- Unlike England and Scotland, the top spot in Wales is taken by a rural area – Gwynedd, home to Snowdonia National Park and a hugely popular area for tourism. But this is also the local authority with the second largest number of listed buildings in Wales, and more museums and archives than any other except Powys.
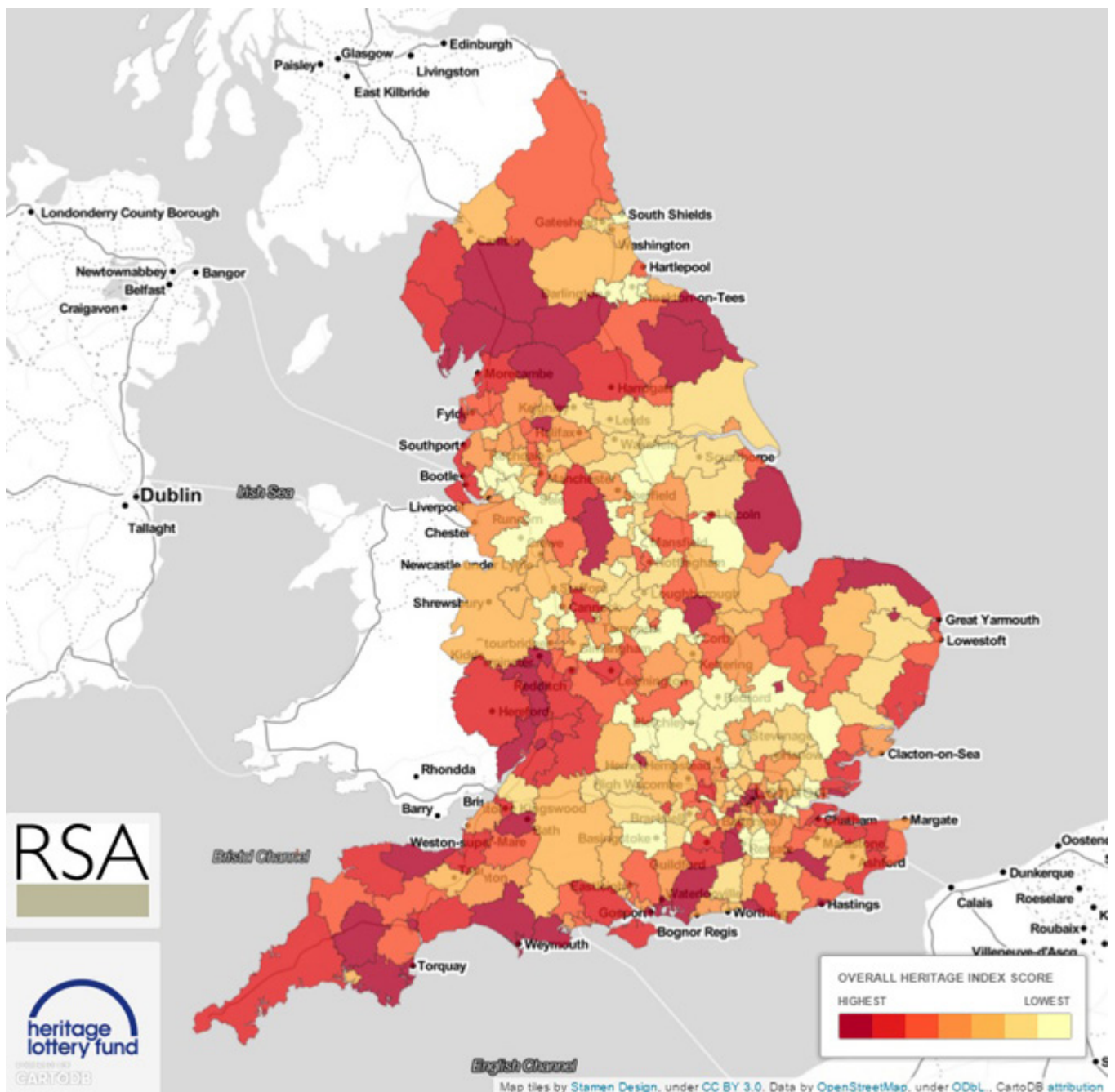
Screenshot from online interactive map, displaying Heritage Index scores

Busting common myths

Myth 1: Heritage reflects our most prosperous places
We compared the heritage scores of all 325 English districts with their scores in the Index of Multiple Deprivation. We found no correlation.

Several places score highly in the Heritage Index despite being relatively poor communities, including Burnley (33rd in England), Newport (10th in Wales) and Dundee (1st in Scotland), and rural areas such as Barrow-in-Furness in Cumbria (15th in England) and Ceredigion (3rd in Wales).

At the same time, many affluent areas do not register strong results in terms of heritage. In England, particularly notable in this regard are Wokingham (278th), Aylesbury (307th), Basingstoke (319th) and parts of Surrey such as Reigate and Banstead (290th) and Spelthorne (314th) districts in Surrey.
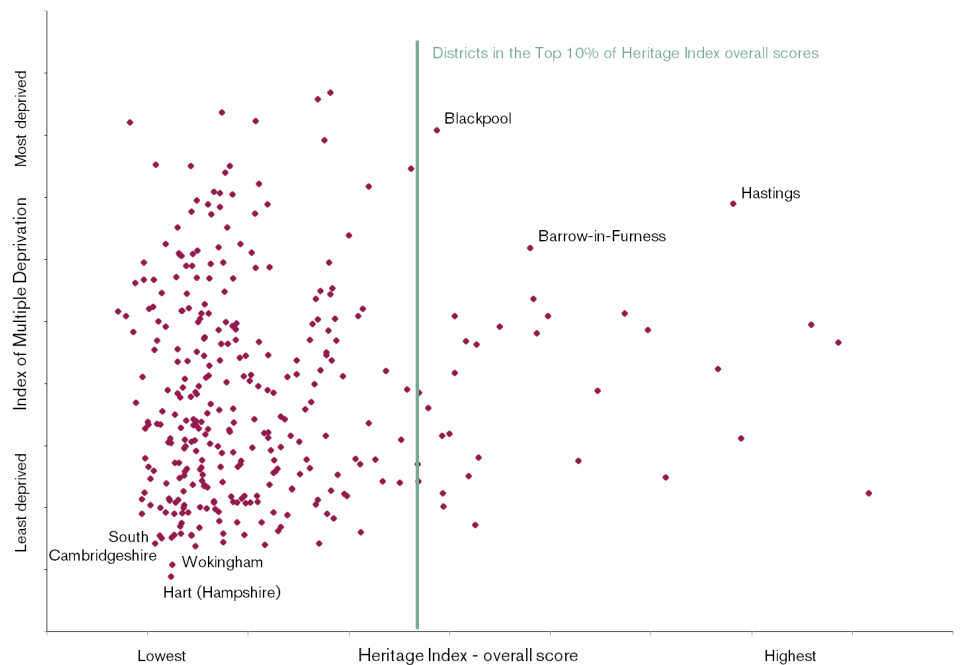
Heritage Index overall scores compared to levels of deprivation for English districts

Myth 2: Heritage is biased towards big cities, or heritage is strongest in the countryside

We compared the heritage scores on the Heritage Index for all 325 English districts with statistics which measure how much built-up land they contain, relative to countryside. We found no correlation. Neither urban nor rural areas are more likely to score better, or worse, on the Heritage Index. With over 50 indicators in the Assets Index, we account for a broad range of types of heritage and so reflect the heritage of cities – where the densest concentrations of listed buildings and industrial history lie – and the abundance of natural heritage in the countryside. Rural areas do tend to see higher scores on activities – once they are adjusted on a per person basis.

In Scotland, remote and rural areas make up four of the top 10 districts as scored by the Heritage Index. Some of Scotland's larger cities – such as Inverness and Perth – exist within predominantly rural districts.

In Wales, rural districts also perform very well, taking four of the top five scores. However, all major Welsh cities sit in the top half of the table, with Torfaen, ranked 5th, home to a World Heritage Site at Blaenavon's industrial landscape.

The graph below plots the scores for the most urban districts in England (over 90 percent of population in towns and cities) against the most rural districts (less than 10 percent of population in towns and cities). The distribution of scores is very similar. Overall, the Heritage Index reflects a diversity of heritage in both the city and in the countryside.

## Myth 3: The north-south divide extends to England's heritage

The north, south and Midlands of England each feature districts with particularly strong performance. Parts of Yorkshire and Cumbria are among the highest scoring places in England. In Wales, south Wales, north Wales, mid-Wales and west Wales each have high scoring districts.

Looking at a local authority scale is important, because it underscores the point that heritage is best understood at the local level, in people's neighbourhoods, where they can access it easily, get involved in shaping it, and where it affects the identity of a place and the identity of citizens. As the graph below shows, the spread of scores among districts shows a similar and broadly evenly distributed pattern between those in the north and the south.

Within each region there are pockets of strong heritage assets and activities; and these exist in different areas of heritage. Overall, the 87 northern districts outperform the south in industrial history, and in landscape and natural heritage.[3] The south scores higher in the historic built environment domain, and in museums, archives and artefacts. Overall the south scores higher on the Heritage Assets Index, but in the Heritage Activities Index, the north leads the south.

Heritage is best understood at the local level, in people's neighbourhoods, where they can access it easily, get involved in shaping it, and where it affects the identity of a place and the identity of citizens

3. Analysing the top 10 and bottom 10 authorities is a misleading way of looking at a north-south divide, simply because the south has more than twice as many local authorities (190) as the north (87). This means that if we picked 10 authorities at random from a list, we'd expected to see the south represented twice as often as the north, in both lists.
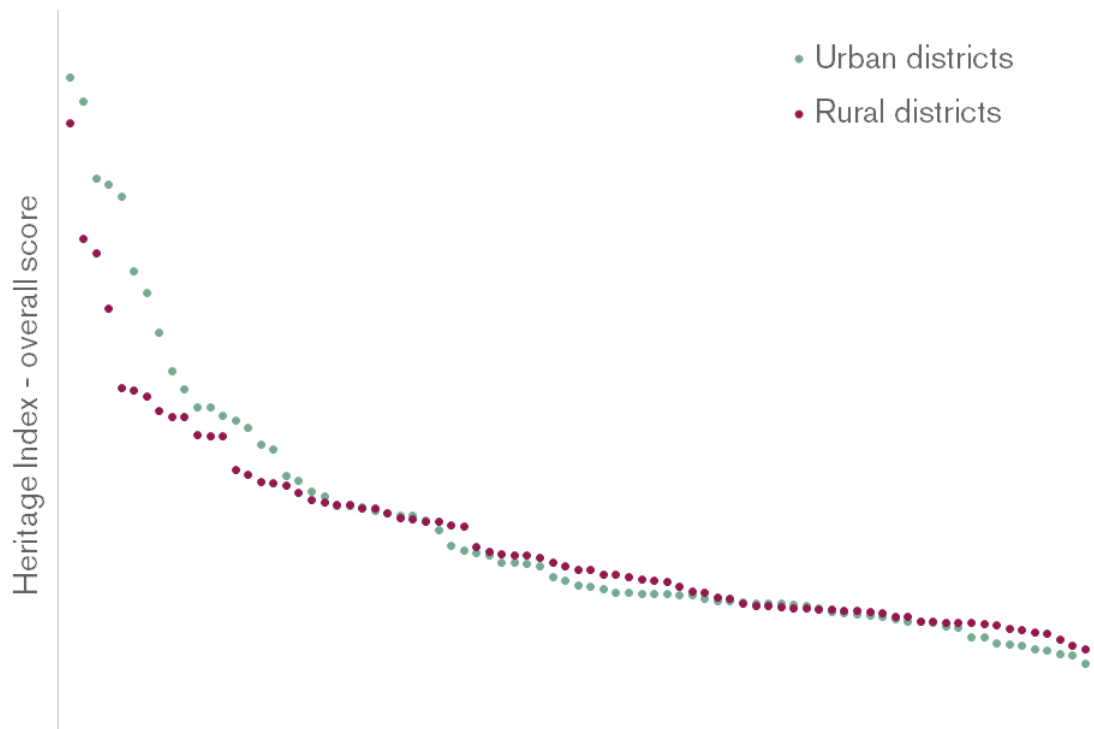
Heritage Index overall scores for urban and rural districts in England
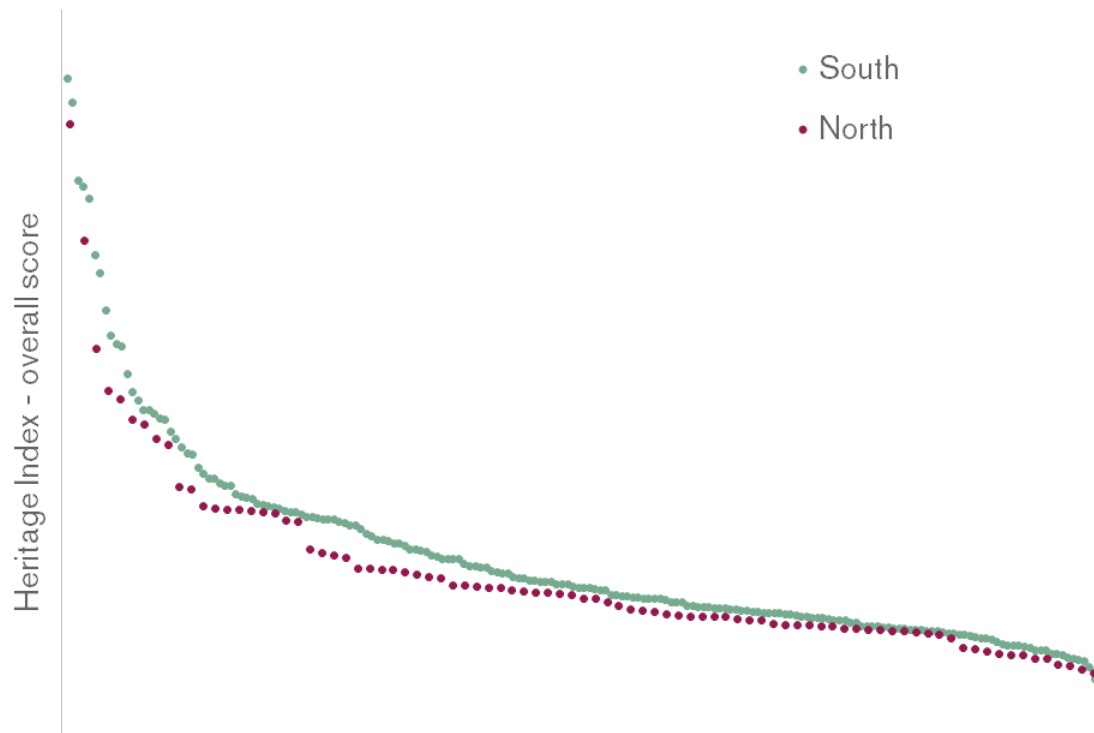
Heritage Index overall scores for northern and southern districts in England

Focusing on places

Liverpool is our city of heritage, as well as city of culture

Among England's largest cities outside London, Liverpool comes top (and at 59th, is in the top 20 percent overall). Liverpool ranks particularly highly for museums and objects, and for cultures and memories. The city has 23 businesses in the culture sector that have their own long heritage, having existed for over 75 years. This includes its historic football clubs, music venues, cinemas and theatres. Liverpool also has significant natural heritage assets, including in the Mersey estuary.

Liverpool is closely followed by Bristol. Bristol – 72nd overall – has strong levels of activity around the historic built environment, as well as extensive coverage for the city through conservation areas. The city is surrounded by a green belt with many landscape assets, and in heritage activity has pioneered innovations such as mapping all of its public sculptures as part of the Know Your Place initiative.

Nottingham (109th), Manchester (119th), Sheffield (159th and Newcastle (160th) all sit in the top half of results for England. Strengths for Nottingham include parks and museums; for Manchester heritage activity indicators score particularly high, including in cultures and memories; while Newcastle is strongest in museums, archives and artefacts. On the edge of the city, Sheffield's borders take in a chunk of the Peak District National Park, meaning it ranks among the top 10 percent of all English districts when it comes to landscape and natural heritage.

Cardiff comes 9th among 22 council areas in Wales, with Swansea coming 8th. Cardiff has particular strengths in parks and open space, while Swansea has strengths in industrial heritage and the natural heritage of Swansea Bay. Swansea was the largest city in Wales for much of the 19th Century – over three times larger than Cardiff in the first census in 1801.

Dundee comes 1st among Scotland's 32 council areas whilst Edinburgh at 3rd pips Glasgow (5th). Dundee was a Victorian centre of industry, with extensive shipbuilding and over 40 percent of the workforce in jute production in 1911 – at over 100 mills. It has seen high levels of investment recently, in advance of the arrival of the Victoria and Albert Museum on the waterfront. With the addition of the Forth Rail Bridge, Edinburgh gets a second World Heritage Site, alongside the many assets of a capital city. Glasgow recently adopted 'People make Glasgow' as its marketing brand. The Heritage Index supports this, showing that Glasgow has participation rates above the national average, and hosted 192 Doors Open events – the most in Scotland.

Leeds and Birmingham score in the bottom 30 percent of English local authorities overall in the Heritage Index, despite Leeds having more listed buildings than any city outside London, and Birmingham having

more blue plaques. Leeds scores in the top half of the heritage activities table – but much lower on heritage assets. The councils are the two most populous in the country, and cover a large amount of suburban development with few heritage assets recorded among our indicators.

The coast: from seaside holidays to seaside heritage

Ten of the top 20 scoring districts in England's Heritage Index have coastline. In Scotland, the Orkney Islands score 2nd and Eilean Siar (the Outer Hebrides) 4th. In Wales the scenic coastline of Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire score 3rd and 4th respectively, while Gwynedd and the Isle of Anglesea on the North Wales coast are 1st and 2nd nationwide.

This is no wonder. Ours are island nations, which have generated great maritime assets and traditions from naval history, shipping and fishing. The top performing major cities, London, Bristol, Swansea, Dundee and Liverpool, each built a legacy of prosperity – over several centuries – as bustling trading ports.

Beaches and seaside cliffs provide popular environments for leisure and recreation, and coasts and estuaries host the meeting of ecosystems, with valuable habitats and diverse and sensitive flora and fauna. We often don't appreciate this unique status: the UK has the most internationally-protected wetland sites (under the Ramsar convention) of any country in the world, largely thanks to its extensive coastline.

Yet over the last 50 years many seaside towns and coastal communities began to struggle, due to the decline of domestic tourism and the challenges of serving an ageing resident population. The Index helps us to identify where heritage is being used to help places adapt to these pressures – and others where it suggests heritage should be viewed as offering a potential response to current challenges.

Successes include Cornwall, North Devon, Scarborough and the Lincolnshire coast, where heritage assets have been capitalised upon to generate high levels of activity. In Cornwall, a strong sense of pride and identity has underpinned efforts to help mainstays of the local diet – oysters, sardines, pasties and clotted cream – achieve protected status. While on the Lincolnshire coast, the Mablethorpe Marathon was initiated in 2006 in an effort to extend the end of tourism season and build a distinct identity for the town.

Scarborough has pioneered the use of data analysis since the 1990s, allowing the town to understand trends in the economic impact generated by tourism. In Whitby (part of the Scarborough district), heritage events extend beyond the summer tourist season, building on the asset of the gothic abbey to host a horror film festival, for example.

The Heritage Index suggests future growth areas for heritage activity, including tourism, which could include Hastings and West Somerset. In north Kent (Gravesend, Medway and the Isle of Sheppey) and south Essex (Southend and neighbouring Rochford and Castle Point), the Index points to significant opportunities to capitalise upon different forms of heritage. In particular, these coastal areas benefit from particular landscape and natural heritage attractions – including wildlife reserves.

As well as its unique pier, Southend is part of the story of the Thames ecological renaissance: it has natural assets as important as those present in National Parks, yet low levels of participation. It is also part of the

The top performing major cities, London, Bristol, Swansea, Dundee and Liverpool, each built a legacy of prosperity – over several centuries – as bustling trading ports

Thames Gateway – one of the fastest developing parts of the country with new housing and a growing population. To capitalise on the opportunity, councils and communities should look to work together across district boundaries, and promote and support access to heritage – including targeting new residents and visitors arriving through the growing airport at Southend.

Feeling the benefits

It is heritage activities rather than heritage assets which account for the strength of the link between local heritage and wellbeing

Higher wellbeing

The UK government has recently started surveying the population to understand how levels of wellbeing vary between places. We compared this data to scores from our Heritage Index. We found that in areas which scored highly, residents also tended to report higher levels of wellbeing.

Most interestingly, digging further into the data, it is heritage activities rather than heritage assets which account for the strength of the link between heritage and wellbeing at a local scale. This holds true in Scotland, Wales and England, each analysed separately.

Several factors might explain this link. Having extensive and accessible heritage activities locally allows residents more opportunities to have experiences which drive satisfaction with life, and the extent to whic people say they are happy and that their life is satisfying and worthwhile.

Alternatively, it could also be relevant that people with high wellbeing are more pro-active (or less inhibited) in choosing to live in districts with high levels of amenity locally, including heritage. It is also the case that people with high levels of wellbeing are more commonly active participants and volunteers in their community.

Heritage Activity Index scores compared to wellbeing for English districts

Taken together, this finding suggests that heritage assets alone do not contribute to wellbeing, but higher levels of heritage activity could be a driver of wellbeing. This is promising for the heritage sector, since activities are more open to influence than assets.

This supports suggestions from earlier research conducted for HLF which found links between the heritage and wellbeing. This research went towards filling the gap in knowledge around the value local people put on heritage, through a commissioned survey of residents in 12 UK places, which asked a range of questions including:

- How much do you know about heritage?
- How important is heritage?
- Are you satisfied with heritage sites and projects to visit/get involved?
- Heritage sites…
    - …are well-maintained
    - …make me proud of my local area
    - …are important in my identity
    - …make it a better place to live

These questions were then correlated with more some general ones about how people feel about local life and whether they think theirs is a good place to live. A positive perception of heritage was found to be correlated with a positive view of local life in general – and that result has now been replicated when looking at the places which perform well in the Heritage Index: Glasgow, Exeter and Portsmouth are strong performers in both research exercises, while Bradford and Peterborough are among the weaker districts. This supports the idea that as well as providing opportunities to learn about the history of the local area through sites and projects, the influence of heritage on life satisfaction is closely related to issues of local pride and identity.
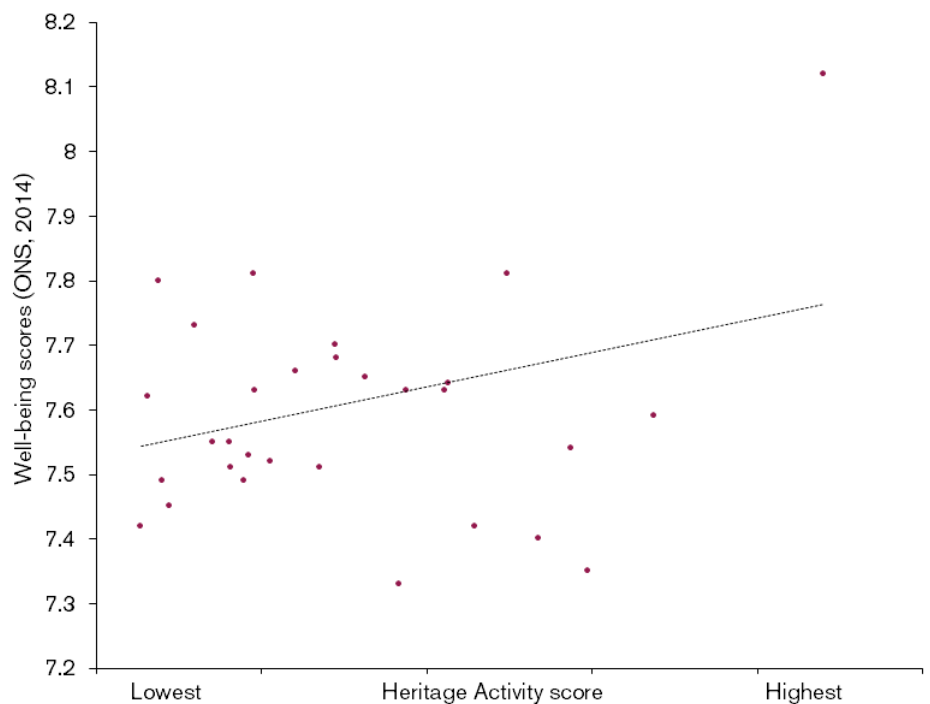
Heritage Activity Index scores compared to wellbeing for Scottish districts
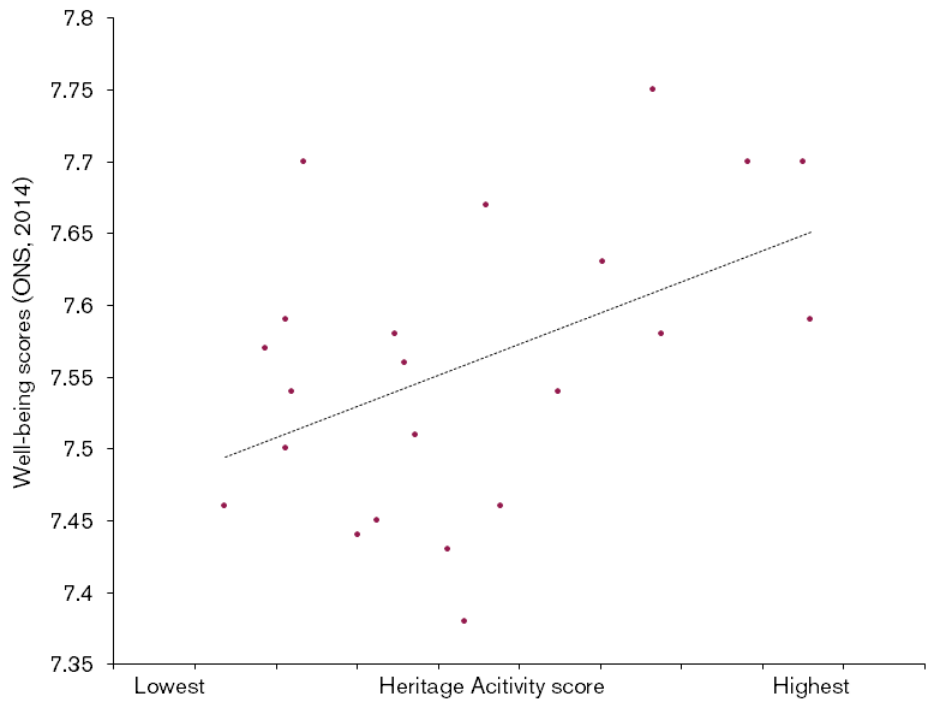
Heritage Activity Index scores compared to wellbeing for Welsh districts

Supporting the benefits of heritage: investment helps places reach their potential

Looking at HLF funding since 1994, higher levels of HLF funding (calculated on a per resident basis) tended to be more commonly awarded to districts with higher overall Heritage Index scores (see scatter graph on following page). The correlation exists against both the Heritage Assets Index and the Activities Index.

Notably, however, several high performing districts in the Heritage Index received HLF funding at less than the England-wide average for the period (£100 per person), including Havant, Worcester and Weymouth & Portland.

Several factors might explain the correlation between higher HLF investment and greater concentrations of heritage assets and activities. HLF investment frequently supports heritage outcomes, such as restoring buildings which might be at risk, re-displaying a museum collection, or renovating a local park. It is also used to help heritage organisations attract more volunteers and visitors, and to generate additional revenue. Where there is lots of existing heritage activity, people might be more likely to come forward with project ideas. The existence of both assets

Heritage Index overall scores compared to HLF funding 1994-2015

HLF is conscious of this tendency that funding will, unless checked, flow to places with a strong infrastructure of assets and activities. One of its responses, for example, has been the establishment of a number of Priority Development Areas – a mix of places where funding has historically been lower, and places where social and economic needs are pressing. In these areas, development officers work with applicants on project ideas and grant applications. Areas do include some high performing cities in the Heritage Index such as Liverpool, but also lower performing places such as Luton, as well as areas that the Heritage Index has subsequently suggested to have heritage growth opportunities: including North Kent, South Essex and Newport in Wales.

4. HLF funding will, in turn, tend to increase a place's standing in the Index: HLF investment is itself an indicator within the Index (though one that has only a small impact of less than 4 percent on the overall score in the overall Heritage Index). But, as important, funded projects may well have increased participation rates in heritage and awareness of local heritage which may have boosted scores in the Heritage Activities Index.

Identifying opportunity areas

We might expect that heritage activities are strongest in areas with lots of heritage assets. In fact there is neither a simple nor strong correlation between how places score in the Assets Index, compared to how they score in the Activities Index. There is local variation across England, Scotland and Wales, within regions, and between similar types of places.

Of the 81 local authorities in England forming the top quartile on the Assets Index, only 32 are also in the top quartile on the Activities Index. Of the top 20 local authorities on the Activities Index, only around half (11) appear in the top 20 authorities when ranked on activities. And there are 10 local authorities which feature in the top 25 percent of places in the Activities Index, despite being in the bottom 25 percent when looking at their heritage assets.

The matrices in the Appendix demonstrate this further – they show local authorities, by region, categorised according to their ranking on both the Asset and Activity Indices. When looking at low scoring authorities one should keep in mind the use of land area to weight the results – which has meant that very large areas (such as Cornwall and Northumberland) score less well (though as we showed above, the Index as a whole is neither biased towards rural or urban areas). Places with high levels of heritage activity – compared to their asset base – are shown in the top right hand corner of the tables. These places can be thought of as highly 'efficient' in the use of their available heritage assets.

One interesting way of using this analysis is to compare the heritage strength of a local area measured in assets, and the heritage strength as measured by activities, in order to identify clear 'opportunity areas' – those towards the bottom left of each of the regional and country matrices where the data suggests places are not yet making the most of their local assets: levels of tourism, local participation, volunteering and investment in heritage are behind where they could be, given the presence of local assets.

These opportunity areas exist in all regions and countries, and include many inner city districts such as Newham and Islington in London, Bury in Lancashire, and Dudley in the Black Country. In these places, there are a rich set of assets, but levels of activity are low. For example:

- Tower Hamlets has six accredited museums locally, and has yielded more archaeological finds than any other London borough (except City of London). However, just 43 percent of residents regularly go to a museum – less than the national

average of 52 percent.

- Dudley is home to a high concentration of industrial history assets including canals, railways and the Black Country Living Museum; overall heritage activity levels are in the bottom half of local authorities when compared across England.

In Wales, Cardiff, Flintshire and Newport have the largest gap when comparing heritage activities to assets. In Scotland, Moray, Fife and East Lothian have the largest gap. In both cases, these are opportunity areas for heritage activity.

At the other end of the spectrum, analysis of the Index reveals that Cornwall, Lincolnshire, Stirling and Ayrshire in Scotland, and the west Wales coast, are doing particularly well already in making the most of the heritage assets they've inherited. Some of England's most renowned historic towns, such as Harrogate, Stratford-upon-Avon, Chester, Winchester, York and Bath are all assessed to be performing well, using assets to drive high levels of heritage activity.

However, there are many surprises too. Among less famous places, Arun district (containing Littlehampton and Bognor Regis), Milton Keynes and Bedford are each home to relatively high levels of heritage activity, despite being in the bottom half of local authorities in density of heritage assets.

In Arun, this has included making greater progress on Neighbourhood Plans than anywhere else in England[5] – these plans give local people the chance to set policies on how the historic environment is protected in law. In Milton Keynes, although the majority of buildings were built in the last 50 years as the new town was expanded by the government, the number of Heritage Open Days locally is well above average.

It's quite possible for areas have activities lagging assets, while scoring highly in the overall Heritage Index. Examples here even include some of the best performers such as Liverpool, Bristol, Torbay and Worcester. These are places that appear high in the composite index because of their outstanding heritage assets, but where the data suggests activity is not matching the potential which those assets provide.

5. Statistics on neighbourhood plans were shared by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), based on informal monitoring, and may therefore contain inaccuracies. Relevant local authority websites will have the most up to date information.

Gaining a richer understanding

Making heritage data open data

The UK has an aspiration to lead the world in open data publishing. When HLF was established in 1994, compiling the Heritage Index would have been impossible due to limitations in data sharing and computer processing power. In recent years, the UK government has led a concerted campaign to ensure that data held by government organisations is made available to the public.

Online platforms such as Open Plaques and Historypin have also provided data to the Heritage Index project. These platforms crowdsource information from voluntary contributors over the internet, building up a library of almost 10,000 plaques and over 60,000 pins of historical information including images, texts and videos. Historic England is pursuing a volunteer crowdsourced approach to ensure its own data on the quality of listed buildings is up to date.

The value of open data often comes from uses that were never imagined by the data owners. The Heritage Index uses Companies House data – which has only recently been made available. Because the data includes information about the incorporation of a business, we can use this data in a heritage context – quantifying the number of businesses involved in carrying forward the heritage of a place over generations. We set this threshold at 75-years-old, and identified specific sectors of business which are relevant to the public and to place-based identity because they are public-facing – such as cinemas and consumer brands.

In compiling the Heritage Index, we benefited from the efforts of the Welsh government's GIS portal; while the Scottish government has recently mapped urban greenspace at an unprecedented level of detail. It is crucial that efforts to publish are concerned with the quality and compatibility of data, in order that data is ultimately beneficial to end users.

Local data and national insights

Comparison between local areas, up and down the Index, should generate a healthy debate about the heritage of place and the extent of people's awareness and engagement with that legacy of the past. Although the Index features over 100 datasets, heritage is often difficult to quantify and record. How do we remember our past if the physical traces have vanished? And what if the physical legacy isn't considered valuable by local residents, or experts, today?

Several examples tell this story. Luton's once famous hat industry, which declined from the 1960s, did not leave the town with many buildings considered to have historic value for their architecture. Therefore the number of listed buildings is low, despite this important industrial heritage locally.

Successful initiatives to draw together local heritage include work by the East End Trades Guild in London, and the Potteries Tile Trail in Stoke. The East End Trades Guild has celebrated the heritage that exists within businesses with long histories and strong local connections. The Guild surveyed its local business members and found, collectively, they have over 7,000 years of experienced as traders. On average they know 80 customers by name. Effectively, these shops and businesses claim to carry the history of the East End: "adding a narrative to the memory of the place". The Potteries Tile Trail celebrates tiles and architectural ceramics across Stoke-on-Trent as a way of promoting the city's built environment and industrial history. Neither of these could have been included in our Index – we only sought to feature datasets with national coverage. But they could be added to the Index to create a richer, local picture of the heritage people value.

As the Heritage, Identity and Place project continues and concludes, it will be up to people in local areas to suggest additional datasets that both reflect what is held as valuable locally, and allow for comparison within districts and between neighbourhoods.

Accounting for intangible heritage

The Index has inevitably been subject to the limitations imposed by what people have, throughout history, decided is worth recording and providing with protective status and resources

What counts as heritage is always contested, and the construction of the Index has inevitably been subject to the limitations imposed by what people have, throughout history, decided is worth recording and providing with protective status and resources. And some heritage is just more difficult to list, or to map to a specific location. We found this was most apparent when we sought to collect and map datasets relating to the 'cultures and memories' theme which was intended to ensure we incorporated intangible heritage within the Index.

We have had some success here. For example, the Heritage Index draws on an emerging dataset of cultural events which includes traditions from the Notting Hill Carnival to the Coopers Hill Cheese Rolling in Gloucestershire.[6] Here, also, we made great use of open data from Companies House about the long-standing businesses that provide continuity to the past, by trading continuously for more than 75 years. Finally, we included the dataset on 59 European protected food and drink designations – from Cornish clotted cream to Arbroath

6. Suzy Harrison, AHRC-funded PhD research at Nottingham Trent University.

smokies, via Anglesey sea salt.

However, other data sources in this area are either conceptually difficult to assemble or have not yet been compiled in anywhere near the same detail as exists with the long-established lists for protected buildings or nature sites, for example. So, although impressive efforts to archive recordings of regional accents and dialects has been published and mapped in the British Library's online archive sound map, it is unclear how the extent of accents could be included in a register, or mapped. The English Folk Dance and Song Society has an archive of recordings of English folk music; mapped by their location of recording. We have not been able to include this dataset in this version of the index but that could be explored in the future. Nothing, though, has been included in the Index on the history and heritage of British pop music – an extra component that could well have propelled Liverpool even further up the rankings for example.

Even more difficult to quantify, place-based identity often involves relationships, affection and sentimentality between people, especially for famous but often long-deceased 'sons and daughters' of a place. We did source data from Open Plaques which styles itself 'the museum of the street' and catalogues the plaques (usually blue and round, but not always) that have been installed on buildings and landmarks to mark the social history of a place and its people. But registering plaques and statues in a database can only go so far in capturing the significance of such moments in history.

Other types of heritage defy being grounded to a single place. Recent research has brought attention to heritage crafts. However, measuring such activity is difficult; firms are often very small, not showing up in official statistics and records. Moreover, the nature of the business means that a sole trader in a craft industry may live in one town, but work at client sites across several counties. Ascribing a link between a heritage craft professional and place-based heritage can be tenuous.

The compilation of data for the Index provides a powerful insight into the way in which we choose to record, and are able to record history. We hope it encourages people to consider new ways of measuring what matters to them about heritage, and we will explore this theme in detail in each of our three case study cities (Bristol, Oldham and Dundee), as research to inform a Final Report on Heritage, Identity and Place, in March 2016.

Shaping places by taking action

The Heritage Index is designed to be a resource which helps to forge a stronger link between heritage and the identity of residents in a place. This can help a place achieve its aspirations to grow and prosper, socially and economically.

It allows anyone interested in heritage to understand and interpret a range of data from dozens of different sources through a single access point. Those with a passion for numbers are able to customise results for themselves by changing the calculations within the Index. Engaging with the data can, itself, stimulate a richer conversation which relates heritage assets to heritage activities across a broad spectrum of what we consider as heritage.

In Bristol, Oldham and Dundee, the RSA will organise a public debate in autumn 2015 to understand better the aspects of heritage which matter most to local people, how they relate to other priorities (like housing, parks or education) and what a range of organisations should do with this collective intelligence.

Strategies which shape the development of local areas are more successful when people can identify with what makes their place special. Heritage provides places with a USP, differentiating themselves against one another, and heritage is fundamental to the global brand and local identity associated with a place. Therefore we recommend that:

- Local leaders – including leaders of government, public services, major institutions and major corporations – should use the Index as evidence to inform local strategies. The Heritage Index shows relative strengths and weaknesses across a broad definition of heritage, and therefore will serve to bring attention to where strengths could be consolidated and capitalised upon, or areas where under-performance might be addressed. This will be particularly important for areas adopting new powers as part of the devolution and decentralisation agenda.
- People designing projects and preparing funding applications will be able to better understand how their work would measure against the scale of existing heritage assets and activities locally. This could inspire better designed projects, and indicators themselves point to different ways in which projects could understand that they have been successful.
- Those looking to develop local heritage to boost tourism,

employment or leisure and learning opportunities for local citizens can capture, through a simplified measure, the ways in which a local area is special or unique, thereby helping to identify and set priorities.

What does this mean for HLF?

Building on 21 successful years of National Lottery investment in heritage and following the publication of the Heritage Index, HLF will:

- Encourage partners and other organisations to add to the Heritage Index by making available any further relevant nationally available data sets relating to heritage assets or activity. HLF will continue to build the Index for the duration of the wider research project with a view to publishing a second edition in Summer 2016.

- Call on those designing heritage projects, including as part of preparing funding applications to HLF, to use the Heritage Index to understand the heritage of their place and the extent of local engagement. This will inspire better projects, and highlight different routes and opportunities for projects to be successful.

- Use the Heritage Index to inform its development and outreach work, encouraging new projects and promoting the availability of Heritage Lottery funding across the UK.

- Call on HLF projects and the wider heritage community to support the Community Right to Bid (2012), nominating heritage land and buildings for recognition by their local authority as 'Assets of Community Value'. In addition, HLF will work with DCLG to ensure that future editions of the Heritage Index include these listed heritage assets.

How can I change the heritage score for my area?

There are three ways in which people and communities can influence the Heritage Index score for their area.

First, by downloading the dataset, you can change our weighting of the different heritage domains, with the results automatically calculating to show shifts in the rankings of a place in response to new data.

Second, actions can influence the performance of indicators in the Heritage Index year-on-year – especially in the Activities Index, but to some extent in the Assets Index as well. Although much of the data in the Heritage Index includes fixed assets in the historic environment, communities can make history come to life, and help ensure it is recorded and accessible.

Thirdly, you can suggest new datasets to be included. HLF will be commissioning a second version of the Heritage Index in 2016: email jonathan.schifferes@rsa.org.uk

Ways to get involved include the opportunity to:

- Make the most of your local heritage assets: visit museums and archives, attend Open House events, or volunteer.
- Find a museum near you
- Find an archive near you
- Find a civic society near you
    - England: Civic Voice Locality
    - Scotland: Civic Trust
- TCV – The Conservation Volunteers
- Wildlife Trust youth clubs
- Youth Archaeological Clubs
- Open House
    - England
    - London
    - Scotland
    - Wales
- Use social media to upload photos, text or video about the history of a place, using Historypin, and ensure that all information on historic plaques is up to date.
- Help shape a neighbourhood plan to guide the policies you want to shape development in your area in the future.
- Consider the heritage assets in your area that could be listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). The Department for Communities and Local Government is currently running a campaign to get more heritage assets listed as ACVs. This offers protection to local assets and means that communities could bid to own them in the future, should they come up for sale; see mycommunity.org.uk
- Helping farmers and food businesses designate local food and cuisine to get protection for its local status from the European Commission.

Appendix - Regional tables of assets and activities

East of England

Assets		
High	**Medium**	**Low**

<table>
<tr><th rowspan="30">Activities</th><td>High</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Norwich</td><td>Suffolk Coastal</td><td>Fenland</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Cambridge</td><td>King's Lynn / West Norfolk</td><td>St Edmundsbury</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>North Norfolk</td><td>Ipswich</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Watford</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Great Yarmouth</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Maldon</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Colchester</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Tendring</td><td>Dacorum</td><td>Huntingdonshire</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Epping Forest</td><td>Forest Heath</td><td>Waveney</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Broadland</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Central Bedfordshire</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Breckland</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Bedford</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>East Cambridgeshire</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>North Hertfordshire</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>St Albans</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Babergh</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Peterborough</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>South Norfolk</td></tr>
<tr><td>Low</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Harlow</td><td>Uttlesford</td><td>Chelmsford</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Broxbourne</td><td>Welwyn Hatfield</td><td>Mid Suffolk</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Brentwood</td><td>Stevenage</td><td>Hertsmere</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Southend-on-Sea</td><td></td><td>East Hertfordshire</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Three Rivers</td><td></td><td>Braintree</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Rochford</td><td></td><td>Thurrock</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Castle Point</td><td></td><td>South Cambridgeshire</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Luton</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Basildon</td></tr>
</table>

East Midlands

Activities	Assets		
	High	**Medium**	**Low**
High	Rutland Lincoln High Peak Derbyshire Dales Broxtowe Nottingham	Bassetlaw Daventry East Northamptonshire	Newark and Sherwood East Lindsey South Northamptonshire South Kesteven
Medium		Chesterfield Boston Leicester Melton	South Holland Kettering Harborough West Lindsey North Kesteven
Low	Oadby and Wigston Charnwood Amber Valley	Wellingborough Bolsover Gedling Northampton Erewash Hinckley and Bosworth Corby Mansfield	North West Leicestershire Ashfield Rushcliffe South Derbyshire North East Derbyshire Derby Blaby

London

Assets			
Activities	High	Medium	Low
High	Kensington and Chelsea Richmond upon Thames Camden Westminster Greenwich	Bromley	
Medium	City of London Islington Southwark Hammersmith and Fulham Hackney Haringey Hounslow	Lambeth Lewisham Havering Merton	Harrow Sutton
Low	Tower Hamlets Newham Barking and Dagenham Hillingdon	Brent Waltham Forest Enfield Kingston upon Thames Redbridge Wandsworth Barnet	Croydon Ealing Bexley

North East

Activities	Assets		
	High	Medium	Low
High			Newcastle upon Tyne Northumberland
Medium	Hartlepool	North Tyneside County Durham	
Low		Redcar and Cleveland Stockton-on-Tees	Gateshead Sunderland Middlesborough South Tyneside Darlington

North West

Assets		
High	**Medium**	**Low**

Activities

High

Burnley	Preston	Blackburn with Darwen
Blackpool	Fylde	Cheshire West and Chester
Lancaster	Eden	
Copeland	Manchester	
Wyre		
South Lakeland		
Allerdale		

Medium

Sefton	Rossendale	Rochdale
Wirral	Chorley	Ribble Valley
Liverpool	Tameside	Carlisle
Halton	Hyndburn	Salford
	Oldham	

Low

Barrow-in-Furness	Bolton	Trafford
West Lancashire	Pendle	Wigan
Bury	South Ribble	St. Helens
	Stockport	Knowsley
		Cheshire East
		Warrington

South East

Assets		
High	**Medium**	**Low**

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">Activities</td></tr>
<tr><td>High</td><td>Hastings
Oxford
Portsmouth
Gosport
Reading
Tunbridge Wells
Eastbourne
Chiltern
Isle of Wight
Shepway
Guildford
Mole Valley</td><td>Chichester
Waverley
Canterbury
Rother
Brighton and Hove
Lewes
Dover
Mid Sussex
Thanet</td><td>Arun
Winchester
Vale of White Horse</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium</td><td>Havant
New Forest
South Bucks
Swale
Medway
Tonbridge and Malling</td><td>Windsor and Maidenhead
Sevenoaks
Maidstone
East Hampshire
Bracknell Forest
Elmbridge
South Oxfordshire
Adur
Southampton</td><td>Crawley
West Oxfordshire
Horsham
Aylesbury Vale
Test Valley
Milton Keynes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Low</td><td>Epsom and Ewell
Runnymede
Eastleigh
Gravesham
Woking
Surrey Heath</td><td>Fareham
Wealden
Wycombe
Ashford
Hart
Dartford
Spelthorne</td><td>Rushmoor
Wokingham
Reigate and Banstead
Worthing
West Berkshire
Tandridge
Cherwell
Basingstoke and Deane
Slough</td></tr>
</table>

South West

Assets			
Activities	High	Medium	Low
High	Torbay Weymouth and Portland Purbeck West Somerset Forest of Dean Cheltenham Bristol Exeter Gloucester Sedgemoor West Devon Mendip	South Hams Poole Teignbridge East Devon Bath and North East Somerset Cotswold West Dorset	North Devon Mid Devon North Dorset Cornwall
Medium	Tewkesbury Stroud East Dorset	Bournemouth North Somerset Christchurch South Somerset South Gloucestershire	Swindon Plymouth Torridge Wiltshire
Low		Taunton Deane	

West Midlands

Activities	Assets		
	High	**Medium**	**Low**
High	Malvern Hills Wychavon Lichfield	Warwick Herefordshire Rugby	Stratford-on-Avon East Staffordshire Shropshire
Medium	Worcester Wyre Forest Bromsgrove Staffordshire Moorlands Stoke-on-Trent Sandwell	North Warwickshire Cannock Chase Coventry Newcastle-under-Lyme	Wolverhampton
Low	Redditch Dudley	Tamworth South Staffordshire Stafford Walsall Telford and Wrekin	Birmingham Nuneaton and Bedworth Solihull

Yorkshire & Humber

Activities	Assets		
	High	**Medium**	**Low**
High	Craven Scarborough	Richmondshire Ryedale	Harrogate York
Medium		North East Lincolnshire Sheffield Calderdale Kingston upon Hull	Barnsley Kirklees North Lincolnshire Hambleton East Riding of Yorkshire Leeds
Low			Doncaster Bradford Selby Wakefield Rotherham

Scotland

Assets			
	High	**Medium**	**Low**
High	West Dunbartonshire East Renfrewshire Orkney Islands Dundee City City of Edinburgh Argyll and Bute	Eilean Siar	South Ayrshire North Ayrshire Stirling Scottish Borders
Medium	Inverclyde Glasgow City	Aberdeen City Falkirk Perth and Kinross Dumfries and Galloway Renfrewshire Shetland Islands	South Lanarkshire Highland
Low	Clackmannanshire East Lothian Moray	East Dunbartonshire Midlothian Fife	East Ayrshire West Lothian Angus Aberdeenshire North Lanarkshire

Activities (row label for all three rows above)

Wales

Assets			
Activities	High	Medium	Low
High	Monmouthshire Gwynedd Isle of Anglesey	Ceredigion Denbighshire	Pembrokeshire Powys
Medium	Swansea Torfaen Cardiff	Conwy Blaenau Gwent Vale of Glamorgan Merthyr Tydfil	Carmarthenshire
Low	Newport	Wrexham Flintshire	Rhondda Cynon Taf Neath Port Talbot Bridgend Caerphilly

The RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) believes that everyone should have the freedom and power to turn their ideas into reality – we call this the Power to Create. Through our ideas, research and 27,000-strong Fellowship, we seek to realise a society where creative power is distributed, where concentrations of power are confronted, and where creative values are nurtured.

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