



ENGLISH HERITAGE

# HERITAGE AT RISK

2012

NORTH WEST



# HERITAGE AT RISK

Despite the challenges of recession, the number of sites on the Heritage at Risk Register continues to fall. Excluding listed places of worship, for which the survey is still incomplete, 1,150 assets have been removed for positive reasons since the Register was launched in 2008. The sites that remain at risk tend to be the more intractable ones where solutions are taking longer to implement.

While the overall number of buildings at risk has fallen, the average conservation deficit for each property has increased from £260k (1999) to £370k (2012). We are also seeing a steady increase in the proportion of buildings that are capable of beneficial re-use – those that have become redundant not because of any fundamental lack of potential, but simply as the temporary victims of the current economic climate.

Almost 100 years ago, the British War Department requisitioned land at Hooton Park near Ellesmere Port. By 1917 the park was the home of Royal Flying Corps squadrons where pilots trained for action in France. Planes were housed in three double hangars where no single piece of timber in the roof structure was more than 6 foot long. The 'Belfast trusses', developed in the shipyards of Northern Ireland, were strong and cheap to build, but no one thought the hangars would be there 95 years later, after vital service in the assembly of military aircraft during the Second World War and subsequent use by the Vauxhall motor company.

One hangar has collapsed, but with a grant from English Heritage and an endowment from Vauxhall, the Hooton Park Trust has saved a second and plans to secure the third remaining one. The Trust intends to open the hangars, so that their remarkable role in modern history is available to all.

There have been other successes. Flood damage at the shieling (agricultural settlement) at Scale Beck in Cumbria had caused the nearby stream to change course, eroding the medieval remains. The Lake District National Park Authority, with support from volunteers, returned the stream to its original channel and is eradicating bracken, the roots of which destroy underlying archaeology.

Over the next three years, the Park and its volunteers will remove bracken from other scheduled monuments with the assistance of petrol strimmers funded by English Heritage. Critical to the success of these ventures is Natural England's Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme. With our financial support, the National Park dedicates staff time to working with Natural England in targeting HLS resources to save monuments at risk.

Altogether 4 buildings, 12 monuments and 3 conservation areas in the North West have been removed from the Register this year for entirely good reasons. But it is not all good news. Other priority sites such as the London Road Fire and Police Station in Manchester remain at risk, despite a commitment from the owner to start remedial work last year.

And as we improve our evidence, so 7 more secular buildings, 48 places of worship and 26 conservation areas have had to be added to this year's Register. Nevertheless, we are on course to achieve the target agreed with the Department for Culture Media and Sport to remove for positive reasons 25% (75) of the 301 entries on the 2010 Register by 2015. Thus far 37 sites have been successfully taken out of risk.

There are challenges ahead: the lack of resources in a recession and the loss of Conservation Officers as councils make savings. The latter are critical to achieving success on the ground. But, with the reshaping of English Heritage's local teams to provide a sharper focus on Heritage at Risk, and continued attention to priority places, progress can be sustained and priceless parts of our heritage will be saved.



**Henry Owen-John**  
Planning and Conservation Director,  
North West

## HOOTON HANGARS, ELLESMERE PORT, CHESHIRE

Constructed in 1917, this rare grade II\* Belfast aircraft hangar had fallen into a state of severe disrepair. Prefabricated buildings of this kind were never intended to last 100 years and their roofs are now unable to cope with the volumes of rainwater they receive. However, the local Hooton Park Trust is determined to bring this and a second surviving hangar back into beneficial use. © English Heritage

## BUILDINGS AT RISK

- Nationally, 3.0% of grade I and II\* listed buildings are at risk. In the North West this rises to 5.4% (109 buildings).
- 4 buildings at risk were removed from the 2011 North West Register, but 7 have been added.

## PLACES OF WORSHIP AT RISK

- Of the 297 listed places of worship surveyed in the North West, 75 are at risk. 48 have been added this year.

## SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

- 3,286 (16.6%) of England's 19,759 scheduled monuments are at risk, of which 187 are in the North West.
- In the North West, 12 scheduled monuments have been removed from the 2011 Register for positive reasons, and 6 have been added.
- 20.8% of scheduled monuments (35) on the North West's baseline 2009 Register have been removed for positive reasons, compared to the national figure of 15.8%.
- Nationally, damage from arable cultivation is the greatest risk factor for scheduled monuments, accounting for 44% of those at risk. In the North West the proportion is only 18%. The greatest threat for over half (55%) of scheduled monuments in the North West is from unrestricted plant, scrub and tree growth.

## REGISTERED PARKS AND GARDENS

- 99 (6.1%) of England's 1,617 registered parks and gardens are at risk, a decrease from 103 (6.4%) in 2011. In the North West, 7 (5.3%) of our 133 sites are at risk.
- Nationally, 5 sites were removed from the 2011 Register and 1 has been added. There has been no change in the North West.

## REGISTERED BATTLEFIELDS

- Of the 43 registered battlefields in England, 6 are at risk, 2 fewer than the 2008 baseline. None of the 3 registered battlefields in the North West are at risk.
- None of our 3 registered battlefields are at risk.

## PROTECTED WRECK SITES

- Of the 46 protected wreck sites off England's coast, 4 are at risk. Of the 10 sites on the 2008 baseline, 9 have been removed. There are no protected wreck sites off the coast of the North West.

## CONSERVATION AREAS

- We now have information on the condition of 7,976 of England's 9,770 conservation areas; 524 (6.6%) are at risk. Of the 760 conservation areas surveyed in the North West, 84 (11.1%) are at risk.
- 3 conservation areas were removed from the 2011 North West Register for positive reasons, but 26 have been added.



### FLAYBRICK MEMORIAL GARDENS, WIRRAL

First opened in 1864 and now listed grade II\*, the former Birkenhead Cemetery is today used mainly as a public garden. Some of its listed buildings as well as the grounds are in a poor condition; a Friends Group is working with the council to improve the area.

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**45%** OF  
BUILDINGS  
AT RISK ON  
THE 1999  
REGISTER HAVE BEEN  
**SAVED**

**84**  
CONSERVATION  
AREAS ARE  
AT RISK

**14.2%** OF  
SCHEDULED  
MONUMENTS  
ARE  
AT RISK

**£907k**  
IN GRANTS  
WAS OFFERED TO  
**15** SITES AT RISK

## PRIORITY HAR SITES

- Castle Hill motte and ditch system, Oldcastle, Cheshire
- Central General Service Hangar, South Road, Hooton, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire
- Church of St James, St James's Place, Liverpool, Merseyside
- Flaybrick Memorial Gardens, Wirral, Merseyside
- Police and Fire Station, London Road, Manchester
- Ribchester Roman fort (Bremetennacum), Ribchester, Ribbles Valley, Lancashire
- Shieling settlement close to the mouth of Scale Beck, Loweswater, Allerdale, Cumbria
- The Winter Gardens, Adelaide Street, Blackpool
- Whitesyke and Bentyfield Lead Mines, Alston Moor, Eden, Cumbria
- Wycliffe Congregational Chapel, Wellington Road North, Heaton Norris, Stockport

## GRADE II PILOT PROJECTS

English Heritage is looking for people to take part in pilot projects that will explore options for expanding the Heritage at Risk programme to include all grade II listed buildings.

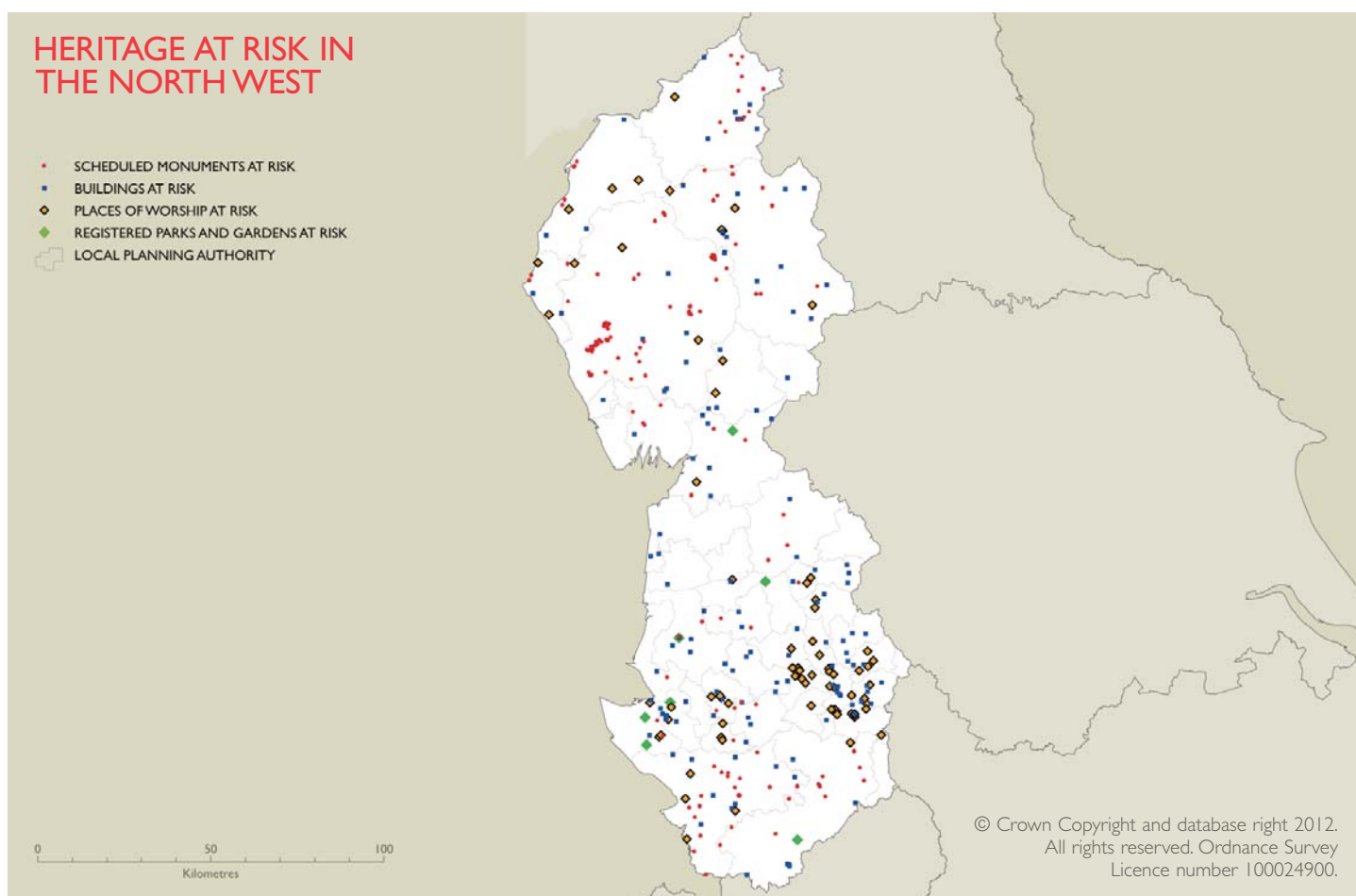
A maximum of 15 pilot projects are required to explore, cost and test various options for undertaking surveys of grade II listed buildings.

For more information and details on how to apply visit:

[www.english-heritage.org.uk/risk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/risk)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Principal Heritage at Risk Adviser; English Heritage North West, 3rd floor Canada House, 3 Chepstow Street, Manchester; M11 5FW.  
Telephone: 0161 242 1400 Email: [northwest@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:northwest@english-heritage.org.uk)



Find out what's at risk by searching or downloading the online Heritage at Risk Register at [www.english-heritage.org.uk/har](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/har)

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