



ENGLISH HERITAGE

HERITAGE AT RISK



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NORTH EAST

HERITAGE AT RISK

'To Town and Tower; to Down and Dale; to tell red Flodden's dismal tale'. The Heritage at Risk Register will never match the verse of Sir Walter Scott, yet it has an equally compelling story to relate. That so many of the sites on the Register can be found woven within the lines of Scott's *Marmion: A Tale of Flodden Field* underlines that they were already recognised for their historic importance more than two hundred years ago. English Heritage's at risk Register has grown in recent years to include an ever-wider range of historic assets, from individual listed buildings and scheduled monuments to registered parks and gardens, conservation areas, registered battlefields and even protected wreck sites. This year, we undertook a pioneering 15% sample survey of England's 14,500 listed places of worship to help us understand the condition of the thousands of designated churches, chapels, synagogues, mosques and temples and other faith buildings that are the spiritual focus for our communities. They face many different kinds of challenges and we need to help congregations ensure their future. Just as at Flodden, there is a battle to be fought but, unlike the decisive action of 1513, this one cannot be resolved in a matter of days.

Encouragingly, some skirmishes are already being won; this year, for the first time, the number of listed buildings on the regional Heritage at Risk Register has slipped below the benchmark of 115 set in 1999. This is very positive news, especially in a climate of ongoing economic uncertainty. And, although English Heritage has given grant aid to several of these sites, such as the Tyne Theatre in Newcastle and St Lawrence's Church in Warkworth, progress elsewhere is down to the efforts of owners and other organisations.

Amidst this success, there are reasons to be wary – as evidenced by the loss of the grade II* Brunswick Methodist Chapel in Stockton, which collapsed in bad weather after a new owner had bought it for repair. The financial climate, too, is of deep concern and there is a danger that adverse economic conditions may continue to suppress the investment needed to repair and reuse heritage assets. Several projects in the Region remain on hold for this very reason. Yet, past evidence shows that investing in historic sites can be a powerful trigger in revitalising communities, which is why English Heritage is funding new conservation area partnership schemes in Amble and Berwick.

With so many historic assets to maintain with ever-tighter budgets, partnership working is vital. For example, a current Heritage Lottery Fund scheme is centred in the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

With contributions from English Heritage, it has allowed the condition of sites such as Shildon Cornish Engine House to be improved to the point at which they will soon no longer be at risk. Natural England and English Heritage have worked together in many different places in recent years and this collaboration is bearing ever more fruit. A recent example involved the repair of the 16th century bastle east of Shittleheugh, Northumberland. The ruins have now been stabilised and the project has demonstrated once again the value of investing in traditional heritage skills – the company that undertook the works employs staff who were taught skills such as lime mortar repair at Blenkinsopp Castle, a site that was itself removed from the at risk Register in 2009.

Maintaining our historic assets is an ongoing battle. However, there are many reasons to be optimistic. It won't become a 'dismal tale' as long as the Heritage at Risk Register can inform the battle plan for all those involved, whether in town, tower, down or dale.



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OLD SUNDERLAND

Old Sunderland and Sunderland Riverside are contiguous conservation areas that have been hit hard by the financial uncertainty of recent times. High Street (East and West) contains many fine buildings dating from the late 18th to the late 19th centuries but many are in an advanced state of dilapidation. Schemes have been devised to repair buildings and regenerate the area but these are being stymied by commercial and residential markets so flat that the attendant business risk is too high to attract fresh investment. Until the economic climate improves, historic assets in the area remain at high risk of further decline.

LISTED BUILDINGS

- 1 in 32 (3.1%) grade I and II* listed buildings are at risk across the country. In the North East, this rises to 6.6% (75 sites).
- 11 buildings were removed from the regional Register during the year, but 3 new sites have been added.
- Since publication of the 1999 baseline Register, 51.3% (59) of the region's buildings at risk have been removed from the regional Register as their futures have been secured, compared to the national figure of 50.7% (724).
- Nationally, £6.2m was offered to 76 sites on the Register during 2009/10. In the North East region we awarded grants totalling £1.1m to 8 sites.

CONSERVATION AREAS

- 272 local authorities (81%) have taken part in our national survey of conservation areas, including all 13 of those in the North East region.
- We now have information for 7,388 of England's 9,300 designated conservation areas, of which 245 are in our region.
- 549 (7.4%) of the conservation areas for which we have information are at risk, 20 (8.2%) of them in North East.

SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

- Approximately 1 in 6 (17.2%) of England's 19,731 scheduled monuments are at risk, compared with 14.4% (198 sites) in the North East.
- The total at risk has fallen by 140 (4%) since 2009, 7 of which (3.4%) were in our region.
- Arable ploughing and unrestricted plant, scrub or tree growth account for nearly two thirds of sites at risk. In the North East, the latter are responsible for nearly half (45%) of the sites at risk.
- Nationally, 82% of scheduled monuments at risk are in private ownership, rising to 86% in the North East.
- Of the £450k offered in grants to owners of scheduled monuments at risk in 2009/10, £22k was awarded to 9 sites in our region.

REGISTERED PARKS AND GARDENS

- 1 in 16 of England's 1,606 registered parks and gardens are at risk, with an increase from 6.0% (96) in 2009 to 6.2% (99) this year. In the North East, only 2 of our 53 sites are at risk (3.8%).
- Nationally, 5 sites have been added and 2 removed from the Register. There has been no change in the North East.

REGISTERED BATTLEFIELDS

- Of the 43 registered battlefields in England, 6 are considered to be at risk, 1 less than in 2009.
- Of the 6 registered battlefields in the North East, 1 is at risk (Newburn Ford).

PROTECTED SHIP WRECKS

- Of the 46 protected wreck sites around England's coast, 8 are at risk, a fall of 1 since 2009, due to the implementation of an improved management regime.
- The North East's 1 protected wreck site is not considered to be at risk.



SEATON DELAVAL, NORTHUMBERLAND

In 2009, the National Trust acquired the Seaton Delaval estate in the wake of a major public funding appeal. Restoration of its landscaped park will be carried out with a strong emphasis on education and training and the involvement of volunteers.

THERE ARE **75** BUILDINGS AT RISK IN THE REGION

14.4% OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS ARE AT RISK IN THE NORTH EAST

8.2% OF CONSERVATION AREAS SURVEYED IN THE REGION ARE AT RISK

£1.1 MORE THAN MILLION OF GRANTS WERE OFFERED TO SITES ON THE 2009 REGISTER

CARING FOR PLACES OF WORSHIP

Places of worship make a huge contribution to our towns and villages. They sit at the heart of communities, dominating skylines and landscapes. They are the product of centuries of invested skill and philanthropy. Most remain as places of prayer and spirituality but others have acquired new social uses that benefit a much wider cross-section of urban and rural society.

Like all buildings, they require regular maintenance to keep them in good condition. They also need to adapt to the evolving needs of their congregations and the wider community. Responsibility for their care falls almost entirely on the shoulders of volunteers, and for many smaller congregations the burden can be heavy.

We have therefore undertaken a series of consultation events with congregations, user groups and local authorities to identify the biggest concerns of those who manage these very special places. Places of Worship are particularly close to the heart of local communities, but in practice it is often just a handful of dedicated individuals who maintain them. They face unique challenges, which are illustrated in an accompanying report.

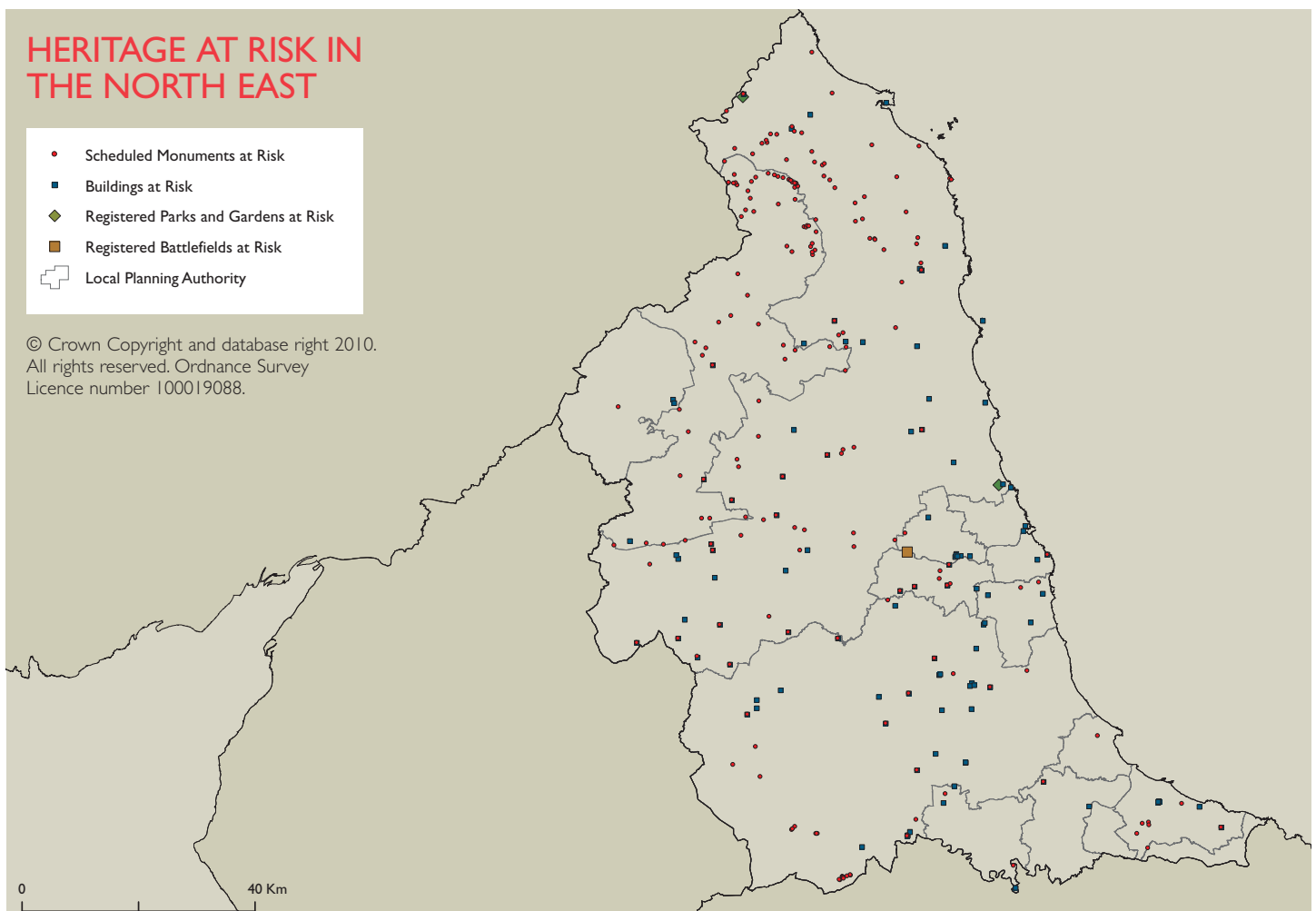
What we know

- 45% of all grade I buildings are places of worship.
- 85% of listed places of worship belong to the Church of England.
- Up to 1 in 10 could be at risk from leaking roofs, faulty gutters or eroding stonework.
- 1,850 repair projects at 1,567 buildings have shared £171m of English Heritage and Heritage Lottery Fund grant aid since 2002/3.

What congregations want to understand better

- Why their building has been listed and what that means.
- How to get permission to make changes and find expert help.
- How to raise money for one-off projects and day-to-day maintenance.
- Who will look after their buildings in the future.

All of these are considered in our booklet *Caring for Places of Worship*, sent to every listed place of worship.



For more information, see
www.english-heritage.org.uk/risk
or contact your English Heritage regional office.

If you would like this document in a different format, please contact our customer services department on telephone: 0870 333 1181 fax: 01793 414926 textphone: 01793 414878 email: customers@english-heritage.org.uk