

Heritage at Risk



Historic England

North West Summary 2016



Heritage at Risk is our campaign to save important historic sites and places from neglect and decay. There are 423 assets on the 2016 North West Register. They range from pre-industrial landscapes, historic stone circles and beautiful medieval churches, through to the vast Victorian textile mills that remind us of the pivotal role this region played in the industrial revolution. There's a huge amount of untapped economic potential in Heritage at Risk across the North West and we've had some real successes in tackling our regional priorities: **City Regions, Helping the High Street, Heritage and Tourism** and **Industrial Heritage**. This year has also seen some notable new challenges, with major threats posed by winter floods and fires. Nevertheless, we're delighted to announce that we're on course to meet our target of removing 15% of entries on our 2015 Register by 2018.

Catherine Dewar Planning Director, North West



We've had much to celebrate over the past year. 38 entries have been removed from our North West Register, and considerable progress has been made elsewhere.

Many endangered places require years of dedication

to turn their fortunes round. One example is Flaybrick Memorial Gardens in Birkenhead, a wonderful community asset and grade II* registered park and garden. Here, significant steps forward have been taken through a partnership between Historic England, Wirral Council and the Friends of Flaybrick. This is just one of several long-standing 'at risk' sites we're helping to regenerate within the **City Regions** of Liverpool and Manchester, supported by over £1 million of our grant aid.

Sometimes, however, disaster strikes overnight. Floods and fires pay no respect to heritage. Having a dedicated Heritage at Risk Team has enabled Historic England to respond quickly to these events. With historic settlements often centred around sources of water, it's no surprise that the unprecedented 2015/16 winter storms wreaked havoc across the region's heritage. Commercial activity and, especially in Cumbria, tourism were badly hit. Our case study explains how Historic England responded to the flooding to help rescue individual sites and plan strategically for similar future

events, supporting our **Helping the High Street** and **Heritage and Tourism** priority themes.

The past year has seen a spike in the number of fires at protected sites. Two grade II* listed buildings – Tudor Wythenshawe Hall, Manchester and Georgian Daresbury Hall, Cheshire – were ravaged by fire. Thanks to the quick and measured response of the emergency services both buildings have escaped total devastation. However, considerable effort is required to repair and bring them back into use.

We're now working closely with fire and rescue services to reduce the likelihood of occurrences elsewhere. The region's protected **industrial heritage** has proved particularly vulnerable, with several empty mills set ablaze. This comes as no surprise, as vacancy and lack of maintenance make buildings more susceptible to heritage crime.

Early intervention is crucial. Liverpool City Council has been using its statutory enforcement powers effectively for the past 25 years, tackling neglect early on. Historic England is keen to help other local authorities to do the same. We provide grants to underwrite urgent works, technical repair advice and support on legal processes, and would be pleased to hear from prospective partners. Working together is as important as ever in saving priceless parts of our heritage for the future.

Charles Smith Principal Adviser, Heritage at Risk

Cover image: Wythenshawe Hall is one of Manchester's last surviving timber framed buildings. Historic England placed the Hall on the Heritage at Risk Register following a major fire in March 2016, which tore through the grade II* listed structure, causing significant harm to its Tudor core. We have worked proactively to support the building's owner, Manchester City Council, in assessing damage, undertaking remedial works and planning for the future reuse of the Hall. The cause of the fire is subject to an on-going police investigation, demonstrating the susceptibility of some of our most valued historic sites to heritage crime.

Designated assets on the 2016 **North West** Register



There are **423** assets on the **North West** Register, **33** fewer than in 2015

Flaybrick Memorial Gardens **Birkenhead, Wirral**



Between the Mersey and the Irish Sea lies Flaybrick Memorial Gardens, one of England's most important registered garden cemeteries.

As Birkenhead's Victorian population grew, an 1843 Order of Parliament allowed creation of a new cemetery. Up-and-coming Edward Kemp, protégé

of leading designer Joseph Paxton, was selected as designer, with Liverpoolians Lucy and Littler employed as architects for the chapels and lodges.

Flaybrick offers a green lung for locals. However, an undercurrent of anti-social behaviour spoils enjoyment.

In the 1970s, burials stopped, the Roman Catholic chapel was demolished and the Non-Conformist and Anglican chapels fell into disrepair. By the 1980s, their roofs and spires had been removed for safety and vandalism was rife. The cemetery was added to the Heritage at Risk Register.

Set up in 1993, Friends of Flaybrick host guided walks and practical days, showing the cemetery the care and love it deserves.

Supporting their efforts, the owners, Wirral Council, are working closely with Historic England. We paid for a condition survey of the chapels, and urgent repairs costing £325,000 start this autumn, funded 50:50 by the two organisations. Having the chapels safe once again will greatly improve public perception.

The next step is a Conservation Management Plan, which we are also funding in partnership. This will help develop a sustainable long-term strategy. The project will involve the wider community, looking at the needs of the entire cemetery, from trees to landscape design to graves.

The challenges at Flaybrick are replicated elsewhere. Historic England therefore organised a successful training day on the understanding, management and celebration of historic cemeteries across Merseyside. Armed with ideas on best practice, we hope that other Friends Groups and Councils will be able to make informed decisions to protect these special landscapes.

Gaisgill Bridge Orton, Cumbria

The winter storms of 2015/16 brought serious flooding to the North West. Record-breaking rainfall caused major disruption to thousands of homes and roads across Cumbria, Greater Manchester and Lancashire.

Inevitably, the region's heritage took a big hit with 363 listed buildings, 43 conservation areas, 4 registered parks and gardens and 25 scheduled monuments located within flooded areas. Historic town centres, such as Rochdale, Whalley and Appleby-in-Westmorland, were particularly harmed. The overall cost of damage to designated heritage alone is an estimated £82 million.

As an emergency response, our local Historic Places Adviser spent four months dedicated to supporting flood-affected communities. In that time we have assisted other agencies in mapping affected sites, advised on technical repairs and started developing updated advice on flood resilience and remediation.

We also acted quickly to address flood damage to some of the region's most vulnerable heritage. In



addition to working with Council Highways teams on numerous bridges, we supported a private land occupier in saving Gaisgill packhorse bridge (pictured), a stunning 18th-century scheduled monument in an idyllic rural setting near Orton in Cumbria. We put together a Section 17 Management Agreement for urgent repairs and an on-going management programme, ensuring this beautiful landscape feature is preserved for future generations to enjoy.

50th Anniversary of Conservation Areas

In 2017, Historic England will celebrate the 50th anniversary of conservation areas. These precious historic areas, from urban and industrial to rural and remote, create a strong sense of place and are likely to be what you think of when you think of special local character.

We'll carry out research into people's attitudes towards conservation areas and the challenges they

face in protecting them. We also plan to analyse local authorities' conservation area survey data to better understand what puts conservation areas up and down the country at risk. Finally, at a time when local authority resources are under pressure, we'll ask how local civic groups and organisations can become more involved to help safeguard conservation areas.

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