

Mary Rose Museum and HMS Victory

In a new poll conducted by specialist research company BritainThinks, 81% of people in Portsmouth feel pride in where they live because of the city's heritage – and say it makes it a better place to live.

To coincide with 20 years of National Lottery investment into the UK's heritage, amounting to over £6billion - including £58million to 67 projects in Portsmouth alone – we have commissioned a survey of 12 towns and cities across the UK to gauge public views on Lottery investment and to see to what extent it has made places better to live, work in or visit.

Portsmouth is a city famous UK-wide for its naval and maritime heritage sites with historic gems such as the Historic Dockyard, Mary Rose and Fort Nelson top of many a tourist itinerary. Indeed, an overwhelming 76% of Heritage Lottery Fund investment in the city has gone into this sector.

Local resident and celebrity Sandy Toksvig, comedienne & Chancellor Portsmouth University, said: "The new Mary Rose Museum is one of the most exciting history projects ever to open in the UK. It is so wonderful to see the crew that fated the ship honored in such a wonderful way. As you walk through the length of the ship you don't just see what life was like for a Tudor seaman, you feel as though you are experiencing it as well."

Now, new research takes a look at the people behind the world famous historic sites that place Portsmouth so firmly on the map. Questioning local residents and representatives from the business, academia, community/voluntary, tourism, civic and local government sectors, the study examines the impact investment in local heritage is having on peoples

lives, attitudes and the communities they live in.

Key UK findings

- 80% think local heritage makes their area a better place to live
- 64% think heritage has improved in recent years in terms of how well it is looked after and what it has to offer
- Heritage plays a powerful role in bringing people together and helping to improve perceptions of quality of life
- Benefits of heritage seen as both transactional and emotional, encouraging local pride and fostering social cohesion

Key findings in Portsmouth

- 87% of people in Portsmouth believe heritage is important for their local area
- 96% of residents said the city's heritage makes it a place people are likely to visit
- 81% of residents feel pride in where they live because of local heritage sites and that they make Portsmouth a better place to live
- 79% said that heritage benefits them personally with cultural and recreational opportunities, especially for families, having a big impact
- 76% of people described HLF investment in heritage projects as good value for money

The poll also found that as well as making places visually more attractive and providing activities and places to visit, the biggest impact of investment into heritage was in attracting tourists, creating jobs, and instilling a sense of local pride in Portsmouth.

Stuart McLeod, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South East, said: "It's fantastic to see the clear sense of pride people have in Portsmouth and its heritage, as well as the personal and economic benefits that come with investment. However, while awareness levels of maritime history is high, the study also shows us that we all still have work to do to increase involvement in the amazing projects that are already happening and inspire new ones, especially exploring community and cultural heritage, to ensure the city's rich heritage story is fully told."

The study also reveals that while many people see the obvious benefits a focus on 'big ticket' naval and military history brings, more needs to be done to engage people on a local level in their heritage and spread investment across the city. While only 4% of respondents surveyed hadn't heard of the Royal Naval Museum and Mary Rose Museum, a significant 60% were unaware of the Gosport Milestones Walking and Cycling Trail, and 52% didn't know about the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection at Portsmouth Library.

Helen Grant, Minister for Tourism, said: "Britain has such a rich and proud heritage - it is synonymous with our national identity and who we are. It's great to hear that our iconic buildings and fantastic cultural attractions also have a positive effect on our wellbeing too, making people happy.

"But not only does it make us proud Britons happy but it also puts smiles on faces of millions of overseas visitors too who are coming to experience the best of Britain in record numbers, boosting local economies up and down the country."

Here's what Britain Thinks residents said about their awareness of Portsmouth's heritage in the city and its impact on them personally, for the economy, and for regeneration:

- "The heritage background – you can't escape it. Your first impression is going to be the navy and the dockyard but there's actually a lot more to it."
- ″There's a lot of loyalty in Portsmouth. People who live here have lived here a long time. There's loyalty to the navy, to the football team."
- "Whenever I walk around I learn something new. You read about the dockyard or the naval heritage and you start to learn a little more about Portsmouth itself. My kids enjoy coming here and are always asking questions, which I learn from as well."
- "Gunwharf has boomed. That's brought a lot of jobs. There are a lot of shops and restaurants..[for example] the Spinnaker Tower."

A stakeholder taking part in the research said: "Funding for heritage has permitted Portsmouth's big attractions to develop and succeed. Without the investment in heritage, Portsmouth wouldn't have the attractive product it has today. It wouldn't be able to compete on a national and international level."

So, while there is still work to be done to engage more people in their city's heritage - the future looks bright for Portsmouth – for visitors, for local people and for the regeneration of a famous city very firmly on the heritage tourism map.

Cllr Luke Stubbs, Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and Economic Development Portsmouth City Council, said: "We're very proud of our cultural, maritime and literary heritage, which attracts many tourists to our waterfront city. There are lots of opportunities for residents and visitors to get involved with community and cultural heritage projects and to help spread the word about everything Portsmouth has to offer."

Find out more on the 20 Years 12 Places webpage including a UK summary report, an essay of the main findings, research slides, reports for each place with films plus more detail on the methodology.

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Notes to editors

BritainThinks research was conducted in 12 cities - Armagh, Bradford, Durham, Exeter, Glasgow, South East London, Manchester, Newark-on-Trent, Peterborough, Pontypool, Portsmouth and Shrewsbury.

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Portsmouth survey

A total of 353 adult residents of Portsmouth took part in the survey. Ten heritage sites and projects that were drawn to their attention by the pollsters were: The Mary Rose Museum, Royal Naval Museum, Fort Nelson, Royal Naval Submarine Museum, New Theatre Royal, St George Staunton Country Park, Gosport Town Centre Historic Parks, Dickens 2012 Festival, The Arthur Conan Doyle Collection at Portsmouth Library, Gosport Milestones Walking and Cycling Trail. All have received Heritage Lottery Fund grants at various times over the past 20 years.

Some of the projects included in the study were:

The Mary Rose Museum Project

The new Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard was opened in 2013, some 30 years after the hull of the Tudor warship was raised from the depths of The Solent into which she had sunk with tremendous loss of life in 1545.

HLF has supported a wide range of projects related to the conservation of the ship and its artefacts but it was a major grant of more than £25.2million that made possible the building of the new museum that finally reunited the hull of the vessel with many thousands of the objects salvaged from the wreck. State of the art conservation techniques now provide a breathtaking view and interpretation of what has been described as a 'Tudor time capsule'.

The new museum, designed by Wilkinson Eyre Architects and Pringle Brandon Perkins+Will, was built around the hull of the ship. The building takes the form of a finely crafted wooden 'jewellery box' with the hull at its centre and galleries running the length of the ship, each corresponding to a specific deck level.

The National Museum of the Royal Navy (formerly the Royal Naval Museum)

The Museum in the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard was restored, expanded, developed and re-designed with the help of a £2.84m HLF grant. This involved increasing access to its collections by providing better amenities for visitors, expanding displays, improving facilities for disabled visitors, creating a new study centre and upgrading storage facilities. The funding enabled the museum to renovate the ancient monument Storehouse No 11, which dates back to 1763.

The museum's development has been supported by several additional HLF grants, most notably, £1.4m to create exhibitions on the Navy in the 20th and 21st centuries, now open to the public under the title HMS Hear My Story. The 18th-century Storehouse 10, built in 1776, has been completely restored providing new exhibition spaces for the museum's vast collections. State-of-the-art interactive displays and exhibitions help bring the collections alive and into the 21st century for everyone, especially young people, to learn from and enjoy.

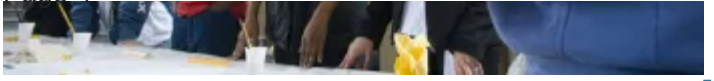
Dickens Community Archive

The Portsmouth Museums and Records Service encouraged local community groups to explore their family, community and local history. The project, supported by an HLF grant of £265,800, coincided with the centenary celebrations for the birth of Portsmouth's famous literary son, Charles Dickens in 2012. Volunteers gained new skills by learning how to access and use the archives. Local community groups used some of the key themes in Dickens' novels – poverty, childhood, crime and punishment – to explore local or community history. The project involved a variety of activities including researching the archives, creating displays for exhibition, collecting and sharing local and community history and other creative tasks. Community groups were also encouraged and supported to come up with their own ideas.

Further information

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School children exploring the heritage of the Painted Hall in Greenwich

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