

# 5 ways heritage helps keep the January blues at bay

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Getting outside and enjoying your local park can help boost wellbeing Peter Neal  
We know that January can feel like a struggle, so on #BlueMonday we're looking at ways that HLF-supported heritage helps lift our post-Christmas mood.

## 1. Visit a heritage site and feel the benefits

At HLF we believe that being around heritage makes you feel better, and we have research to prove it. [A report produced in 2016](#) showed that visiting any kind of heritage boosts wellbeing and happiness.

So whether it's a castle, a museum, or a national park - why not go and enjoy some fabulous UK heritage this January?

## 2. Volunteer and learn new skills

Volunteering can be hugely beneficial for wellbeing, as [John Priestley, the subject of our September Changing Lives story, found out.](#)

Participating in the Improving Futures: Volunteering for Wellbeing project enabled John to go from his lowest point of homelessness to a position at the National Football Museum in Manchester.

If you'd like to find out about volunteering opportunities offered by HLF projects, check out our [Online Community](#).

### 3. Access safe and inclusive spaces and groups

If you're struggling this January, remember that heritage spaces and organisations are often safe and inclusive, where everyone is welcome.

[quote=Lizzie Guntripp, Heritage Ambassador]"Heritage is not exclusive: it is relevant to all."[/quote]

[Quay Place in Ipswich](#) is one such example. This beautiful old church is now a unique heritage and wellbeing centre, with therapy rooms, spaces for quiet reflection, and opportunities to socialise and learn new skills.

### 4. Have a breath of fresh air

Does being outside make you feel better? You're not alone - research indicates that [spending time outdoors is a key positive factor in physical and mental health](#).

HLF has invested over £800million in public parks, meaning more of us can get outside, get active, and feel happier.

Why not [visit your local park](#), and see if you feel the benefits?

### 5. Enjoy what your community has to offer

Walthamstow's transformation from a down-at-heel London suburb to a thriving destination shows how investing in community heritage boosts the wellbeing of the people that live there.

Our Chief Executive, Ros Kerslake, [explored this transformation](#), looking at how National Lottery funding improved Walthamstow's natural and built environment.

She explains that the effects of investing and engaging with community heritage include health, happiness and wellbeing – so everyone wins!



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HLF's Heritage Ambassadors at the Geffrye Museum Jeff Gilbert



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Gardeners at Lloyd Park in Walthamstow

**Heritage and positive mental health**