



HERITAGE  
DONCASTER

# HISTORY HEALTH & HAPPINESS

2019/20 Impact Report



Doncaster  
Council



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



# Who we are

In April 2018 Heritage Doncaster became an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation (NPO). The NPO funding enables Heritage Doncaster to deliver a strategic programme of outreach work called History, Health and Happiness.

Heritage Doncaster is part of Doncaster Council and oversees Doncaster Museum and Art Gallery, Cusworth Hall and Park, Doncaster Local Studies Library, Doncaster Archives and the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry Museum. Heritage Doncaster cares for almost 1 million objects, documents and artworks that date from millions of years ago to today.



*History Club with b:friend. Image: James Mulkeen*

# What we do

History, Health and Happiness aims to tackle isolation and improve wellbeing in four key areas of Doncaster by using museum collections as the basis for outreach and community engagement activities. We strive to make participants feel more connected to others in their community, and have a greater understanding of and pride in the place they live. The activities are participant led and respond to the needs and interests of the communities in which they take place.



«  
Why it  
matters  
»



## HEALTH & WELLBEING

Feeling connected is good for you. Loneliness and disconnection has a big impact on health. It is strongly linked to depression, dementia and heart disease (*Caliope et al, 2006; James et al, 2011 and Valtorta et al, 2016*).

Loneliness increases the likelihood of mortality by 26% and is just as bad for your heart as smoking 15 cigarettes a day (*Holt-Lunstad, 2015*).

9 million adults in the UK are either always or often lonely (*Co-Op or British Red Cross*).

In Doncaster it is estimated that 55,000 people in the Borough experience some form of mental health problem (*Doncaster HWB Strategy*). People who experience a greater sense of belonging report higher mental health scores (*happinesspulse.co.uk*).

**We aim to encourage connections and conversations to tackle loneliness, as well as building connections and friendships through social interactions.**



Relationships are the key to wellbeing - more so than social status or life circumstances



*Parsfield et al, 2015*





## RESILIENCE & CONFIDENCE BUILDING

Social connections and relationships with people in your community build places that are more resilient. It is more likely that self-interest and differences can be put aside for the common good (*Siegler, 2016*). A strong sense of community can also increase individual resilience and confidence to withstand difficult situations (*Sandstrom, 2013*). Our programmes encourage people to develop their confidence and meet with people outside of their normal social circles.



Cooking Through Time. Image: Heritage Doncaster



## SENSE OF PLACE

People who talk to their neighbours on most days are more than three times more likely to have a strong sense of belonging than those who never speak to their neighbours (*ONS UK Community Life Survey*). A sense of belonging and community can bring communities together, reducing differences in social and cultural identities. A sense of place is also important in fostering community pride and creating a Doncaster that people can be proud of.



## ECONOMIC IMPACT & SKILLS

Wellbeing is a key influencer on the economy (*Centre for Economics and Business Return*). People who are stronger, healthier and happy are better workers. Poor mental health costs the UK economy up to £99 billion a year (*Stevenson and Farmer, DWP, 2017*). In addition, older patients who live alone are more than 50% more likely to access emergency care services incurring a cost (*Dreyer, 2018*). We also aim to encourage participants to gain new skills which in turn raises their confidence and their job market profile.



History Club with b:friend. Image: James Mulkeen

## Why history?

History has the ability to unite people through a sense of a shared past. For example, shared memories of childhood games, school dinners, or local folk stories you have heard before. History can also be unique to place, allowing us to share stories that are uniquely Doncaster, or Denaby Main, or Mexborough.

History is inspiring. Stories of when those in the past have overcome adversity, beaten the odds and demonstrated immeasurable strength can inspire us and enable us to find comfort when we face our own turbulent times. We can also learn from history and strive to create a society that avoids repeating the past's mistakes.

Storytelling is key to sharing the past and it sparks curiosity, learning, imagination and creativity. We hope to give everyone's creativity the opportunity to flourish and encourage life-long learning.

History is also more than what has happened before. We make history every day and we aim to enable participants to write their own history and leave their own mark on the historical record.



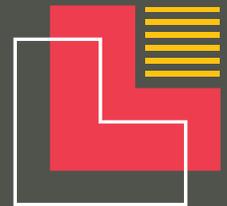


«  
**Our  
activities**  
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Our programmes are shaped by the people who take part and we encourage participants to play an active role in the sessions.

Hands-on access to Heritage Doncaster's objects enables unique storytelling opportunities. We also acknowledge that today is tomorrow's history and encourage participants to share. The time to chat and the time for stories to be valued is key.

**We aim to foster connections and conversations, as well as spark creativity and learning.**



**HISTORY CLUB**

We partner with b:friend, a local charity that delivers social clubs for isolated older adults, for History Club. History Club is a monthly Heritage Doncaster takeover of 4 of their social clubs. The sessions focus on hands-on heritage activities, storytelling and the opportunity for participants to share their own views, stories, and memories.



*History Club with b:friend. Image: James Mulkeen*



## HERSTORY

A weekly social club for women in Denaby Main. Each week the group looks at the stories and experiences of women in the past. The sessions focus on conversation, storytelling, and learning from the past.



Herstory. Image: James Mulkeen



## COOKING THROUGH TIME

In collaboration with Adult, Family and Community Learning, and Doncaster Conversation Club we delivered Cooking through Time ESOL sessions. In each session participants develop their conversational English skills by learning about Doncaster's past and cooking historical recipes. Recipes included Roman stuffed dates, Viking bread and Victorian scones.

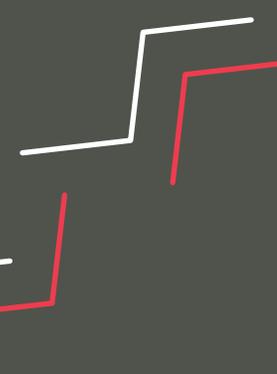


Refugee Week 2019. Image: Heritage Doncaster



## YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILY HUBS

Following on from pilot activities delivered in summer 2019 we have launched a programme of activity specifically focussed on working with families and young people. This includes partnerships with Family Hubs and organisations that support young carers. The sessions focus on wellbeing and confidence building.



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What we have achieved  
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We can infer that participants in History, Health and Happiness programmes are “experiencing new levels of connectedness and are building their relationships within their community.”

They are also “well engaged in project activities and learning things that are new to them.”

*Arc Research and Consultancy Ltd/Sheffield Hallam University*

## ISOLATION

93%



~20%

increase in feelings of interest in other people\*\*

11%

rise in feelings of belonging & connectedness\*

83%

became interested to try other activities in my community\*\*

83%

talked to people outside their age group\*\*

## HEALTH & WELLBEING

~20%

increase in optimism about the future\*\*

~15%

increase in new things\*\*

23%

rise in confidence\*

11%

rise in happiness levels\*

96%

made someone else feel welcome\*\*

Herstory has changed my life. It gives me something to look forward to.

Denaby

Better than any lesson I have been in at school. Lots of fun. I have learned a lot from this.

Denaby

It stimulates the little grey cells.

Denaby

## SENSE OF PLACE



rise in how people feel about where they live\*

35 PEOPLE



13 COUNTRIES

celebrated Refugee Week at Central Family Hub in June 2019

## SKILLS



of people learned something new\*\*



shared their skills knowledge or memories\*\*



400+ museum objects used in outreach to bring history to life

2086 interactions at 131 sessions



2500 cups of tea made



62 people learnt how to charleston

300+ hours of Heritage Doncaster social sessions

40 TOPICS chosen by participants

1 visit to Parliament

14 partnerships with Doncaster organisations



150+ objects loaned from community groups & individuals for the Danum Gallery, Library and Museum

6 recreations of the journey of the Mayflower



17 unique stories shared by older neighbours at b:heard events

The data is taken from quantitative methods (a Wellbeing scale and adapted WEBWBS), as well as qualitative data including facilitator diaries and case studies. The data was analysed by Arc Research and Consultancy Ltd/Sheffield Hallam University.

\*Based on data from 10 people who attended Herstory in Denaby Main in financial year 2019/20. Sample only includes those who completed a questionnaire at 3 time points.

\*\* Based on data from thirty-two people drawn from the population of those that participated in Heritage Doncaster activity Jan-Dec 2019. The sample includes only those who completed a questionnaire at two time points.

# What people say

## TESTIMONIES

“I absolutely love Herstory. I was unsure to start with as I didn't know what to expect and I wasn't into history at school. I thought there can't be that many great women in history but wow there is. I enjoy learning about everything from all the decades as the things we are learning are things we are interested in. I also think our group is amazing and we have formed such a special friendship because we are all going through a similar thing in life. I for one can say I have felt my confidence increase within the group. The ladies are fantastic and no question is too silly to ask. I love it.”

“Herstory for me prevents isolation, forms friendships, gives good learning and is well presented. I love all the topics we do and how much we have learned, and the places we have been, the people we have met over the last year. I am interested in most topics and love to see what we are doing each week.”

“I really appreciate the Doncaster museum coming to the group. We always learn something new and always look forward to the visits, long may they continue”

*Mexborough b:friend participant*

“Coming to the heritage group has made me feel much better and took my mind off my problems.”

*Mexborough b:friend participant*

“Keep it going!  
Art is for all”

*Thorne b:friend participant*



“At a time when loneliness in all its forms has been identified as a major concern for society **this initiative is particularly worthwhile**. The social relevance of this targeted programme is highly applicable here given the issues of geographical inequality identified by the service, taking the work of the service out to these localities is therefore a major commitment”

*Arts Council Assessor*

“Thank you. Very satisfied today so I shall come again. You people have made a lot of people happy and relaxed today.”

*Balby b:friend participant*

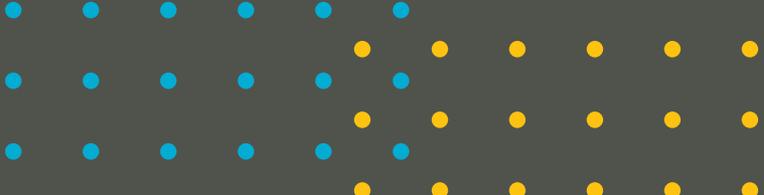
“In no sense could these groups be seen as ‘the usual suspects’ in terms of museum provision i.e. members of traditional history or civic societies, there was a degree of excitement in evidence particularly I think for the B:Friend group where members **expressed delight** that the museum service should want to bring material out to them”

*Arts Council Assessor*



“The time spent was most enjoyable throughout and very entertaining with a warm and happy atmosphere. Loved it all.”

*Balby b:friend participant*







## MOVING MUSEUM

We will soon be able to launch the Moving Museum. The Moving Museum is a travelling exhibition that will journey around the Borough. It will share stories from Heritage Doncaster’s collection, as well as showcase co-curated content produced by community groups and individuals. This will link to co-curated exhibitions in the new Danum Gallery, Library and Museum and enable us to share more diverse stories from Doncaster’s community.



## LIFE DURING & AFTER LOCKDOWN

During the coronavirus pandemic, History, Health and Happiness has adapted its programming to continue to provide cultural activities, support and much needed escapism. This has included producing activity packs for distribution to isolated and vulnerable adults, digital social clubs and producing mindful ‘Five Minute History’ audio recordings. We have worked closely with partner organisations to ensure that we can support those most at risk in our community.

- Tackling isolation and fostering connectedness have never been more important. The coronavirus pandemic and the need to stay at home have shown many of us the impact that isolation can have on your mental health and wellbeing. For many, social isolation will not go away once lockdown is lifted. As a result, social clubs like those that we deliver will continue to play a vital role in building confidence, forming connections and tackling loneliness.
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We also acknowledge that staying home is a way of life for many in our community, including those living with social anxiety and living with disabilities that prevent them from leaving the house. History, Health and Happiness aims to launch Museums at Home that continues to bring heritage stories and activities in to people’s Museums at Home. These programmes will build on the learning from the digital, virtual, and postal resources created during the Covid-19 pandemic.



## NEW PARTNERSHIPS & ACTIVITIES FOR 2020/2021

History, Health and Happiness will be piloting new activities that aim to reach new audiences. These include activities in Stainforth and Woodlands, and activities specifically targeted at families and young people.





«  
We  
need  
you  
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## PARTNERSHIPS

The data analysed by Arc Research and Consultancy Ltd and Sheffield Hallam University reveals that we still have a long way to go in improving how people see their local area and community. A collaborative approach, across agencies and Doncaster Council teams will allow us to develop communities and a sense of place. We are seeking new partnerships and relationships to enable us to break down barriers in communities through culture and history, as well as the opportunity to participate in the Borough wide strategies on place, well-being, caring, and learning.

We also want to work with more third sector organisations and providers who deliver social clubs. We can provide content and resources based on our fascinating museum collections that can be adapted by organisations and groups.



## VOLUNTEERING

An element of ensuring sustainability of our outreach programme includes providing opportunities for volunteers to build skills and learning in order to assist with delivery of activities, and recruiting participants for sessions. We are looking for volunteers to help support our History, Health and Happiness programme.



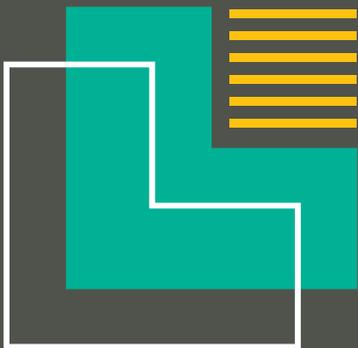
## GETTING THE WORD OUT

We want to share our best practice in developing a community-based wellbeing model and delivering participant led activities within communities.

We have tips on building partnerships, encouraging people to attend activity, and evaluation that we would like to share.

We also want as many people as possible to know about the History, Health and Happiness programme of work, and for as many people as possible to be able to attend our activities. We need your help in getting the word out!

We firmly believe that our workshops are meaningful and an asset to Doncaster.





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Contact  
US  
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If you have any questions or would like more information,  
please contact Victoria on

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You can find out more at

[www.heritagedoncaster.org.uk/HappyHistory](http://www.heritagedoncaster.org.uk/HappyHistory)





Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



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**HERITAGE  
DONCASTER**

With our best wishes for  
Christmas 1914

May God protect you and  
bring you home safe

Mary R George R.I.