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News release

Hadrian's Wall announces new wall-wide Roman cavalry exhibition

Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site is to host a major new exhibition in 2017 celebrating the cavalry regiments that once guarded this famous North West frontier of the mighty Roman Empire.

Taking place from Saturday 8 April to Sunday 10 September 2017, Hadrian's Cavalry explores the role and daily life of the Roman army's cavalry forces in a unique wall-wide exhibition that stretches the full 150 miles of the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site area – from Maryport in the west to South Shields in the east.

The exhibition will bring together a unique group of Roman cavalry objects including ornate helmets, armour and weapons on loan from national and international museums, which will be shown alongside objects from museums across the Wall. The national and international museums include the British Museum, National Museums Scotland, the Musée d'Art Classique de Mougins (France), Archäologisches Landesmuseum Baden-Württemberg / Limes Museum, Aalen, the Archaeological State Collection, Munich and the Landesmuseum Württemberg, Stuttgart (Germany).

The new exhibition also features one of the largest Roman Cavalry re-enactments ever seen in the UK.

The main funder of Hadrian's Cavalry is the Arts Council England's Museum Resilience Fund.

Bill Griffiths, head of programmes for Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums and chair of the Hadrian's Cavalry steering group, said: "This is a once in a lifetime experience, bringing together for the first time these very special Roman cavalry objects. To be able to do it across the museums and heritage attractions of Hadrian's Wall, where cavalry regiments played a key role in protecting the Empire and projecting Imperial power, makes it even more exciting.

"The cavalrymen were famous for their lavishly decorated helmets and body armour. The cavalry horses were also held in high esteem; enjoying customised stabling in barrack blocks built to accommodate the riders and their mounts.

"Hadrian's Cavalry will reveal the story of the Roman riders through a unique exhibition spread across 10 museums and heritage attractions, each with its own special exhibition and objects. Never before have people been able to see this collection of Roman cavalry objects in the actual locations they would have been used."

In addition to the wall-wide exhibition, Bitts Park in Carlisle will host two days of Roman cavalry re-enactments on 1 and 2 July. 30 Roman cavalrymen - a *turma* or troop - will come together for the first time in almost 2,000 years.

Bill continued: "To help bring the exhibition to life, we are organising one of the largest Roman cavalry re-enactments ever seen in the UK. A troop of 30 Roman cavalrymen, also referred to as a *turma*, will showcase some of the exercises the cavalry would have performed on training grounds at sites across the Wall and described by Hadrian himself almost 2,000 years ago. It will be an amazing spectacle and unique to this exhibition. We are

grateful to Carlisle City Council who are helping to fund this special event, to Christian Levett for helping sponsor the exhibition, and to our main funder, Arts Council England.”

Highlights of Hadrian’s Cavalry include the exhibition at Segedunum Roman Fort, Baths and Museum in North Tyneside, where the recruitment, training and tactics of the cavalry will be explored. An interactive zone, including the chance to dress a Roman cavalry horse, will uncover more of the day-to-day life of the regiment.

Great North Museum: Hancock in Newcastle celebrates the prestige and power of the Roman cavalry helmet with an exhibition including two bronze ‘Ribchester-style’ Helmets, which are being displayed together at the museum for the very first time.

Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery in Carlisle is home to one of the biggest Hadrian’s Cavalry exhibitions; looking at the role of the cavalry regiments in Carlisle, across Hadrian’s Wall and across the entire Roman Empire. An immersive audio/visual experience will take visitors back in time to experience what life was really like for cavalrymen along Hadrian’s Wall.

Some of the Roman forts along the Wall will highlight the role of cavalry horses in Roman society. The exhibition at English Heritage’s Corbridge Roman Town and Museum will explore what the depiction of horses in Roman artefacts – including brooches, sculpture and pottery – tells us about their status and role in Roman life. Chesters Roman Fort and Museum will tell the story of the strong bond between cavalrymen and their horses, including how the animals were looked after and maintained.

The display at Roman Vindolanda will focus on the personal stories of cavalry soldiers stationed on the Wall itself, revealed through the Vindolanda writing tablets and other objects found in on-going excavations at the site.

More displays at Housesteads Roman Fort and Museum, Arbeia Roman Fort and Museum, the Roman Army Museum and Senhouse Roman Museum will complete the story of the Roman cavalry. There will also be smaller cavalry themed events over the year.

Completing the Hadrian’s Cavalry exhibition will be a specially commissioned contemporary art installation at Chesters Roman Fort. The piece, at the Roman site from July 2017 until September 2017, will use the natural environment and sound to evoke the presence of the 500 hundred horses once stabled within these iconic Roman ruins.

Jane Tarr, Director North, Arts Council England said: “I’m really pleased that the Arts Council is supporting the Hadrian’s Cavalry exhibition through our Museums Resilience Fund. This is a fantastic example of partners working together to bring Hadrian’s Wall to life right along its length. Visitors to the world heritage site and local audiences will get to see world class objects, many in the locations they would have been seen 2000 years ago. I look forward to seeing how the project develops and how it will enable the museums involved to become more sustainable and resilient businesses. It will be interesting to see how this project can provide a model for the future.”

The 10 museums and heritage attractions taking part in Hadrian’s Cavalry are:

- Arbeia Roman Fort and Museum (South Shields)
- Segedunum Roman Fort, Baths and Museum (Wallsend)
- Great North Museum: Hancock (Newcastle upon Tyne)

English Heritage venues:

- Corbridge Roman Town and Museum (Corbridge, Northumberland)

- Chesters Roman Fort and Museum (Chollerford, Northumberland)
- Housesteads Roman Fort and Museum (Haydon Bridge, Northumberland)
- Roman Vindolanda (Bardon Mill, near Hexham)
- Roman Army Museum (Greenhead, Northumberland)
- Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery (Carlisle, Cumbria)
- Senhouse Roman Museum (Maryport, Cumbria).

For more information visit www.hadrianscavalry.co.uk

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For additional information, images or interview requests for Hadrian's Cavalry, please contact david.brookbanks@ngi.org.uk / 0191 440 5740.

Senhouse Roman Museum. Maryport

The exhibition theme at the Senhouse Roman Museum will look at the religious beliefs of the Roman Cavalry and the breeding of the perfect cavalry horse. This theme is inspired by a relief of the Celtic horse goddess Epona, which was discovered in the Roman fort at Maryport. The exhibition at Senhouse Roman Museum will include objects from the British Museum and three museums in Germany: The Landesmuseum in Baden-Württemberg, The Landesmuseum in Württemberg (Stuttgart) and The Markgrafenmuseum in Ansbach. The exhibition also includes a full size willow cavalry horse produced by pupils at Maryport Junior School in a series of art workshops in the Museum.

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Notes to editor

- Hadrian's Cavalry is funded primarily through Arts Council England's Museum Resilience Fund and inspired and managed by a partnership of heritage organisations from across Hadrian's Wall. The partnership includes Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, English Heritage, Vindolanda Trust, Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust, Senhouse Museum Trust and Northumberland National Park Authority, which is the accountable body providing financial administration.

Supporting partners of the Hadrian's Cavalry Exhibition include Carlisle City Council, the British Museum, National Museums Scotland, the Musée d'Art Classique de Mougins (France), Archäologisches Landesmuseum Baden-Württemberg / Limes Museum, Aalen, the Archaeological State Collection, Munich, and the Landesmuseum Württemberg, Stuttgart (Germany).

- The cavalry and part-mounted units were the elite of the auxiliary forces of the Roman army and were the backbone of the frontier garrison. The role and importance of cavalry to the Roman army and Empire is often neglected in public presentation of the Roman frontier. Alongside presentation of the training, equipment, daily life and military operations of cavalry troopers and their horses, the exhibition will explore the role of the regiments in projecting the Roman imperial image through their impressive armour and other equipment. The exhibition

programme will include live re-enactment, learning and community engagement activity.

- Core partners of the Hadrian's Cavalry Project are:

English Heritage - www.english-heritage.org.uk/hadrianswall

Northumberland National Park Authority - www.northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk

Senhouse Museum Trust - www.senhousemuseum.co.uk

Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery - www.tulliehouse.co.uk

Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums - www.twmuseums.org.uk

Vindolanda Trust - www.vindolanda.com

Carlisle City Council (www.carlisle.gov.uk) and Christian Levett are proud sponsors of Hadrian's Cavalry.

- The 150-mile Hadrian's Wall frontier area runs from the western Roman coastal defences at Ravenglass, through Whitehaven, Workington and Maryport to Bowness-on-Solway, along Hadrian's Wall through Carlisle and Hexham to Newcastle, Wallsend and South Shields.
- There were over 30 forts on the Roman frontier across the north of England, including 16 along the line of the 73-mile wall itself (Bowness-on-Solway to Segedunum at Wallsend) plus coastal, outpost and supply forts. Along the wall there were around 80 milecastles and 160 turrets, a ditch to the north and the great defensive vallum earthwork to the south.
- The Hadrian's Wall frontier is part of the transnational World Heritage Site - Frontiers of the Roman Empire - which includes the Antonine Wall in Scotland and the Upper German/Raetian Limes. This represents the borderline of the Roman Empire at its furthest extent in the 2nd century AD. It stretched from the west coast of northern Britain through Europe to the Black Sea and from there to the Red Sea and across North Africa to the Atlantic coast.
- Hadrian's Wall Country is the brand used to promote the World Heritage Site to visitors. The brand was introduced in 2002 by the Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership and conveys and reinforces values that encourage visitors, linking the World Heritage Site to the rural and urban landscape through which it runs. Larger than the official boundary of the World Heritage Site, Hadrian's Wall Country covers an area approximately 10 miles north and south of the frontier and five miles in from the Cumbrian coast. The Hadrian's Wall Country identity helps to locate and promote the World Heritage Site via information on the www.hadrianswallcountry.co.uk website, and the Hadrian's Wall Country bus, railway line, volunteers, walking and cycling routes, and local produce sub-brands.
- Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2015 and 2018, we plan to invest £1.1 billion of public money from government and an estimated £700 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. www.artscouncil.org.uk