



WOODLANDS & RIVERBANKS PHOTOGRAPHY TRAIL

With your back to the Cathedral, leave the main entrance and face the Castle. Go past Durham University’s Music Department - the first building on your left – and turn left down the path known locally as Windy Gap. Turn left at the foot of the slope and follow the footpath until you reach a path on your right that leads down some steps to the Old Fulling Mill. Take the first path on your right after the Old Fulling Mill, and follow the path down to the river.

Trail

Grade

Accessibility

Distance

Time

walking

easy to moderate

some steps and short steep slopes

1.5 miles (2.41km)

1-2 hours

KEY

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Route of trail

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Footpaths on the woodlands and riverbanks

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Direction of trail

↺

Go back in the direction you have come from

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Steps

➤➤

Steep slope



1 The Willow Tree

From here you can capture picture postcard views up and down the river, or close-ups of the reeds, reflections on the water, a rowing boat, or wildlife.

Photo opportunities

- Once you’ve captured the whole scene, try focusing on some of the details by the water’s edge.
- If it’s a calm day you should be able to capture the trees on the opposite side reflected in the water.
- Shooting with the sun behind you will give different effects depending on the time of day. As long as you’re careful not to look at it directly, why not break a few rules by shooting towards the sun? Carefully move your camera until the sun is hidden behind the trees. This can produce wonderful silhouettes and give your photos some lovely lens flare.
- Think about your composition. Try using the edge of the riverbank to lead your eye towards a point of interest, such as a cormorant on the river or a rowing boat.

Continue, with the river on your right- hand side, past the willow tree, until you reach the Storyteller’s Chair.



2 Kathedra

Known locally as the ‘Storyteller’s Chair’, Colin Wilbourn’s Kathedra stone sculpture represents the idea of sanctuary. Have a look at the back of the chair; it’s made up of a collection of random gargoyles and covered in moss and lichen.

Photo opportunities

- To get a good 3D effect and lots of detail of the faces and the stonework, come close to the chair and shoot down onto it, or up to it at an angle.
- Combine your close-ups with an out-of-focus background of the river and woodlands on the opposite side.
- If you’re lucky, you may be able to capture some interesting shadows on the faces of the chair from the sun just peering over the tops of the trees and shining through the branches.
- Don’t be tempted to use flash as this will flatten the subject and reduce the depth of the image.

Continue, with the river on your right- hand side, under Prebends’ Bridge, and follow the path around to the Count’s House.



3 The Count’s House

This little building, built in the style of a Doric monument, is a summerhouse. It’s believed to have been built sometime around the 1820s for a Polish man who lived in the area and called himself ‘Count’ Joseph Boruwlaski. You can find out more about him in the Cathedral, where he is buried.

Photo opportunities

- Approach the building from the front right-hand side. If you crouch down with your back to the river and use your zoom, the building will appear larger than life with its columns forming a diagonal line to lead your eye into the image.
- The green of the trees behind the building gives a nice contrast to the warmth of the stone. If you’re photographing on a day with blue sky and fluffy white clouds then you should capture a stunning image.

Take the path up past the tennis courts, to the fork in the road where Prebends’ Bridge is on your left.

Cross the bridge and turn left. Follow the path until you come to a wooden bench and a viewing platform on your left. Head down towards the water’s edge, facing the bridge.



4 Prebends’ Bridge

This Durham City landmark offers fabulous views of the Cathedral and riverbanks. The bridge was built in the Romantic period of the 18th Century and the surrounding woodlands were planted around the same time.

This famous bridge has been captured by many artists over the years, including JMW Turner. Now, it’s your turn.

Photo opportunities

- Focus on the colourful buildings in the distance, using the arch of the bridge as a frame.
- Focus on the arch with the buildings out of focus in the background.
- Use the riverbank to lead your eye under the bridge towards the buildings.
- Focus on something close to you, like the reeds, a duck, or a tree, and leave the background out of focus.
- Crouch down low towards the water, or stand on the bench and hold the camera up high. Here’s your chance to get creative with your composition.

Head back up the path towards the bridge. Over the crossing, past the bridge, with the bridge on your right-hand side, head down the lower path towards the buildings.

Follow the path around behind the house to the flagged area with seats, and approach the wall next to the river.



5 Cathedral View

The last stop on our trail is a famous view across the river towards the Cathedral. The Cathedral was built between 1093 and 1133 in the Romanesque style; the towers provide its distinctive outline.

Photo opportunities

- Zoom in close to the Cathedral.
- Try an open shot across the river taking in the Cathedral on the other side.
- The diagonal direction of the weir creates a lovely leading line towards the Cathedral.
- Grab your tripod and attempt the tricky, but highly worthwhile ‘silky’ water shot using a slow shutter speed.

Head back over the bridge. The Cathedral is on your left and the trail starting point should be in view.

We hope you enjoyed this photography trail. For more information about the Woodlands and Riverbanks project please visit www.durhamcathedral.co.uk

Professional and amateur photographers alike have been enchanted by the famous view of Durham Cathedral standing tall above the River Wear, a vista which has been captured on camera countless times. Yet, the Cathedral's heritage woodlands and riverbanks offer endless photo opportunities, still waiting to be explored.

Discover the beauty of the woodlands and riverbanks with this special photography trail, and enjoy the peace and tranquility of this natural haven at the heart of Durham City.

From the wild garlic and bluebells which carpet the woodlands in spring, to the gold and russet shades which adorn the riverbanks in autumn, each season has its own charm.

Whether you already live in Durham, or are visiting, take a little time to stop, look and capture some images to take home and remind you of your day.

This family-friendly trail is for photographers of all ages and abilities. There are expert hints and tips of how to get the most out of your camera during your visit. The trail is approximately 1½ miles long and can take as long as you like depending on how many photos you take, and how long you stop for.

We start our woodland walk at the Cathedral's North Door and finish on the bank opposite. The route is easy going, with a few small hills along the way, and should be suitable for all seasons. Before departing the Cathedral, why not take some photographs of the exterior of Durham Cathedral itself, including the famous Sanctuary Knockers?

There are five photo stops on our trail, where you'll be challenged to consider light, focus and position. Starting at the Cathedral, you'll walk down to the riverbank and past the Old Fulling Mill. You'll capture the Storyteller's Chair, Prebends' Bridge and the buildings beyond, as well as the famous view of Durham Cathedral across the river.

We hope you enjoy your visit to Durham Cathedral and its heritage woodlands and riverbanks. If you'd like to receive information about services, events and other ways of being involved with the Cathedral such as volunteering, please contact events@durhamcathedral.co.uk or call 0191 386 4266.

The eighteenth-century woodlands and riverbanks at the heart of Durham City provide a unique setting for the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Durham Cathedral and Durham Castle. With support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Durham Cathedral's Heritage Woodlands and Riverbanks Project has rejuvenated this historic landscape, creating more opportunities for people to engage with the area through improved physical access, a programme of events and outdoor education sessions, and other learning and volunteering opportunities.



This trail is one of a series, to help residents and visitors to Durham become more aware of the rich natural and cultural heritage of the woodlands and riverbanks. Other trails in the series include: Pilgrimage, Geology, History and Nature.



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