

## **World Heritage UK's Year – April 2023 to March 2024**



### **Advocacy**

WHUK works internationally, nationally and locally to build awareness, understanding and valuing of WH, WHSs and OUV, with key stakeholders, communities, and audiences:

- WHUK's President Chris Blandford worked with and supported the European Network of World Heritage Associations (ENWHA) in establishing a governance model and working framework, as well as representing WH in the UK and WHUK at the ENWHA stand at ITB Berlin, one of the world's largest travel and tourism trade fair
- WHUK's President has been working with the National Trust and their internal WH group of senior managers, raising the profile of WH within NT strategies and operations
- WHUK's President met with UNESCO's WH Centre Director Lazare Eloundou Assomo and Head of European & North American WH Unit Berta de Sancristobal, to update them on WH in the UK and WHUK. Both expressed their continued interest and support for WHUK and its activities
- WHUK's President has continued to work on the Republic of Ireland's ambitions for WH, including supporting their newly established WH Unit, developing guidance for Ireland's revised WH Tentative List, refining their national WH strategy, and at a site level, advising the Sligo Neolithic Passage Tombs on its journey to WHS status
- WHUK continued to support Historic England, Historic Environment Scotland, Cadw, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, ICOMOS-UK (working to a MoU), IUCN, ICCROM and the UK National Commission to UNESCO

- Supported Heritage Alliance through participation on their specialist working groups – Spatial Planning Advisory Group and the International Advisory Group
- WHUK is now a member of the Historic Environment Forum (HEF), working with other senior heritage leaders, to foster research, conservation and presentation of, and political engagement with all aspects of the heritage environment
- WHUK is a member of DCMS' World Heritage Advisory Group (WHAG), to advise and steer the State Party in all aspects of delivery of the WH Convention, starting with the coming implementation of the UK's Tentative List. WHAG comprises leaders and decision makers from NDPBs (heritage and environment) and Governmental departments

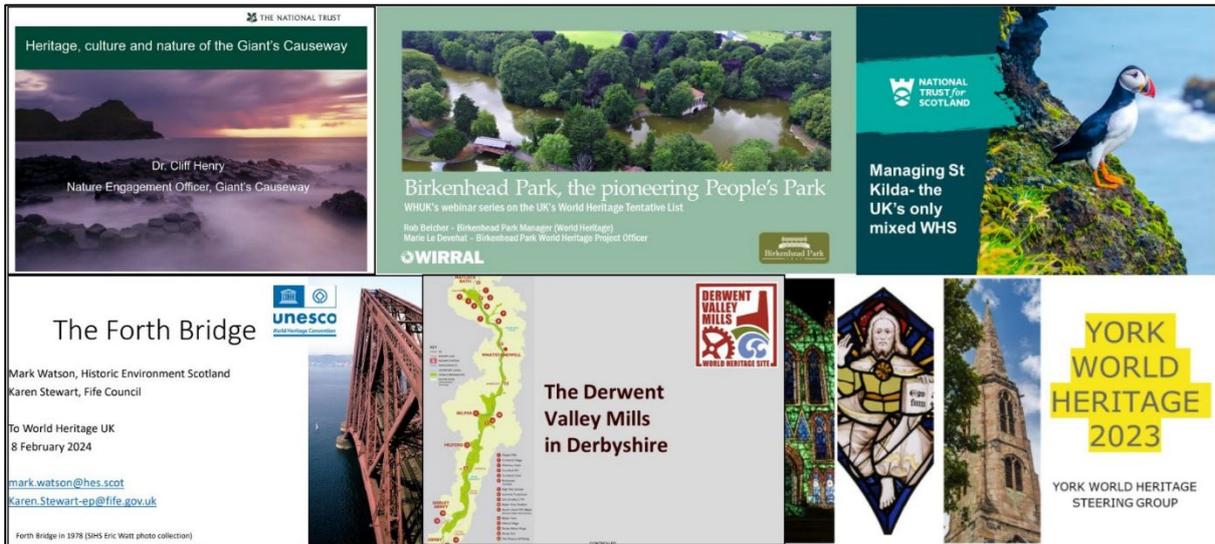
## **Sector Development**

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 & Nature”* was the theme for the summer workshop in the English Lake District WHS in July; held at Cumbria University's Centre for National Parks and Protected Areas, delegates enjoyed two days of talks and site visits into the WHS. 56 delegates attended in person, and the workshop benefitted from sponsorship from Lake District National Park Authority, United Utilities, the Environment Agency and Windermere Lake Cruises
- *“Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity in World Heritage”* was the theme for our 2023 annual conference, held at Stirling's Engine Shed with support from Historic Environment Scotland (HES). Over the two days in October, delegates heard from experts from heritage and beyond, on topics such as youth audiences, community engagement, accessibility in the workforce, socio-economic inclusivity, disability within heritage interpretation and more. A packed programme was supplemented with field trips to the Forth Bridge and Antoine Wall WHSs, plus a social night hosted by HES in their role as conference sponsors. 94 delegates attended in person

- New for 2023-24, WHUK developed and hosted a series of webinars exploring WH across the UK. Available to all and designed to grow WH awareness, the first series focused on natural WHSs (Giant's Causeway, the Jurassic Coast and St Kilda) while the second showcased a number of the new Tentative List candidates (Birkenhead Park, Gracehill Moravian Church Settlement, York, and the East Coast Flyway). These webinars have built their audiences, both domestic and international, with the latest series which focuses on Industrial Heritage, drawing a series audience of ~100 and income exceeding £1500. All are recorded and made available via YouTube to delegates unable to make the live talk



- In September and November, WHUK in conjunction with ICOMOS-UK, hosted webinars on HIAs. The first was aimed at WHS coordinators and managers, and local authority planners; the second was aimed at the private sector (eg consultants, architects etc). Both had explanations of HIAs and their importance from Susan Denyer, and were complemented with real-world case studies. Both webinars were well attended; 95 at the first and 66 at the second. Income from both was shared between ICOMOS-UK and WHUK
- 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 was 30+
- WHUK hosted one WHS Chairs meeting in November, with updates from NDPBs and discussions on resource and engagement levels at WHSs. The number of actual Chairs attending continues to be frustratingly low. Chair Prof. Barry Gilbertson also announced his retirement from the WHS Chairs Group
- WHUK has continued to support Special Interest Groups and Site projects, including Industrial Heritage, Climate Emergency, WH & Peace, the north England WHS cluster, and Learning & Engagement

- WHUK's membership remains stable:
  - Voting Members = 40 (up 2 on 2022-23)
  - Associate Members = 4 (up 1 YOY)
  - Individual Members = 55 (down 8 or 13% YOY)
  - Academic Member = 1; a direct mail campaign, supported by Steps to Sustainability, targeted 40 HE institutions offering heritage-based courses

## **Engagement & Communications**

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 2022-23 WHUK Review, WH in the UK 2022-23 Review, details on the new Tentative List candidates, and videos from events; 71 articles for the News section were added on a variety of topics including our events, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Climate Change toolkit, IUCN WH strategy, job and Trustee opportunities across the UK etc
- Database – WHUK's database of regular contacts stands at 750 (WH stakeholders and commercial, up 6% YOY)
- E-Communications – 15 e-newsletters were sent out to our database during the course of the year, reaching ~12k in total, with an average open rate of 27% (cf. last year's figure 22.6%) and average click through of 10% (cf. industry norm of 3-5% and 8.3% last year)
- Social Media – X (formerly Twitter) followers are currently 3580 (same as last year) and Facebook has ~2100 followers (cf. ~1900 YOY); WHUK welcomed volunteer Millie who uploads, monitors and interacts on behalf of WHUK on our social channels
- Print – work commenced on a 'WHS by Rail' map, being produced by Hadrian's Wall YAMs and Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership, to be ready for 2024's WH Day
- WHUK has given presentations on WH to Durham, Bangor and King's College London universities; has spoken at Hadrian's Wall annual networking event and Canterbury's "*Re-Awakening WHS*" symposium, and facilitated Stonehenge & Avebury's governance workshop
- WHUK's President chaired and presented to Garden Trust members on WH gardens in the UK

## **Governance & Management**

- Our Chair Teresa Anderson from Jodrell Bank WHS and Manchester University who took over at the start of 2023 was unable to continue as Chair due to personal reasons and stepped down. Heritage consultant and Great Spa Towns of Europe's original WHS coordinator Paul Simons took on the role in the summer
- 2023-24 also saw changes within the Board of Trustees; Sam Rose, David Holroyd and Jane Gibson all retired and will be sadly missed, though Jane will continue to support WHUK and has been co-opted onto the Board. New Trustees elected include Brandi Hall-Crossgrove (from Ironbridge WHS and ICOMOS), Barry Gamble (WH consultant) and Henry Owen-John who had been co-opted onto the Board last year
- In the New Year's Honour's List, WHUK President Chris Blandford was awarded the OBE for services to World Heritage in the UK
- Beth Thomas left WHUK for the Churches Conservation Trust and Natasha Mattocks became our new Finance Manager. Natasha brings a wealth of financial management across a number of charity sectors
- The 2023-24 online AGM saw finances of the previous year agreed and new membership rates for 2024-25 also agreed; 2023-24 saw WHUK make a small profit following from a successful year of events and membership retention
- A review of WHUK's Business Plan started this year and will be finalised in early 2024-25

World Heritage UK  
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