

# Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site Annual Report 2017



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Durham Castle and Cathedral  
inscribed on the World Heritage  
List in 1986



# Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site Annual Report

## Welcome

- To our first annual report – since our new Management Plan was approved by UNESCO last February (to see our plan in full, please go to <https://www.durhamworldheritagesite.com/> and click on “Documents and Research” at the bottom of the page)
- A lot has happened in the past year. Our Action Plan (which you can see in more detail in the Management Plan) has 6 key aims, underpinned by supporting objectives:
  1. *Protect the Site’s Outstanding Universal Value and setting*
  2. *Conserve and enhance the Site and its setting*
  3. *Support understanding and awareness of the Site and its Outstanding Universal Value and of World Heritage*
  4. *Support communities in realising the economic, social and cultural opportunities and benefits World Heritage status can bring*
  5. *Support visitor and communities’ access to and their enjoyment of the Site and its benefits*
  6. *Support and demonstrate exemplary WHS management to deliver all aims*
- We hope this Report will tell you some of the activities we have delivered over the past year in support of these Aims.
- We would like to thank all the partners who have worked with us over the past 30 years since our inscription, ensuring that Durham WHS continues to be a place of “Cultural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity.” *Paragraph 49 Operational Guidelines for Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, UNESCO, 2005*

*Canon Rosalind Brown, Chair of WHS Coordinating Committee*

*Jane Gibson, WHS Coordinator*



## Who we are

The World Heritage Site (WHS) is managed with the support and advice of the WHS Coordinating committee, whose members are:

- **The Reverend Canon Rosalind Brown**, Nave Canon and Canon Librarian, Durham Cathedral and Chair of Durham WHS Coordinating Committee
- **Jane Robinson**, Chief Operating Officer, Durham University
- **Stuart Timmiss**, Head Of Planning Durham County Council
- **Angela Cook**, Director of Finance and Administration of St John's College
- **Barbara Hooper**, Historic England
- **Dr. Douglas Pocock**, The City of Durham Trust
- **Martin Roberts**, International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) UK



# Aim 1 Protect the Site's Outstanding Universal Value and Setting

- Cathedral - Redisplay of St Cuthbert's relics**  
 2017 saw the return of St Cuthbert's Relics to public display after 6 years in storage. The fourteenth-century Great Kitchen is one of only two intact surviving medieval monastic kitchens in England, with a distinctive octagonal shape and a high rib-vaulted ceiling. This spectacular space has now been transformed into a permanent home for The Treasures of St Cuthbert, some of the most significant surviving Anglo-Saxon artefacts in the UK. This outstanding collection includes St Cuthbert's preserved wooden coffin and his exquisite gold and garnet pectoral cross. Also on display are the ivory comb and portable altar buried alongside St Cuthbert, Anglo-Saxon vestments gifted to his Shrine, and the original Sanctuary Ring.
- Scottish soldiers archaeological investigations** The 'Scottish Soldiers' Project, which started in 2013 with the discovery of the remains of the soldiers during one of the earlier phases of the Palace Green Library refurbishment was brought to a conclusion in 2017. The soldiers will be reburied at Elvet Hill Road Cemetery, and on the 12 May 2017 a plaque was dedicated to the soldiers in the courtyard of the café at the Library, close to the site where the remains were originally discovered.

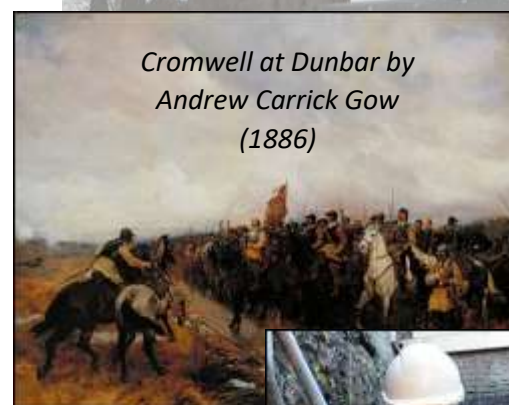


- Durham Castle's Care & Conservation Policy**  
 This was developed and approved, building the case for Museums Association Accreditation. Durham University's Estates and Buildings Department, in collaboration with the Castle Curator, implemented works to improve conservation standards for display of collections in the Tunstall Gallery, collections have been catalogued and are available online and a condition survey and conservation repackaging has been carried out on collections stored in Castle's objects store.



*"The launch of the Treasures of St Cuthbert on permanent display in their new home marks a new phase in the life of Durham Cathedral and its exhibition experience Open Treasure,"*

*The Very Rev Andrew Tremlett, Dean of Durham.*



*Cromwell at Dunbar by Andrew Carrick Gow (1886)*





## Aim 2 Conserve and enhance the Site and its Setting



- **Durham University restoration of the Exchequer Building:** The third stage of works to the Palace Green Library was completed in 2017. These included the refurbishment of nine rooms including services and finishes; installation of conservation heating and blinds; upgrading teaching, meeting and research facilities and the creation of a new digitisation suite for archive collections to improve access and conservation. The works will improve access to one of the most important buildings in the World Heritage Site and a number of important collections.
- **Cathedral Tower project** The Cathedral Tower is currently closed to the public to carry out vital repair and conservation works to the Upper Parapet. The project is part of a major repairs programme being undertaken to ensure the Cathedral's buildings are maintained and conserved for this and future generations to enjoy. The most significant element of the Tower, the Upper Parapet project is undergoing stone conservation by the Cathedral's own team of masons. Other works include repairs to roof-coverings and rainwater systems, and the renewal of roof-access decking so that visitors can continue to enjoy the magnificent views of Durham offered from the Tower.
- **DCC Riverbanks working group** The Riverbanks of the Peninsula are very special indeed. They provide opportunities to introduce people to the river, its history, its flora and fauna and for informal leisure activities. Their proximity to the World Heritage Site reinforces the importance of managing this area in a way that is commensurate with the significance of its built and natural heritage. In 2017, Durham County Council, on behalf of a Steering Group of the main landowners, commissioned a Development & Management Strategy considering the physical condition and infrastructure as well as opportunities, challenges and constraints for enhancing the appeal and use of the Riverbanks. The benefits of revitalising the Riverbanks to those who use them – residents, workers, students and visitors – are clear. They will provide a place to spend time, to walk, to pursue activities, to see wildlife and an opportunity to escape the hustle and bustle of the city, yet be right on its doorstep. They will encourage people to experience more deeply explore further and stay longer.

## Aim 3 Support understanding and awareness of the Site and its Outstanding Universal Value and of World Heritage

- WHS Lecture Series 2017** The 2017 programme addressed the theme of Heritage at Risk, with 6 lectures, covering themes ranging from the UNESCO Blue Shield programme, heritage at risk in the Near and Middle East, Heritage At Risk and the work of Historic England and our own Durham City Neighbourhood Plan. In addition to the lectures, we hosted the Northern premier of the film “The destruction of Memory” along with a visit and question and answer session from the film’s director, Tim Slade.
- World Heritage Day** To celebrate World Heritage Day 2017 on the theme of ‘Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Tourism’ we took our own unique view of this and brought a variety of craft activities and workshops to the site. Giving us a chance to showcase the amazing crafts practitioners of Durham who keep our cultural heritage alive daily, making the site what it is today. It is the maintenance of this range of skills that allows the site to remain a sustainable tourist location as without them much of the heritage of the site would be lost! Family-friendly activities were supported by the Cathedral and University’s Learning teams and Castle Community Action and included opportunities to see a stonemason at work and enjoy the craft of the Cathedral broderers.
- Heritage Open Days** For Heritage Open Days this our Volunteer team delivered walking tours of the Site, highlighting some of the features often overlooked by visitors to the WHS.





## Aim 4 - Support communities in realising the economic, social and cultural opportunities and benefits of World Heritage status

- **Survey of Visitors to Durham Castle** As part of the WHS Research Framework's goal to 'Understand the World Heritage Site today', Durham's UNESCO Chair in Archaeological Ethics and Practice in Cultural Heritage and the Institute of Medieval and Early Modern Studies supported a pilot study to evaluate the economic impact of visitors to Durham Castle in 2017. 282 groups were surveyed, representing a total of 649 visitors. Initial analysis is revealing insights into the type of visiting groups, their home locations and key origins of foreign visitors. The majority of visitors travelled to Durham either by car or train and around half stayed overnight in Durham City or nearby. The majority of visitors had not visited the Castle before, and the average amount of money spent on their visits was £197.
- **Lumiere**  
Back in Durham for the fifth time, artists from around the world illuminated the city in delightful and unexpected ways, with a series of light installations to explore. Commissioned by Durham County Council and produced by Artichoke it attracted over 240,000 people. This year's programme had a strong international element once and in his first UK commission, Spanish artist, Pablo Valbuena transformed the interior and exterior of Durham Cathedral with "Methods" inspired by the tradition of English change ringing. Led by Durham Cathedral's Bell Major, 60 bellringers from the North East and beyond performed live for six hours each night of the festival. All partners contributed by making spaces and buildings available for lighting installations
- **In Other Words** Working with international students from Durham University, artist Alan O'Cain transformed the WHS Visitor Centre's courtyard garden into a multisensory space. Recorded haiku poems, inspired by the WHS and composed by the students from across the world were spoken in both the international language of the authors and recited in English translation by members of the local community and accompanied by an originally composed piano score. The exhibition was accompanied by a limited edition book displaying the Haikus both in their original languages and scripts and in English translations also created by the international students.





## Aim 5 Support visitor and communities' access, their enjoyment of the Site and its benefits

- **Visitor feedback survey** – In a presentation to the World Heritage:UK annual conference in Ironbridge in October, our Deputy Visitor Services Coordinator at the Visitor Centre, presented the results of a visitor satisfaction survey, with some particular insights and data mined from the 5 years of visitor comments logged in our visitors books since we opened the WHS Visitor Centre. A Wordcloud created from these comments gives a snapshot of the rewarding emotions and enjoyable experiences of our visitors.



- **Young Heritage Ambassadors** In 2016/17, Durham WHS took part in a national pilot project called 'World Heritage Youth Ambassadors' spearheaded by Blaenavon WHS. Eight young people aged 14 - 17 came together from across three local schools and were based at Palace Green Library, Durham University. The 'YAMS' explored and researched their WHS, contributed to public events, took part in workshops, helped inform 7000 people at Celebrate Science, a huge annual science festival held in the heart of the WHS, and even visited the Island of Lindisfarne to discuss its WHS potential. Each received official accreditation from ASDAN for their volunteering ranging from ten to sixty hours. Members of the group are looking forward to further opportunities to champion their local heritage and are a huge asset to the Durham WHS.



- **Durham County Council major works programme begun to improve access via Owengate** Over the year, the pavement up Owengate to the threshold of the WHS has been widened and levelled. The road setts are being lifted, cleaned and replaced in an improved matrix, which will further improve access to WHS for visitors with limited mobility, scooters, buggies etc. This complements the current work to complete the repaving of Elvet Bridge and the Dun Cow Lane/Bow Lane works in previous years. The work is being carried out to a high level of craftsmanship in historically appropriate materials.





## Aim 6 Support and demonstrate exemplary WHS management to deliver all aims

- **New Management Plan** The new WHS Management plan for 2017 to 2023 was approved by UNESCO in February 2017 and a public launch event was held to coincide with the WHS lecture on Historic England's Heritage At Risk programme in September.

This marked the culmination of a significant and extensive period of work contributed to by all partners. It has helped the further understanding of the site by describing the attributes that underpin the Values expressed in the Statement of Outstanding Value. This is a useful way of communicating what the WHS stands for.

Intangible Values of the site are described for the first time – in common with other World Heritage Sites, Durham has a very rich and varied cultural life that has developed over the centuries.

The Plan includes an initial description of the site's setting and its boundaries, starting a process that will assist in future protection of the site.

- **Establishment of 3 WHS Operational sub-committees** As part of the improvements to the management of the WHS, three operational sub-committees have been established, drawing membership from the key stakeholders across the WHS and facilitating effective coordination of works and activities in support of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Site. The three sub committees are:
  - Heritage, Collections & Buildings;
  - Culture Events & Programmes;
  - Research





## Looking forward to 2018

- Appointing a new Chair for the WHS Coordinating Committee – with thanks to Canon Rosalind Brown who on her retirement from Durham Cathedral is standing down after 5 years as Chair of the WHS Coordinating Committee
- Welcome to Jane Robinson, Chief Operating Officer, Durham University, who will be taking over the Chair of the WHS Coordinating Committee on Canon Brown's retirement
- A review of the boundary of the WHS, to include the river and outer banks that surround the current site
- WHS Lecture series 2018 on the theme of the wider context and setting of Durham WHS