

HERITAGE COUNTS 2011

NORTH WEST

Heritage Counts 2011 is the tenth annual survey of the state of England's historic environment. It is prepared by English Heritage on behalf of The North West Historic Environment Forum. Visitors to the Heritage Counts website are able to download the full set of regional indicators and maps detailing the historic environment in their region from www.heritagecounts.org.uk. The data is in three sections; Understanding the Assets; the headline figures of asset numbers, Caring and Sharing looks at key trends in managing the historic environment, and Using and Benefiting has data on enjoying the benefits of the region's historic environment.

THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND BIG SOCIETY

New research shows that the historic environment can provide the context and means for people to get involved in their local areas. Heritage groups are an important source for community input into shaping areas, with 85% of civic societies responding to planning applications. They also provide opportunities for people to take part in their community, with 50% of The Heritage Alliance members offering volunteering opportunities. To encourage more people to play a part in their local heritage, Heritage Counts presents a checklist which local heritage groups can use to widen and strengthen community involvement in their projects and groups. Please see the national Heritage Counts report for more detail. www.heritagecounts.org.uk

HERITAGE COUNTS: INDICATOR DATA

UNDERSTANDING THE ASSETS

| Regional Assets | 2011 totals |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| World Heritage Sites | 15 |
| Scheduled Monuments | 1,316 |
| Listed Buildings Grade I | 485 |
| Listed Buildings Grade II* | 1533 |
| Listed Buildings Grade II | 25,511 |
| Registered Parks and Gardens | 130 |
| Registered Battlefields | 3 |
| Listed Places of Worship | 1,322 |
| Conservation Areas | 869 |
| Designated Museum Collections | 17 |
| Accredited Museums | 103 |
| Land in a National Park | 18% |
| Land in a AONB | 11% |

CARING AND SHARING

PLANNING APPLICATIONS TREND

During the last decade the pattern of planning applications decisions in the North West mirrors the national trend, reflecting the relative strength and confidence in the economy; namely a

steady rise to a peak in 2004/05, a slow decline to 2007/08 then a sharp drop to 2009/10. There was a 1% increase in the number of planning application decisions in 2010/11 in the North West including Lake District National Park, as compared to 2009/10 (41,392 in 2010/11). The trend for listed building consents is fairly steady until a peak in 2007/08, a very sharp decline (of 29%) between April 2008 and March 2010 – and an increase of 5% in the past year. Planning applications referred to English Heritage also showed an increase of 8% over last year's total. Conservation area consents including the National Park, have increased by 2% between 2009/10 to 2010/11 to 235.

LOCAL AUTHORITY CAPACITY

The recent cutbacks in local government budgets have hit the resources of the heritage sector hard across the country – with an average decrease in the numbers of local authority staff working on the historic environment of around 12% from 2009 to 2011. Some regions have been hit harder than others – the North West has suffered the most with a massive 33% reduction in local authority historic environment staff since 2009. This alarming picture could get worse as more cuts are likely over the next two years. English Heritage have been working with the Local Government Group, the Institute of Historic Building Conservation, Association

of Local Government Archaeology Officers and the Planning Officers Society to try to identify alternative models of working which might mitigate some of the harm done by these cuts to local historic environment services. These services are hugely important to the good management of the historic environment and the provision of even a reduced level of conservation service is dependant on the retention of skilled staff. The current situation is a cause for very grave concern.

GRANT SPENDING

The most important financial contributor to the region's historic environment is the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), which since its inception in 1994/95 has invested £528,573,382 to 3,159 projects in our region. Last year the HLF awarded grants of £26,688,813 to 120 projects, a 168% increase on the historically low total for 2009/10. English Heritage grants are mostly aimed at reducing the risks facing heritage assets in the region. Over the past decade English Heritage has invested over £23 million in grants in the North West region. However grant spending by English Heritage fell by 41% in 2010/11; (£1.9m) compared to 2009/10 (£3.2m) (Non-adjusted for inflation). With the exception of the 2009/10 total, the trend since 2006/07 has been a steady decline. Another important source of targeted funding to the historic environment is

the Environmental Stewardship Scheme, administered by Natural England, which offers farmers financial support towards their management of parts of the rural historic environment. Since 2005, there have been 2,525 Environmental Stewardship agreements investing a total of £3,203,263 in the North West.

Over the past decade of Heritage Counts reports, the combined public investment of the HLF, English Heritage and Natural England into the historic environment of our region has been more than £369 million.

USING AND BENEFITING

MIXED PICTURE FOR VISITOR NUMBERS

Overall participation in the historic environment remains strong in the North West, with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport Taking Part survey showing that 69% of adults had visited at least one historic site over the past 12 months. In 2010 there were 2.98m visits to heritage sites in the North West. Among those sites which had replied to the survey in both 2009 and 2010 there was a very small fall in visit numbers (3% decrease). Data from the National Trust shows a steady increase in the visit figures, with an increase of 38% over the last four years in the numbers of visits to its' pay for entry sites – with a further 3% rise last year on 2009/10 figures. In total there were 1,051,563 visits to National Trust staffed properties in the North West in 2010/11. English Heritage recorded a small decrease (of 4%) between 2009/10 and 2010/11 in the numbers of visitors to its seven staffed sites in the region to 181,000. There were at least 1,098,477 visits to Historic Houses Association member properties in 2010. Visits to museums in Manchester are slightly down on last years' totals, but two venues in particular recorded large increases in visitors; the Museum of Science and Industry visit numbers increased by 12% between 2009/10 and 2010/11, and the revamped People's History Museum, which focuses on labour history and democracy, had a massive increase of 47% in visitors this last year. Visits to the seven National Museums in Liverpool have increased by another 300,000 over the year – and now stand at 2,562,878 (2010/11). In July 2011 the new Museum of Liverpool Life opened at the Pierhead, and in the first two weeks alone had over 150,000 visitors. This museum is the largest newly-built national museum

in the UK for over a hundred years. The collections will demonstrate Liverpool's unique contribution to the world, showcasing popular culture whilst tackling social, historical and contemporary issues.



The New Museum of Liverpool at the Pierhead attracted over 150,000 visitors in its first 2 weeks of opening. © English Heritage

VOLUNTEERS

One of the last pieces of research the North West Development Agency commissioned was into the training and skills of volunteers working in the heritage tourism sector. The intention was to use the information to support the training and management of such volunteers, and ultimately, improve the visitor experience. More good volunteer guides across the North West, engaging with visitors, would deepen the quality of their experience and encourage repeat visits to the region. The survey findings demonstrate the importance of heritage volunteers in the North West. 87% of respondents said their venues used volunteers, corresponding to between 4,100 and 4,700 volunteers per year – in addition to the 1,600 to 1,900 paid members of staff. In total the volunteers at the venues surveyed were doing approximately 727 full time equivalent jobs – without which many institutions would struggle. Indeed 96% of respondents said that volunteers were critical to the success of their venue. One of the issues identified by the survey was the need for more relevant and affordable training. 72% of responding venues felt that investing in training and development of volunteers would help increase visitor numbers and repeat visits.

NEWLAND BLAST FURNACE

Newland Furnace was built in 1747 by Richard Ford and was one of eight charcoal fired and water powered furnaces in the area. It produced pig iron using charcoal until it closed in 1893, almost a century after the rest of the country had changed to coke fired furnaces. Since the last production ran the blast furnace has been slowly crumbling away. Giant beams collapsed, slates and firebricks became loose and fell to the

ground, and the site became used as a rubbish tip and dumping ground for cars.

The Newland Furnace Trust was formed in 1998 by a group of volunteers who wanted to stop the decay of the site and had worked on it since 1989. They acquired a 999 year lease for the site, giving them responsibility for ensuring that the furnace hearth and flue, the attached blowing chamber, and the charging house remain intact. The Trust has been awarded funding from Cumbria County Council, South Lakeland District Council, The Manifold Trust, Cumbria Amenity Trust, local individuals and English Heritage.

The site is open to the public for guided tours on Heritage Open Days and by arrangement with the Trust. Consent has recently been given for electric lighting to be installed in the charging house, which will increase the times the site can be open.

This is a good example of how a dedicated small group of volunteers can help to preserve our heritage, and indeed remove a site at risk from the English Heritage At Risk Register. It also illustrates the importance of public support and funding to these voluntary groups.



Newland Blast Furnace. © English Heritage

Produced on behalf of the North West Historic Environment Forum.

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