

# CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

Spring 2025 Bulletin





# CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

The Trust was founded in 1942. On 8 April 2021 it became a “Charitable Incorporated Organisation”, remaining registered as charity no. 502132

## Founder:

The Very Rev'd Cyril A Alington  
*Dean of Durham 1933-51*

## Patrons:

Roberta Blackman-Woods  
*Member of Parliament 2005-19*

Bill Bryson  
*Chancellor of the University 2005-11*

The Very Rev'd Michael Sadgrove  
*Dean of Durham 2003-15*

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## SPRING LECTURE: DURHAM CATHEDRAL: AN EYE-CATCHER IN THE LANDSCAPE

**Martin Roberts** will give this talk on Saturday 24th May at 2 pm in Room ER 201, Elvet Riverside, New Elvet, Durham.

It is said that medieval pilgrims approaching Durham from the southeast stopped and crossed themselves when they first saw the central tower of the cathedral, five miles away. It was a beacon summoning them to the Shrine of St Cuthbert. But the importance of the cathedral view endured beyond the medieval period. Around the city in their rural estates, the local gentry were transforming their inward-looking gardens into wider, more expansive parkland that quite deliberately embraced the sight of the cathedral as an eye-catcher in the landscape.

The topic fits nicely with current work to update the Setting Study for the Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site. The lecture will be promoted jointly with the World Heritage Site.

## ARCHITECTURAL AWARD 2024 AND AGM 2025

Trustees have decided to award our Architectural Award for 2024 to The Story at Mount Oswald. It is an outstanding example of creating a modern building alongside a historic house. It combines the County Records Office, the DLI Museum and the County Registry Office on a single site.

The Trust's AGM this year will be held at The Story at 5 pm on 16th October when Carolyn Ball, Chief Archivist, will tell the story of The Story. Full details will be given nearer the time and our reasons for making this award will be written up in the Trust's *Annual Review*.

## DURHAM CITY RIVERBANKS SURVEY

Durham Wildlife Trust has linked up with the Cathedral and they want to better understand how people use and enjoy the riverbanks in Durham City.

They would appreciate it if you could take this short survey:  
<https://www.durhamwt.com/durham-riverbanks>

The survey is open for responses until 28th April.

## RICHARD HIRD - AN OBITUARY

We are sorry to report the sudden death of Trustee Richard Hird. By profession he was a chartered town planner who worked for many years with Durham County Council and his professional opinion was highly valued by the Trust. His funeral was celebrated in Durham Cathedral and he was buried in Bow Cemetery on 24 February.

Richard was a widower and leaves two daughters. He was a member of St Mary's College SCR. His wife, Marilyn, a College alumna, had been the College archivist and wrote the first published history of St Mary's, *Doves and Dons*. He lobbied for the installation of the blue plaque for St Mary's original hostel on 33 Claypath (pictured on page 5).

Richard was an expert in organs and he wrote the book about the organs in Durham Cathedral: Richard D. Hird and James B. Lancelot. *Durham Cathedral Organs*. Dean & Chapter of Durham, 1991.

For many years he was the Honorary Treasurer of the British Institute of Organ Studies (BIOS) and also built and managed the website BIOS used until 2012. As well as continuing as a member of BIOS, Richard was Diocesan Organ Advisor for Durham, a committee member of the Darlington and District Organists' Association, maintaining their website and frequently posting on their social media. Richard was a guest speaker about organs for organisations outside the organ world and had speaking engagements scheduled.

All who knew him were both surprised and saddened by his death. He will be greatly missed by family and friends. May he rest in peace.

[The cover photograph of Durham nightlife was taken by Richard in March 2024]

## PUBLICATION OF RESEARCH BY GARY BANKHEAD

Gary is well known for his diving exploits to discover historical artefacts from the River Wear. He has already published *Textile Manufacture, Taxation and Trade in Late- and Post-Medieval Durham* and the Trust has commissioned a review of this to appear on our website.

Gary is now seeking funding to enable him to publish his more recent findings *Pilgrim Souvenirs, Devotional and other Objects of Faith*. This will be published as a monograph by the Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland (the *Arch and Arch*) in partnership with Durham University's Museum of Archaeology.

The Trust has donated £1,000 towards the cost. We look forward to reviewing the book in due course.



**Richard at the Trust's 80th Anniversary Celebration in 2022**

# COUNTY DURHAM PLAN REVIEW

The County Durham Plan (CDP) was adopted in October 2020. Under recent legislation a new County Plan has to be produced, aligning with the Government's priorities (particularly on housing and key national infrastructure), the updated National Planning Policy Framework (<https://bit.ly/4jao5AK>) and new, streamlined procedures for producing a plan.

The timetable for producing the plan is:

- Scoping and early participation: March 2025 – September 2025
- Plan Visioning: October 2025 – March 2026
- Public Consultation 1: March 2026 – April 2026
- Evidence gathering and drafting the Plan: May 2026 – October 2026
- Public Consultation 2: November 2026 – November 2027
- Engagement, proposing changes: January 2027 – June 2027
- Submission: July/ August 2027
- Examination: September 2027 – March 2028
- Adoption: April 2028

The Trust has set up a working group to develop our input into this process. The working group comprises John Ashby, Sue Childs, Roger Cornwell, John Lowe and Matthew Phillips, and reports regularly to the monthly meeting of Trustees. The Trust has contacted the responsible people in Durham County Council and met with a positive response. We hope to be able to work closely with them, and other key organisations in the City, on this very important process.

## MINERS' HALL DONATIONS

The Miners' Hall at Redhills, after an eight-year campaign, is nearing the end of its renovation and it will soon reopen to the public as an important heritage and community hub.



The Trust has contributed £100 by purchasing a replica Miner's Token (see photograph) and recently made a donation of £500 to Redhills Durham, the charity constituted to serve as custodian of the Miner's Hall.

There are still a few opportunities to make the Hall even more special through contributions from the public and organisations which may not have thought smaller donations matter.

**The Miner's Token is the metal disc miners handed in before going into the mine to ensure an accurate count of those underground in case of accidents.**

You can support by helping fund:

- signage and information panels
- restoration of pictures and artefacts
- refinements to landscaping and the wonderful gardens.

Please send your donation to Redhills CIO at the Handelsbanken, Durham, sort code 40-51-62; account no. 23512941.

All donations will be gratefully received and recorded on the Redhills Sponsors' Board.

# STUDENT PLACEMENTS

The City of Durham Trust is working with the University's Department of Archaeology to provide placements for MA students on the International Cultural Heritage Management course, further details available here: link: <https://bit.ly/42o7bra>

The premise of this MA course is the important role cultural heritage plays in achieving sustainable development, offering a sense of identity, and maintaining social diversity with cohesion and intercultural dialogue. Students look at the global issues and challenges of managing cultural heritage, within the perspective of Durham's World Heritage Site, and in liaison with local organisations.

This year students are looking at three projects with the Trust:

## **Presenting and Evaluating Commemorative Plaques in the City of Durham**

Plaques celebrate the links between notable historic individuals, organisations and events with buildings in the present. Several organisations have developed series of plaques on buildings across the City, and these include the Rotary Club Durham Jubilee Plaques, City of Durham Parish Council Plaques, and the City of Durham Trust Plaques. The Trust has begun to create a database of all plaques present in Durham from these different schemes (<https://durhamcity.org/resources/list-of-plaques-in-the-city/>), and is looking to create an interactive online resource to present this data to the public. A student is working with the Trust to support this initiative.



## **Evaluating the Impact of the City of Durham Trust on the Development of the County Durham Plan**

The project is looking at the development of the County Durham Plan adopted in 2020 and the impact of the interventions provided by the Trust on the final adopted version. The student will look through documents held by the Trust, and within Durham County Council archives. This will be specifically in relation to heritage (including planning, conservation zones, the World Heritage Site, and other aspects identified alongside the Trust). The student will analyse which interventions from the Trust were adopted and which interventions were not, and identify if there were any patterns or themes discernible from the types of interventions forwarded and their success in adoption within the Plan. The project might also offer lessons to be learned for the new Plan

## **Evaluating the Impact of the City of Durham Trust on planning applications associated with Listed Buildings**

The project will assess the impact of appeals and responses made by the Trust to planning applications for Listed Buildings within Durham City. Monthly summaries, including the location of the building, are published on the Trust's website (<https://durhamcity.org/our-work/summaries/>) but, at present, these are not searchable within a spreadsheet. The student will look through the Trust's archive of responses to planning decisions and outcomes of these for Listed Buildings within Durham City, to identify and demonstrate the Trust's role and impact in planning decisions.

## DES KELLY - DURHAM PHOTOGRAPHER & CDT TRUSTEE

Des Kelly was a member of the City of Durham Trust from 1980, and became a Trustee from 1989. His love for the city he lived in all his life was expressed through his photography – his other abiding passion throughout his life. He was also a member of the Durham Photographic Society.

Des Kelly was born in the City of Durham in 1922 in a now demolished house near the cathedral, and brought up near the brutalist splendour that is Dunelm House. He lived his entire life in the city, except for his service in the Royal Navy during the Second World War.

His wife Audrey also had strong links to the city and lived there all her life. She was born in the tied cottage that went with her father's job as gardener for the Vaux family, tenants of Dryburn Hall and estate on the north edge of the city, and later the hospital built during the Second World War. They both shared a love for the city of Durham, an interest in local history and industrial archaeology.

Des began photographing the city he loved from the 1950s in a series of black and white photographs. He found the recording of things as he saw them fascinating. In the 1960s, he became concerned that the streets and lanes around him that he knew so well would be forgotten, and he photographed the city as it was before the new roads were built, as well as what happened afterwards. From the building of Dunelm House, to the construction of the A690 link road to Junction 62 on the A1(M), he recorded it all.

Des was a member of the City of Durham Trust until his death in 1999. The Trust dedicated a plaque to him on a bench in the Botanic Gardens, near where he worked as a technician at the University of Durham. In 2024, the Trust kindly helped Des and Audrey Kelly's family commemorate both of them on this bench.

*Rosalind Francis and Andy Kelly*

### Milburngate in the 1950s





Above is the top of North Road; below is the original Bus Station



## RESPONSES TO PLANNING APPLICATIONS

An important role for the Trust is to respond to planning applications affecting Durham City. The data below shows how we handle these. For the past three years we have looked at about 300 applications a year. For most of these we need to take no action. For the others where we feel the Trust can make a contribution we object, support, or make comments for improvement.

	2022	2023	2024
<b>Considered</b>	308	316	312
<b>Objections</b>	95	72	67
<b>Support</b>	14	13	23
<b>Comments</b>	15	17	10

As part of the evidence we use in our responses, we cite policies from the County Durham Plan (CDP) and the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan (NP). Policies we find most useful are:

CDP Policy 29 Sustainable Design (42%)

NP Policy S1 Sustainable Development Requirements of all Development and Re-development Sites Including all New Building, Renovations and Extensions (31%)

NP Policy D4 Building Housing to the Highest Standards (5%)

NP Policy G1 Protecting and Enhancing Green and Blue Infrastructure (6%)





CDP Policy 16 Durham University Development, Purpose Built Student Accommodation and Houses in Multiple Occupation (19%)

CDP Policy 44 Historic Environment (32%)  
NP Policy H2 The Conservation Areas (33%)

CDP Policy 31 Amenity and Pollution (13%)

CDP Policy 21 Delivering Sustainable Transport (10%)  
NP Policy T1 Sustainable Transport Accessibility and Design (3%)

CDP Policy 45 Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site (7%)  
NP Policy H1 Protection and Enhancement of the World Heritage Site (10%)

CDP Policy 10 Development in the Countryside (5%)

CDP Policy 20 Green Belt (5%)

CDP Policy 5 Durham City's Sustainable Urban Extensions (covering Bent House Lane and Sniperley) (5%)

NP Policy E3 Retail Development (3%)  
NP Policy E4 Evening Economy (3%)

The percentages refer to how often the policies are used (from data on the Trust's new pages for our application responses: <https://durhamcity.org/our-work/planning>).

## **PLANS FOR DURHAM'S FUTURE: CITY VISION, 'CAMP' & WHS PLAN**

The Trust has engaged with these three inter-linked consultations which together will have a significant influence on the future of the city. They are all work in progress and the current state of their development is summarised below:

### **Durham City Vision Consultation**

Durham County Council is replacing its masterplans for the towns in the County with Strategic Place Plans. These are intended to be developed by taking seriously the views of those who live, work and visit them. The process started in Durham City with a consultation exercise seeking views that led to the Durham City Vision. The results can be found at <https://bit.ly/3G1jamO>.

The key findings are structured within the report under the thematic areas of community, economy, environment, heritage, housing, public services, safety, and transport. Of particular interest to the Trust are the findings about heritage.

**Strengths:** The Cathedral and Castle are iconic landmarks, and the city's historic character is central to its identity.

**Challenges:** Accessibility to heritage sites, limited promotion of attractions beyond the Cathedral, and the under-representation of non-religious history were identified as weaknesses.

**Opportunities:** Broadening the narrative of Durham's heritage and creating more inclusive cultural experiences can strengthen its appeal to both residents and visitors. Stronger promotion of the wider offer of Durham was also highlighted as an opportunity.

## **'CAMP'**

The Durham City Conservation Area Management Plan has completed the first stage of its consultation. The Non Designated Heritage Assets (NDHA) within the individual conservation area boundaries have been surveyed by a group of volunteers arranged by the Parish Council and including members of the Trust. A survey form was completed, and photographs taken of each asset. The County Council's Design and Conservation Team are reviewing, scoring and mapping assets as part of the appraisal process.

Some small changes have been proposed to the boundaries of the individual conservation areas and the Council is planning to consult stakeholders and partners on the amended boundaries prior to Phase 2 public consultation, following which final decisions on boundaries will be made.

The next key steps are:

- Completion of NDHA survey review and mapping.
- Completion to final full drafts of the 7 conservation area character appraisal documents.
- Preparation for Phase 2 full public consultation ON LINE; this is currently in the programme for June of this year but potentially subject to change.

## **WHS Management Plan and Setting Study**

Work continues on these key related documents. Historic England has issued new guidance about management plans and this has to be digested and adjustments made to the plan. In addition, strategic partners the Castle and the Cathedral are finalising their own strategic plans which also impact on the overall plan for the WHS. The Durham City 'CAMP' includes a new conservation area character appraisal for the Peninsula which also impacts on the plan.

A WHS Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is in development. This is based on an extensive study undertaken in the last year on the setting of the World Heritage Site. This refines our understanding of the 'inner' and 'outer' setting which is included within the text of policy 45 of the County Durham Plan. The SPD will refer to the 'CAMP' and conservation area appraisals and will outline the considerations required in future development briefs / proposals. Together the various reports will provide a robust evidence base for the future protection of the WHS.

## **CLOSURE OF DURHAM MUSEUM**

Durham Museum is now permanently closed. The diocese of Durham is currently exploring options for the future use of the St Mary le Bow building. The museum collections are gradually finding new homes around the City of Durham. Some items will go to The Story at Mount Oswald, including Thomas Sharp's plaster model of his 1945 plan for Durham. The model of Durham Market Place would make a great addition to the Town Hall when it re-opens this autumn, while the model of medieval Durham will join Durham University's Museum of Archaeology.

The seventeenth-century lawyers' bench from the Chancery Court on Palace Green would make a wonderful focus for a museum display showcasing the role of the law courts in Durham's social history. Stories from legal cases involving rich and poor across the ages would make an attractive addition to promoting "Durham's Story" – a new Durham County Council branding initiative, to be taken up by venues across the city.

The current issue of the *Museums Journal* reviews 'The Story' at Mount Oswald, praising the archives facility, but concludes that it fails to provide what Durham is currently missing – a museum that tells the story of the people of Durham.

## DURHAM CITY MATTERS

This very small city has an extraordinary number of building sites or vacant lots and it is disturbing to see so much disruption in our beautiful city.

**Milburngate** is still in limbo with no sign of activity other than replacing the boarding covering some of the office windows. It has been reported that the County Council is borrowing £55m to fund the cost of completing the development. Another very large site awaiting development is **Prince Bishops Place**. A number of the shops are vacant, but one unexpected bonus is that pop-up shops are filling the gaps. Durham Climate Action is hoping to set up a community hub in one of them and the Trust is supporting that endeavour.

There are indications that plans will soon be unveiled for the **old bowling green** at the racecourse. A café and recreation area are planned. The area, know as **Hemp Garden**, has been looked after by local volunteers and they are keen to retain community involvement. Meanwhile the nearby **old swimming baths** remain derelict, the former **coach park** that was removed from the common land at the Sands remains fenced off and unused, and there is another prominent lot awaiting development at the bottom of Claypath, the **former council offices**.

There are other sites that are awaiting development or partially developed. At least the former M&S store is now being reconfigured as the entertainment venue **STACK**, though the work is disruptive in the narrow Silver Street. On a more positive note, it is pleasing to see the excellent refurbishment of the roads and pavements of the **Baileys** and similar improvements are under way around the junctions of Crossgate, South Street and North Road.



**The disruptive works in Silver Street occasioned by the reconstruction of the former Marks & Spencer store**

# Durham Peninsula 2025 Invasive Species Events



The Durham Peninsular Invasive Non-Native Species project is a collaborative project, coordinated by the Wear Rivers Trust. We are working with numerous organisations that are dedicated to improving the riverbanks of Durham for both people and wildlife.

2025 will see Wear Rivers Trust delivering a range of events in Durham Peninsula.

For more details contact  
Claire Dodds  
claire.dodds@wear-rivers-trust.org.uk  
07880189232  
or scan the QR code to  
check out our volunteer and  
events page <https://wear-rivers-trust.teamkinetic.co.uk/>

- 10 am - 1 pm **Wednesday 30th April** Mindfulness Walk, Big River Watch
- 10 am - 2 pm **Saturday 17th May** Community Engagement Event at the Botanic Gardens
- 10 am - 12 pm **Thursday 22nd May** Balsam Bash
- 10 am - 12 pm **Thursday 29th May** Balsam Bash
- 1 pm - 2 pm **Friday 6th June** Talk on the Alien Invaders of the River Wear
- 9 am - 4 pm **Saturday 14th June** Durham Regatta
- 10 am - 12 pm **Thursday 19th June** Balsam Bash and Plasticblitz
- 10 am - 2 pm **Saturday 21st June** Community Engagement Event at the Palace Green Library
- 10 am - 12 pm **Thursday 26th June** Balsam Bash
- 10 am - 12 pm **Thursday 3rd July** Balsam Bash
- 10 am - 2 pm **Saturday 5th July** Community Engagement Day at Redhills Durham Miners Hall
- 10 am - 2 pm **Monday 21st July** Community Engagement Day at The Story



# Wear Rivers Trust