

State of the
Historic
Environment
Report 2002

**NORTH
WEST**

The State of the Historic Environment in the **North West** Region 2002

COVER IMAGE:
The Anderton Boat Lift, after a long period of disuse has been repaired and is now fully operational again, thus restoring to navigation a key link between the Trent and Mersey canal and the River Weaver, 15m below canal level. Constructed in 1875, British Waterways led the £7m project with practical and financial support from English Heritage, the Heritage Lottery Fund and a wide range of partners including the Waterways Trust, the Inland Waterways Association, the Anderton Boat Lift Trust and the Friends of the Anderton Boat Lift. It is estimated that the refurbished lift will generate £1.1m additional spend in the area.

The publication of the first annual State of the Historic Environment Report (SHER), of which this regional factsheet forms a part, offers the opportunity to collate relevant information and begin to analyse the condition of the historic environment in England. SHER 2002 is a pilot and the Historic Environment Review Steering Group is inviting comment on the format and content of the national and regional documents to ensure that they can be improved upon in future SHERs.

For this first year it has only been possible to produce a summary of basic information for the North West. In future years it is envisaged that this document will be more comprehensive. The Regional Historic Environment Forum will play a key role in guiding regional content and analysis, and will add to the basic content available from the national SHER data collection process. However, views on the usefulness of this document and what should be in the future regional SHERs are welcomed. All documents can be viewed at www.historicenvironment.org.uk

Please make your response by 28 February 2003 to:
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Although all the English Regions show tremendous diversity in the character of their historic environment, such diversity is especially strongly represented in the North West. The contrast between the urban industrial centres of Liverpool and Manchester with the high fells of the Lake District could scarcely be more marked, but each represent key elements of the historic environment. There are also links: in the third millennium BC Neolithic stone axes from Langdale and Scafell were traded widely across Britain – an early example of the innovative skills and technological advances which are the hallmark of the 18th and 19th century development of the region's two greatest cities.

If any reminder of the importance of the historic environment to the North West were needed, the devastating effect of Foot and Mouth Disease on Cumbria in particular provided it. The disease affected the historic environment in a number of different ways. Initially our concern was to work with MAFF / DEFRA to ensure that archaeological sites and historic buildings were not destroyed through mass burial and the cleansing and disinfecting regime at a time when the farmers were caught in the emotional trauma of the loss of livestock. Then it was a case of looking at the loss of visitors and income from English Heritage's own properties, as part of the wider impact on the tourist economy as a whole. In addition to the need to rebuild this economy there was also the wider concern that if only a low level of restocking took place the whole landscape, shaped by thousands of years of human interaction with the natural environment, would change for the worse. Fortunately the resilience of the agricultural community is diminishing this risk.

The historic environment is crucial to the image of the North West in the rest of England. While Hadrian's Wall and the Lake District provide examples of dramatic and beautiful landscapes, too often the outstanding legacy of our industrial towns and cities is characterised by misperceptions of grime and decline. Not only is this an inaccurate view as it ignores the outstanding civic, commercial and religious buildings born of the industrial revolution, but also the mills warehouses etc – the engines of industry themselves offer outstanding potential for adaptive re-use which retains the spectacular characteristics of these structures while providing for a 21st century community. The city living boom initiated in Manchester and now taking off in other parts of the region is an example of this, and provides a doubly sustainable way forward: less pressure on transport and infrastructure while preventing energy waste in demolition and new build. In Nelson, Lancashire, with significant community support, English Heritage is arguing strongly that the only part of this 19th century mill town which survives substantially intact should be the subject of a community led conservation approach, rather than the blunt instrument of clearance and new build currently proposed.

The North West Historic Environment Forum is addressing these issues by seeking to raise the profile of the outstanding qualities of the North West, and by defining the value of what we have inherited, both for its own sake and what it can contribute to the quality of life and economy of the Region. With one World Heritage Site, Hadrian's Wall, recognised as an important driver of the tourist economy widely-supported efforts are being made to achieve this status for the Lake District, Liverpool and Manchester / Salford, as a key element in seeking to change the image of the region for the better.

An integrated approach to these issues is beneficial: this is well demonstrated by the overarching nature of the Historic Environment of Liverpool Project, composed of modules for Buildings at Risk, World Heritage Site, education and community involvement etc. The fact that the project allows these strands to be drawn together is leading to significant investment by partner organisations, such as the North West Development Agency, which otherwise would have been difficult to unlock. The attitudes of local communities to projects such as this is fundamental: the initial testing of attitudes to Liverpool's historic environment by MORI showed a huge level of pride in the heritage of the city and a real desire to ensure this was not needlessly lost. Similarly when English Heritage initiated a project on the sporting legacy of the region there was tremendous public interest and support.

There are big issues still to tackle, in particular buildings at risk, the role of the historic environment in regeneration and changing outdated perceptions of the region. The historic environment sector has to work on a number of fronts – through regional planning guidance, the North West Cultural Consortium and by engaging more fully with the Regional Assembly. The assessment of the current state of the historic environment is absolutely critical to advancing on these and other fronts, because it provides, for the first time, baseline figures on the components which together make up the historic character of the North West.

REGIONAL PROFILE¹

- The North West, at 14,165 sq km, is close to the average size of an English region.
- The total population of the North West is 6,880,500 compared to an average for English regions of 5,528,100. Its population is the third highest for an English region.
- There is an average of 486 people per sq km in the South West, the highest of all English Regions after London. The average density in England is 381 people per sq km.

- The Gross Domestic Product of the North West in 1999 was £77,562m, above the average for English regions of £73,300m, and 12% of the total for England of £660,200m.
- The North West has 2607 sq km of the total 9934 sq km of National Park in England covering 18% of the total region, which is more than twice the average for England at 8%.
- The North West has 1570 sq km of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty covering 11% of the region compared to the average coverage for England which is 16%. The region has 6km of England's 1041km of total Heritage Coast.

THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT OF THE NORTH WEST

SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

- In July 2002 there were 1309 scheduled monuments in the NW compared to 1242 in 2000. This represents an above-average increase of 5.1%. The average number of monuments in a region is 2204.
- 64 applications for Scheduled Monument Consent were made in the NW in 2001/2 compared to a national average of 88.
- One indicator of the degree of pressure on the stock of monuments is the number of Scheduled Monument Consent cases as a proportion of all Scheduled Monuments. In the NW this was 4.9% compared to a national figure of 4%².

LISTED BUILDINGS

- In March 2002 the NW had 25,795 entries on the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, which was 6.9% of the national total.
- In 2002, 6.5% of the region's Grade I and II* Listed Buildings were classified as being at Risk. It was significantly above the national average of 3.7% although it represents a small fall of 0.3% on 2001. Although around two thirds of local authorities in England have local BAR Registers that cover buildings of all grades, there is currently no regional analysis of the contents. Nationally, the average number of entries on such lists is around 50.
- 8.0% of the entries in the NW on the 2002 English Heritage BAR Register were capable of economic repair (i.e. unlikely to require some public subsidy). The national figure is 12.8% but the latter is inflated by the large number of buildings in London capable of economic repair.

¹ Regional Profile information from *Regional Trends 2001* on www.statistics.gov.uk

² As some monuments will have more than one application in a year and scheduled monument consent is not always applied for, this figure should be treated with caution and is one indicator of relative pressure for change.

³ *Local Authority Conservation Provision* by Oxford Brookes University for the IHBC and EH, 2002.

⁴ As (2) above.

⁵ English Heritage.

⁶ Regulations require that planning applications in or affecting the setting of conservation areas that cover more than 1000sq.m. or where a proposal is more than 20m high should be referred to English Heritage.

- The Local Authority Conservation Provision (LACP) report³ found that local authorities in the region had an average of 51.8 buildings at risk of all grades on their local Buildings at Risk List, above the national average. However, in the North West this represented 8.8% of all listed buildings being at risk. This is above the national average of 5% and the highest of any region in England.
- In the NW in 2001/2 765 listed building consent applications were notified to English Heritage which is consulted on the more important proposals: an average of 1 application for every 34 listed buildings (the figure for all regions except London was 1 for every 64 listed buildings). 2000/01 there were a total of 1756 listed building consent applications made to local authorities in the region, an average of 1 application for every 15 listed buildings⁴ compared to a national average (excluding London) of 1 for every 13 listed buildings.

CONSERVATION AREAS

- In June 2002 the NW had 674 conservation areas⁵. The average number of conservation areas per English Region was 1003.
- During 2001/2 in the NW, English Heritage was notified of 438 substantial applications in conservation areas⁶. This equates to around 0.6 major applications per conservation area in a year. The average per region was 558 applications or 0.6 major applications per conservation area.
- One way of measuring how conservation areas are being managed is the number of Conservation Area Appraisals that have been adopted by local authorities. In the NW an average of 6 Appraisals had been adopted per local authority by June 2002, compared to a national average of 8.

WORLD HERITAGE SITES

- The NW has one of England's fourteen World Heritage sites: Hadrian's Wall (designated in 1987 and also part in the NE). It has an active steering committee, adopted management plan and adopted Local Plan policies.
- Three of the twelve sites in England on the UK Government's Tentative list are in the NW. These are The Lake District, Liverpool Commercial Centre and Waterfront, and Manchester and Salford Mills (Ancoats, Castlefield and Worsley).

HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS, AND REGISTERED BATTLEFIELDS

- In October 2002 there were 123 entries on the Historic Parks and Gardens Register in the NW, compared to an average per region of 170. 29 sites have been added to the Register since 2000.
- Three of England's 43 Registered Historic Battlefields are in the NW.

RESOURCES

- In 2001/2, English Heritage offered £2,404,000 in the NW region (9% of the total for England) which included £700,000 on secular grants, £175,000 on church grants, £1,529,000 on area grants (HERS).
- The LACP survey reported that 46% of local authorities in the region had a historic building grant programme, compared with a national average of 51%. The average grant budget for historic buildings for an average NW region was £8,756 compared to the national average of £19,779.
- The Heritage Lottery Fund offered grants during 2001/2 of £18,830,000 in the NW region (7.9% of the total for England). This included £4,287,000 for Places of Worship and £4,287,000 on Townscape Heritage Initiative and Urban Parks Programme.
- The LACP survey found that in the NW the average level of staffing for historic building conservation per local authority was 1.2 compared to a national average of 1.7. A figure for local authority archaeological staff will be available for next year.



ENGLISH HERITAGE