

PRESS RELEASE

8 November 2010. 19.00hrs

The logo for the UK Landscape Award 2010 is a black teardrop shape pointing downwards. Inside the teardrop, the text "UK LANDSCAPE AWARD 2010" is written in white, with "2010" in orange. Below this, the phrase "DISCOVERING GREAT PLACES" is written in white. At the bottom of the teardrop, there is a white downward-pointing arrow inside a black circle.

UK
LANDSCAPE
AWARD
2010
DISCOVERING
GREAT
PLACES

Durham Heritage Coast wins UK Landscape Award

The restoration of the Durham Heritage Coast – previously an industrial wasteland - was announced as the winner of the first-ever UK Landscape Awards tonight.

Durham Heritage Coast was awarded the title of UK Landscape of Year at the UK Landscape Conference in Liverpool. The project will now go on to represent the UK in the European Landscape Award which takes place in Strasbourg in March 2011.

Durham Heritage Coast emerged as the winner from a diverse list of urban and rural finalists which included:

- A twenty five year campaign to improve the Mersey Basin
- Creation of spectacular spaces and streets in the heart of Sheffield
- Community-led rebuilding of Baxter Park, Dundee in Scotland
- Conservation of the hill forts and heather moorland of Denbighshire in Wales
- Regeneration of Lough Neagh in Northern Ireland

Durham's coastline suffered from 100 years of waste tipping by the coal industry with over 1.5 million tonnes of waste per year being dumped over the cliffs onto the beaches and into the sea. Durham's beaches became known as 'The Black Beaches' and looked so grim that they were used as film locations in Get Carter and Alien.

In their submission, The Durham Heritage Coast Partnership described the transformation;
“Where previously colliery waste was tipped onto the beach in enormous quantities, a coastal path now leads you through a wonderful landscape mosaic of great natural, historical and geological interest with dramatic views along the coastline and out across the North Sea.”

Ian McMillan, poet and radio presenter, who was on the judging panel summed up the views of the judges;

“This is an internationally important exemplar for transforming a despoiled landscape through careful investment and enormous amounts of enthusiasm and hard work. A bold vision has created a landscape of beauty rich in wildlife and cultural heritage in which local communities can feel justifiably proud. This is the beginning of a renaissance which will enable towns and villages of this part of the former Durham Coalfield to develop a relevant new identity.”

Full details are available from www.uklandscapeawards.org/results

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Further information

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Notes to Editors

1. High resolution images and interviews with representatives of the winning project and judging panel can be organised through the Landscape Institute Press Office.
2. The Durham Heritage Coast stretches for 11 miles between Sunderland and Hartlepool on the North East coast of England. The coastline suffered from 100 years of waste tipping by the coal mining industry until the closure of the area's last pit in 1993.

“Turning the Tide”, a Millennium Commission –funded regeneration project, began the process of turning the spoil heaps back into natural grasslands and supporting the natural actions of the sea by removing spoil from beaches during the 1990s . They also installed interpretation panels and public artworks along the newly established coastal path. As a result Heritage Coast status was awarded in 2001.

In 2003 Durham Heritage Coast Partnership took over the management of the coastline and have delivered three major coastal improvements schemes to improve access, interpretation, facilities and natural habitats. They have also developed the Coast & Countryside Voluntary Rangers – a group of local people who provide over 10,000 hours of effort per year, going out on a weekly basis to undertake a wide range of nature conservation tasks and guided walks.

3. The European Landscape Convention (ELC) established a *Council of Europe Landscape Award* to recognise quality stewardship of landscapes. Council of Europe member states run national competitions to identify national winners who are then put forward for the European-level award. The Award has only been run once before. This is the first time that the Award has been run in the UK. Entries for the Award closed on 27 August 2010. The winner was announced on 8 November 2010 at the European Landscape Convention Conference in Liverpool. The UK winner will then be submitted to the Council of Europe's European Landscape Award which will be announced in March 2011.
4. The ELC is the first international convention to focus specifically on landscape, and is dedicated exclusively to the protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe. The ELC became binding from 1 March 2007. The convention highlights the need to recognise landscape in law, to develop landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and creation of landscapes, and to establish procedures for the participation of the general public and other stakeholders in the creation and implementation of landscape policies. It also encourages the integration of landscape into all relevant areas of policy, including cultural, economic and social policies.
5. The European Landscape Convention is championed by DEFRA, the Welsh Assembly Government, the Scottish Government, the Department of the Environment Northern Ireland and their agencies.
6. The Award is being managed in the UK by the Landscape Institute, the professional body for landscape architecture.

