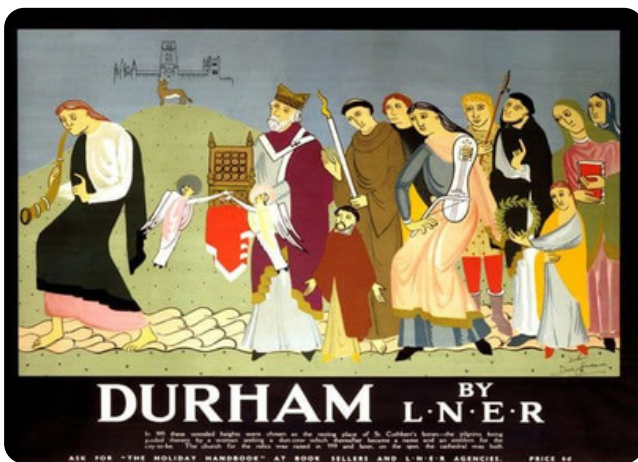


Heritage Open Days 2024: Routes, Networks, Connections

Welcome to Durham Castle

Heritage Open Days are England's **largest festival of history and culture**, bringing together over 2,000 organisations, 5,000 events and 40,000 volunteers. Every year in September, places across the country open their doors to celebrate heritage, community and history – and they are all FREE.

This is the **30th anniversary year** of Heritage Open Days. The European wide theme for the year is **Routes, Networks, Connections** celebrating how **people** and **ideas** have moved around and come together throughout history. This festival is about encouraging us all to **celebrate what connects us**.



Inscribed on the **UNESCO World Heritage Register** in 1986, Durham Castle is considered to be of **outstanding universal significance to humanity**. Over its **950 year history**, Durham Castle has had its own **remarkable journey**: the site began in 1072 as a Norman fortress; it then served as a palace for Durham's 'Prince-Bishops' for over 800 years; from 1837 onwards it has been home to a community of students, serving as the oldest college of Durham University.

This castle has been shaped by many different networks of people, art, and culture over its long history. As you move around the site today, look out for our pink 'Heritage Open Day' panels in each room to read more about these different routes, networks, and connections.

Heritage Open Days 2024: Routes, Networks, Connections

The Normans and their Journey North

In **1066**, England was invaded **twice**. In September, **Norwegian forces travelled to England** led by King Harald Hardrada of Norway, who attempted to claim the English throne. He was defeated by the Anglo-Saxon King Harold Godwinson and his forces at the Battle of Stamford Bridge. However, less than **three weeks** later, in October, England was invaded again. **Norman forces travelled to England**, led by William the Conqueror, also hoping to claim the English throne. The forces met in battle. Whilst the English fought on foot in shield-wall formation, the Normans had **brought war-horses and archers with them**. The **Normans** triumphed at the **Battle of Hastings** and William was crowned King of England on December 25th, Christmas Day.



However, the Norman invasion was not met without **resistance**. Many noblemen were unhappy seeing a Norman king on the throne. They instead wanted Edgar Aethling to be crowned King of England – the last remaining member of the House of Wessex. A series of **rebellions** broke out across the North of England and the new king William desperately struggled to keep control.

In response to this insurrection, **William and his forces travelled northwards**. In an attempt to **subjugate** Northern England the king and his men decimated large parts of the Northern landscape hoping to starve out the rebels. This became known as **'The Harrying of the North'**. A near-contemporary chronicler, Orderic Vitalis (c.1075–1142), writes:

“The King stopped at nothing to hunt his enemies. He cut down many people and destroyed homes and land. Nowhere else had he shown such cruelty. This made a real change. To his shame, William made no effort to control his fury, punishing the innocent with the guilty. He ordered that crops and herds, tools and food be burned to ashes. More than 100,000 people perished of starvation. I have often praised William in this book, but I can say nothing good about this brutal slaughter. God will punish him.”

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Networks of Art and Culture

The Norman Conquest of England in 1066 brought with it many gradual changes to Anglo-Saxon society as **Norman customs, culture, and art were introduced**. One major aspect of this cultural shift was the popularisation of Norman style **architecture**. **Many builders, artists, and stonemasons travelled over from Normandy** to England during this period.

Durham Castle is built in the **‘motte and bailey’** style which was popular throughout Northern Europe from the tenth century onwards. ‘Motte’ refers to a mound of earth with a small structure on top known as a ‘keep’, and ‘bailey’ refers to the fortified enclosure next to a mound. This **architectural style travelled over to England with the Normans** and many examples can be found throughout the country today. A study by castellologist D. J. Cathcart King published in 1972 listed **473 mottes** in England!



Durham Castle contains some of the **finest examples of Norman style sculpture** within England in the Norman Chapel. The Castle’s Norman Chapel is believed to have been built by William de St Calais, a **Norman monk** who was Bishop of Durham between 1080 and 1096. The **carvings** in the Norman Chapel are closely influenced by churches across Normandy including at Bayeux, Caen, Cerisy-la-Forêt. This is a fine example of the **network of artistic and architectural influence** which existed in the period following the Norman Conquest.



Crypt, Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Bayeux



Capital, Abbaye Saint-Vigor, Cerisy-la-Forêt

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Routes of Conservation

Tapestries were very popular amongst the wealthy in the early modern period. They functioned both as beautiful pieces of **art** – which added to a sense of opulence and luxury – and also helped to **insulate** rooms to keep them warm.

Here in the Tunstall Gallery you will see several **‘Verdure Tapestries’** lining the walls. These tapestries are **Flemish** and date to the **seventeenth century** (likely between 1640 and 1680). The verdure style refers to the depictions of rich forest landscapes and vegetation.

Other rooms within the Castle were similarly decorated with Flemish tapestries including the Bishop’s Suite, later known as the Senate Suite. Within these rooms were a set of six tapestries which depicted the **story of Moses**, with episodes including the burning bush and the staff turning into a snake. These rooms have since been closed and the tapestries have been removed in order to carry out urgent **conservation** work.

These tapestries, having **travelled over from Antwerp around 350 years ago**, are now on a **new journey northwards to Glasgow** to undergo treatment for insect infestations. Insects present a real threat to textiles. Moths and beetles can eat through fabrics and lay their eggs amongst the fibres. The larvae then continue to eat through the fibres as they mature. In Glasgow the tapestries will undergo a conservation method known as **freezing preservation**. Insects, regardless of their stage in the life cycle, cannot survive below -15°C . The tapestries will be **kept in a freezer for at least two weeks** at a temperature somewhere between -30°C and -40°C .



Watercolour by Revd. Edward Bradley c.1840s.



Photograph of the Moses tapestries prior to conservation.



The tapestries being rolled and prepared for transportation.



The tapestries being stowed in a van ahead of their journey.

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The Journey of Pineapples

There is an unusual feature to be found on the Black Stairs – pineapples. Whilst it might seem peculiar today, pineapples were once a major **status and wealth symbol**.

It is said that a pineapple craze began in 1493 when Christopher Columbus discovered pineapples growing in a Caribbean village. He presented these fruits to **King Ferdinand in Spain** as a marvel of the ‘New World’ and they quickly became popular as a **rare and exotic** fruit. No doubt the fruit’s unusual appearance contributed to the fascination and interest. **By the 1550's pineapples were being shipped regularly from the Caribbean to Europe**, however, a single pineapple would have cost thousands of pounds to buy in today's money. Hence, the pineapple became an indicator of **immense wealth and status**. It was even possible to **rent pineapples** in order to use them as a centre piece at a dinner party.

King Charles II was apparently so taken with pineapples that **he commissioned a portrait of himself being presented with one**. The image depicts the Royal Gardener, John Rose, presenting the King with a pineapple.



There was an additional craze in the 18th and 19th centuries for growing pineapples. In 2016 archaeological excavations at **Auckland Castle** – the Bishop’s summer residence – revealed a pioneering ‘**pinery-vinery**’, created by **Bishop Richard Trevor** in the 1750s. Warm temperatures from furnaces allowed him to grow pineapples. It is believed to be one of the **first of its kind** in the North East and set the standard for following ones.

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The Journey of the Travelling Judges

In the far left hand corner of the room you will find a portrait of **Sir George Jeffreys** (1645–1689), a notorious Welsh judge who served as Lord Chief Justice under King Charles II and later Lord Chancellor under King James VII and II. He is better known as **‘The Hanging Judge’**, a reference to his involvement in **‘The Bloody Assizes’** – a series of trials which took place in 1685 following the Monmouth Rebellion which was an attempt to **depose King James VII and II**.

Over 1000 rebels were tried in assizes. An **assize** was a **travelling court of senior Judges**, who presided over offences that were beyond the jurisdiction of local magistrates. There were different circuits and different sittings throughout the year.

‘The Blood Assizes’, as they became known, were presided over by Judge Jeffreys and **travelled throughout the West Country** moving through **Winchester, Dorchester, Lyme, Exeter, Taunton, and Wells**. By the end of the assizes over **300 individuals were hanged** or hanged, drawn and quartered, granting Jeffreys his nickname. Some 800 individuals were transported to the West Indies to serve as cheap labourers. The **hanged bodies** from the trials at Taunton were **displayed** around the county to ensure people understood the fate of those who rebelled against the king.



The **portrait** of Jeffreys in this room was likely painted by **Sir Kneller**, a German painter, who trained under Rembrandt in Amsterdam, and became the leading court painter for British monarchs. This painting of Judge Jeffreys may have entered the Castle’s collections at the time of **Bishop Crewe** (Bishop of Durham 1673-1721) who was a favourite of James II. This is an interesting example of the **network of art and culture across Europe**.

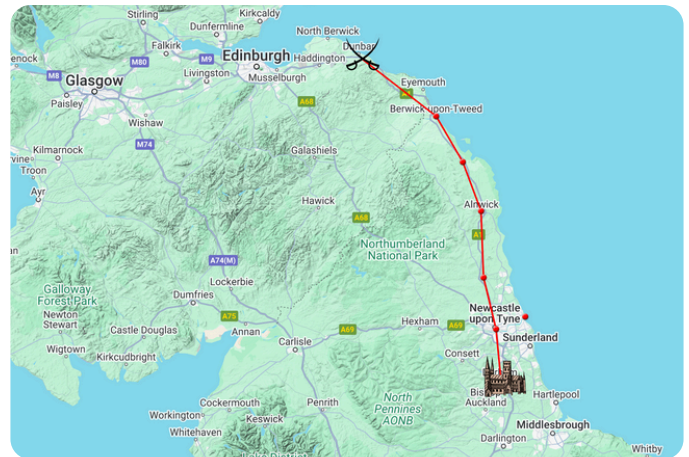
Heritage Open Days 2024: Routes, Networks, Connections

The March of the Scottish Soldiers

Civil War broke out in England in August 1642, following a long power struggle between King Charles I and Parliament over religious freedom and the rights of the King. The conflict which followed between the **Royalists and Parliamentarians** engulfed the whole of the British Isles and resulted in over 100,000 deaths. In January 1649 **King Charles I was beheaded**. However, this did not bring peace. In England, a Commonwealth was established. Scotland, however, recognised Charles's son, Charles II as king of all of Britain and began recruiting an army to support him. The English dispatched an army under the command of Oliver Cromwell. Conflict followed and on September 3rd 1650, Scottish forces were defeated at **The Battle of Dunbar**.

The surviving Scots became **prisoners of war**. Over **4000** men were **forcibly marched south to Durham**. On the way they stayed overnight at Berwick, Alnwick Castle, Morpeth, and at the church of St Nicholas in Newcastle. They were treated dreadfully, being fed **raw cabbage** and **spoiled meat**, and around 1000 men died on the long march from hunger, exhaustion, and dysentery.

When the surviving Scottish Soldiers reached Durham they were imprisoned in **Durham Cathedral**. Conditions were cramped for over **3000 men**. Many were weak from the march and disease spread rapidly. Sick prisoners were removed from the Cathedral and **taken to Durham Castle** in efforts to **stop the spread of disease**. Within only 50 days, 1600 men were dead and these soldiers were **buried in mass graves on Palace Green**. Some men survived and a small group were transported to America to work in the English colony aboard a ship called the **Unity**.



In **2013** archaeological excavations were carried out under the **University's Palace Green Library** ahead of constructing a new café. A mass grave was located containing up to **28 individuals**. The remains of the Scottish soldiers were **reburied** in a public cemetery less than a mile from where the remains were discovered. Representatives attended from the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church, as well as descendants. Handfuls of Scottish soil were scattered into the grave.



Heritage Open Days 2024: Routes, Networks, Connections

Networks of Learning

Durham has a **longstanding reputation as a centre for learning**. In the Middle Ages Durham was home to a thriving **Benedictine Priory** which was a part of a rich network of knowledge and literature circulating throughout Britain and Europe. Durham's reputation for learning resulted in numerous early **attempts to form a university** in the city, notably under King Henry VIII and later under under Oliver Cromwell. However, the proposal was met with opposition from Oxford and Cambridge universities and was abandoned. In **1669**, Bishop John Cosin founded a library on Palace Green, **one of the earliest public libraries** in England, greatly contributing to local learning.

In **1832 Durham University was founded** by Bishop William Van Mildert, the last 'prince bishop' of Durham, and the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral, becoming **the third oldest university in England**. After Van Mildert's death in 1836, Durham Castle was handed over to the University and became officially known as **University College**, the oldest college of the university. Today it is fondly referred to simply as 'Castle' by the students.

Today **students travel from all over the world** to attend Durham University. In 2023/24 University College, or 'Castle', welcomed **over 1900 students** from **78 countries** including Brunei, Cambodia, Ukraine, Venezuela, The Azerbaijani Republic, Kuwait, The Faroe Islands, and many other places. (Durham University as a whole comprises just over 20,000 students!)



Students at **Durham University** can study a wide variety of subjects across the sciences, arts, and humanities. Many of Durham's departments rank among the **highest in the world** for their subject. In 2024 this included Archaeology (5), Classics and Ancient History (6) and Theology and Religion (7), Geography (16), Anthropology (28), English Studies (29), and many more.

Durham Castle continues to welcome visitors, students, staff, volunteers, and researchers from all over the world. The Castle is a part of a global network of community and learning.

