

Sheffield's Heritage

What it is and why it matters

Sheffield has a [Heritage Strategy](#), developed by and for the whole community, published by local charity Joined Up Heritage Sheffield.

But what is “heritage”?

Heritage is ...

... anything inherited from the past that you want to keep safe and pass on to people in the future

... whatever tells the story of human life and experience, including yours

... all that helps you feel that you belong in a place or in a community

... large or small, a physical object or an idea, natural or artificial, serious or playful, personal or universal

Heritage might be ...

... a place: farms, factories, homes, streets, lamp posts or milestones; river valleys, parks, gardens, dams, moors, industrial sites or trees; names or street-corner stories

... a collection: in a museum, a gallery, an archive, someone's home, out on the street, or buried underground; of tools, great artworks, clothes, regalia, official records, personal writings, precious or everyday things

... a tradition: crafts, skills, legends, inventions, recipes or games

... an idea: stories of crime, compassion, love or bravery; memories of lost worlds or older times, songs, faiths, words, sayings or whole languages

...and much, much more.

Sheffield's heritage is ...

... green and blue

Sheffield's valleys and woodlands brought industry to the city and are now its lungs. Hills and rivers shaped where and how we live and work.

Our parks and gardens recall aristocratic estates, famous designers, and businesspeople turned benefactors. Sheffield is the birthplace of national parks and home of the right to roam.

... radical

Sheffield's story is of Chartist uprising, campaigners for suffrage and against slavery, religious rebelliousness, industrial strife and solidarity.

We have confronted and contributed to tyranny at home and abroad, the impact of empire and the wealth and want of industry. We know the pain of upheaval, the injustice of private affluence and public squalor, the struggle for betterment and a passion for Independence.

... historic

We live amongst Tudors, Stuarts, Georgians, Victorians, Edwardians, the manorial, the municipal and the modern. Beneath lurks our Norman, Dane, Saxon, Roman and iron age past.

Where but Sheffield can you find Ecgbert uniting England, Waltheof defying the Normans, Mary Queen of Scots imprisoned, Bess of Hardwick rivalling Good Queen Bess, not to mention Robin Hood?

It is here that Robert Marnock redefined the garden, Florence Nightingale invented nursing, John Ruskin reimagined museums, and Edward Carpenter spread sandals and socialism.

Sheffield's heritage is ...

... industrious

Thomas Boulsover's plate, Benjamin Huntsman's crucibles, Henry Bessemer's converter, Harry Brearley's stainless, and Sheffield's name on the best knives across the globe are just one story.

Let's not forget how we brewed beer for buffers and grinders, nor all our other livelihoods of coal and fireclay, confectionery and cotton, paints, polishes, tinned peas and toilet paper.

... playful

Sheffield is the home of football and the two oldest clubs in the world. Yorkshire cricket began here. This is the place for pugilism and pedestrianism, pitch and toss, billiards in pubs and snooker on stage.

We are a joyful city of brass bands and rock bands, choirs and balladeers, carols in pubs and laughter in concert halls.

... human

Sheffield's heritage comes from us. Our ancestry, be it in the next street, another city, country or continent. How we worship, what we eat, who we buy from, how we enjoy ourselves. Our photographs and family trees. What we learn from our parents and what we teach our children.

It is constantly renewed from without and within, and strengthened through sharing. It is an ongoing story to which we add our part, keeping it alive to be carried on by others.

Why does heritage matter?

Sheffield's heritage creates its distinctive sense of place, increasing its appeal to visitors and its economic vitality as a place to live and work. *Sheffield needs to understand and celebrate its heritage* so people value it, see it in a positive light and work to conserve and enhance it.

Heritage is for everyone. It's something that can bring us together. *Championing the diverse heritage of this wonderfully diverse city* will help people and communities feel their connection to Sheffield's heritage and their part in Sheffield's present.

Heritage sustains the city's prosperity by boosting property values, bringing the customers, workers and visitors needed by business. A strategic approach to *exploiting the economic potential of heritage* will change decisions about relocation, regeneration, construction and development, and job creation – to say nothing of national grant funding.

Heritage teaches us about the past and can point to better ways to live life today and to shape the future. Sheffield needs to *support the educational value of heritage* not just in our schools and colleges but across communities, making it truly for life-long learning.

Sharing our heritage connects us, exploring our heritage makes us active, learning about heritage keeps us aware and engaged, and heritage volunteering helps others. Conserving and re-using, not condemning and rebuilding, helps the climate. We just need to *recognise the social, wellbeing and environmental benefits of heritage*.



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