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World Heritage UK

December 2025 newsletter



The Trustees, President and staff of World Heritage UK would like to wish all their members, stakeholders and partners a very merry Christmas.

World Heritage UK will continue to support those working to care for our globally important Sites across the whole of the UK and in our Overseas Territories. We have an exciting programme planned for 2026 and look forward to seeing you soon.

Natasha and Alex will be taking a break over Christmas and New Year. There will be no one available between 24 December and 4 January.



Call for Submissions - Living Heritage in the UK

A call for submissions has opened for inventories of living heritage in the UK, asking communities to submit their traditions and heritage practices.

An area of heritage often overlooked, living heritage (or 'intangible cultural heritage') includes folklore, performance, customs and crafts that are passed on from generation to generation.

Living Heritage is a broad subject that can include everything from bell-ringing to boat-building, cèilidh to carnival, pantomime to pancake day, highland games to Eisteddfod, Lambeg drumming to long sword dancing, and dry-stone walling to wassailing.

Seven categories will be used for the inventories (although a lot of living heritage sits in multiple categories): oral expressions; social practices; performing arts; land, nature and spirituality; crafts; sports and games; and culinary practices.

The inventories are being set up by the Governments of the UK, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland following the UK joining the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage last year.

The call for submissions will be open for 4 months until Friday 27 March. During this period, there are a range of information sessions, workshops and events,

at www.livingheritage.unesco.org.uk

The inventories will provide a snapshot of all the different types of living heritage across the UK: from popular to niche and old to new. Their purpose is to both raise awareness and to start a conversation about the value of this heritage, paving the way for future efforts to improve its safeguarding.



Industrial Heritage webinars - season two

WHUK's 2026 starts with the latest series of webinars, this time focusing on those Industrial World Heritage Sites that missed out on the first Industrial Heritage series back in 2024. The first three talks will highlight specific WHSs; the last will be the launch of the upcoming Industrial Heritage Trail.

- Tuesday 20th January - [New Lanark](#)
- Tuesday 3rd February – [Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal](#)
- Tuesday 10th March – [Blaenavon Industrial Landscape](#)
- Tuesday 21st April – UK Industrial Heritage Trail

Individual talks are £5; a ticket for all four is £15. All talks are recorded and the videos uploaded to WHUK's private YouTube channel. Ticket holders will be sent a link after the talk.

All talks are on Zoom and run 7 to 8pm. Zoom details are usually sent the day

To book, please click here: [World Heritage Webinars – Industrial Heritage Season Two # 1: New Lanark | World Heritage UK](#)



Observing the Heavens from the “Periphery”: Astronomy in Ireland 1640-1830

A PhD scholarship is available for a collaborative project between the [Armagh Observatory and Planetarium](#) and [Queen’s University Belfast](#).

Overview: the project aims to explore the history of Irish astronomical activity, 1640-1830, and reveal a community of star-gazers on the island before the so-called ‘Golden Age of Irish astronomy’. Working with the historical observatory at Armagh, this research will offer new insight into Ireland’s vibrant intellectual culture in an era of ‘scientific revolution’ and ‘Enlightenment’.

The project asks:

- Who was doing astronomy in this period and what forms did it take?
- Where did astronomical activity happen prior to the establishment of the three major Irish observatories (Armagh, Dunsink and Birr Castle)?
- How did early Irish astronomical activity shape regional and global cultures and itineraries of knowledge?

Both archival and material culture research methods will be used. Armagh Observatory and Planetarium’s 32,000 historical records and collection of artefacts dating from 1499 onwards will provide the starting point. There are also relevant holdings at Dublin’s [Dunsink Observatory](#), the Royal Irish Academy, [Birr Castle](#), The Royal Society, the Armagh Robinson Library, and

biography to explore the history of the Irish trade. Extant instruments held at the Irish observatories and UK collections such as the Science Museum Group and the National Maritime Museum will form a key part of the evidence base.

As a collaborative project, the student will benefit from the specialised resources, training and support offered by Armagh Observatory and Planetarium. There will be opportunities for this research to contribute to a UNESCO World Heritage site bid (on the part of the three Irish observatories) and also to generate public-facing outcomes, such as exhibitions. The student will, therefore, be able to develop both academic and heritage-sector professional skills and experience.

For further information and applications please visit the QUB website at:

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate-research/phd-opportunities/observing-the-heavens-from-the-periphery-astronomy-in-ireland-16401830.html>

Closing Date for applications 13 January 2026

Image: Armagh Observatory – Robinson Dome and Orrery

Please support the work of World Heritage UK

WHUK is a small but unique charity. We're always looking for new members or donations.

If you aren't a member, or know someone who would like to be a member, please go to our [Membership page](#) to join.

If you or a friend or colleague would like to make a donation to WHUK, please go to our [Donation page](#), to help us support the UK's WH community.

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