

The historic streets of Norwich Peter Everard Smith

Do you enjoy a Melton Mowbray pork pie; a stroll through the park; or even a spot of bird watching? Then like many of us, you've been making the most of your local heritage according to a new Heritage Index published today.

What is the the Heritage Index?

Compiled by the RSA, in collaboration with HLF, the Heritage Index reveals for the first time which areas enjoy the most physical heritage assets, such as canals, monuments and museums. However, it also looks at how actively residents and visitors in those areas are involved with local heritage; and – by comparing the two - shows where there is potential for local areas to make much more of their heritage.

[quote=Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF]"We hope this new Index will help communities to better understand their heritage."[/quote]

It's a unique new tool. Local communities, businesses and leaders can now use it to explore not only how vibrant the heritage is in their local areas but also how they can best capitalise on its potential to boost their economies and improve residents' wellbeing.

And if you thought your local area didn't have much heritage, think again. The Heritage Index brings together over 100 data sets ranging from but not limited to:

- nature reserves
- heritage open days
- archaeological groups
- blue plaques
- heritage volunteering and participation data
- pubs that have been listed as community assets
- EU-designated local foods such as Cornish Pasties or Melton Mowbray pork pies

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said: “We hope this new Index will help communities to better understand their heritage; identify its potential; and capitalise on what make their areas distinctive. We hope it will encourage debate about what heritage is and how it is best recognised and properly exploited in local plans.”

Heritage, Place and Identity

The Heritage Index is part of a wider RSA and HLF collaboration looking at Heritage, Place and Identity, which will reach its conclusions next year. The Index will remain open during this time, so that if organisations can identify other national data relating to heritage assets or activities that are not yet included, they can be added to a revised edition, planned as part of the final report on the wider project.

You can explore the full Heritage Index through a collection of interactive maps on the RSA’s website. There is also a selection of case studies outlining some of the Index’s emerging narratives.



Dundee City Centre Glynn Satterley

New Heritage Index highlights potential for areas to make more of local heritage