



Left to right: Dr Claudine van Hensbergen, Ruth Sheldon and Adam Goldwater of Great North Museum: Hancock and Dr Gareth Roddy.

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Northumbria University chosen as a national hub for festival of humanities

Two of the North East's landmark treasures – the Lindisfarne Gospels and Hadrian's Wall – will form part of a major celebration this year after Northumbria University was named one of only five institutions selected as a hub for the UK's 2022 festival of humanities.

The [Being Human Festival](#), held across the country each November, demonstrates and celebrates the ways in which humanities-based subjects,

which include language and literature, history, geography, philosophy, archaeology, anthropology, law, religion and art, inspire and enrich our everyday lives.

It is the UK's only national festival of the humanities and is funded and delivered by the [Arts and Humanities Research Council](#), the [British Academy](#), and the [School of Advanced Study](#), University of London.

Hub status for the festival, now in its ninth year, is awarded annually to only a handful of research organisations to present a programme of free and thought-provoking public events on a chosen theme, that respond to the histories, cultures and communities of their local area.

Aimed at people of all ages with a variety of backgrounds and interests, these events are designed to help address the challenges of modern living by offering people valuable insights into both themselves and their relationships and interactions with others.

[Dr Gareth Roddy](#), a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow in the Department of Humanities at the University, and [Dr Claudine van Hensbergen](#), an Associate Professor of 18th century English Literature, were instrumental in putting together the bid for Northumbria to host this event.

Dr Roddy said: "This year's festival will explore the theme of 'breakthroughs', and our hub programme will celebrate two of the North East's landmark treasures, the Lindisfarne Gospels, which are returning home to the region in September for a three-month period at the Laing Art Gallery, and Hadrian's Wall, the pre-eminent monument of Roman Britain, which saw construction begin 1,900 years ago.

"During the festival, our programme of activities will explore how we can use both of these 'breakthroughs' in intellectual, artistic, religious and military endeavour to ask fundamental questions about humanity, as well as what breakthroughs look and feel like to us today."

The Being Human Festival will see a range of exciting events hosted at the Laing Art Gallery, Shipley Art Gallery, and at the Great North Museum: Hancock. The latter venue will host an ambitious 'Museum Late' to launch the festival in Newcastle, with a range of performances, screenings and

interactive events hosted by Northumbria academics, with contributions from collaborators from Newcastle University.

Adam Goldwater, Manager, Great North Museum: Hancock, said: "We're delighted to be supporting the festival with a key late social event at the Great North Museum: Hancock. Our core aim as a museum is to inspire curiosity, learning and debate through a stimulating, innovative and provocative cultural and science engagement programme. This event provides exactly the platform to do so, and a fantastic opportunity to include cutting edge research at the heart of our public events programme."

Dr van Hensbergen, who is a UK Research and Innovation Fellow, leads the University's partnership with Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums (TWAM), which will be involved as a hub partner.

She added: "Using these incredible artefacts of history as inspiration, our events, in partnership with a range of local experts, will be led by colleagues from across arts, humanities, and health and life sciences, and will feature expertise from, and elements of, linguistics, literature, creative writing and history, as well as fine and performance art, social work, education and community wellbeing.

"This is a huge achievement for the University, and we're excited to be collaborating with some brilliant local community and cultural partners to create engaging events and projects for all to enjoy."

In addition to the partnership with TWAM, the University will also be working with St. James' Heritage and Environment Group Community, who are promoting the history of Hadrian's Wall in Newcastle's West End, on a number of events.

The programme, funding for which was provided by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the British Academy, builds upon the [Creative Communities programme](#), being led by the University's Professor Katy Shaw to unlock the [potential of culture and arts](#) in addressing regional inequality.

As Northumbria University's Director of Cultural Partnerships, Dr Shaw also made the case for the contribution of northern culture to the levelling-up

agenda as author of the All Party Parliamentary Group's [Case for Culture](#) report.

She said: "The return of the gospels and the anniversary of Hadrian's Wall are a timely reminder to us all that the north has always been a cultural powerhouse.

"The diversity and wealth of culture and heritage that define this hub will illuminate how the past can inform the present and help us all take on the challenges of tomorrow. It's a real example of what can be achieved when universities work in partnership with cultural organisations to extend the reach of our expertise and resources for public good."

Being Human will take place between Thursday 10 November and Saturday 19 November. Full details of the programme of events will be available at beinghumanfestival.org from October.

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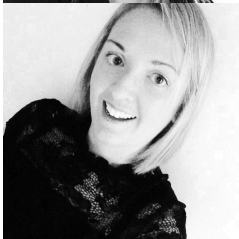


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