

## World Heritage UK's Year – April 2024 to March 2025



### Advocacy

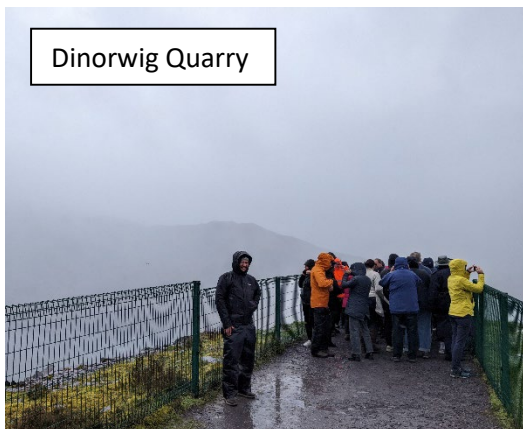
World Heritage UK (WHUK) works internationally, nationally and locally to build awareness, understanding and valuing of World Heritage (WH), World Heritage Sites (WHSs) and Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), with key stakeholders, communities, and audiences:

- 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; Chris has been supporting ENWHA in organising their first WHS Managers' Forum, to be held in April 2025 in Spain; 3 UK WHSs will represent the UK
- WHUK's President has been working with the National Trust (NT) and their internal WH group of senior managers, raising the profile of WH within NT strategies and operations; WHUK has been elected onto NT's Advisory Bodies Committee
- 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 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

- WHUK supported The Heritage Alliance through participation on their specialist working groups Spatial Planning Advisory Group and the International Advisory Group
- WHUK as member of the Historic Environment Forum (HEF), is working with other senior heritage leaders, to foster research, conservation and presentation of, and political engagement with, all aspects of the heritage environment in England; WHUK also contributed to the annual Historic Environment Overview
- WHUK is a member of DCMS' World Heritage Advisory Group (WHAG), helping to advise and steer the State Party in all aspects of delivery of the WH Convention. WHAG comprises leaders and decision makers from NDPBs (heritage and environment) and Governmental departments

## **Sector Development**

WHUK works on behalf of the UK's 35 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:



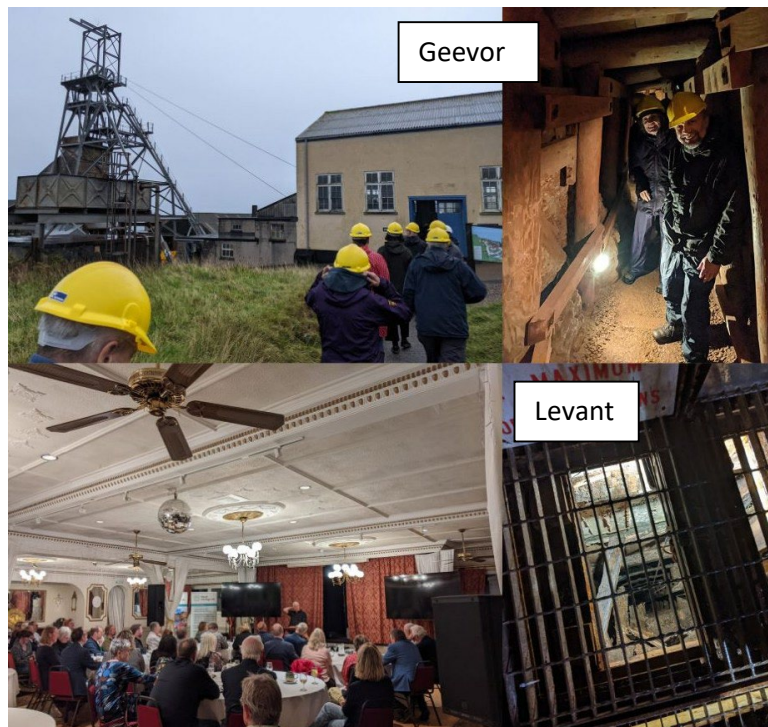
Dinorwig Quarry



Penrhyn Castle

- *"Industrial World Heritage"* was the theme for the 2024 workshop, held over 2 days at Bangor University. 64 delegates enjoyed talks by speakers from Germany, Liverpool University, Jodrell Bank, Cadw, VisitBritain and more, on topics covering how Industrial Heritage can drive urban regeneration, attract inbound tourism, support STEM in education, engage local communities, contribute to the UK's Intangible Cultural Heritage, be the focus of major events etc. Included in the programme were (very wet) site visits to Dinorwig and Bethesda Quarries, Llanberis Slate Museum and Penrhyn Castle, plus a social at Cellb Arts Centre with local Welsh language musicians Ffenest. Delegate feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The workshop was generously supported by Bangor University
- *"Making the Most of World Heritage..."* was the theme of the 2024 annual conference, held over 2 days in Redruth in the Cornish Mining WHS. Almost 100 delegates heard talks on topics ranging from economic regeneration to managing development and conservation together, Place Making, WHS governance, wellbeing, education, repurposing heritage assets and more, from a variety of speakers including the heritage consultants, Historic England, Nottingham Trent University, Historic Royal Palaces, the National Trust and more. The programme included sites visits to Geevor and Levant mines, when of course the heavens opened and we all

got soaked (which is the norm for WHUK events!). Again feedback was predominately very positive. The 24/25 conference was kindly sponsored by Cornish Metals, who are redeveloping a tin mine in Redruth



- Following the successful introduction of WHS-focused webinars, WHUK continued this initiative in 2024-25. During the spring/summer period, we hosted a series of 7 webinars focusing on the UK's Industrial Heritage (IH). Six WHSs gave individual talks and the series ended with a round table conversation about where the IH sector may go, with the Ironbridge WHS Coordinator and Prof. Ian Wray from the Heseltine Institute at Liverpool University. Over 120 signed up to this series and it brought in income of ~£1900



- The autumn's series focused on cathedrals and abbeys within WHSs. Four – Canterbury, Westminster, Durham and Bath – were covered. This series received signups of ~50 and an income of £500+
- The final series of the year highlighted the work by a number of WHSs in their work to adapt to and mitigate for the impacts of climate change. The series included the Flow Country, Fountains Abbey, Edinburgh and the Lake District, and attracted 50+ attendees and an income of ~£550

- 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, as well as focused talks on projects at Coast Connections, Loughborough University, the Tower of London and Fountains Abbey; average attendance was 30+
- WHUK hosted one WHS Chairs meeting in November, with updates from NDPBs and individual WHSs
- WHUK has continued to support Special Interest Groups and Site projects, including Industrial Heritage, Climate Emergency, the north England WHS cluster, and Learning & Engagement; the Newcastle University's "UNESCO WHSs as Ambassadors for Peace" project was completed and its report published
- WHUK's membership faced some challenges during 24/25, as a number of Local Authorities (LAs) cancelled or downgraded their memberships, a trend likely to continue into the coming year as LAs continue to struggle financially:
  - Voting Members = 34, down on the previous year, with losses including Canterbury, New Lanark Trust, Devon County Council and English Heritage
  - Associate Members = 12, with an increase as some Voting Members downgraded to Associate membership
  - Individual Members = 41, down on the previous year
  - Academic Member = 1

## **Engagement & Communications**

WHUK's communications is primarily aimed at the UK's WH sector.

- Website – additional resources were added to the site during the year, primarily 64 articles for the News section across a variety of topics including events, reports, job opportunities and WHS news
- Database – WHUK's database of regular contacts stands at 700+ (WH stakeholders and commercial, down 6% YOY)
- E-Communications – 17 e-newsletters were sent out to our database during the course of the year, reaching ~12k in total, with an average open rate of 25% (cf. last year's figure 27%) and average click through of 6% (cf. industry norm of 3-5% and 10% last year)
- Social Media – X followers are currently 3300 (up on last year), Facebook has ~2400 followers (cf. ~2100 YOY) and LinkedIn has ~660 followers; WHUK's previous social media volunteer has left and we will seek a new volunteer early 25/26
- Print – with the inscription of 2 new WHSs, the old 'WH in the UK' leaflet/map was redesigned, with a number of WHSs ordering hard copies and a pdf e-book made available to all WHSs
- WHUK has given presentations on WH to Durham, Bangor and King's College London universities, as well as the Seaside Heritage Network

- Realising the Benefits of WH to Local Communities (RtB2) reached its second phase. Following the pilot project RtB1 delivered the previous year, WHUK with support from Historic England developed RtB2 to understand and support greater community engagement with WH/WHs, through a 2 ½-year p/t role hosted at WHUK. This project was agreed this year and will commence 25/26

## **Governance & Management**

- 2024-25 saw changes within the Board of Trustees; Max Bryant and Lesley Garlick both retired, though Lesley will continue to support WHUK and has been co-opted onto the Board as Meetings' Secretary. New Trustees elected include international heritage consultant Adam Wilkinson and head of Northern Ireland's Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust Graham Thompson
- The 2024 online AGM saw finances of the previous year agreed and new membership rates for 2025-26 also agreed; 2024-25 saw WHUK make a small profit following from a successful year of events and membership retention
- A new Business Plan for 2025 – 28 was developed and adopted at the 2024 AGM and Jan 2025 Board

World Heritage UK

April 2025

