

ENGLISH HERITAGE

# HERITAGE AT RISK

NORTH WEST



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This is the third year English Heritage has produced its Heritage at Risk Register – a document that records the health of England's historic environment and shows where action is needed. The Register is analysed by region, and is searchable online via our website at [www.english-heritage.org.uk/risk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/risk). Having begun in 1998 with grade I and II\* listed buildings, the Register today includes scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields, protected wreck sites and conservation areas at risk of damage and decay or from development pressure. 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.

The North West region has a relatively high percentage of historic assets at risk, particularly listed buildings. This is partly a reflection of the region's post-industrial economy; disused industrial buildings, such as Backbarrow Iron Works in Cumbria or the Stanley Dock warehouses in Liverpool have been on the Register since its inception in 1998. The North West was a frontier region in Roman, medieval and later periods. This turbulent history has left a legacy of military installations and defended houses and castles, some of which are also at risk. Tower houses such as at Arnside and castles such as Gleaston in Cumbria are examples. Finding new uses for historic buildings and sufficient money to repair scheduled monuments and make these places accessible to the public remains a challenge.

However, the past year has seen some successful responses to these challenges. English Heritage staff have focused much effort on scheduled monuments at risk. Working with owners and partners, such as Natural England, positive results are being achieved. At the historic Cockpits at Lymm in Warrington, for example, invasive undergrowth has been cleared and a management agreement is now in place, funded by a Higher Level Stewardship grant from Natural England. We have also supported local authorities in their efforts to encourage owners of buildings at risk to undertake repairs. This has been particularly successful in the Ropewalks area of Liverpool where partners have included Heritage Lottery Fund, the North West Development Agency and the City Council, but much remains to be done.

In recent years, we have been pleased to see a steady reduction in the number of sites on our regional at risk Register, but there is evidence that the economic recession is now having an impact on the historic environment. There are now fewer cases where the market can deliver solutions on its own, while cuts in public subsidy make closing the conservation deficit much more difficult. For example, work to convert the Royal Insurance building in Liverpool to a hotel has stopped due to the unfavourable economic climate. Elsewhere, projects that have been approved through the planning system cannot start until the financial outlook improves. Levels of subsidy through European funding have also been hit by the unfavourable exchange rate.

In response to these difficulties, we will increasingly focus our resources on 'stopping the rot' – making sure that the decay of significant historic places can be arrested in the medium term to allow them to take advantage of any future economic upturn.



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## THE WEAVERS' TRIANGLE, BURNLEY

Once the cotton-weaving capital of the world, many of the buildings in this conservation area are derelict. The North West Development Agency provided funding to help Burnley Council acquire much of the site from a recession hit owner. A steering group comprising English Heritage, North West Development Agency, Heritage Lottery Fund, Regenerate Pennine Lancashire and the Prince's charities supports the Council. Urgent repairs are in progress and a development prospectus has been published. English Heritage is providing expert advice and financial assistance.

## LISTED BUILDINGS

- 1 in 32 (3.1%) grade I and II\* listed buildings are at risk across the country. In the North West this rises to 5.1% (103 sites).
- 6 sites were removed from the 2009 regional Register during the year, but 5 new sites have been added.
- Since publication of the 1999 baseline Register 42.1% of the region's buildings at risk (66) 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 West we awarded grants to 12 sites totalling £1.1m.

## CONSERVATION AREAS

- 272 local authorities (81%) have taken part in our national survey of conservation areas, 29 of which were in the North West region.
- We now have information for 7,388 of England's 9,300 designated conservation areas, of which 680 are in our region.
- 549 (7.4%) of the conservation areas for which we have information are at risk, 64 (9.4%) of them in the North West.

## SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

- Approximately 1 in 6 (17.2%) of England's 19,731 scheduled monuments are at risk, compared with 14.8% (194 sites) in the North West.
- The total at risk has fallen by 140 (4.0%) since 2009, 3 of which (1.5%) were in the North West.
- Across the country arable ploughing and unrestricted plant, scrub or tree growth account for nearly two thirds of sites at risk. In our region general deterioration is the next most common issue.
- Nationally, 82% of scheduled monuments at risk are in private ownership, falling slightly to 81% in the North West.
- Of the £450k offered to owners of scheduled monuments at risk in 2009/10, £46k was awarded to 3 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 West, 6 of our 130 sites are at risk (4.6%).
- Nationally, 5 sites have been added and 2 removed from the Register. 1 has been added in North West, Thornton Manor (grade II\*).

## REGISTERED BATTLEFIELDS

- Of the 43 registered battlefields in England, 6 are considered to be at risk, 1 less than in 2009.
- None of our 3 registered battlefields are at risk.

## PROTECTED SHIP WRECKS

- Of the 46 protected wreck sites around England's coast, 8 are at risk, 1 less than in 2009, due to the implementation of an improved management regime.
- There are no protected wreck sites off the coast of the North West.



### SCARISBRICK HALL

Alongside their ambitious plans for the main house, Scarisbrick Hall's new owners are working with English Heritage to decide how best to rejuvenate its important but sadly neglected landscape park.

THERE ARE

**2,017**

GRADE I AND II\*  
LISTED  
BUILDINGS  
IN THE NORTH WEST

**14.8%**

OF THE  
REGION'S  
SCHEDULED  
MONUMENTS  
ARE AT RISK

**9.4%**

OF  
CONSERVATION  
AREAS SURVEYED  
IN THE REGION ARE  
AT RISK

**£1** OVER  
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.

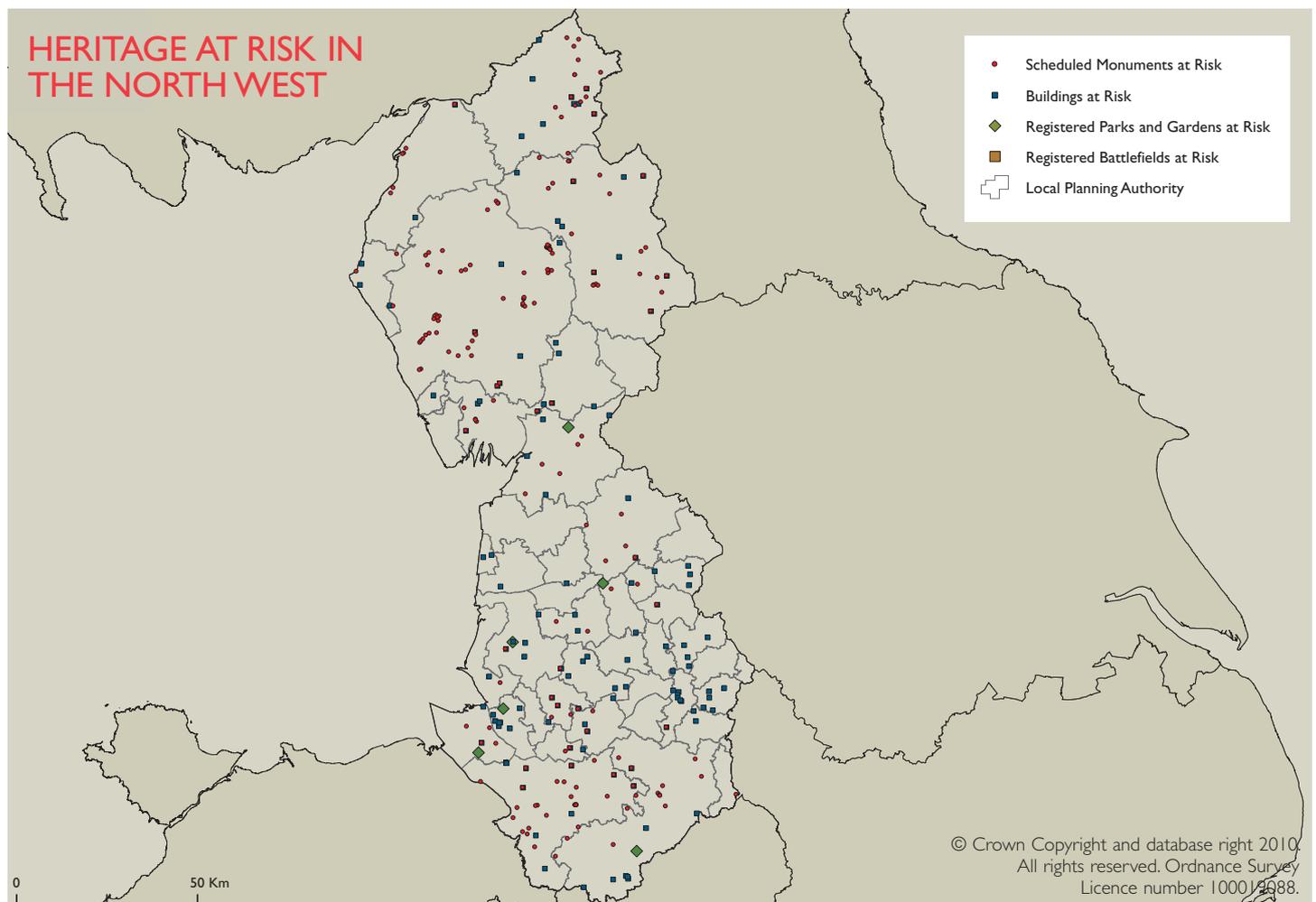
### What we know

- 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](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/risk) or contact your English Heritage regional office.

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