

## World Heritage UK's Year – April 2022 to March 2023



2022 saw the 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention and this featured frequently in WHUK's activities during the year, as we continue to support and deliver on behalf of our members and the UK's World Heritage sector.

### **Advocacy**

WHUK works internationally, nationally and locally:

- WHUK contributed to The Historic Environment Overview (Spring 2022) produced by the Historic Environment Forum with support from the National Trust and Historic England. Our President provided a review of WH over the past 12 months
- WHUK's President presented at ICOMOS' *"50 Years of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention in Europe. Achievements and Challenges"* Krakow 8–10 June 2022
- WHUK has been providing support and guidance to the Czech Republic's Ministry of Culture, as they explore developing a similar body as World Heritage UK for their country
- WHUK's President Chris Blandford and Trustee Justin Scully attended the European World Heritage Associations conference in Switzerland in October, where representatives from 16 countries discussed the challenges and opportunities WHSs faced in the coming years
- World Heritage UK took part in Heritage Alliance's Heritage Debate 2022 in November, where over 200 heritage professionals discussed on this year's topic:

*“Heritage in 20 Years: what will matter most?”*, focusing on the challenges and hopes for WH

- WHUK’s President has been working with the Irish Government on developing their strategy for World Heritage. This culminated in a presentation to International Scientific Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management (ICAHM) in December, on the challenges and opportunities for WH in Ireland
- WHUK’s Chair Prof. Teresa Anderson, Trustee Dr. Sam Rose and President Chris Blandford, as independent experts have been part of DMCS’ panel, assessed the upcoming UK WH Tentative List. The new candidates will be announced in April 2023. WHUK has also been supporting prospective candidates in their proposals such as Port Sunlight and Bodnant Gardens
- This year saw the start of the UK’s WHSs 3<sup>rd</sup> Cycle of Periodic Reporting to UNESCO. WHUK supported DCMS, Historic England and WHSs prepare for and commence the process
- WHUK continued to support Historic England, Historic Environment Scotland (eg 2023 conference and venue visit), Cadw, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, ICOMOS-UK (promotion of events), IUCN, ICCROM (Panorama project) and the UK National Commission to UNESCO (in particular UK’s statement on Ukraine War and their Local to Global project)
- Supported Heritage Alliance with their review of the Heritage Funding Directory

## **Learning & Networking**

WHUK works on behalf of the UK’s 33 WHSs. We deliver a key hub role, linking the frontline with government and heritage NDPBs. We provide knowledge, training and networking opportunities for WH professionals to share and learn from each other. This year we delivered:



- *“World Heritage & Sustainability”* at Blenheim WHS in April; WHUK’s first hybrid event (both in-person and broadcasting online), featuring talks on the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, sustainable transport and tourism, and building sustainable relationships with communities, with speakers from UNESCO, Oxford

University, UKNC, World Heritage Experience Switzerland, VisitBritain and more. Over 50 delegates attended from across the UK

- *“Liverpool – After World Heritage”*, online conference in June; following Liverpool’s sad delisting last year, WHUK delivered an all-day conference, exploring the reasons why and ramifications of this loss to the UK’s WHS sector. Speakers included the Heseltine Institute at the University of Liverpool and representatives from DCMS, HE, ICOMOS-UK, Dresden, Bordeaux, Merseyside Civic Society, Harcourt Developments and National Museums Liverpool. Over 75 delegates attended this lively debate
- *“Celebrating 50 years of the World Heritage Convention, and looking ahead to the next 50”* was the theme for our 2022 annual conference, held at Jodrell Bank WHS in October. The first day looked back at 50 years of the Convention and 36 years of WH in the UK, with speakers included ex-Director of the WH Centre, the UK’s Ambassador to UNESCO, ICOMOS-UK, the National Trust and representatives from all the UK’s NDPBs. The second day looked ahead, to what the future might hold for WH. The day started with UNESCO’s Chair for Heritage Futures and a challenging workshop, followed by speakers from the Irish Government, the UK’s WH Youth Ambassadors and Newcastle University. Over 100 delegates attended in-person and online
- In March WHUK hosted a webinar on *“Funding for Heritage”*, with NLHF’s Head of Policy speaking on their new strategy. 20 delegates attended including representatives from Overseas Territories
- WHUK hosted four WHS Coordinators’ Forums (in May, September, November and February), providing Site coordinators and managers the opportunity to hear the latest from Government, NDPBs and their peers; average attendance exceeded 30
- WHUK hosted two WHS Chairs meetings (May and November), Chaired by Prof. Barry Gilbertson. Presentations were made on WH Engagement Locally, Regionally and Nationally by the Chair of the English Lake District WHS and UKNC’s Local to Global/Sites for Sustainability projects
- WHUK has continued to support Special Interest Groups and Site projects, including Industrial Heritage, Climate Emergency, WH & Peace, the north England WHS cluster, Learning & Engagement and communications/branding
- WHUK’s membership remains stable. During 2022-23 we undertook research to explore potential markets for membership growth. Using funding from Steps to Sustainability, research was undertaken with Local Enterprise Partnerships, Destination Marketing Organisations and academia, to identify potential. The research found that our best prospect is academia. Since the research, WHUK has been working with Bangor University, to develop membership packages for academic departments, staff and students. These packages will be marketed to academic institutes for the 2023/24 academic year. Volunteer research has provided a database of prospective institutions to target, with Bangor committing to a 3-year membership already
  - Voting Members = 38 (same as 2021-22)

- Associate Members = 3 (down 1 YOY)
- Individual Members = 63 (up 8 or 15% YOY)

## **Promotion**

WHUK's communications is primarily aimed at the UK's WH sector. Our social media activity has reach beyond this audience.

- Website – additional resources were added to the site during the year, primarily 2021-22 WHUK Review, WH in the UK 2021-22 Review, Periodic Reporting and videos from events; 58 articles for the News section on a variety of topics including our events, WH Convention anniversary events, job and Trustee opportunities across the UK, UNESCO resources etc
- Database – WHUK's database of regular contacts stands at 709 (WH stakeholders and commercial)
- E-Communications – 19 e-newsletters were sent out to our database during the course of the year, reaching ~13.5k in total, with an average open rate of 22.6% (cf. industry norm/last year's figure 22%) and average click through of 8.3% (cf. industry norm of 3-5% and 7.2% last year)
- Social Media – Twitter followers are currently 3583 (up from ~3000 YOY) and Facebook has 1900 followers (cf. ~1000 YOY)
- Print – a reprint of 5500 copies of the WH in the UK map were made for 3 WHSs
- Key dates – for both WH Day (18 April) and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the WH Convention (16 November), WHUK posted on social media, added content online and sent out details via e-newsletter

## **Governance & Management**

- Following the 2022 AGM, WHUK saw the stepping down from Chair of Tony Crouch, who has been Chair for 4 years. Our new Chair Teresa Anderson from Jodrell Bank WHS and Manchester University took over at the start of 2023
- 2022-23 also saw changes within the Board of Trustees; Don Gobbett, Gill Clarke and Jane Masters all retired and will be sadly missed. New Trustees elected include Amanda Chadburn (previously at DCMS and HE) and Ashleigh Taylor (from Blaenavon WHS). Henry Owen-John was also co-opted onto the Board
- The 2022-23 online AGM saw finances of the previous year agreed and new membership rates for 2023-24 also agreed
- In February, WHUK undertook a planning day, in-person, in Manchester. All Trustees bar Max Bryant and Ian Wray were able to attend, with Sam Rose and David Holroyd dialling in. The impetus for this day was the need to review the Business Plan and to agree steps for securing funding. As a result of this day, progress is underway with discussions with HE and NLHF regarding funding
- During the year, WHUK made 7 applications for funding. Unfortunately, in the highly competitive post-pandemic environment none were successful

- New policies for the year include Safeguarding & Protecting People, Ethics and Volunteering
- A members' survey was distributed with results being analysed in early 2023-24

World Heritage UK  
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