

New research reveals Manchester's heritage helps make us happier

17/03/2015



Heaton Park, one of the projects in Manchester featured in the 20 Years 12 Places research

To coincide with 20 years of National Lottery investment into the UK's heritage, amounting to over £6billion – including £144.9m in 331 projects in Manchester 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 had made places better to live, work in or visit.

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 Manchester

- 85% of people in Manchester believe heritage is important for their local area
- An impressive 80% of residents feel that heritage benefits them personally with parks and green spaces having a particularly powerful impact. 71% of residents living around Heaton Park for example said their quality of life was improved by having it nearby
- 82% of local visitors feel that taking part in their local heritage has increased their understanding of the history of Manchester
- 73% say heritage helps them have a greater understanding of other's people's cultures
- 71% described the projects HLF has invested in as good or excellent

The findings above form part of a poll conducted by specialist research company BritainThinks for the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). It found that as well as making places visually more attractive and providing activities and places to visit, heritage is also seen as hugely important for the local economy and instilling local pride and community cohesion.

Manchester's heritage offer is a diverse one with sites ranging from the People's History Museum to The Monastery Manchester (Gorton Monastery), Heaton Park and the newly reopened Whitworth. In fact, museums, libraries and archives, historic buildings and land and biodiversity are among the top three areas of HLF investment in Manchester.

Sara Hilton, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North West, said: "It's fantastic to see the clear sense of pride that people have for Manchester and its heritage, as well as the personal and economic benefits that have come from investing in that heritage. 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 intangible heritage, to ensure our city's rich heritage story is fully told."

Nick Brook-Sykes, Director of Tourism at Marketing Manchester, said: "Greater Manchester has given the world so much in terms of culture, science and sport and it's the region's unique heritage that makes Manchester both the third most visited and one of the UK's most liveable cities.

"HLF has, of course, been fundamental to the on-going development of Manchester as a visitor destination – from the People's History Museum and National Football Museum to Elizabeth Gaskell's House and Manchester Central Library. HLF investment in these attractions has clearly fuelled both tourism and civic pride. One only needs to look at the fantastic success of the newly reopened Whitworth to understand the impact that heritage has had and continues to have on communities in creating vibrant communities. I look forward to continued partnership with HLF to further develop and improve our visitor offer."

Sir Richard Leese, Leader of Manchester City Council, said: "We recognize the huge importance of heritage in the success of the city, both in contributing to a sense of place and supporting economic growth. HLF has been a tremendous partner in this vision and it's great to know that Manchester residents share our pride and enthusiasm for the city's historic and cultural gems. We are developing a Heritage Assets Strategy in partnership with English Heritage. "

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."

Visit the [20 Years 12 Places webpage](#) to find out more – 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.

Follow us on Twitter - [#20Years12Places](#) [@HLFNorthWest](#) [@heritagelottery](#)

Notes to editors

The Monastery Manchester - Gorton Monastery

The Monastery of St Francis & Gorton Trust was awarded a £1.7million HLF grant, as part of a wider £3m project, to enable the charitable trust to complete the restoration and conservation of the Pugin designed Victorian gothic masterpiece. The £3m total funding will allow for the construction of a permanent and sustainable carbon neutral front wing, designed to welcome the general public and enable the monastery to share its story and be 'open every day for everyone'. This will result in the creation of new community and educational space, enhanced visitor facilities, making the Monastery a permanent resource that schools, the community and the general public can experience and enjoy all of the time.

The Whitworth Gallery

The redevelopment of the Whitworth, was supported by a major £8m HLF grant, Along with support from The University of Manchester and other funders, the redevelopment project has doubled public space and created state-of-the-art new facilities including expanded gallery spaces, a study centre, learning studio, and a collections centre. By reconnecting the gallery with its surrounding landscape and creating an exciting programme of events and activities, local people and visitors will be better able to appreciate and enjoy the full Whitworth experience.

Heaton Park

Following an HLF grant to restore this much-loved Manchester green space, new visitor facilities such as the exciting new children's play area were created, the dramatic rolling landscape surrounding Heaton Hall has been reimagined and many of the park's historic buildings restored. Before the project started, Heaton Hall was virtually hidden from view by trees and shrubs and the original William Emes' planting scheme had been lost. That historic landscape has now been restored together with the Western Pleasure Ground, which has new paths, flower beds and seating. It is a pleasant garden space, where some of the oldest trees in the park can be seen.

Further information

Laura Bates, HLF press office, on tel: 020 7591 6027 or email: lbates@hlf.org.uk

You might also be interested in...

[School children exploring the heritage of the Painted Hall in Greenwich](#)

[**'20 years in 12 places' – New research reveals UK's heritage helps make us happier**](#)