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World Heritage in the
United Kingdom



**World
Heritage UK**

INTRODUCING WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN THE UK



WHAT IS WORLD HERITAGE?

World Heritage is the designation for places that are of ‘**Outstanding Universal Value**’ and have been inscribed onto UNESCO’s World Heritage List to be protected for future generations to appreciate and enjoy. The cultural or natural significance of these Sites is so exceptional that it transcends national boundaries and is of common importance for global humanity.

World Heritage Sites are special places for all to visit, explore and enjoy.

The United Kingdom Government, as a signatory to UNESCO’s World Heritage Convention, pledged to conserve and protect its World Heritage Sites inscribed on the World Heritage List.

As of the beginning of 2022, there are 33 World Heritage Sites in the UK and the British Overseas Territories. The types of Sites include cultural heritage, natural heritage and a mix of both. UK places have been inscribed on the World Heritage List since the mid 1980’s.

World Heritage Sites in the UK are owned, planned, and managed by a range of organisations and partnerships including central government agencies, local councils

and charitable trusts. All of these follow UNESCO’s guidance on Site management. The Sites are also integrated into the UK’s national and local planning policy framework.

There are over 1100 World Heritage Sites in 167 countries worldwide and these include a wide variety of very significant historic features and monuments of all ages, exceptional landscapes and townscapes, and valuable ecosystems and natural phenomena. In many cases the Sites form part of living, working places, where the balance of conservation and every day activities and land uses, is the key to their future protection and sustainability.

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In accordance with World Heritage Convention guidance, the UK Government can nominate additional candidate World Heritage Sites for inclusion on the List. A Site is selected from the UK’s ‘Tentative List’ or short list of Sites previously assessed and agreed - see bit.ly/uktentativelist. The assessment process prescribed by UNESCO for the Site to reach Inscription on the World Heritage List may take a minimum of 2-3 years.

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OBJECTIVES & ACTIVITIES

‘Supporting the UK Sites of outstanding global importance’

World Heritage UK (WHUK) is a charity focused entirely on raising the profile and securing the sustainable future of UK World Heritage Sites by advocating for support and resources, and promoting the importance of the values of the Sites. It also facilitates networking and training, and ensuring the sharing of good practice in World Heritage Site planning and management across the UK.

WHUK represents all of the UK’s Sites and the network of Coordinators who manage the World Heritage Sites at a local level. WHUK works closely with other national governmental and other organisations and agencies, who have, as part of wider remits, some involvement in World Heritage. WHUK aims to establish a coherent approach to UK World Heritage Sites which will be better known, understood, and supported through sustainable funding. The **Outstanding Universal Values** of the Sites can provide inspiration, learning and enjoyment for society and future generations.



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MORE INFORMATION FOR VISITORS TO WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN THE UK

◆ Where are the UK World Heritage Sites?

As the map overleaf shows, 29 of the 33 Sites are distributed throughout England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. More detailed information on their location and accessibility can be found on the website links in this leaflet. The remaining 4 Sites are located offshore in British Overseas Territories.

◆ What features are included in UK World Heritage Sites?

The UK Sites include a wide range of historic monuments and past industry, landscapes, townscapes, and natural geological and ecological features. These are summarised in this leaflet and more detailed descriptions and suggestions for visitors can be found for each on the website links given.

◆ Why were the UK Sites inscribed on the World Heritage List by UNESCO?

The **Outstanding Universal Value** of each is summarised on the UNESCO website bit.ly/ukwhslist and on the World Heritage UK website worldheritageuk.org

