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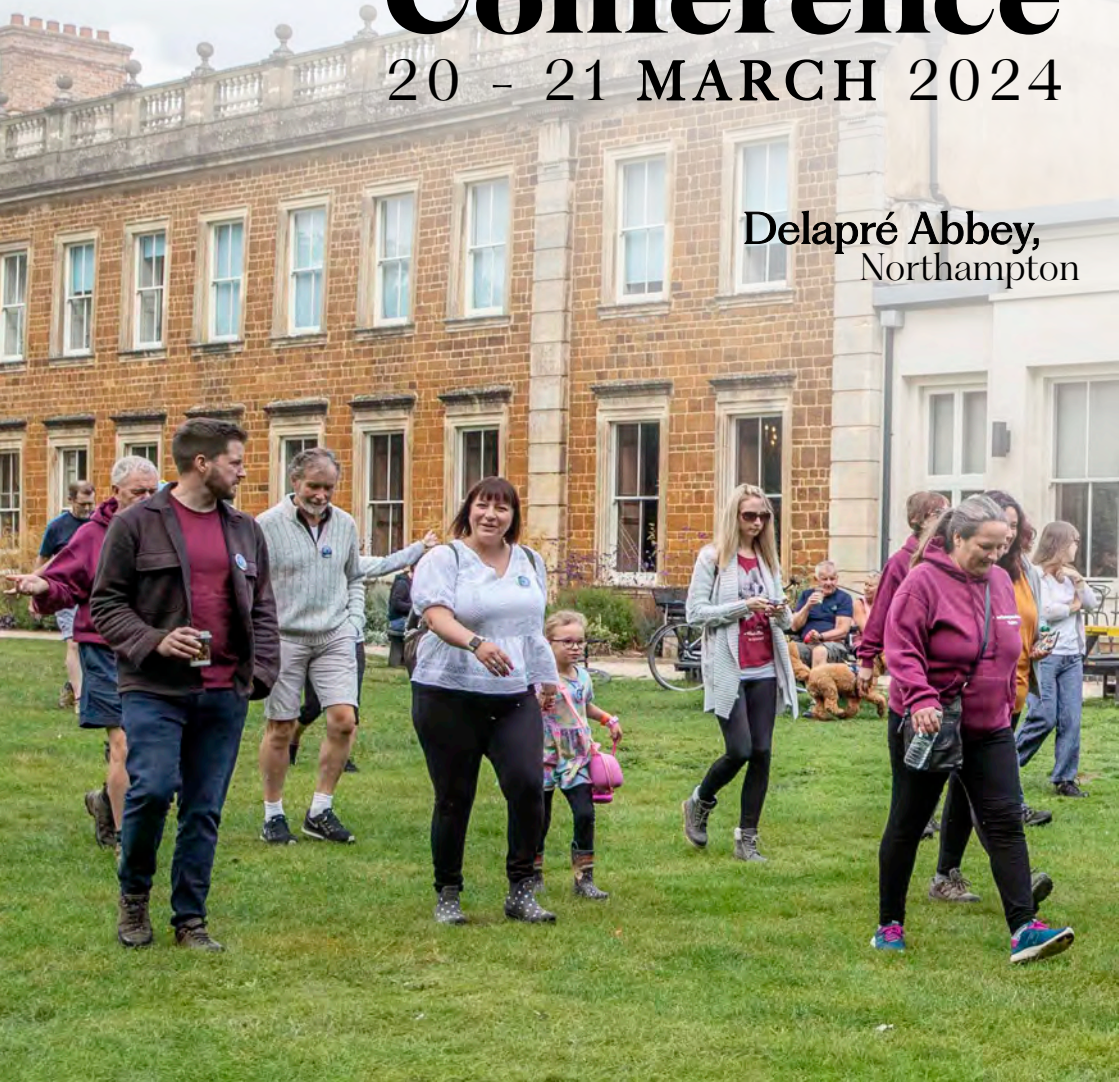


Delapré
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Wellbeing Heritage & Conference

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Delapré Abbey,
Northampton



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Putting people first - shifts in heritage policy and practice

How can cultural heritage, people-centred, participatory approaches help us support wellbeing?

Ian Thomas | British Council

Ian Thomas, Head of Research and Insights, Arts, British Council, leading on the evidence and learning from across the British Council's global arts programmes including the development of a What Works Approach to Cultural Heritage Protection. Ian has over 20 years' experience in working across a range of arts and cultural organisations, previous roles include at Arts Council England and Telford and Wrekin Council and as a board member for a number of arts organisations. Ian is a graduate of both Durham and Liverpool Universities, a former Visiting International Research Fellow at the University Southern California, is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and has written and presented on a range of international platforms around cultural heritage and sustainable development.



Heritage is not simply frozen in time and related to the past. It's a multifaceted, living and dynamic concept, interwoven with peoples and places. The core of this presentation is centred around sharing examples between theory, learning practice and geographies through taking a people centred approach to heritage can impact on local people's wellbeing. What is heritage? What does it mean to different people? What is the role of heritage in strengthening community wellbeing and resilience (sense of belonging, identity and community cohesion)?

The British Council have been running an action research programme, Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth since 2018 in Viet Nam, Colombia working with 6 Indigenous communities, and Kenya working with young people on their cultural heritage.

It looks at how investing in a people centred approach to heritage can benefit all levels of society and bring social cohesion, wellbeing and economic growth. The overall context of the programme was that of rising inequality, the need for inclusive growth to address this and the positive role the heritage can playing in responding to this context.

[Watch here](#)

Changing minds: How is research advancing understanding of the impact of heritage participation on mental wellbeing, and how can this evidence help improve people's lived experience?

Carenza Lewis | University of Lincoln

Carenza Lewis MA ScD FSA FHEA FRSA is a university professor in public engagement with research and an archaeologist with 20+ years' experience running hands-on public participatory heritage projects involving thousands of people and a range of online and broadcast media programmes. Her research interests include historic rural settlements, community archaeology, and heritage and wellbeing. Recent research projects investigating the social impact of public participation in heritage, including introducing public participatory archaeology in Europe, have encompassed a range of types of activity and aspects of wellbeing, and used innovative methods to understand the mechanisms by which heritage participation benefits health.



This paper will review recent research into the relationship between heritage and wellbeing in order to consider how close this is bringing us to the tipping point of being able to successfully make (or advocate for) a step change in policy, practice and perception around public heritage participation for health and wellbeing. Insights from a range of recent studies using qualitative and quantitative methods will be reviewed to show how robust not only our knowledge, but also our understanding, is becoming into the relationship between heritage participation and health. Analysis will consider why this knowledge and understanding is important, what gaps remain, and what else could help make this step change achievable at scale in a period simultaneously facing increased need and reduced resources.

[Watch here](#)

What matters most to people? A 'bottom-up' approach to understanding the potential of heritage for wellbeing

Martina Tenzer | Historic England / University of York

Martina Tenzer is a Heritage At Risk Project Officer at Historic England and currently completing her PhD at the University of York (UK). Her research focusses on methods for analysis and visualisation of social values and public perception of heritage and cultural landscapes and the integration of 'everyday heritage' in the decision-making process for a more transparent and inclusive heritage management. Prior to this, she gained degrees in Applied Landscape Archaeology at the University of Oxford (UK) and in Archaeology and Ancient History at Heidelberg University (Germany) and worked in commercial archaeology. Her research interests include Contemporary Archaeology, Historic Landscape Characterisation, climate change and global challenges, Artificial Intelligence in heritage management, mapping and visualisation of complex, abstract concepts, and QGIS.

Heritage and cultural landscapes are traditionally assessed and managed by professionals and practitioners. The shift or 'cultural turn' in the 1960s and 70s and the emphasis on public engagement and participation embedded in agendas and conventions like the Faro Convention (2005) and the European Landscape Convention (2000) proved challenging for the sector. People's perceptions, experiences, needs, visions and aspirations are often overlooked when heritage places are evaluated for public benefit and, subsequently, the potential of places, monuments and historic buildings are limited to education and learning about the past.

However, people connect to places for various reasons – through personal experiences, local history, memories, traditions and events, beliefs, myths and legends. Such intangible connections to the tangible elements of the historic environments are hidden, and traditional surveys and evaluation methods are incapable of capturing the reasons for the intricate connection between people and places. Furthermore, people are no longer passive consumers of knowledge and information. The public approaches and understands historic places differently from heritage practitioners and uses such places differently than in the past. Heritage and the historic environment have to provide an adequate background for the different uses and needs of people, particularly after the experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Wellbeing and mental and physical health have become increasingly important for visitors of heritage places. The heritage management has to include these aspects in the planning and offers to the public.

To include people's individually held values and approach the evaluation and management of places in a genuinely democratic bottom-up approach, a tool developed at the University of York – the Social Landscape Characterisation (SLC) – allows to collect, analyse and visualise on a landscape scale what and why places in the historic environment matter most to them. This approach creates an essential background for a socially sustainable heritage and landscape management based on people's needs to foster the appreciation of the historic environment and nurture a sense of place, belonging and identity.

[Watch here](#)

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Seeking happy heritage futures in the Anthropocene: an alternative framework of heritage and nature drawn from anti-oppressive theory

Bethan le Masurier | University of Exeter

Bethan le Masurier is a doctoral researcher at the University of Exeter, based in Cornwall. Her research focuses on transdisciplinary, anti-oppressive approaches to heritage work in the Anthropocene. She has a Masters in heritage management, and is also a musician and songwriter.



To pursue better futures, heritage work in the Anthropocene must be political and creative, seeking functional approaches that improve well-being.

I am developing an alternative heritage approach rooted in anti-oppressive theory. I use anti-oppressive (feminist, queer and anti-racist) texts as foundations, moving beyond conflict and critique of the heritage sector's inequitable foundations and towards something functional and future oriented. From anti-oppressive theory, I have drawn five key themes (positionality, nature, time, care and specificity) to guide heritage approaches. This non-prescriptive, expansive approach allows for a range of holistic, creative and political heritage futures, both theoretical and practical. I pose questions for heritage contexts and make suggestions guided by my framework. These questions and suggestions are connected to key concepts from well-being theory, demonstrating how expanding heritage boundaries and making equity foundational contribute to improved well-being.

In my presentation, I will describe the potential heritage approaches created by my framework, going into detail on my theme 'nature'. Key anti-oppressive concepts raised in this theme are: the human/nature dichotomy, capitalist and colonialist disconnection from place, animalisation of non-white and queer people, and bodily experience. These connect to well-being concepts of belonging, affiliation, ecosystem health, and emotion. Integrating anti-oppressive theory connects to well-being concepts of social justice and dignity. Questions I pose for heritage scenarios include: How should sites be understood outside of human/nature dichotomies? How does recognising humans and heritage as parts of nature alter responses to 'threats'? How can expanding our idea of heritage and nature help with climate stress? How should heritage work operate alongside other movements, such as land rights or environmental conservation? How can the body be integrated into heritage contexts where places and things are often de-bodied?

[Watch here](#)

Being Black, Being (Un)Well: Health and Heritage, a Colonial Epistemology?

Tré Ventour-Griffiths | independent public historian and sociologist

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Do claims of heritage being good for 'people's health' reflect colonial epistemologies? In Northants, for example, Black communities are an enigma on heritage sites – often viewed under surveillance or suspicion. Terms like 'canteen culture' (Macpherson, 1999: 46) are better placed to define our relationship to the occupational culture practiced by the heritage sector. So, one must ask if commitments to wellbeing and health come from a provincial colonial epistemology of health?



Moreover, Black experiences of heritage show racism as overlooked topic, if not actively systematically avoided. In wellness provisions, is 'racism' included as a public health issue? Exposure to racism impacts health and this is an ongoing colonial legacy. As Black people, we are excluded at least twice over: in the 'canteen culture' and mainstream conceptualisations of 'closeknit', white communities necessitating epistemologies of whiteness by the heritage sector – further to heritage sites, within a rubric of the 'green unpleasant land' "...fiercely guarded site[s] of belonging" (Fowler, 2020: 18).

In the countryside, we Black people are watched always under suspicion. Yet, we have been in rural Britain for centuries (Caballero and Aspinall, 2018), but still viewed as interlopers – these everyday racisms impact health. From volunteering roles to employed staff to organisational leadership teams, clearly the sector still has problems of exclusion. Is it right to say work done in heritage is fit for the health needs of all? This paper explores these contemporary discourses within wider contexts of history and belonging – pertinently as Britain's rural spaces exclude on a multipronged axis.

[Watch here](#)

Inclusivity within heritage: A brief look at 30+ years of struggle with disabilities within the sector

Kymerly Elizabeth Jones

independent archaeologist and volunteer at PAS, Swansea Egypt Centre and National Museum of Wales

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In this paper I propose to highlight aspects of my own 'career' that can help with understanding the issues of inclusivity for the disabled within heritage. This 'career' spans fieldwork as well as lab and DBAs in commercial, academic and third sector organisations. I will also have some hopefully useful insights into museum work.

I will be presenting examples which identify the barriers I have personally faced as a disabled archaeologist as well as examples of where mechanisms have been found to overcome these. The latter will discuss how effective these mechanisms have been in securing employment.

Finally, I will be introducing a time variable element. Having worked in heritage in 5 different decades I will be able to add detail as to how experiences of disability have varied over time in terms of employment/inclusion.

[Watch here](#)

Heritage sites as wellbeing hubs

Moseley Road Baths – Diving In Together

Simon Piaia | National Trust

Project Manager

I have a genuine passion for bringing places to life, ensuring a project achieves the greatest impact while maintaining its value within the community. Social history has always fascinated me, why things have taken place, who was involved and the impact this had. Over the last 10 years I have worked predominantly within the arts, culture and heritage sector and throughout this time, I have had the opportunity to see the evolution of a range of projects, all of which have had communities at their heart.

Previously, I provided heritage project management consultancy to clients nationally - Many of the special places I supported had achieved grant funded for their projects, particularly via the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Currently, I am part of a coalition of organisations overseeing the delivery of a multimillion-pound heritage-led regeneration project at Grade II* listed Moseley Road Baths in Birmingham. This is a role I am immensely proud of and honoured to be part of such a unique opportunity to support in the restoration of this truly magnificent place and develop how it engages with its communities today, tomorrow and into the future.

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Emily Butler | Moseley Road Baths

Emily Butler is currently the Programme Development Coordinator at Moseley Road Baths (a grade II* listed heritage building in Balsall Heath, Birmingham) where she has led on the 'MRB Alive' project for the past 3 years. The project has focused on programming wellbeing & community activities as well as pop-up cultural events.

She has over a decade worth of experience, focusing on relational and socially engaged practices within creative, cultural, wellbeing and arts programmes. Emily has worked with organisations such as Women and Theatre, Fatt Projects, Creative Dementia Arts Network (CDAN), Warwickshire Poetry Voices & Libraries and East 15 Acting School. She has directly worked with people who are care experienced, in secure hospitals, those in probation services and adults and young people with learning disabilities.

Emily's background in Acting and Community Theatre has fueled her playful approach to programming.



Moseley Road Baths – Diving In Together

Since 2018, following decades of campaigning, Moseley Road Baths Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO), assumed operation of Moseley Road Baths and have continuously done so ever since. Initially, the CIO operated the Baths for the provision of swimming, but in 2021 this was extended to additional activity in a bid to explore further ways to engage with the local community. This has seen the development of an activity programme centred around improving the health and wellbeing of the local community, while showcasing the heritage of the building and the diverse culture of the area it sits within.

We would like to share our experiences over the past 3 years, including the types of activity that have been developed and how we have partnered with local, city-wide and national partners to achieve this. This would include how we have utilised and developed local networks to establish individual wellbeing groups and video footage of lived experience of those who have participated. Additionally, we would discuss the positives of social prescription and how confusion could be eliminated when working within these models. This would include how personal and organisational challenges can affect the integration of social prescription, as well as how the CIO have overcome this to benefit people and the initiative itself.

Our programming to date has taken place through a series of successful external funding campaigns to pilot new activities in a bid to discover new initiatives in heritage programming. The baths are currently in a transitional phase, at the beginning of a 7-year campaign to restore the building, while creating an innovative engagement programme. We would be delighted to share our learnings through evidence of practical application and to support developing wellbeing programming as a sector.

[Watch here](#)

Manchester's Modern Day Monastery

Elaine Griffiths OBE DL

The Monastery of St Francis & Gorton Trust

Elaine is co-founder and Chief Executive of The Monastery of St Francis & Gorton Trust that saved this E.W. Pugin masterpiece from dereliction. The 28 year journey and restoration of Gorton Monastery has become a catalyst for the regeneration of this deprived part of East Manchester. The vision was always to create a Modern Day Monastery back at the heart of the community once again as a cultural, creative and educational heritage resource providing innovative health & wellbeing solutions & support.



Jeannine Goh PhD Mphil

The Monastery of St Francis & Gorton Trust

Jeannine is a psychologist and the Co-Director of The Sanctuary at the Monastery, where she founded and created the pioneering Listening Service. Having worked for nearly 15 years with Elaine on the vision for the Modern-day Monastery she is now leading on the health and well-being offer. Jeannine is dedicated to promoting trauma-informed, compassionate health approaches and would love to see the exemplar model at The Monastery replicated in heritage sites across the UK.



Allison Angel

The Monastery of St Francis & Gorton Trust

Allison's first-hand experience as a recipient of the Listening Service is what led to her becoming Co-Director of The Sanctuary at the Monastery. A social entrepreneur at heart, Allison has an extensive background in business coupled with a strong sense of awe (and stewardship) for heritage and historic environment. She values community wisdom and is an advocate for lived experience and post-traumatic growth.



Manchester's Modern Day Monastery

The Monastery of St Francis & Gorton Trust, established in 1996, has been at the forefront of heritage-led regeneration in one of Manchester's most deprived communities. The Trust's journey comprises a 27-year track record of transforming the endangered world monument site and E W Pugin's architectural masterpiece into a beacon of hope and pride for the Gorton community.

The Trust's vision, rooted in the compassionate values of the former Franciscan occupants, has evolved into developing Manchester's first Centre for Heritage, Health, Music & Innovation. This initiative has widened participation among non-traditional heritage audiences, inspiring new visitors and helping to transform Gorton's reputation while preserving its rich heritage.

The Trust has been involved in a hugely diverse range of community projects and activities from its inception until today. Always successfully operating without relying on grant support by generating income through self-sustaining initiatives, The Trust runs on support from over 50 volunteers in addition to its small and locally based professional staff team.

The Monastery operates through its trading subsidiary Monastery Manchester Ltd. This unique model makes it a self-reliant heritage and cultural attraction, generating all income independently. This approach has brought nearly £20 million in economic benefits to the Manchester City Region and over £12 million in heritage grants and public funding for East Manchester. The Trust's impact extends beyond economic contributions; it has earned over 30 prestigious awards, highlighting Manchester's positive attributes in various marketing and communications channels.

The Trust's partnership with local charities, like African Rainbow Family and Manchester Camerata, and its continuous delivery of outreach and engagement projects underscore its dedication to serving local community needs. The Monastery is recognized regionally, nationally, and internationally as a heritage and community-led exemplar of best practice, often providing free consultancy and advice to other projects.

Since lockdown, the brave decision was made to allow Gorton Monastery (commonly known as Manchester's Modern-day Monastery) to open completely free of charge to the local community and the general public from Sunday to Thursday from 10 am-4 pm.

This had been a dream of the CEO Elaine Griffiths OBE, since she and her husband Paul gave up their careers to save this beautiful heritage building that lay in ruins. Gorton Monastery was once a thriving community hub at the centre of the community, the question was, and still is, how can a now deconsecrated Monastery become once again a thriving community health and support hub within a secular city?

The re-opening of The Monastery to the local community on a daily basis allowed Elaine and psychologist Dr Jeannine Goh, to create a vision of a thriving Heritage and Holistic Health Hub. One that could catch people before they fall, be a destination for social prescription activity and a catalyst for the dynamic evolution of the community. Two years on, the response and impact has been exciting and humbling.

In this presentation Elaine Griffiths and the Co-Directors of the Monastery's Sanctuary will share their journey, findings and ambitious plans for their exemplar project. In particular, they will celebrate and share the success of the unique Listening Service that has been developed and piloted at this beautiful awe-inspiring heritage site.

[Watch here](#)

Historic Houses and Wellbeing

Sarah Roller | Historic Houses

Sarah co-ordinates Historic Houses' policy and education work, as well as contributing articles for Historic House magazine and running the Historic Houses Twitter feed. Before joining Historic Houses in early 2022, she worked in various history and heritage sector roles, including in communications, digital media and collections/curation work. She is a trustee of the Heritage Education Trust.

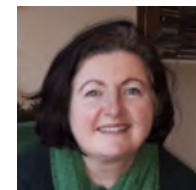
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Siobhan Goodwin | The Bishop's Palace, Wells

Siobhan Goodwin is the Community Engagement Manager at The Bishop's Palace in Wells. She works with local community groups on health and wellbeing projects both on and off site, as well as managing the volunteer team. She has a particular interest in the health benefits of spending time in nature. She has over 20 years experience as a Youth & Community Worker and has been involved in the heritage sector for almost 10 years.

IG: @bishopsplacewells | FB: @Bishopspalace | TT: @thebishopsplace



In 2022/3/4 we ran three Nature Connection courses at The Bishop's Palace, working with Somerset Wildlife Trust, The Natural Academy, Exeter University and local community groups.

We used the model established by The Natural Academy: five pathways to nature connection. Their work is backed up by previous research carried out by Derby University on the benefits of connecting with nature to both mental and physical health.

Our groups have been with varied groups of local people including learning disabled adults, those people living with dementia and adults with neurodiversity.

The courses have been 4-6 weeks for one morning or afternoon per week and were free. Each participant then also received a free annual pass to keep returning to The Bishop's Palace for a full year so they could feel part of our community and practice new skills and habits they had learnt on the course. At each session everyone had the chance to do both practical and mindful activities, enjoy the peaceful atmosphere of the palace gardens (14 acres of green and blue space), have things to practice at home and make connections with others in the group. Practical activities included making an apple bird feeder, photography and picking a bunch of flowers.

The feedback from participants was very positive. This type of course would be very possible for other historic houses across the country to run. The Natural Academy run short courses so staff can qualify to run them easily. By their very nature, the sessions need very few resources or equipment and can be run all year round.

[Watch here](#)

Archaeology and wellbeing

Operation Phoenix: Supporting Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Staff Using Archaeology

Aidan Phillips | Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue

Aidan is a Watch Manager for Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue and the key initiator for the Operation Phoenix project. He has worked for Northants Fire and Rescue since 1987 in full and part time roles and has been a firefighter since 1978. Aidan is also founding member of Irthlingborough Archaeological Society.



Ben Donnelly-Symes | Northamptonshire Archaeological Resource Centre

Ben is the archaeological curator at the Northamptonshire Archaeological Resource Centre which opened as the new publicly accessible archaeological archive store for Northamptonshire in 2021. He is also a co-director for the Irchester Field School and a part-time PhD student at the University of Leicester studying non-specialist engagement with archaeological archives.

Nadia Norman | Stanwick Lakes

Nadia Norman is the Heritage Coordinator at Stanwick Lakes, working to plan and coordinate heritage projects that explore the 5,000 year history that was unearthed during excavations during the 1980's. From hands on volunteer led projects such as the construction of a replica Roundhouse and Big Bronze Age Boat Build, to curating the Heritage Museum in the Visitor Centre, Nadia is enthusiastic about all things heritage and has a strong passion for engaging visitors and community groups in the rich history of the site.

Nadia also has an interest in archaeology and has spent time on many local dig sites throughout the county over the past decade.



Sarah Scott | University of Leicester

Sarah Scott, Professor of Archaeology, Heritage Hub Director, University of Leicester. I work with organisations of all sizes, supporting social and economic regeneration through archaeology and heritage across the East Midlands and beyond, facilitating collaborations that combine cutting-edge university research, sector and lived experience.

Dickie Bennett | Breaking Ground Heritage

Dickie has a proven track record in delivering heritage-based wellbeing projects across diverse groups. These projects span youth organisations, archaeology field schools, academic institutions, blue light services, and veterans. His first-hand experience as a participant in heritage wellbeing initiatives, coupled with his role in establishing Breaking Ground Heritage, positioned him uniquely in this developing field.

Dickie has now ventured into academia, seeking to develop a deeper understanding of the mechanisms that drive heritage wellbeing interventions. His focus lies on measuring project outcomes and impact. By bridging practical experience with academic intrigue, Dickie aims to enhance the effectiveness of these interventions and contribute to the field of heritage wellbeing.



Operation Phoenix: Supporting Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Staff Using Archaeology

This presentation will demonstrate the background, planning, undertaking and results of the first year of Operation Phoenix; a collaborative project aimed at supporting staff from Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) by using archaeology as a tool to assist serving members of the service who are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), stress or wider mental health issues. Operation Phoenix adapted and developed the model of Operation Nightingale for a different audience and set of local circumstances.

The project has run since November 2022 and has introduced participants from NFRS to the whole archaeological process including research, excavation, post-excavation, archiving and experimental archaeology aspects. Through this, the project has sought to support NFRS participants develop a sense of community through the archaeology and history of Northamptonshire and the Nene Valley.

The project team will discuss the programme of activities (led by/co-created with Aidan Phillips from NFRS) that participants have undertaken over the past year and the presentation will include contributions from team members of their lived experience of the project. The activities include walking the landscape of the Nene Valley, archiving and sorting artefacts at the Northamptonshire Archaeological Resource Centre, undertaking the building of a Bronze Age boat and Iron Age round house at Stanwick Lakes and participating in the excavation of a Roman town at the Irchester Field School run by University of Leicester and Chester House Estate.

We will present preliminary results for the participants and discuss the efforts to make the project sustainable going forward. Finally, we will outline our future plans for the project and some of the lessons we have learnt along the way.

[Watch here](#)

Rendlesham Revealed – a community archaeology project

Faye Minter | Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service

Faye Minter is an archaeologist specialising in the identification of Roman and early medieval metal artefacts. Faye has worked for Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service for many years and is currently Archaeology Archives and Projects Manager for Suffolk County Council, managing the county's archaeological archives, finds recording as part of the Portable Antiquities Scheme, and Suffolk based research projects. Faye has had responsibility for the finds recording at Rendlesham since 2008 and is the manager of the community archaeology project Rendlesham Revealed funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

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Alice De Leo | Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service

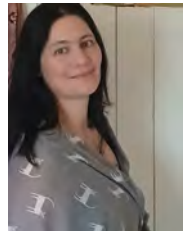
Alice De Leo is a landscape historian and has a background in fundraising. Alice has been employed by Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service since 2017 starting in the Historic Environment Record before becoming the Project Delivery Officer for the Rendlesham Revealed community archaeology project in 2018, helping to secure the project's National Lottery Heritage Fund grant for both the development and delivery phases.

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Karen Howard | Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service

Claire Andrade | Suffolk Mind

Claire Andrade BSc (Hons) For the last 8 years has been a group facilitator teaching psychoeducation within a personality disorder service for Suffolk Mind. Having worked for an international charity as a child advocate taking cases to the high court for judicial review and running an advocacy project for children across Essex from 2003, I began work with adults in 2016 with a diagnosis or traits of Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder/Complex PTSD from various referral pathways across Suffolk. From 2020-2022 I also worked within a multi-disciplinary team, the NHS NSFT COVID & Staff Support Service supporting the mental wellbeing of NHS workers across Norfolk & Suffolk as they battled the pandemic.



Rendlesham Revealed – a community archaeology project

This presentation focuses on the volunteer involvement with the community archaeology project 'Rendlesham Revealed: Anglo-Saxon Life in South-East Suffolk' led by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (SCCAS), funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, working in partnership with over 20 local and national organisations.

Over 6 years, from this project's inception, the local community have been at the heart of this project. More than 600 volunteers have been involved.

A programme of archaeological fieldwork, to investigate the internationally significant early medieval royal settlement at Rendlesham, was dedicated to a vision of citizen science by directly engaging local people, with training and support from a small core professional team from SCCAS, Cotswold Archaeology and with academic advice from Professor Christopher Scull.

This presentation also illustrates how the project proactively sought to engage people who do not usually have the opportunity or have significant barriers preventing them to be involved with archaeology. Specifically collaborating with Suffolk Mind and Suffolk Family Carers, it was possible to remove barriers and provide volunteering opportunities that would address the mental health and wellbeing needs.

Suffolk Mind will share case studies to amplify the voices of individuals in their service who volunteered and highlight how this project had a positive impact on their mental health wellbeing in ways that in-service support is rarely able to provide. Suffolk Mind's Waves service supports adults diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder, PTSD and anxiety. Such diagnoses severely impact on a person's ability to function in their daily life, such as leaving their house to enjoy interests or to work, and struggling with their sense of identity and value.

More information about the Rendlesham Revealed project is available at: heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/rendlesham

[Watch here](#)

Recovering the Fallen: how searching for the dead inspires life for the living

Richard Osgood | Operation Nightingale /Ministry of Defence

Richard Osgood is the Senior archaeologist for the Defence Infrastructure Organisation – part of the Ministry of Defence – where he has worked since 2004. He leads 'Operation Nightingale', a programme to assist the recovery of military personnel using archaeology. In 2019 he won the Current Archaeology 'Archaeologist of the Year' award and in 2021 was given an MBE for services to Heritage and Defence. Prior to working for MOD, he worked as the Research Assistant to Professor Barry Cunliffe. Richard lives in Winchester.



Rosanna Price | Cotswold Archaeology

Rosanna has been an archaeologist for over 15 years and now spends her days as Cotswold Archaeology's Engagement Manager – website handling, social media wrangling, and press and publicity pandering! She has run Cotswold Archaeology's online channels since 2015, using social media to reach a core audience of now over 42,000 fantastically responsive followers (hello, if you're reading this!). She also works in the field, using digs to engage local communities, create lasting social initiatives, and foster community wellbeing through a shared sense of history. She's had the privilege to directly share many sites with the public, most recently the Minety Roman tile kiln and an East Anglian B-17 crash site.



In the summer of 2023, Cotswold Archaeology joined forces with a volunteer team from Operation Nightingale, US military organisations, and the surrounding local community in a seemingly quiet East Anglian village. Our mission, on behalf of the US Department of Defense, was to investigate the fatal crash of a WWII American bomber, with the intention of recovering any retrievable remains of the aircrew, thus bringing closure to their surviving friends and family members. The project would come to create lasting unions between communities not only across social and age divides, but also across the Atlantic.

Although seemingly incongruous to take traumatised and wounded veterans to a place of fatality, such projects prove to be some of the most successful from a wellbeing perspective. This talk will highlight the volunteer-centred components included in the overall archaeological recovery package, the results of the fieldwork, and the personal reflections of the participants themselves. It will also showcase the incredible emotional investment to be uncovered in local communities, particularly in relation to sites of World War history, and how the energy of these individuals can be supported and directed to enable them to co-create self-sustaining archaeology, heritage, and community projects of their own.

[Watch here](#)

Heritage and wellbeing for children and young people

The Lowenna Project – working with care experienced young people

Sophie Meyer (she/her) | Cornwall Heritage Trust

Engagement Lead at Cornwall Heritage Trust, Founder and Director of Queer Kernow CIC and Trustee of Cornwall Pride.

With a BA (hons) and MA in Archaeology from the University of Southampton and over a decade of experience working in the heritage sector, Sophie's practice brings together academic and professional expertise with her lived experience as a neurodivergent queer woman. Her career is focused on making history an equitable, engaging, and inclusive experience for all.



Caroline Davey (she/her) | Cornwall Heritage Trust

Education and Outreach Manager for Cornwall Heritage Trust

With a BA(Hons) English and History from Bath Spa University and a PGCE from Exeter University, Caroline's professional background is firmly rooted in education and includes 25 years of experience teaching history in Cornish secondary schools.

Her new role at Cornwall Heritage Trust seeks to engage young people and explore ways to connect Cornwall's communities with their unique history, investigate connections with the past and interpret the distinctive landscape around them.



The Lowenna Project involved a partnership between Cornwall Heritage Trust and Carefree (Carefree works with Care experienced young people). The aim of this partnership was to invite vulnerable young people to join creative workshops to co-design a wellbeing pack based on Cornish heritage.

The workshops offered the opportunity to connect, try something new, engage with green space and explore Cornish heritage. We worked with three Carefree groups, 11 – 17yr olds in Care, 18 -25yr old Care leavers, and unaccompanied minors seeking asylum.

For each workshop we ran a sensory activity that would then be included in the Wellbeing Heritage activity book. The role of co-creation with this activity book gave the workshops legacy, it also ensures that it's not a wellbeing book made for people, but with people – enabling the book to have real value and usefulness.

The focus was very much on sensory exploration, and while they took part on heritage sites, a learning outcome was not expected and the focus was very much on wellbeing and the journey of the young people. I think this was a key point that the Trust has learned from working with Carefree.

Alongside the creation of the activity book, the main legacy of the project is in breaking down threshold anxiety for historic sites with care experienced people and building an embedded relationship with Carefree to impact our work beyond this project. It also helped Cornwall Heritage Trust learn and respond to the needs of care experienced people and how we had to adapt and change to support access and engagement for this needs-led group.

[Watch here](#)

Ensuring heritage is for everyone. Providing access to archaeological fieldwork for children with special educational needs (SEN)

Dr Peter Guest | Vianova Archaeology & Heritage Services

Dr Peter Guest (Vianova Archaeology & Heritage Services), is an archaeologist and numismatist with over 30 years' experience as a finds specialist, excavator, researcher, teacher and curator. Peter specialises in the Roman period and is particularly interested in Britannia and the northwestern provinces, the Roman army and frontiers, as well as Roman coinage and the economy. Peter's current excavation project is investigating the late Roman villa at Hinton St Mary in Dorset, where a unique mosaic was found 60 years ago. The community engagement element of this excavation is the subject of Peter's presentation at the Wellbeing and Heritage Conference.



The British Museum's excavations at Hinton St Mary involved an educational partnership with Yewstock School, a day community school in Sturminster Newton for children from North Dorset with a range of learning difficulties and special educational needs. Our aims were to provide an enriching learning experience for the schoolchildren to understand what archaeology is, the importance of the past to the places we live in, as well as developing an appreciation of this unique local archaeological site. Over 140 pupils joined the team during the 2023 season for afternoons of hands-on archaeology, taking part in activities that including digging, sieving, finds washing and processing, as well as metal detecting. The impact of the outreach programme with Yewstock School was considerable and clearly demonstrates that engaging with archaeological fieldwork can have many positive physical and mental health benefits. Evaluating educational learning events via traditional methods such as feedback forms can be problematic, however, and so the Hinton St Mary project employed a 'Feedback Mosaic' to provide a quick and informal indication of how much the Yewstock pupils enjoyed their experience being 'Real Archaeologists'.

[Watch here](#)

Project Rejuvenate

Dr Linda Monckton FSA | Historic England

Dr Linda Monckton is Head of Wellbeing and Heritage at Historic England and a heritage professional with an expertise in how heritage can promote and sustain increased wellbeing. She is author of the Historic England Wellbeing and Heritage Strategy and delivers a programme of pilot projects and strategic development. She works closely with the heritage and health sectors and other Arm's Length Bodies and devolved nations along with international colleagues to establish evidence gaps and what works. She also has a publication record on aspects of architectural history and wellbeing and heritage. She sits on a number of advisory and steering boards for research projects and advises international colleagues on wellbeing and heritage. Linda has held a fellowship at the Southampton Institute for Arts and Humanities; was recently a visiting lecturer at University College London's Institute of Sustainable Heritage and is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.



Historic England has spent four years working with two archaeological contractors (Wessex Archaeology and Isle Heritage) to develop a heritage-led outdoors programme for young people. It is based on the idea that archaeology and heritage can and does expand the capacity of vulnerable young people where it is suppressed by circumstance or self-belief; and that participants can build transferable skills such as resilience, critical-thinking and cooperation, all through a stronger connection to the historic environment, creating chances for increased autonomy.

The project set out to establish a clear methodological framework for action, and a design based on the principles of developing self-determination. After successful fund raising two projects were run in 2023: one for young people with low engagement with school and at risk of falling out of mainstream education and one for children undertaking reparation within a youth justice context.

This paper will briefly outline the process we went through and the results of our 2023 pilot projects, in particular the direct and measurable impact on young people. It will also refer to the challenges and lessons learned from the projects and our future ambitions for this work.

[Watch here](#)

Heritage and wellbeing for older people

Photovoice with Older Adults: Exploring the role of Heritage and Historic Places in Ageing and Wellbeing

Jessica Bowden | Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh

Jessica Bowden has a degree in Archaeology, and a master's degree in Cultural Heritage Management from the University of York. Her master's thesis explored the impact of excavating human remains on the mental health of archaeologists. Jessica is currently a third-year PhD researcher with Heriot-Watt University, with interests in heritage, ageing and wellbeing. She has experience working on archaeological sites and with heritage institutions. She also has experience in employing innovative participatory research methods, including Photovoice. The title of Jessica's PhD thesis is 'Exploring the links between heritage, memory and sense of place in order to understand the relationship between older adults and their local historic environment'.

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This presentation will discuss the results of a Photovoice study, conducted with 17 participants in Nottinghamshire, between April – June 2023. This research forms part of my PhD with Heriot-Watt University, which is titled 'Exploring the links between heritage, memory and sense of place in order to understand the relationship between older adults and their local historic environment'. Using Photovoice, I conducted a number of workshops with older adults (aged 56-86) to explore factors that influence the relationship between older adults and their local historic environment. The links between heritage, memory and sense of place were considered. The overall aim of my research was to understand the role that the local historic environment plays in daily life, and how it can be used to support people to age-in-place, and thus improve overall wellbeing.

Three key themes were identified within the Photovoice data. These were: 1) interconnected culture and community; 2) place identity; and 3) intergenerational bonding. It was revealed that older adults typically value their local historic environment for personal reasons, relating to their own experiences of heritage, memory and sense of place. It was also recognised that the local historic environment can improve overall wellbeing and support people to age-in-place in two key ways: through providing space for social interaction, and through providing space for meaningful engagement and educational activities. Engagement with historic places and heritage activities also facilitates intergenerational and wider communal bonding. The historic environment can therefore play a significant role in supporting community wellbeing, and in supporting people as they age.

[Watch here](#)

Remembering Yesterday, Supporting Today. Using cultural heritage to enhance the well-being of people living with dementia

Helen Wallbridge BSc Hons, ACIFA | Hampshire Community Heritage

Helen is a community archaeologist. She works freelance under the name Hampshire Community Heritage, inspiring people to connect with their heritage and the history that surrounds us.

Helen began volunteering with Southampton City Council Archaeology Unit, and studied Archaeology at the University of Leicester, which included a three-month exchange with the University of Pisa. On graduating, Helen returned to Southampton Archaeology, until recession and cutbacks necessitated a move to a more lucrative, but unhappy, career in IT. Whilst taking a family break, Helen began volunteering for the New Forest National Park Remembers WW2 project, and experienced first-hand the much-needed wellbeing benefits of archaeology and heritage. This project reignited her passion for archaeology and led to eight years working with the Maritime Archaeology Trust.

Working freelance allows Helen to fulfil various interests that include archaeology, research, education, and community heritage work. Helen particularly enjoys working with people living with dementia, using reminiscence therapy, life stories and musical playlists to enhance their wellbeing. Helen considers heritage settings to be the 'keepers of memories': an excellent resource for promoting wellbeing and is striving to make heritage more accessible, especially to the dementia community.

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LI: @helen-wallbridge-hampshire-community-heritage-5071a6232/



Helen is a freelance community archaeologist. She works one afternoon a week at a community dementia wellbeing group, using different aspects of heritage to promote the wellbeing of the members attending. Helen is keen to work with heritage organisations to help them become welcoming places for people living with dementia, and to take their offer into the community.

People living with dementia often retain strong memories of their early adult life. Familiar objects can help to trigger these memories, which strengthen the person's sense of identity and belonging. Discussing the past, not only promotes cognitive stimulation but allows people to share their life experiences and wisdom, creating a sense of pride and achievement and experiencing deep interpersonal connections with their families and caregivers.

This workshop, led by discussion, will explore the opportunities for museums, historic buildings, archaeological sites, and other heritage settings to encourage those living with dementia to visit their sites, to explore suitable and accessible collections, and to enjoy immersive experiences. We will also discuss how our heritage offers are much needed in the communities that are unable to visit, and how they too can be included.

[Watch here](#)

Heritage and Dementia: Supporting Practitioners

Sophie de Chardon | independent researcher

Sophie de Chardon is an independent researcher with an MA in museum social practice from the University of Leicester. She currently works as a volunteer for the Museum of Brands in London, leading reminiscing sessions for people living with dementia.

A licensed psychologist with 20 years' experience in Human Resources delivering change programmes and advising stakeholders on people-related needs, Sophie has built an expertise in project and team management. Spending 10 years at the British Museum in various HR roles she developed a strong interest for the museum and heritage sector. Later, a relocation to New York gave her the opportunity to get involved with community engagement work in partnership with the MET and Brooklyn Museum, convincing her to make a career change towards museum social practice with a particular focus on health and wellbeing.

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Over the past 10 years, museums and heritage organisations have developed programmes aimed at improving community health and wellbeing. Most research in this field have focused on demonstrating and measuring the impact of these activities on participants. In contrast, and in spite of the potential risks this work can present for practitioners delivering those programmes if not properly supported, there have been very limited studies attending to practitioners needs.

Focusing on programmes aimed at participants living with dementia and consisting of semi-structured interviews of 18 practitioners from six UK-based organisations, the research we conducted explored practitioners perception of the support available in their organisation for their emotional and affective labour. Furthermore, it collected practitioners recommendations of the support they would like to see implemented.

Findings from this research propose a framework in two parts for evaluating and supporting the emotional demand placed on practitioners working with people living with dementia. Firstly, it identifies a set of five factors impacting practitioners emotional and affective labour: activity location, frequency of contact with participants, practitioner professional background and experience, practitioner personal experience of people living with dementia and quality of team relationships. Secondly, it presents a tri-dimensional model of support covering the following categories: emotional, informational and instrumental. It includes both preventive and reactive interventions.

We are putting forward this framework as an organisational tool to prevent some of the health risks associated with health and wellbeing community engagement work for people living with dementia.

[Watch here](#)

Community and Place I

Gladden: A Virtual Community

Ruthanne Baxter | Gladden Village

Ruthanne Baxter is Co-Founder of Gladden Village, a fictional, online village that utilises heritage stories to support mental health and reduce loneliness and isolation. Gladden Village is something Ruthanne does in her volunteer time. In her day job she is Civic Engagement Manager for the University of Edinburgh Heritage Collections and within that varied remit she leads on Prescribe Culture. Ruthanne has been involved in delivering heritage prescriptions, and related research projects, since 2019. She is a Health & Wellbeing Advisor to Museums Galleries Scotland and provides consultancy on developing heritage-based health creation, and social prescribing, across the UK, and internationally.

X: @ruthannebaxter | #GladdenVillage



Gladden Village is a fictional, online village offering connection, community and opportunities to contribute, using heritage as a trellis. Launched in January 2023 and managed by the volunteer Village Council, Gladden welcomes all adults, but was created specifically to provide digital social prescribing for those who are less able to be out and about. Many of the villagers are older adults who have caring responsibilities, ill health or have been affected by the cost-of-living crisis.

In this session you will hear more about village life, the benefits and challenges of running online heritage-based hospitality for reducing loneliness and improving wellbeing and discover how you and your heritage stories of choice could support the villagers and the Village Council.

[Watch here](#)

Place, identity and wellbeing: Bradford and beyond

Karina Croucher | University of Bradford

Karina is Professor of Archaeology, Heritage and Wellbeing in the School of Archaeological and Forensic Sciences at the University of Bradford. Her interdisciplinary research has drawn on the past to develop non-medicalised approaches to contemporary issues. For example, she has led on the 'Continuing Bonds' and 'Dying to Talk' projects, which have explored the use of funerary archaeology for prompting discussion and challenging biases around death, dying, bereavement and loss, and has been a co-investigator on the 'People, Heritage and Place' project, exploring place-based research in Bradford engaging communities with heritage, and the 'Building Resilience Through Heritage' project, which uses heritage for wellbeing and cohesion among refugee and host communities. She is also the University of Bradford's Academic Lead for Bradford 2025 City of Culture.



Igidius B. Ichumbaki | University of Dar es Salaam

Chris Gaffney | University of Bradford

Adrian Evans | University of Bradford

Andrew Wilson | University of Bradford

Professor Andrew S. Wilson, PhD, MCIfA, FHEA is Chair in Forensic & Archaeological Sciences in the School of Archaeological & Forensic Sciences at the University of Bradford. He is an Archaeologist and Heritage Scientist, with wide-ranging research interests in Digital Heritage, Conservation, Human Bioarchaeology, Taphonomy and Forensic Archaeology. He Co-Directs Visualising Heritage, which has developed wide-ranging capabilities in 3D digital capture and innovative methods of dissemination. He has published widely and led major Digital Heritage projects including: Digitised Diseases (Jisc), Fragmented Heritage/ Curious Travellers (AHRC Digital Transformations Theme Large Grant), Augmenting Jordanian Heritage (AHRC-GCRF), Reimagining Tanzania's Townscape Heritage (AHRC), People, Heritage and Place (AHRC) and AHRC's Capability for Collections, enabling place-based research, including development of Bradford's Digital Twin.



Place, identity and wellbeing: Bradford and beyond

This paper presents ongoing collaborative, place-based research at the University of Bradford, exploring the importance of identity, and the role of heritage and culture, for wellbeing, cohesion and resilience. Using digital heritage, alongside arts-based creative methods, our projects are highlighting the crucial role that the past can play for communities today. For instance, 'People, Heritage and Place' (AHRC Place-based programme) has used digital twin technologies to explore heritage, alongside creative workshops with school learners, exploring their journeys, routes, and narratives; work that is also being developed with our partners at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, in response to the UN year for the Creative Economy.

Our Building Resilience Through Heritage project has used faithful 3D reconstructions of heritage sites drawing upon the Curious Travellers methodology, alongside intangible heritage in Cultural Heritage Festivals. Collectively this work has resulted in increased cohesion among refugee, and between refugee and host communities – we are now bringing results from our work in Jordan for a new Yorkshire based project in the UK. Separately, in 'Continuing Bonds' and 'Dying to Talk', we have used funerary archaeology and creative methods to build resilience around death, dying, bereavement and loss, with audiences ranging from health and social care professionals and students, to school children, the latter co-producing resources with and for young people, used in 'Festivals of the Dead' (with Continuing Bonds methods also now being used for exploring topics of gender, identity, and diet/eating disorders).

Legacy and impact derived from our place-based research contributes to Bradford's role as City of Culture 2025, further highlighting the value of local identity, heritage, and culture, with a fundamental aim of the Bradford 2025 focused on wellbeing.

[Watch here](#)

History Health Happiness – Back to Nature

Jo McQuade | City of Doncaster Council Culture Services

Community Development Officer

Jo has 10 years' experience working in the cultural sector in Doncaster, and is passionate about using arts, culture, and heritage to connect local people in local places.

She manages the Doncaster Culture Services Community Team, at City of Doncaster City Council, who programme and deliver an innovative creative health initiative called 'History Health Happiness' which provides a mix of activities, events, and workshops to adults, young people, and families.

Jo loves sharing her crafting and upcycling skills in sessions, as well as using historic objects to spark conversations and uncover memories and local stories.

She works with strategic partners and local groups to identify new opportunities.



Emma Kelsey | City of Doncaster Council Culture Services

Culture Services Officer Communities

Emma is a community engagement worker focusing on arts and heritage to enhance wellbeing.

Born and raised on the Yorkshire/Lincolnshire border, Emma gained a BA in Fine Art: Painting from Edinburgh College of Art in 2014. Since graduating, Emma has worked across events and hospitality, as well as working in social care as a support worker in a care home, and later as an outreach worker for adults with additional needs.

Emma currently works at Doncaster Culture Services in the community team delivering wellbeing sessions within the community. In these sessions, Emma combines her creativity and social care experience to build meaningful and engaging work.



Katie Mulkeen | City of Doncaster Council Culture Services

Culture Services Officer Communities

Katie's background is firmly in culture and the arts, having achieved a BA with First Class Honours in Theatre, Film and Television from York St John University in 2004 and a Masters in Film Production in 2007.

Following six years teaching in the Further Education sector, Katie took a career break being a mum to her two young children. Her journey in the museum sector began in 2019 when she started her career in community engagement with Doncaster Museum.

Katie is passionate about enabling families and young people to be inspired by history, art and culture. She has developed a number of outreach sessions including Curiosity Club - a group for pre-school children with history-themed crafts and activities, and History, Forage & Feast - a nature based group for homeeducated young people.



Kat Woolley | Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

Inspiring People Officer

Kat has 15 years of experience working in environmental education and wildlife conservation at Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. As a Forest School leader for the past 8 years, Kat has worked with a wide range of diverse groups, for example people in recovery from drug and alcohol misuse, and those with poor mental health.

She is a keen naturalist with specific interests in fungi, wild food, and invertebrates amongst many other things. Having a personal interest in history has been useful when planning sessions using nature and heritage to support people's wellbeing.



History Health Happiness – Back to Nature

Our presentation will share the outcomes of a successful cross-sector partnership between Doncaster Culture Services and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. Since 2021, we have delivered a range of activities at Potteric Carr Nature Reserve.

Each session explores a different piece of history, inspired by our museum collections, and linked to nature. They help people connect and socialise, improving people's wellbeing.

Projects include:

A Taste of History – For adults to explore historic periods, forage for ingredients to cook an historic recipe on a campfire. Mock Banana, Hawthorne Syrup, Bread recipes

- Crafting thorough History - For adults to have a go different natural crafts from different periods in time i.e., reed candle making, Corn Dolls, Whittling a spoon.
- Back to Nature – For Adults combines historic crafts and campfire cooking.
- History Forage and Feast - For home educated young people 12 – 16 Years
- Get Wild Summer Camps - For young people 12–16-year-olds to explore historic periods historic crafts, and campfire cooking.

To highlight this success, and to encourage more culture nature collaborations, we can share extractions from our wellbeing evaluations (using a version of the Wark Edinburgh wellbeing questionnaire), as well as feedback and case studies from attendees. We would like to invite an attendee or volunteer deliver part of the presentation and share a visual photo real of images.

We can talk about how we plan sessions connecting heritage themes with nature-based activities.

We can share examples of how we have collaborated with local providers to fund the activities, i.e., WEA, Rotary Club, Holiday Activity Food Fund.

We are now trialling new ways to that take these experiences out in to the heart of local communities. For Example, Culture Nature Edlington, which has received funding from Natural England and Libraries Connected to uses local libraries as a gateway to nature. We are also taking the Back to Nature project out to a Woodfield Park in Balby to make it even more accessible to local people.

[Watch here](#)

Heritage and Social Prescribing I

Heritage 4 Health – A Social Prescribing project in Northern Ireland

Beth Frazer | Northern Ireland Environment Link

Beth Frazer has over 15 years of experience working in museums and heritage including education, community engagement and events. Working across departments in her career, Beth is award winning in her delivery including the MARSH Award for Excellence in Museum Education and as the coordinator of the first, and award winning, Playful Museums Festival across Northern Ireland. As well as the Irish Museum Association education and outreach forum, Beth has presented at Engage in Arts Summer school, National Trust NI staff network, Museums Next Growing Audience Summit, Museum Next Games and Play Summit, and published in the IMA Journal. Beth was selected and took part in the British Museum Exchange programme, Space Invaders Reverse Mentoring programme and Thrive Audience Development programme.

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A new initiative called Heritage 4 Health is bringing together healthcare providers and heritage sites across Northern Ireland to improve community health and wellbeing. Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the innovative programme aims to increase access to nature and local history through social prescribing.

Social prescribing enables healthcare professionals to refer patients to a range of local, non-clinical services that suit their needs.

The programme was developed by Northern Ireland Environment Link and the Healthy Living Centre Alliance. Early indicators highlight improvements in mood, social isolation and overall wellbeing. Healthcare staff have observed participants becoming more active and connected through taking part. Heritage 4 Health is designed to increase access to, and time spent on activities known to enhance individual health and wellbeing. Research has proven that environmental heritage and green & blue spaces are extremely valuable supports to human health and wellbeing. It is widely acknowledged that being outdoors and connecting with the natural environment boosts activity levels, improves physical & mental health recovery, and enhances our overall sense of wellbeing.

Programme participants are referred through Healthy Living Centres across Northern Ireland. It is anticipated that Heritage for Health will help people benefit from a variety of positive impacts. An increase in engagement with environmental heritage has the potential to increase visits, knowledge and understanding.

This presentation will give an overview of the overall project from engagement with participants to our approach to share learning through events and podcasts. We will share first hand experiences and you will hear from our facilitators and participants. You can hear about our learning, the challenges and successes.

[Watch here](#)

‘Accessible Archaeology’, a participant perspective

Arran Johnson | York Archaeological Trust

Arran Johnson is a Community Engagement Officer at York Archaeology with a keen interest in partnership working and the engagement of new and diverse audiences. Alongside developing and overseeing public training excavations, Arran manages the national award winning Archaeology on Prescription social prescribing project. He has 18 years of experience, specialising in the investigation of complex, deeply stratified urban sites, and an uncanny ability to find Viking Age cesspits in the unlikelyst of locations. Arran aims to continue developing innovative projects that champion accessibility, inclusion and the wellbeing benefits of archaeology.

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Ian Milsted | York Archaeological Trust

Christina Henzel | York Archaeological Trust

Christina Henzel is a Community Engagement Assistant Officer at York Archaeology. She has over a decade of combined experience in commercial archaeology and museums, and is a key member of the Archaeology on Prescription delivery team. Her main interests include widening people's understanding of the archaeology and heritage local to them, and making fieldwork accessible to all.



Alice Hall-Thomas | York Archaeological Trust

Domhnall Crystal | York Archaeological Trust

A cross-sector drive towards making heritage projects accessible to an increasingly diverse audience has enabled more people than ever to engage with archaeological activities that may otherwise have felt unable or excluded. This process has been greatly aided by the commendable exchange of knowledge and experience between leading organisations.

A great strength of the Archaeology on Prescription programme has been the active role played by its participants. Alongside a robust, rolling process of evaluation, open discussions with participants has empowered individuals to communicate their needs and to co-create sensitive adaptations, leading to many individuals participating in activities that they hadn't anticipated would be possible. However, what effect does this focus on the needs of the participant have on their experience? In a project that aims to move focus away from any challenges a person may be experiencing beyond their time on-site, could such efforts inadvertently lead to negative outcomes?

In this presentation, participants that have completed the Archaeology on Prescription programme will join members of the delivery team to share their experience of the project. The discussion will cover both the staff and participant experience of all aspects of the project, how adaptations and accessibility measures are perceived, and what unexpected successes and challenges have been derived.

[Watch here](#)

What a Difference a Dig Makes: delivering wellbeing benefits to Northampton's underserved communities at Delapré Abbey through archaeology and social prescribing

Katrina Gargett | MOLA

Katrina Gargett is a community engagement specialist with over eight years of experience working in the heritage sector. Previously Community Partnership Manager at MOLA and Community Engagement Manager at York Archaeology she has co-led the development of impactful community engagement programmes focused on health and wellbeing and citizen empowerment, including YA's award-winning Archaeology on Prescription and MOLA's AHRC-funded Delapré Digs: Archaeology for Wellbeing. She has an MA in Cultural Heritage Management from the University of York. katrina.gargett@gmail.com



Yvonne Wolfram-Murray | MOLA

Yvonne graduated from University of Bradford with a BSc in Archaeological Sciences and by 2006 with a PhD in Archaeology. She worked with Northamptonshire Archaeology and then MOLA since 2005. After 15 years in the field Yvonne moved over to the MOLA Northampton reporting and publications team; writing reports and publications of completed excavations. Additionally, Yvonne is a lithics specialist for MOLA. For the Delapré Digs project Yvonne was a co-leader providing sessions to the participants.



Calypso Finch | MOLA

Calypso Finch is an Archaeologist in the MOLA Northampton field team. She is a Digital Engagement Assistant on the National Highways A428 Scheme. Her general day-to-day work involves excavating and recording on archaeological sites across the Midlands, as well as creating social media and blog posts. Calypso supported the delivery and evaluation of the Delapré Digs project.



Eleanor Sier | Delapré Abbey

Eleanor has an undergraduate degree from the University of Edinburgh in Social and Architectural History and a MA from University of Newcastle in Heritage Education and Interpretation. She has been working in the heritage sector since she was 16 and is passionate about making heritage sites engaging and accessible to as many people as possible. She has been Head of Engagement and Interpretation at Delapré Abbey since 2021.



What a Difference a Dig Makes: delivering wellbeing benefits to Northampton's underserved communities at Delapré Abbey through archaeology and social prescribing

In August 2023, MOLA embarked on their first social prescribing pilot, 'Delapré Digs', in partnership with Delapré Abbey Preservation Trust (DAPT) and Northampton General Practice Alliance (GPA), funded by MOLA's AHRC Impact Accelerator Account Grant Scheme. Building on the model Katrina Gargett established for York Archaeology's, 'Archaeology on Prescription', and drawing on DAPT's long-standing partnerships with Northampton's health and social care networks, 'Delapré Digs' saw twelve Northampton community members come together over 6 weeks at Delapré Abbey to take part in archaeological and creative activity with the aim of improve their wellbeing. The conference paper will present 'Delapré Digs' as a case study, discussing the project development, delivery and evaluation, and highlighting the successes and challenges of embarking on a new type of impact work for MOLA, centering improved wellbeing as a key outcome.

It will discuss the impacts for Delapré Abbey itself, including enabling a deeper understanding of the Abbey's story and demonstrating an authenticity in its ambitions to be sited as part of a new UNESCO World Heritage bid. Above all however, the paper will provide insights into the impact of the programme on those who took part, including from the participants themselves, and conclude with ambitions and next steps for 'Delapré Digs' within the context of DAPT and MOLA's wider wellbeing work and efforts to make a difference to the lives of people living with mental health challenges in Northampton.

[Watch here](#)

Heritage and Social Prescribing II

Heritage and volunteering in the whole systems approach to social prescribing – Heritage Connectors and Heritage Buddies

Desi Gradinarova | Historic England

Dr Desi Gradinarova is a Senior Policy Adviser (Wellbeing and Heritage) at Historic England and Historic Environment Lead at the National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP). Dr Gradinarova has been working in heritage, research, education and policy for many years and is a passionate believer in the potential of heritage to bring people together and its crucial role in maintaining a vibrant and healthy society.



Jenny Hartnoll | Health Connections, Frome

Jenny Hartnoll has over 30 years of experience in the voluntary sector and, more recently, in the NHS. Her career journey spans working as a Dance Movement Therapist in drug and alcohol detox centers and mental health day centers, through to helping set up some of the first Sure Start programs in London, and working as a charity CEO.

In 2013, Jenny set up Health Connections Mendip, based at Frome Medical Practice. This initiative has been instrumental in helping GP practices take community-based approaches to improve health and well-being.

As well as working at Frome Medical Practice, Jenny works as a consultant, both nationally and internationally, helping organizations set up simple, common sense, community-based projects and initiatives aimed at fostering connections and enhancing health and well-being.



Amanda Chambers | NCVS

Amanda is an experienced strategic public sector manager with expertise in strategy, marketing and behaviour change and 30 years' experience in the sport, leisure, health and wellbeing sector. Amanda led the Sport England funded £1.6 million City of Football project in Nottingham and the cross-government programme 'Preventing and Tackling Mental Ill Health through Green Social Prescribing' test and learn pilot programme in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire called Greenspace. She is currently working with Nottingham CVS to support and improve strategy, working practice and sustainability between the health and VCSE sectors.



Megan Clark | Wavehill Ltd

Megan Clark is a research and evaluation specialist with experience in research relating to nature, heritage, and wellbeing. Megan works at Wavehill, who deliver social and economic research, evaluation and analysis throughout the UK. To get in touch, you can find her at

megan.clark@wavehill.com.



Heritage and volunteering in the whole systems approach to social prescribing – Heritage Connectors and Heritage Buddies

In NASP's understanding of social prescribing, and more specifically, in their whole-systems approach to social prescribing, the existence of Connectors, Buddies (or other supporting roles in the community) is very important in overcoming the barriers that many people and underserved groups meet when trying to get help with some of the issues and difficulties they are encountering. The approach helps take some pressure of the NHS-based SP link workers and aids people to access the activities and support they may need.

So far there have been many different types of implementation of these models – from SP and Community Connectors to Nature Buddies, Move mates and others. Historic England wanted to learn from all these practices and trial the application of this approach to heritage. In 2022, HE commissioned Frome Medical Practice and NCVS to carry out 11 month-pilots to establish and test such schemes - Heritage Connectors in Frome, Somerset and Heritage Buddies in Nottingham respectively. Heritage Connectors and Heritage Buddies are examples of those facilitating roles crucial in connecting people to health, wellbeing and social prescribing services – this time through engagement with the historic environment. The external evaluation report by Wavehill Ltd has presented some very useful and interesting findings about the process, impact and potential scaling up of these models, and we will be keen to share these widely with heritage colleagues and partners more widely.

[Watch here](#)

Improving wellbeing in Kirkham: the creative heritage of a northern town, Lancashire

Sue Flowers | Phoenix Rising partnership

Sue Flowers is an artist, writer and director of the third sector organisation Green Close, which she co-founded and has led since 1996. Based in North Lancashire, she has a strong track record of managing often complex, publically funded multidisciplinary projects, developing programmes using her socially engaged arts practice as bedrock for understanding the role of heritage in improving health.

She believes in the power of the arts to transform lives and over the last three years has led the delivery of Phoenix Rising a partnership social prescribing programme delivering art, nature and movement, inspired by heritage.

www.greenclose.org | www.phoenix-rising-wellbeing.co.uk



Helen Shearn | Helen Shearn & Associates

Helen is an independent consultant and evaluator in arts, heritage, health and wellbeing, and an Occupational Therapist, with approximately 30 years interdisciplinary experience, knowledge, skills and practice. She has facilitated and built a wide range of partnership projects and connections in the creative health sector.

Over the last 3 years, Helen has been advising and supporting the Heritage, Health, and Wellbeing programme in Kirkham, Lancashire, part of the Historic England's Historic High Street, Heritage Action Zone with Fylde Council. Recently Helen has been providing consultancy for The Brecks Heritage and Wellbeing project in Norfolk with the Restoration Trust. Helen is a member of the engagement advisory group for the Nature + Love programme at the Horniman Museum & Gardens.

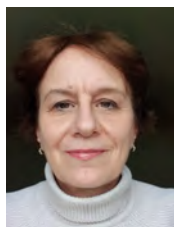
Helen worked at South London & Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM) for over 18 years as the Trust wide Head of Arts Strategy, Southwark Arts Manager, Occupational Therapist and Day Centre Manager. She coordinated and developed many cultural and creative health projects to support recovery, inclusion and wellbeing with and for people living with mental health problems, dementia, and addictions.

Helen holds a Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) in Arts Management and Policy, a Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) in Occupational Therapy, and a BA Honours Degree in Fine Art, and is an Associate of the Royal Society Public Health (AMRSPH).

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gem.org.uk/suppliers/helen-shearn-consultancy-arts-culture-health-wellbeing/ |

kirkhamfutures.org/plans/health-and-wellbeing-programme



Improving wellbeing in Kirkham: the creative heritage of a northern town, Lancashire

Sue Flowers and Helen Shearn would like to present an overview of the programme, to share the journey, such as the intricate and careful depth and breadth of work undertaken, the co-production and partnership working with the community in Kirkham, with some participants talking about their experiences.

We would share some highlights from the independent evaluation by Toby Williamson & Dr Eva Cyhlarova and the consultation called *Our Community Inheritance* led by Dr Cecilia Wee, artist and facilitator, on what Kirkham needs to thrive and help decide what happens next to support community and individual wellbeing in the area. <https://www.kirkhamfutures.org/post/our-community-inheritance-interactive-workshop>

The exhibition will include a range of art works and pieces specially made and kept in the local archives from the Kirkham in Amounderness Local History and Heritage collection at St Michael's Church, such as the Golden Threads of Kirkham tapestry developed by Danielle Chappell Aspinwall weaving, , embroidered banners, the heritage town trail entitled An A-Z of Kirkham - weather permitting! developed by Kremena Dimitrova with the community, photographs of Kirkham Club Day 2022 by Darren Andrews <https://www.kirkhamfutures.org/post/threads-of-kirkhams-golden-history-revealed> and Our Heritage Matters scrapbooks.

Plus, highlights of the oral history project called Voices led by the Cultural programme and supported by the Library in Kirkham, who were commissioned by the HHW programme.

We would also like to screen a short documentary film celebrating the programme by Rachel Capovila, which includes participants, stakeholders and facilitators speaking, images and events from the last year such as the Wellbeing Festival and one of the community Soup Socials and the *Our Community Inheritance* workshops.

[Watch here](#)

Uses of heritage in social prescribing and pathways to access

Jennie Willetts | Bramley Baths

Jennie Willetts is Business Development Manager for Health and Wellbeing at Bramley Baths, a Community Led social enterprise in Leeds. With a degree in Dance and background in Performing Arts, her career began in the Entertainment and Leisure industry. A change in career path saw her take on management roles within the retail sector before becoming a Mum in 2009. In order to focus on her new family commitments, a further career change was necessary. Jennie retrained and started her own business, delivering exercise classes for both high profile private health clubs, Leeds City Council, community venues and large scale events, giving her a wide breadth of knowledge across health, leisure and charity sectors. In 2013, Jennie joined the team at Bramley Baths, fully embracing all job roles within the organisation including lifeguard, gym instructor, swim teacher, duty manager and eventually leading to her current role as Business Development Manager.



David Wilford | Bramley Baths

David Wilford is a seasoned senior manager with over 34 years of experience in the professional realm, primarily within the voluntary sector for nearly two decades as a chief Executive. His career journey commenced in textile design and management, managing director of PLC subsidiary, eventually leading him to spearhead research efforts for Bradford's three CCGs. Through this research, he has championed "realising community assets" research as an integral part of developing integrated care systems in 2016/17.

David is dedicated to managing community-led projects that advocate for underserved communities, providing them with a platform to shape statutory services. His expertise lies in areas such as welfare debt and advice, health advocacy, and empowering individuals to take charge of their own well-being. He strives to address health inequalities and ensure that all individuals have equal access to quality healthcare services.

A passionate advocate for transforming the NHS and public health system, David believes in implementing cost-effective projects that prioritise community involvement. By fostering a bottom-up approach, he empowers local communities to actively participate in designing and creating patient-centric services. Leveraging a valuable heritage asset, David as CEO of Bramley Baths aims to enhance the overall health of the local population.



We have 2 excellent examples of successful projects in which we have worked with our local NHS services. The Bramley Apple project was a collaboration of Bramley Health and Wellbeing GP surgery, Bramley Elderly Action and Bramley Baths. We worked together to provide weekly sessions for people identified by the GP, that would benefit from exercise and social activities. The outcomes were extremely positive and the results of participants on the WEMWBS, were staggering. Our second project focused on those that had been classified as CEV (Clinically Extremely Vulnerable, who were made to shield throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.) We offered them a tailor-made programme that was co-created with the participant to address their health and wellbeing needs. The programme offered 5 one to one sessions, from swimming to gentle exercise, we then supported them further with a membership to further instill the lifestyle journey they had embarked upon. Over 70% of the participants, continued to use the facilities after their funded sessions had ended. This success was further recognised by addition funding from Leeds City Council, to continue the project for another year.

[Watch here](#)

Heritage and Mental Health

Healing Landscapes: Reparative Archaeology in Practice

Laura Hampden | Historic England

Laura Hampden is a British-Caribbean Archaeologist and Cultural Strategist. Her interests are in the history and archaeologies of postcolonial contact in the Caribbean and beyond, how we teach and learn and practice archaeology in the U.K, and the reparative role of archaeology in society. She began her career in the tourism sector guiding tours to heritage sites in Europe before training to be an archaeologist, and has now worked in the museums and heritage management sector for over ten years. She currently works at Historic England as a Historic Environment Record Project Officer in the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service, is a member of Clif's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee, and a founding member of the European Society of Black and Allied Archaeologists.



Through landscape restoration projects, to small scale site reinterpretation and museum displays, or through integration in outdoor learning activities, and horticultural therapies there are many ways in which archaeology can help to maximise wellbeing benefits and sustainability. From the Caribbean to the U.K and beyond, non-institutional healing practices promoting physical, mental and spiritual healing are being effectively integrated with thematic, and place-based approaches in heritage and archaeology. The paper will share some of these projects, and discuss how reparative, restorative and healing justice frameworks can be applied within archaeology to improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of individuals and communities.

Mental Health and Wellbeing; an afterthought of a four-country participatory research project in museums

Helena Garcia Carrizosa | Open University

Previously, she was a Research Associate for the ARCHES Horizon 2020 project. Helena works closely with the different museums and galleries and the participatory group to test and evaluate different technologies.

Being visually impaired herself, she has personal first-hand experience of the challenges and difficulties people with sensory impairments face on a day-to-day basis, particularly within the museum sector.

Helena has worked at different museums and galleries internationally, such as the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice, the National Gallery in London and the Völkerkunde Museum in Hamburg. She has two masters' degrees one in Art History, Renaissance Culture and Curatorship from the Warburg Institute in London and the other in Education in Museums and Galleries from UCL-Institute of Education.



Based on lessons learned, this paper reflects on the role of mental health and wellbeing when doing participatory research involving disabled people with a wide range of access preferences and needs, working in diverse museum environments. This research methodology was developed for the ARCHES (Accessible Resources for Cultural Heritage EcoSystems), a Horizon 2020 funded project. ARCHES involved partners in Heritage and Technology across Europe. It developed online resources, software applications and multisensory technologies to enable access to Cultural Heritage Sites within and beyond the project. The project ran from 2016-2019. Three years later this paper reflects on the lessons learned in relation to wellbeing and mental health.

The paper will question:

- What were the expectations of ARCHES staff in relation to mental health and wellbeing at the start of the project?
- What were the factors that influence wellbeing and mental health across the three year project? How did these differ from country to country?
- After the pandemic what would the project do differently

The paper will also investigate the role technology has played then in facilitating engagement with the project community and the heritage sites. By answering these questions the paper will outline how future projects can learn from ARCHES and adapt it into the current climate.

[Watch here](#)

Mental Health Archaeology: Limitations and Risks

Will Rathouse | formerly with MOLA and Mind Aberystwyth

Having previously served as a territorial soldier, Will Rathouse studied archaeology and anthropology at Lampeter and completed a PhD in archaeological heritage whilst working as a support officer for Mind Aberystwyth. He designed, delivered and evaluated the first mental health and well-being archaeology project in Wales in 2017. From 2018 to 2023 he worked for MOLA on the Thames Discovery Programme and other projects many of which had well-being dimensions. He has also volunteered on Operation Nightingale events and with Waterloo Uncovered. He was a contributor to the Delphi process from which Paul Everill and Karen Burnell created the AMPHORA guidelines for wellbeing heritage projects.



Rob Rathouse | South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust

Since 2012 a range of projects have sought to support mental health and promote psychiatric recovery through archaeological activities. In that 12 years projects including Operation Nightingale, The Past in Mind, Ceredigion War Memorials Project, Waterloo Uncovered, and many more have generated a great deal of data on the effectiveness and best practice in such work. Karen Burnell and Paul Everill have drawn on this data and the experiences of the professionals involved to develop guidelines on best practice in the AMPHORA project.

We suggest there needs to be more focused discussion and research on which mental health conditions and of what level of severity are likely to benefit from participation in archaeological activities. At what point of severity do we decide that potential participants might find an archaeological or heritage environment unsafe? We want to identify potential risks associated with more severe conditions and consider how risks to participants, including from other participants, might be anticipated and mitigated.

This paper hypothesizes possible answers to these questions and suggests research strategies to test the hypotheses.

[Watch here](#)

Evaluation

A Systematic review in heritage wellbeing interventions: how are we defining wellbeing and measuring outcomes. Do they correlate?

Dickie Bennett | Breaking Ground Heritage

Dickie has a proven track record in delivering heritage-based wellbeing projects across diverse groups. These projects span youth organisations, archaeology field schools, academic institutions, blue light services, and veterans. His first-hand experience as a participant in heritage wellbeing initiatives, coupled with his role in establishing Breaking Ground Heritage, positioned him uniquely in this developing field.

Dickie has now ventured into academia, seeking to develop a deeper understanding of the mechanisms that drive heritage wellbeing interventions. His focus lies on measuring project outcomes and impact. By bridging practical experience with academic intrigue, Dickie aims to enhance the effectiveness of these interventions and contribute to the field of heritage wellbeing.



Dr Karen Burnell | Solent University

Dr Craig Allison | Solent University

The promotion of positive wellbeing through the use of heritage-based interventions is growing exponentially (Everill et al. 2020), yet there is little reliable or comparable evidence to demonstrate the true impact of these interventions, or the outcomes said to have been achieved through their delivery. This could simply be due to the interdisciplinary nature of the subject, with project design and delivery developed within the humanities and heritage sphere, crossing into the research design and evaluation framework, firmly established within the social sciences.

Why conduct a systematic review? A systematic review attempts to collate all empirical evidence that fits pre-specified eligibility criteria in order to answer a specific research question (Higgins et al. 2023). This presentation will demonstrate the need for, and the processes of conducting this systematic review, whilst highlighting some of its findings.

Objectives of this systematic review: (1) to assess the existing evidence of 'active' heritage wellbeing interventions, for project specific definitions of wellbeing, (2) whilst assessing the compatibility of the scales or measures used for demonstrating outcomes.

[Watch here](#)

Evidencing the value and value for money of heritage-based interventions

Liz Goodwin | University of Exeter

Dr Liz Goodwin is a Research Fellow in Health Economics at the University of Exeter. Her research interests include the measurement of health and wellbeing outcomes, analysing the cost-effectiveness of health and social care interventions alongside clinical trials, the application of clinical trial methods to complex interventions, and broader health and social care research using a range of quantitative and qualitative methods. She was a health economist on the Scaling Up Human Henge study, and is currently leading a project with the National Trust to explore the wellbeing effects of their Conservation in Action programme. Liz has always had a passion for history, and can often be found hiking through the Bronze Age landscape of her beloved Dartmoor. She is particularly drawn to the early medieval period, and is currently learning Old English. Having experienced the contribution that her interest in heritage has made to her own quality of life, Liz is actively pursuing research funding opportunities to develop a robust evidence base for interventions that harness the power of heritage to enhance health and wellbeing.

X: @Madjka and @HEG_Exeter



Annie Hawton | University of Exeter

Annie is an Associate Professor in Health Economics with a track-record of both quantitative and qualitative research in health, social, and wider care services, and expertise in public and patient involvement. She has worked for 30 years in research, teaching, and advisory roles in both health and social care settings. She has an international reputation in Health Economics research relating to Multiple Sclerosis, and health-related quality of life and wellbeing approaches for use in cost-effectiveness analyses. She has a keen interest in bringing Health Economic approaches to the heritage sector.



Shannon Hogan | National Trust

Shannon Hogan, National Archaeologist – National Trust. After graduating with an MA in Comparative Art and Archaeology from UCL, Shannon worked in the development-led sector across East Anglia from 2005 as a site director and project manager. In 2017, she joined the Trust as a regional archaeological consultant for the East of England before moving into a central consultancy role in 2021. Her current role in the Trust is diverse - coordinating engagement, wellbeing and digital projects and research across properties and regions. Shannon is also working to develop a partnership with the CBA to create increased opportunities for community engagement with NT's historic environment landscapes and assets to help deliver against our shared ambitions for inclusivity and wider public benefit.



Vanessa Heaslip | University of Salford

Professor Vanessa Heaslip is a Professor of Nursing and Healthcare Equity at Salford University, and Adjunct Visiting Professor in Public Health at the University of Stavanger. Her research interests are in communities who experience health inequity and social exclusion and whose voices are not traditionally heard in the academic and professional discourse. She has worked with a variety of groups including Gypsy, Roma, Travellers, people living with mental health issues, people in prison and people from ethnic and racialized communities. Professor Heaslip has numerous publications including book contributions, journal articles (professional and peer reviewed), editorials and discussion papers, see [Prof Vanessa Heaslip \(worktribe.com\)](#)

Vanessa is also an Associate Editor with Nursing Open and on the Editorial board of Health Equity Journal. You can follow her at @HeaslipVanessa



Evidencing the value and value for money of heritage-based interventions

Despite increasing evidence that engagement with heritage-related activities promotes health and wellbeing, interventions harnessing such activities have yet to be brought into the mainstream of health and social care provision. This may be due to the lack of research which has used the framework for assessing the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of health and social care interventions that is typically used for decision making in the NHS. This involves randomised, controlled trials, utilising recognised and validated measures of health and wellbeing, and particular economic evaluation methods.

We will outline the contribution that trial and economic evaluation methods could make to securing ongoing funding and support for heritage-based interventions (HBIs), and how these methods might be applied in a heritage context. We will illustrate developments in this area to date by talking about “past, present and future” work that we have been/are involved with.

Past: We will describe what we learned from our first attempt to implement the standard data collection procedures for economic evaluation as part of the ‘Scaling Up Human Henge’ project.

Present: We will introduce our ‘Conserving the Mind’ project, which aims to explore the impact of the National Trust’s Conservation in Action programme on the mental wellbeing of visitors.

Future: We will outline research proposals that are currently in submission or under development.

We hope to encourage discussion around how best to use these methods in ways that work for those delivering and participating in HBIs, and that will provide the evidence required for funders and decision-makers.

[Watch here](#)

Understanding of the socio-economic wellbeing benefit of engagement with heritage action and creativity: a UCL, South Downs National Park Authority and Seaford Town Council Knowledge Exchange

Sarah Wolferstan | University College London

Sarah Wolferstan (MA) is Senior Specialist for Public Engagement Learning and Policy at University College London’s (UCL) Archaeology South East (ASE). Her background is in Archaeology, Anthropology and Cultural Heritage Studies focusing on community participation in heritage. After graduating, she spent several years working in fundraising and partnerships in the voluntary and international development sectors before returning to ASE to consult on World Heritage management planning, lifelong learning projects and promotion/monitoring Heritage standards in European contexts. She was expert to the Council of Europe’s Heritage Division (2007-18), represented UCL in its Erasmus+ partnerships; developing capacity building frameworks for heritage communities’ work on creativity, learning, participation and inclusion. She was seconded from ASE to the National Trust in 2021 to conduct research on evaluating the Wellbeing benefits of participating in archaeology. This led to an archaeological e-learning project with NT and Council for British Archaeology (2023), another with Seaford Town Council and the South Downs’ National Park Authority (2023-24) to explore how a youth wellbeing project might provide archaeology and heritage volunteering opportunities. Sarah is also working on community storytelling project to share the results of several years of ASE’s developer-funded excavations in Whitechapel.



Chiara Amini | University College London

Young people in deprived areas of East Sussex have below average educational attainment and lower socio-economic opportunities, including access to the wellbeing benefits associated with participating in cultural or nature-based activities. Seaford Head is an open space just east of the small town of Seaford, in Lewes District. The headland includes a SSSI, managed as a nature reserve and a Municipal Golf Course which lies on top of SAM (a Bronze Age bowl barrow and Iron Age fort). The site is at risk of accelerating coastal erosion which has precipitated the need to record the archaeology as the council prepares plans to move one of the greens and a section of a national coastal path during 2024-25.

This 6-month KE runs until May 2024, with three creative workshops to invite responses for a new climate change heritage volunteering / training project planned to coincide with works on the SAM. We will co-create a vision for heritage with young people from social-economically deprived areas of the town by creating a safe environment to explore heritage and the future. We will co-create evaluation methodologies to understand the impact that involvement in co-production has on wellbeing, educational attainment, employability and skills. A longer-term goal is to find out if co-production in heritage partnerships is a valuable methodology for building local capacity / cultural infrastructure and can serve as a catalyst for wider investment in small and medium sized coastal and rural towns.

[Watch here](#)

Communities and Place II

Creating a Moment in History at Stanwick Lakes; How heritage projects can have a huge impact on wellbeing

Nadia Norman | Stanwick Lakes

Nadia Norman is the Heritage Coordinator at Stanwick Lakes, working to plan and coordinate heritage projects that explore the 5,000 year history that was unearthed during excavations during the 1980's. From hands on volunteer led projects such as the construction of a replica Roundhouse and Big Bronze Age Boat Build, to curating the Heritage Museum in the Visitor Centre, Nadia is enthusiastic about all things heritage and has a strong passion for engaging visitors and community groups in the rich history of the site.

Nadia also has an interest in archaeology and has spent time on many local dig sites throughout the county over the past decade.



Stanwick Lakes is a 750 acre nature reserve in Northamptonshire managed by the charity Rockingham Forest Trust. The reserve holds SSSI status (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and is a popular location with bird enthusiasts, walkers and families.

Extraordinary archaeological finds on site in the 1980's unearthed evidence of human settlement spanning over 5,000 years, and with support and funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) we have been able to provide heritage projects that are hands-on and accessible, with wellbeing as a principal value that is intrinsically woven into everything we do.

Projects over the past ten years have included educational school programs, traditional heritage craft courses, volunteer opportunities and in our current project, hands on experiential and experimental archaeology.

These projects have provided the foundations to continue to offer activities for all that develop skills, confidence and wellbeing in a wonderful environment.

Individuals and groups with shared passions and experiences are nurtured and empowered to have ownership for the learning and activities that take place. Skill sharing, teamwork and encouragement to learn has created a wonderful heritage community, a lasting legacy to heritage at Stanwick Lakes.

This presentation and video, explained by the volunteers themselves, will show the positive effects of heritage projects on health and wellbeing and how the team are working towards putting heritage on the map at an already popular and well-loved venue.

[Watch here](#)

Vibrant communities: Understanding built heritage, community developments and wellbeing

Lucy Hockley | Historic Towns and Village Forum

Co-Director

Lucy has a background in museums and heritage management, with a longstanding interest in the built and natural environment, sustainable development and heritage craft skills. She is interested in how historic environments contribute to wellbeing and activity that promotes these connections. With over 15 years of experience in managing learning programmes of all levels in the conservation of historic buildings, landscapes and associated craft skills, her broad interests are represented by the breadth of HTVF'S work. Lucy has been involved as a staff or board member in heritage networks and organisations at a local, regional, national and international level, and values the dedication and enthusiasm that can be found across the sector.

htvrf.org | X: @HTF | IG: @htvf2020 | LI: @the-historic-towns-and-villages-forum



The wellbeing benefits of being in well-designed, human-centred environments are understood to be good for us. This includes appreciating and protecting the natural and historic built environment. For many communities, the path to that generally defined goal is not a clear one. And even with agreement on what it might mean for a group of individuals in their locality, how to go about this may still feel like a challenge with planning regulations, changing requirements, the costs and other barriers. Of course, there are a range of charities, public bodies, advisory groups and others who may help, and we'll consider the ways that communities can determine their futures with a strong focus on wellbeing benefits and sustainability.

In this session we'll explore some previous work of the Historic Towns and Village Forum, including the collaboratively produced report 'Better Balance between Heritage and Growth' and associated activity. We'll also consider the practical ideas and points we're thinking through as part of a small team at the moment. The changed circumstances that this decade has seen make it both useful and necessary to take this time to reflect as we plan forward.

[Watch here](#)

Heritage on the Doorstep as Wellbeing Resource. The Heritage and Wellbeing for NHS Staff Project

Joanna Sofaer | University of Southampton

Joanna Sofaer is a Professor of Archaeology at the University of Southampton, Co-Director of the Southampton Institute for Arts and Humanities (SIAH), Director of Archaeology for the Creative Industries, and was Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) Knowledge Exchange and Impact Fellow (2017-2023). Her current work focuses on the role of cultural assets in supporting health and wellbeing, working in partnership with communities, health professionals, the third sector and cultural organisations. She is PI for the UKRI-funded project Pathways to Health Through Cultures of Neighbourhoods and PI for Heritage and Wellbeing for NHS Staff (HerWellNHS) funded by Historic England in collaboration with Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust. She works with the National Trust on the Heritage Perception and Wellbeing project and led Places of Joy: Heritage After Lockdown. Joanna is also interested in the past as inspiration for contemporary creative practice, and creativity in prehistoric material culture. She has led and partnered on several transnational European projects including the HERA-funded project Creativity and Craft Production in Middle and Late Bronze Age Europe.



Ofelia Zaboloteanu | University of Southampton

Bryony Whitmarsh | University of Southampton

Jason Sadler | University of Southampton

Sharon Court | Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust

Joe Shoebridge | Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust

Leon D'Cruz | Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust

Anoop Chauhan | Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust

Workforce burnout is the highest in the history of the NHS and is recognised as a dangerous risk to its future functioning. The scale of the crisis in wellbeing means that there is an urgent need to maximise use of existing resources and to promote self-help. Heritage sites are one such resource.

Funded by Historic England, HerWellNHS is a feasibility study building towards a larger scale clinical trial. It investigates the wellbeing outcomes of visits to heritage assets, specifically: heritage on the doorstep in urban contexts, heritage in green spaces, and digital heritage engagement. Participants are 250 high-risk members of staff working at Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust who do not yet meet clinical thresholds for mental health intervention but who have self-reported low levels of wellbeing and who self-refer to the project.

This project takes a novel approach to wellbeing through community engagement that features self-direction rather than participation in a health intervention, thereby building agency and choice in wellbeing. Portsmouth is a heritage-rich city. The project created an interactive online map and guide to local heritage sites in Portsmouth and the surrounding area, many of which were located in the city itself. Project partners provided participants with free tickets. Participants were given free choice of where to visit, with whom, and how often. In this paper we discuss the pre-study selection process for including heritage sites in the online interface, participant visit choices, and their relationship to self-reported wellbeing outcomes.

[Watch here](#)

Places of Worship and Wellbeing

Wellbeing and church buildings

Eddie Tulasiewicz | National Churches Trust

Eddie Tulasiewicz is Head of Policy and Public Affairs at the National Churches Trust, the UK charity for church buildings and leads on research and strategy development. He has worked for the BBC Production as a Radio and Television Producer, for BBC Imagineering developing multi-platform content and technology strategies, and for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster as Director of Communications. His expertise includes communications, branding, marketing, policy development and stakeholder management in the heritage, faith and charity sectors.



In House of Good in 2021 we detailed the social care that churches are providing and the wellbeing generated by hosting different types of community functions and groups e.g. foodbanks, drug and alcohol support, youth groups and mental health groups. Due to the pioneering nature of the work, we were only able to attach an economic / monetary value to the four main groups and functions.

From our survey of churches in 2021 we were aware of many other groups hosted by churches and the additional value of this wider convening power and congregation enabled by the church building. And this was alongside awareness of the growing policy focus on loneliness and social cohesion (sense of trust and belonging).

So for our new research study is looking into the role of the church in addressing the wellbeing and 'place based' issues like loneliness and social cohesion (trust in neighbours and sense of belonging) and improve the evidence for this.

In policy terms these social cohesion outcomes are important in 'place based' work where local and national government seek to boost and improve vulnerable communities. Indeed wellbeing was cited explicitly in one of the 12 missions of the government's Levelling Up White paper.

We are looking at:

- Value of churches in hosting community groups that increase trust, belonging and wellbeing
- Loneliness: church and volunteering reduce loneliness
- Is visiting an old church is good for us too!?

[Watch here](#)

Community Life in an Ancient Site

Peter Aiers, OBE | The Charterhouse, London

Peter Aiers is the 34th Master and Chief Executive of the Charterhouse. He was previously the Chief Executive of the Churches Conservation Trust, a national charity caring for historic church buildings across England and had worked here for 15 years.

Peter's background is in historic building conservation and has always had a particular interest in how historic buildings can best serve contemporary society. He has a track record of significant historic church building development projects and also invented Champing™.

Peter is a trustee of the Heritage Alliance and Goodwill Solutions CIO, a member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and a Lay Member of the Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral.



Susan McIlroy | The Charterhouse, London

Born in Kensington, I spent my childhood and school years in Essex. Moving on from University I made the decision to embark on a career within the world of education.

After enjoying a very rewarding career at different school settings over the years and undertaking management roles, I decided to take a sabbatical and accepted an overseas post at an Independent Preparatory School on the island of St Maarten- where, coincidentally, two of my siblings live. Returning to the UK a year later to settle my daughter at university following her gap year, I took up employment once again at my previous school.

In 2002 and after much thought and consideration, I finally decided to return to the Caribbean and accept the role of Principal at a fully accredited International Private Preparatory School for children age three through to eighteen years.

After a tenure of ten very successful and fulfilling years both professionally and personally, I decided it was time to head back to London in 2012 and enjoy more family time with my daughter and my two young grandsons. Following my departure I took on a one year Consultancy role with the School in St Maarten and remain a member on their Board.

Making the decision to return to live and work in Essex in 2014, I joined a small Independent Preparatory School in Shenfield and became part of their senior management team and their education adviser, until July 2020.

Since moving to the Charterhouse, amongst other things, I have been part of the team that set up a Community Space every Friday morning to welcome the local community into our home.



Community Life in an Ancient Site

The Charterhouse is a repurposed Mansion House and between 1611 and 1614 an Almshouse and School we created as per the will of Thomas Sutton. This Mansion House was in turn repurposed from a Carthusian Monastery. Although the school left in 1872, we remain an almshouse dedicated to providing a haven for older people. Our strategy sets out our ambition to create a community of excellence for the care of older people. This strategy has three pillars, those of Place, Care and Sustainability.

The success of the Charterhouse has many elements, however, the historic environment, our commitment to remaining on the original site and the sense of tradition are important to life here.

The Charterhouse is a complicated site as we provide housing, a museum, an events business, a registered care home as well as private tenants and commercial space.

There are three parts to our abstract:

1. The experience of living in the historic environment of the Charterhouse as a Brother.
2. Working with Oxford University, we are developing a project where we plan to collect Brothers life stories for a long term social archive and then explore applying these life stories clinically for dementia or palliative care.
3. The beneficiaries of the charity opening the doors to enable others from the local community to benefit from free ,coffee and cakes and company every Friday morning, in our historic setting.

[Watch here](#)

Surveying the Sacred: Churches, Wellbeing and Contemporary Antiquarianism

Lesley Hardy | Diocese of Canterbury / Timelocked Heritage

I'm a historian by training and was based for many years as Senior Lecturer in History at Canterbury Christ Church University where I am now Reader Emeritus. Most of my career though, has been spent on site, working with communities to explore, understand and protect their heritage. I've worked on Roman villas, Victorian archives and recently have been pre-occupied by the relics, life and long 'afterlife' of an Anglo- Saxon Royal Saint, Eanswythe. I've spent most of my life thinking about the past - why and how it means so much to us? In particular why, in some places, we seem to be able to feel the past around us?

I continue to work in heritage alongside being as vicar and I'm now turning my attention to churches and other sacred places many of which seriously 'at risk'. I want to ask how do we forge connections between these ancient sacred sites and the communities that surround them, whether religious or not, and what is the important experience of time and timelessness that they offer us.



Churches have long been a focus of historical and artistic interest, and are probably the single most important collection of heritage sites in the country. Increasingly they are also recognised as sites of memory and community and also as places of environmental importance. Their significance though is hard to pin down. Built and beautified over centuries, with loving attention, churches are much more than historic buildings; the sense of the sacred is indelibly written into their fabric and their surroundings.

At the same time Churches are often seen as being a bit of a burden and distraction from the real purpose of the church, dwindling numbers and lack of funds is leading to a crisis for these extraordinary buildings and landscapes. Over 900 churches are on the heritage at risk register and a number will close because of lack of funds or active congregations to support them.

In this presentation I want to describe an approach and a project proposal located in three churches in Canterbury which attempts to offer a response to these issues rooted in the idea of historical, archaeological and artistic survey. Survey' here is meant in a broad sense as in gaze, exploration, contemplation, mapping and recording; it combines the empirical study and testing of science with conservation and interpretation of heritage -a form of contemporary antiquarianism.

[Watch here](#)

Closing Presentation

Cultural Heritage Capital and Wellbeing: Examining the Relationship Between Heritage Density and Life Satisfaction

Thomas Colwill | Historic England

Senior Economist

With over two years at Historic England, Thomas contributes to the Cultural Heritage Capital programme, collaborating with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to assess the economic value of cultural heritage. His expertise spans on econometric analysis, the cultural heritage economy and has released articles on culture's impact on voting behaviors and local economic development, contributing to the integration of cultural heritage into economic planning.



This report explores the relationship between local cultural heritage density and individual wellbeing in England, using data from the National Heritage List for England and the Understanding Society Survey. It assesses how day-to-day encounters with cultural heritage assets impacts people's wellbeing.

The research provides evidence for policymakers on the importance of heritage conservation for improving quality of life and societal wellbeing.

[Watch here](#)

Workshops

ChaT (Cultural Heritage and Trauma)

Roots and Futures Team | University of Sheffield



The Roots and Futures team are based at the University of Sheffield. They are represented today by Rhonda Allen, Prof Lizzy Craig-Atkins, Dr Courtenay-Elle Crichton-Turley and Terezia Rostas. Rhonda, Courtenay and Terezia work part time as RAs on the project and in roles within the charitable and local government sector in Sheffield. Rhonda as a youth prevention worker with Sheffield City Council and as an international carnival and festival judge, Courtenay works for ChilyPep, an asylum seeker and young people's empowerment charity, and Terezia is a Roma cultural advocate and charity director. Lizzy is the Roots and Futures project lead and a professor in the Department of Archaeology.

Roots and Futures publications:

Coming soon! [Community Voices 2 booklet](#) - a report on our consultations in 2023

- Community Voices booklet - a report on our consultations in 2022-23
- Roots and Futures website and blog
- Links to other publications including our toolkit and policy briefs (via the blog)

Structural inequalities and prejudices, including racism, ableism, sexism and homophobia, manifest in how cultural heritage is discussed, whose heritage is prioritised and made visible and who makes decisions about the future. Different forms of participatory research – where the contributions of individuals and communities with lived experience are centred – are vital to combat these problems, as are efforts to diversify the heritage workforce.

Cultural heritage can be joyous, celebratory and transformative, can improve wellbeing and sense of belonging, and promote community cohesion – which is why our work must be inclusive. But where heritage projects engage with people who have experienced inequality and prejudice, communities with histories of forced migration, warfare and racial exclusion (or any other injustices), seek to uncover hidden stories and histories, or engage with diverse teams of participants and researchers, there will be topics, conversations and outcomes which are traumatic.

This workshop on culture, heritage and trauma will be led by the Roots and Futures project, University of Sheffield. It will reflect on when and how cultural heritage engagement raises traumatic themes and how this is experienced by participants and practitioners. Participants will engage in activities to examine and reflect on the relationship between heritage engagement and trauma, and will come away with tools to ensure their participatory heritage projects provide a safer space for those who have experienced racism and cultural prejudice.

Change Minds: using archives for mental wellbeing

Laura Drysdale | Restoration Trust

Laura Drysdale is the Director of the Restoration Trust, a charity that uses heritage and creativity to improve people's mental health. We call it Culture Therapy because exploring compelling archives or sensory immersion in ancient landscapes reignites people's curiosity and love of life. She began her career as a conservator, then worked at English Heritage before becoming a support worker with people living with mental health challenges. At the Restoration Trust she leads co-produced projects in archives and ancient landscapes with mental health, heritage, creative and academic partners. The Restoration Trust won the 2020 AHRC/Wellcome Prize for Community Engagement for our Change Minds partnership with the Norfolk Record Office and the University of East Anglia.



Minnie Coldman | project participant

Minnie Coldman is a member of the Change Minds Project Board who participated in an iteration of Change Minds in King's Lynn.

Historic archives can be a powerful wellbeing resource. This workshop aims to stimulate interest in their use via a taster of Change Minds, a heritage, creative and wellbeing project engaging those living with mental health problems. www.changeminds.org.uk.

Change Minds participants use 19th century asylum archives to research and develop creative responses to the lives of asylum patients in the past, gaining a deeper understanding of their own experience along the way. Run by the Restoration Trust and Norfolk Record Office, it is being scaled up through test and learn iterations in Norfolk, Bristol, Lancashire, Dundee and London. A digital hub and mental health research will underpin wider future roll out.

The Ripple Effect, Being well with change. How heritage, art and ecology can support positive wellbeing and actions

Leigh Chalmers | Wessex Archaeology

James Aldridge | Artist

Throughout 2022 and 2023 Wessex Archaeology in partnership with artist James Aldridge and the Environment Agency delivered The Ripple Effect. Set against the backdrop of the River Avon in Salisbury, The Ripple Effect explored themes of archaeology, heritage, ecology and wellbeing and used creativity as a means to understand and record the process.



This session will explore the group's developing relationship over the two-year period, to the river and the heritage of the city, and the impact this has had on individual wellbeing. It will address the importance of co-creation, in allowing space in a project for the participants' individual needs, personalities and voices to be supported and acknowledged.

We will also touch on the relationship between individual and ecological wellbeing, and how learning about the past can inform our understanding of what different places and communities need from us in the future (becoming a better ancestor).

Following a showing of The Ripple Effect film and Q&A session, we will lead a Creative Mapping activity in the grounds of the Abbey, using a range of materials to record our experiences of and responses to the site and its heritage.

This activity will echo the approach embedded within The Ripple Effect, whereby participants were supported to follow and develop their own individual areas of focus within the overall framework of the project, and to use their whole being - senses, emotions and imaginations included - to learn about their relationship to local heritage.

The past in the present: creating a community history toolkit for health and wellbeing

Dr Erin Beeston

Manchester Histories / Creative Manchester, University of Manchester

Erin Beeston is a Knowledge Exchange Fellow: Heritage and Wellbeing working with Manchester Histories, Creative Manchester, and the University of Manchester. Erin is working closely with the Manchester Histories team and partners across Archives+ to develop activities for use in the Histories Hub in Manchester Central Library and in community settings, with a focus on creative health.

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Janine Hague | Manchester Histories

Janine manages a host of Manchester Histories projects. To do so she is working with community groups and cultural organisations to tell the stories of people and places across Greater Manchester.

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In this workshop session, we will explore how digital toolkits can be effectively designed for use in community settings to improve health and wellbeing. Erin Beeston will briefly introduce her research on creating a toolkit aimed at older people for the heritage organisation, Manchester Histories. She explains how this intersects with recent developments in the Greater Manchester Creative Health Strategy and shares what she has learnt working in partnership with Manchester Histories and members of Manchester's Archives+. The content of this toolkit has been generated by partners ranging from librarians and archivists to the input of family history society volunteers.

The main part of the workshop will involve a practical element, enabling participants to generate ideas for their own activities that can be used remotely in settings such as care homes or community libraries. To do this, we will look at approaches to historic material, thinking about how we can use sources like material culture, archive, or the built environment differently to instigate discussions in the present. The practical aspect of this workshop will introduce a method Erin developed working with partners at Manchester Archives+ to relate history to present communities; significantly, not relying on reminiscence or place-based knowledge to generate discussions amongst community groups.

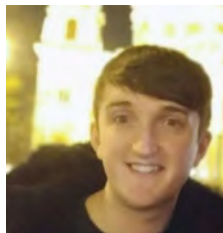
There will be opportunities for wider discussions at the end, and we can consider how, in designing these activities, existing models like the 5 Ways to Wellbeing and the recent Creative Health Quality Framework can be incorporated into planning, development, and evaluation.

Doorstep Discoveries - What is heritage? The wellbeing impact of diverse community led events for a national festival

Liam Montgomery | National Trust

Liam Montgomery is the Heritage Open Days Marketing & Projects Manager at the National Trust. He co-leads the coordination of the national festival, responsible for overseeing marketing strategy, raising the national profile of the festival, and measuring impact. Liam leads the festival's youth engagement project New Wave, which supports 18–25-year-olds to co-create events with local heritage sites. He has worked in the heritage sector since 2016 across visitor experience, audience development, commercial, and management contexts. He has an MA in Cultural Heritage Studies from UCL's Institute of Archaeology, with a keen interest in cultural memory, learning theory, and wellbeing.

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Sarah Holloway | National Trust

Sarah Holloway is the Heritage Open Days Programme Manager for the National Trust. She leads the operational team, fosters the community network that powers the festival and curates the blog as a further storytelling platform. She's always been interested in public engagement with heritage (in its widest possible sense) and the positive impacts it has. She is a member of the Wellbeing & Heritage Working Group run by Historic England, NASP, and Council for British Archaeology, and The Heritage Alliance's Skills, Education & Engagement Advocacy Group.

sarah.holloway@heritageopendays.org.uk



As a free, nationally supported but community-led festival, Heritage Open Days is a good example of breaking down barriers to offer diverse opportunities for people to engage with heritage. Evaluation has been a key part of its operation from the beginning, so now entering its 30th year it has a remarkable long term data set for the impact of this kind of work. With extensive experience of working at scale with a wide range of individuals and local groups it is now also measuring wellbeing impacts more specifically.

The workshop will include a short presentation offering an overview of our work, sharing the main findings around its impact on visitors and communities with examples and statistics. There will be lots of time for questions and discussion, particularly through an interactive session to explore your own experiences, and what we value in terms of our heritage – the little things make a big difference!

www.heritageopendays.org.uk

X: @heritageopenday | IG/FB/LI: @heritageopendays

How can heritage buildings make us happier and healthier?

Heather Clifton | Purcell

Heather has a strong interest in the correlation between heritage, materials, nature and wellbeing. She is a senior architect at Purcell with experience of working in a variety of sectors, with a particular focus upon education and the impact a healthy environment can have on young minds and their attitude to learning. After qualifying as an architect in 2018 she has been part of teams delivering a new build all-through school, a stand-alone nursery, and number of significant school extensions. She has also worked with schools to develop long-term strategic development plans for their estates. As well as the education sector, she has worked on commercial developments and cultural projects, and particularly enjoyed been involved in the restoration of an 19th century grade II listed theatre.

Heather has delivered projects to both BREEAM excellent and WELL platinum and is interested in the ability of good design to support well-being. She is particularly drawn to the challenges inherent in achieving this ambition within the unique context of existing heritage assets.



Janet Jury | Purcell

As an accredited Specialist Conservation Architect (SCA), Janet is a particular advocate of the merits of post-war design and a member of the Twentieth Century Society.

As well as extensive involvement in the broad spectrum of private and government-funded residential design, small- and large-scale cultural facilities, workspaces, and education, Janet is experienced in a wide range of health and wellbeing sectors.

She has worked with many charities to deliver schemes for care of the elderly and vulnerable adults, to address the challenges associated with homelessness and to support those affected by severe medical conditions. Janet's urban design skills are equally applicable to examining the potential of new build or refurbishment in the context of a single site, an estate of buildings or a larger masterplanning task.



Sam Riley | Purcell

Sam is passionate about old buildings and historic places. An undergraduate degree in literature has equipped him with strong research, analysis and writing skills, while specialist knowledge has been gained during his master's degree in Building History, both undertaken at the University of Cambridge. He has previously worked within the heritage and planning arm of a property consultancy. As well as involvement with the SPAB, Sam volunteers as a condition surveyor and building illustrator for English Heritage. He is also co-founder of a group to connect young people early in their heritage careers.



How can heritage buildings make us happier and healthier?

A 45-minute workshop with a pre-assembled Lego model of a typical town/ city with a mix of heritage buildings. After an initial discussion with the Purcell facilitators, the group will explore how heritage buildings can help us reconnect with each other and promote wellness in a post-shopping mall era.

We will explore themes of:

Loneliness / Safer public spaces / Community gardens / Pocket parks / Community fixing labs / Library of things / Positive mental health / Biophilia / Alzheimer's and Dementia-friendly environments / Heritage Action Zones / Planetary health / Materials that hold time

We will encourage radical thinking about how old buildings can be used to bring communities together, looking at long-term and 'meanwhile' use.

We will bring examples of leftfield ideas such as these:

- Specific local heritage features that can be temporarily transformed for community-led events and moments of national togetherness.
- Storefront Theatre – retaining the heritage frontage but transforming a building into an active street venue

We will use examples such as the Creative Land Trust who take over unused spaces for 'meanwhile' use as creative maker-spaces and artists' studios, looking at how these ideas could translate into direct community action, to combat specific needs for specific local demographics.

We will also look at the positive social and economic benefits of schemes such as Heritage Action Zones and the Creative Youth Network which encourages youth and diverse groups to actively participate in reclaiming and reframing heritage buildings.

At the end of the workshop, we hope to have the basis of a case-study outlining how heritage buildings could be used to radically redefine and re-empower local people to shape their towns.

We would like to follow-up by presenting a written-up case study with funding advice to provide a roadmap for how citizen groups can do something positive about their communities.

Archaeology 4 well-being and the Later Prehistoric Norfolk Project

Andy Hutcheson | University of East Anglia

Andy Hutcheson is an archaeologist specialising in the role of institutions in developing complexity. He is also interested in the role that cultural heritage plays in well-being. He received his Ph.D. from the University of East Anglia in 2011 and has worked as a professional archaeologist since 1984, first as a field archaeologist and latterly as a cultural heritage advisor. Most recently, Andy has led on activities relating to the [Later Prehistoric Norfolk Project](#). Working in collaboration with The Restoration Trust and Cambridge Archaeological Unit, the project aims to place Norfolk's prehistoric archaeology in an international context and at the same time explore the potential of archaeological projects to contribute to their participants' health and well-being. He has undertaken excavations at both [Arminghall Henge](#) (2022) and Warham Iron Age Camp (2023) as part of the project, also involving local school children and young people from Synergy Multi Academy Trust.



Laura Drysdale | Restoration Trust

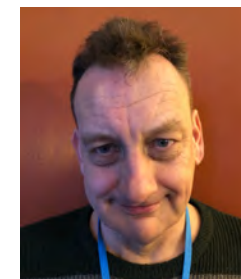
Laura Drysdale is the Director of the Restoration Trust, a charity that uses heritage and creativity to improve people's mental health. We call it Culture Therapy because exploring compelling archives or sensory immersion in ancient landscapes reignites people's curiosity and love of life. She began her career as a conservator, then worked at English Heritage before becoming a support worker with people living with mental health challenges. At the Restoration Trust she leads co-produced projects in archives and ancient landscapes with mental health, heritage, creative and academic partners. The Restoration Trust won the 2020 AHRC/Wellcome Prize for Community Engagement for our Change Minds partnership with the Norfolk Record Office and the University of East Anglia.



Phillip Wells | project participant



Robert Fairclough | project participant



Archaeology 4 well-being and the Later Prehistoric Norfolk Project

In this contribution we are interested in the value of different responses to the past. Through hearing of people's experiences of an archaeological project, we will explore the benefits to individual well-being. Heritage is important to health and well-being and a more thorough acknowledgement of that might help in dealing with the politics of climate change losses. The Later Prehistoric Norfolk Project (LPNP) is primarily about archaeological research and adding to our understanding of the prehistoric past. LPNP has a great variety of participants including, academics from the UK, Japan and Nigeria, professional archaeologists from the Cambridge Archaeological Unit, students from the local Multi-Academy Trust, post-graduates from the Maldives, as well as local volunteers. This creates an instant and diverse community, all focused on a wide definition of archaeological practice where creativity is a big part of what participants do. Being part of this project provides a view to the future as well as the past. Brief or extended periods of involvement with the material remains of the past may influence perceptions, becoming engrossed in this practice can allow the mind to escape issues in the present.

One of the issues we have in the present is a common lack of engagement with pasts and landscapes. Connecting to our heritage and to the environment is increasingly important in managing the impact of climate change and in preventing ecological degradation in the future. We will also touch on international approaches and taking a global attitude to learning. In addition, other linked projects, including the Great Yarmouth Heritage Link Worker will be examined and added into the round table, workshop discussion.

Prescriptions, Partnerships, and Placemaking: Reflections on fostering cross-sectoral partnerships to develop and deliver archaeological social prescribing programmes with underserved communities

Katrina Gargett | MOLA

Katrina Gargett is a community engagement specialist with over eight years of experience working in the heritage sector. Previously Community Partnership Manager at MOLA and Community Engagement Manager at York Archaeology she has co-led the development of impactful community engagement programmes focused on health and wellbeing and citizen empowerment, including YA's award-winning Archaeology on Prescription and MOLA's AHRC-funded Delapré Digs: Archaeology for Wellbeing. She has an MA in Cultural Heritage Management from the University of York.

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Arran Johnson | York Archaeology

Arran Johnson is a Community Engagement Officer at York Archaeology with a keen interest in partnership working and the engagement of new and diverse audiences. Alongside developing and overseeing public training excavations, Arran manages the national award winning Archaeology on Prescription social prescribing project. He has 18 years of experience, specialising in the investigation of complex, deeply stratified urban sites, and an uncanny ability to find Viking Age cesspits in the unlikeliest of locations. Arran aims to continue developing innovative projects that champion accessibility, inclusion and the wellbeing benefits of archaeology.

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Ayesha Purcell | Oxford Archaeology

Ayesha Purcell is Community Archaeology Manager at Oxford Archaeology and a Knowledge Exchange Facilitator for CHANSE (Collaboration of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Europe). With a background archaeological fieldwork, Ayesha develops and manages commercial and grant funded public impact projects, including audience research, wellbeing projects, and skills and education programmes. Ayesha is passionate about finding new and innovative ways of using our shared archaeological resource to support and empower communities and provide opportunities for structurally underserved audiences.



Leigh Chalmers | Wessex Archaeology

This session would bring together a panel of heritage and wellbeing practitioners, from different organisations, professional backgrounds, and at varied career stages, to reflect on and discuss the importance of partnerships in developing and delivering social prescribing projects. The panel have extensive experience across a diverse range of sector leading heritage-based social prescribing projects, that incorporate fieldwork, historical and archival research, and creative and artistic outputs. Panel members will draw on this firsthand experience to discuss strengths, challenges, and learnings, to share knowledge and understanding with the Heritage and Wellbeing community of practice.



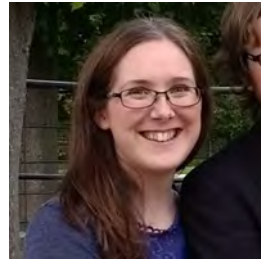
Measuring impact: tailored evaluation of health and wellbeing within heritage projects

Jenny Merry | Morris Hargreaves McIntyre

Jenny Merry is a Consultant at Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, where she has been delivering insight and strategic consultancy for arts, culture, heritage and nature organisations around the world for the past 11 years, including English Heritage, National Trust, SFMOMA, British Council, and Historic England.

Her particular passion is for projects which connect young people with heritage and the natural environment. She has a strong background in capturing youth voice in programme and project evaluations, giving real authenticity to the research and allowing young people to help shape their engagements.

After graduating from Cambridge with a degree in History, Jenny began her research career in local government by monitoring and evaluating the impact of childcare programmes in her local area. This gave her the appetite for turning analysis into insight, which she strives to deliver for all her clients at MHM.



Heritage, as its heart, is about a person or community's inherited sense of self – who we know ourselves to be in relation to what has gone before us.

Heritage programmes that seek to repair centuries of health and wellbeing inequality are as vital as they are exciting to work on. It's been a great source of pride for us to support so many organisations over the years demonstrate their impact, evaluate their strengths and areas for development, and ultimately increase their potential to improve the lives of those in their communities.

At Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, we have significant expertise in developing comprehensive and robust evaluations which address the needs of multiple stakeholders, and conducting evaluations for large, complex and long-term national programmes as well as much smaller-scale local initiatives.

In this hour-long session we will share our experience of evaluating impact for heritage projects to show how the principles can be applied to projects of any size. We would introduce our approach for evaluating health and wellbeing impacts from identifying the associated theory of change (i.e. how will our actions make something better for the people we're trying to serve?) and tying this into an evaluation framework. We would talk about tailoring evaluation materials to the target groups, catering for diverse accessibility needs, as well as working with national frameworks such as the Five Ways to Wellbeing.

We intend to bring this to life with examples from our evaluations of the National Trust's Castlefield Viaduct project and English Heritage's Shout Out Loud programme.

Policy Panel

The Policy Panel will pose questions and provoke a discussion around topics such as the visibility of the heritage sector's contribution to wellbeing and what needs happen for it to be noticed and appreciated more by Government, other sectors and the wider public. The panel members will also be invited to share their views about what heritage organisations and practitioners need to do to meet unmet needs in our communities and link to social prescribing successfully, as well as how we can become more inclusive and relevant to today's society.

Susan Wilkinson | HE commissioner

Sue Wilkinson is a Historic England Commissioner. She was an executive board director at the National Trust until the end of 2016 and the executive lead on tourism. During her time there she led much of the charity's income generation, oversaw the membership growth to nearly five million members, and led major IT projects and a brand review.

Currently, Sue is a trustee of English Heritage and deputy chair of the Churches Conservation Trust. She is also vice chair of the Medical Research Foundation.

Sue was previously a board director of the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions and a trustee of the Canal & River Trust and chair of the Living Waterways Awards. Prior to this she was a trustee at the Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich, and served on the Visit England Board and as a trustee of the Institute of Fundraising.



Charlotte Osborn-Forde | CEO, NASP

Charlotte Osborn-Forde is the CEO of the National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP), a government funded body to develop social prescribing locally, nationally and internationally with partners – especially NHSE. She works closely with clinical and community-based colleagues to develop strategic links between the healthcare sector and providers in culture, heritage, physical activity, nature and voluntary and community services – to improve health and wellbeing. Charlotte leads an evidence team of academics and researchers building the case for better integration and investment into social prescribing, at national and global level. Prior to leading NASP, Charlotte was the CEO of Involve Kent, and worked with the Department of Health to pilot social prescribing in primary care, initiating a service which grew to 102 GP practices offering social prescribing alongside medical care to more than 5000 patients. She also lectures in social prescribing at the Kent and Medway Medical School.



Lizzie Glithero-West | CEO, The Heritage Alliance

Lizzie Glithero-West has been the Chief Executive of the Heritage Alliance since 2016. Her previous career has been mainly in the civil service and she has expert knowledge of a wide range of policy areas including archaeology, heritage protection, museums and tourism.



Sarah Roller | Policy and Education Manager, Historic Houses

Sarah co-ordinates Historic Houses' policy and education work, as well as contributing articles for Historic House magazine and running the Historic Houses Twitter feed. Before joining Historic Houses in early 2022, she worked in various history and heritage sector roles, including in communications, digital media and collections/curation work. She is a trustee of the Heritage Education Trust.

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Laura Drysdale | Restoration Trust

Laura Drysdale is the Director of the Restoration Trust, a charity that uses heritage and creativity to improve people's mental health. We call it Culture Therapy because exploring compelling archives or sensory immersion in ancient landscapes reignites people's curiosity and love of life. She began her career as a conservator, then worked at English Heritage before becoming a support worker with people living with mental health challenges. At the Restoration Trust she leads co-produced projects in archives and ancient landscapes with mental health, heritage, creative and academic partners. The Restoration Trust won the 2020 AHRC/Wellcome Prize for Community Engagement for our Change Minds partnership with the Norfolk Record Office and the University of East Anglia.



Neil Redfern | Executive Director, Council for British Archaeology

Neil Redfern is the Executive Director of the Council for British Archaeology, an independent charity, that brings together members, supporters and partners to give archaeology a voice, champion participation and safeguard archaeology for future generations. He has previously worked for Historic England in York for 18 years as an Inspector of Ancient Monuments and Development Advice Team Leader. During this time, he was responsible for the delivery of Historic England's statutory advice on planning, listed building and scheduled monument consent applications in Yorkshire. He has an MPhil in Archaeological Heritage Management and Museums (University of Cambridge) and a BA (Hons) in Geography and Archaeology (University of Manchester). He has over 26 years' experience of cultural heritage management, archaeological fieldwork, survey and assessment and museum practice through working for English Heritage, the Cambridge Archaeological Unit, the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) and the Wordsworth Trust. He is particularly interested in the practical and philosophical challenges of how we value places, work with the wider public and help everyone participate.



Poster Presentations

“Healing Heritage”. Empowering mental health through heritage-led collaborative practices

Dr Giulia Mezzalama | Politecnico di Torino / CCW Cultural Welfare Center

The presentation centers on the intersection of heritage, collaborative practices, and mental health, adding to the discourse on the role of cultural heritage in addressing youth mental health challenges. It acknowledges the potential of involving young individuals in heritage-led activities as a platform for creative expression, social interaction, and the exploration of personal and collective histories.

The paper specifically showcases the outcomes of the collaborative design workshop "Healing Heritage" held in Turin from May 4th to 6th, 2023. The workshop, structured according to a methodology developed by the Association MinD Mad in Design since 2014 with the contribution of a scientific committee comprising researchers and professionals from different disciplinary fields, included collective activities based on participatory approaches aimed at exploring the connections between cultural heritage and mental health in the area of the Valentino Castle in Turin, a UNESCO site and the seat of the Politecnico of Turin, along with its adjacent park. The workshop employed a multidisciplinary approach, forming teams consisting of university students from various disciplines (mostly architecture, design and psychology), young individuals with expertise and direct experience with mental health diseases, and social and healthcare professionals.

Facilitated by experts in psychology, architecture, design, and cultural heritage, the workshop aimed to explore participatory practices and their impact on mental well-being derived from cultural heritage. Aligned with the principles of participatory action research, the project also included an evaluation phase led by the psychologists for the participants to reflect on the path taken and gather their perspective on how involved they felt.

Mindful museums: The health and wellbeing impacts of mindfulness-based approaches to museum collections

Christopher Jeavons | independent practitioner

Mindfulness is a state of present moment awareness that is most frequently achieved through meditative practices in which the individual centres their attention upon a particular anchor of focus, whether this be the breath, a bodily sensation, or an emotion, for a sustained period of time.

Mindfulness-based approaches are increasingly being deployed within the cultural heritage sector to facilitate engagement with heritage spaces and collections and to improve the health and wellbeing of a range of communities.

Within this area, my research has focused particularly on mindful museum object-handling activities and their health and wellbeing impacts in university student populations, a demographic currently experiencing an unprecedented frequency of mental health concerns. I have previously explored this topic through a research project as part of my masters course at the University of Leicester which sought to measure and explore the health and wellbeing outcomes of mindful museum object handling activities within a group of 10 international student participants, hosted at Leicester Museum and Art Gallery. I will continue to explore this research area in hosting Leicester Museum and Art Gallery's 'Mindful Mondays at the Museum' programme, comprised of a series of bi-weekly activities that will take mindfulness-based approaches to the museum's artworks, artefacts and handling collection and will be open to the public.

Campus heritage and student wellbeing: lessons from the SWELS project

Dr Thomas Kador | University College London

Between 2020 and 2023 the SWELS (Student Wellbeing and Experiential Learning Spaces) project explored both the learning and wellbeing impact of 'cultural learning spaces' on university students. We conducted a mixed methods study, combining a survey and interviews with c.150 students from three large, research-intensive universities in the South of England; King's, Oxford and UCL. The aim of this was to establish students' levels of wellbeing, the activities they engage in to support it and what role cultural spaces – such as museums, libraries and gardens – play in alleviating some of the main stressors linked to being a university student. SWELS started during COVID-19 lock down conditions and concluded after the last lock downs had ended. Consequently, it provided insights on these questions both during and after the pandemic. This also allowed us to compare the difference between in-person and online engagement with cultural resources. While the focus of our research was on identifying the potential contribution museums, collections and green spaces can make to supporting and improving student wellbeing, the survey in particular identified striking levels of low mood, anxiety and related wellbeing difficulties across the cohort (with some differences between the three institutions). While these are in line with other recent work on young adult and university student, mental health, they provide very concrete examples of the severity of the current situation. However, the research also showed the positive contributions a curriculum that actively engages with heritage resources on and off the university campus can make toward improving student mental health.

Sleeping Well in the Early Modern World and Ordsall Hall Creative Health Hub

Dr Anna Fielding | University of Manchester

Naomi Lewis | University of Manchester

Caroline Alexander | University of Manchester

The Wellcome Trust-funded Sleep in the Early Modern World project at Ordsall Hall has created an emerging hub where the local community can explore approaches to health and lifestyle balance through interpretation and activities based on early modern healthcare and sleep. From research by Prof. Sasha Handley, Dr Anna Fielding has designed a range of craft and remaking workshops based on early modern health models and practices which encouraged good sleep. Craft, cooking, and remedy making sessions have been delivered across family workshops, school visits, adult learner programmes, and community groups. This chimes with modern-day reawakening regarding the health benefits of sleep and a regional push across Manchester towards creative health provision in museums and galleries to improve community wellbeing.

Together we are also exploring the benefits of creative health through co-produced programmes and resources, working with Salford Living Well, Wellbeing Matters Social Prescribing, and Salford Health Improvement Connect to provide long-term and sustainable social prescribing and wellbeing pathways. This approach uses the historical health model of the 'six-non naturals' to inform emotional healthcare techniques, personal health maintenance plans, and community group-led workshops. We believe early modern health regimes complement modern approaches such as the five ways to wellbeing, helping to bring people with emotional health needs together using the community asset of Ordsall Hall while deepening engagement in meaningful and cohesive ways.

Community-led Regeneration of the Hop Pole Inn: Our Story So Far

James Sibson | Limpley Stoke Community Benefit Society

Jessica Evans | Limpley Stoke Community Benefit Society

The Grade II-listed Hop Pole Inn has been at the heart of Limpley Stoke for 500 years. Like many rural communities, over generations it has brought residents together as an anchor of place, wellbeing and cohesion.

To our dismay, the Hop Pole Inn closed its doors in 2017 following decades of underinvestment. Held within a UK wide portfolio of commercial assets, the building was earmarked for residential development as part of the disposal strategy by the portfolio owners. The community had secured the Hop Pole as an Asset of Community Value around 2014 and remained active in supporting past operators to keep the pub open. This allowed us to seek to purchase the building and avoid its permanent loss.

Our story mirrors that faced by many communities across the country. The accelerating decline of historic pubs in recent years represents not just the loss of a building type that lends vitality to our streetscape – pubs inform local identity, infuse unity within our communities and are key to combating loneliness and social isolation. They are places to meet family, befriend a stranger; take a break and meet people you would likely not engage with anywhere else.

In response, village residents rallied together to 'Save the Hop Pole' <https://www.limpleystokecbs.org/>. The Limpley Stoke Community Benefit Society (LSCBS) was formed in 2021 as a vehicle to co-ordinate community investment, access Government funding and enable the purchase of the pub to safeguard it for future generations. By February 2023, 560 members of the community had become shareholders in the LSCBS. As of January 2024, we have around 650 shareholders, have raised £900k and have reached the mid-way point of the repair and refurbishment works to return the Hop Pole Inn to an important and valued community hub.

The presentation shares our story so far – from learning of the building's 16th Century origins to our early beginnings as community owners, the battle to safeguard historic fabric following decades of unsuitable adaption and neglect, to securing a long-term sustainable business model for this much-loved community asset. It will conclude with an audience discussion inviting wider perceptions on how support mechanisms can better enable community-led projects such as ours, which place heritage and wellbeing at their heart.

Crafting Happiness in a Heritage Setting

Cheryl Cecilia Lui | Bath Medical Museum

Irene Prentice | Bath Medical Museum

Hannah Rustomjee | Bath Medical Museum

Our presentation gives a glimpse of Bath's heritage in wellbeing dating back to the Romans. We are exploring how the Romans understood wellbeing and its relevance today. We are looking at the difference between wellness and wellbeing and how this leads to overall happiness. We are also interested in the relationship between subjective and intersubjective wellbeing. Our presentation discusses the different types and levels of stress and illustrates these alongside coping mechanisms.

