



ENGLISH HERITAGE

# HERITAGE AT RISK

SOUTH WEST



# HERITAGE AT RISK

2010 marks the publication of the third edition of our Heritage at Risk Register. It identifies which of this country's most important grade I and II\* listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields, protected wreck sites and conservation areas are threatened by development pressures, neglect or decay. The Heritage at Risk Register also monitors the changing condition of assets to help us prioritise where our resources and expertise can best be deployed. 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.

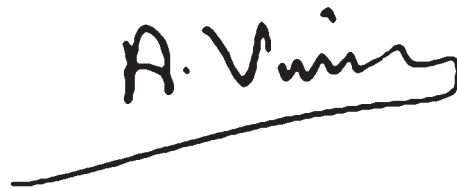
The expansion of the Heritage at Risk Register in the South West means our understanding of the threats facing our most important historic assets is improving year on year. However, finding solutions for so many, and such a diverse range of historic structures and places remains a challenge for us and our partners, not least in the current economic climate.

The global financial recession and its consequences are having an impact on progress in dealing with Heritage at Risk. Funding is becoming ever more difficult to obtain and competition is increasing for scarce public grants and subsidies. It is clear that capital spending, particularly by public sector bodies, will be squeezed for some time to come, which may mean significantly reduced investment in the repair and adaptation of publicly owned buildings and assets. Developers with the will and resources to take on 'at risk' buildings are becoming harder to find, and agreed development schemes may not now be implemented until the economy recovers. As a result, it may be that charitable and voluntary organisations such as building preservation trusts and friends groups have a greater role to play in saving vulnerable heritage assets.

A number of important buildings that have been at risk for several years have suffered further as a direct consequence of the economic downturn. Repair schemes at Tonedale Mills in Somerset, and the historic World War Two aerodrome at Yatesbury in Wiltshire both ceased when developers abandoned the site. The future of these buildings is particularly uncertain; their condition is once again deteriorating, their repair costs are rising, and it could take many years to find another suitable solution for them.

However, we have made progress in other areas over the last year. Devonport Guildhall and 81 Montpelier Terrace, Cheltenham, are among the buildings at risk that have been removed from the Register following the completion of repairs. We also have a strong partnership with Natural England that allows vulnerable scheduled monuments to be included in Higher Level Environmental Stewardship schemes. We are grateful to a number of local authorities for helping us to improve our shared understanding of the condition of the Region's conservation areas.

Tackling the most vulnerable historic assets is always challenging, and becomes even more so in a recession. We will use this time to target the most urgent repairs to ensure the most vulnerable sites are not lost.



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## TONEDALE MILLS, WELLINGTON, SOMERSET

The Tonedale woollen mill complex closed in the late 1990s after nearly two hundred years of operation. It is recognised as one of the best-preserved historic textile sites in the country, but its grade II\* buildings became progressively more derelict and were placed on the Buildings at Risk Register in 2001. Conversion work began in 2008, but the development was abandoned a few months later with the start of the economic downturn. Several government agencies are discussing possible solutions for the site, which is now in the hands of the official receiver.

## LISTED BUILDINGS

- 1 in 32 (3.1%) grade I and II\* listed buildings are at risk nationally. In the South West this falls to 2.2% (155 sites).
- 9 sites were removed from the 2009 regional Register during the year, but 17 new sites were added.
- Since publication of the 1999 baseline Register 55.4% of the region's buildings at risk (102) 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 South West we awarded grants totalling £594k to 8 sites.

## CONSERVATION AREAS

- 272 local authorities (81%) have taken part in our national survey of conservation areas, 28 of which were in the South West region.
- We now have information for 7,388 of England's 9,300 designated conservation areas, of which 920 are in the South West.
- 549 (7.4%) of the conservation areas for which we have information are at risk, 107 (11.6%) of them in our region.

## SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

- Approximately 1 in 6 (17.2%) of England's 19,731 scheduled monuments are at risk, this rises to 20.2% (1409 sites) in the South West region.
- The total at risk has reduced by 140 (4.0%) since 2009, of which 32 (2.2%) were in this region.
- Arable ploughing and unrestricted plant, scrub or tree growth account for nearly two thirds of sites at risk. The South West follows the national trend in this respect.
- Nationally, 82% of scheduled monuments at risk are in private ownership, falling to 75% in the South West.
- Of the £450k offered to owners of scheduled monuments at risk in 2009/10, £31k was awarded to 24 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 South West, 16 of our 293 sites are at risk (5.5%).
- Nationally, 5 sites have been added and 2 removed from the Register but no change in the South West.

## REGISTERED BATTLEFIELDS

- Of the 43 registered battlefields in England, 6 are at risk, 1 less than in 2009.
- None of the 8 registered battlefields in the South West is at risk following the removal of Langport from the Register during the year.

## PROTECTED SHIP WRECKS

- Of the 46 protected wreck sites around England's coast, 8 are at risk, a fall of 1 since 2009.
- 1 of the 23 protected wreck sites off the coast of the South West is at risk, a reduction of 1 since last year – the *Royal Anne* has been removed following the implementation of an improved management regime.



### LELANT, CORNWALL

More than one hundred and fifty of Cornwall's most vulnerable wayside crosses have recently been fitted with microchips to discourage their theft.

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THERE ARE

**7,093**

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

**20.2%** OF  
THE REGION'S 6,974  
SCHEDULED  
MONUMENTS  
ARE AT RISK

**11.6%** OF  
CONSERVATION  
AREAS SURVEYED  
IN THE REGION ARE  
AT RISK

**32** SITES  
ON THE  
2009 REGISTER  
RECEIVED  
GRANT AID

## 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.

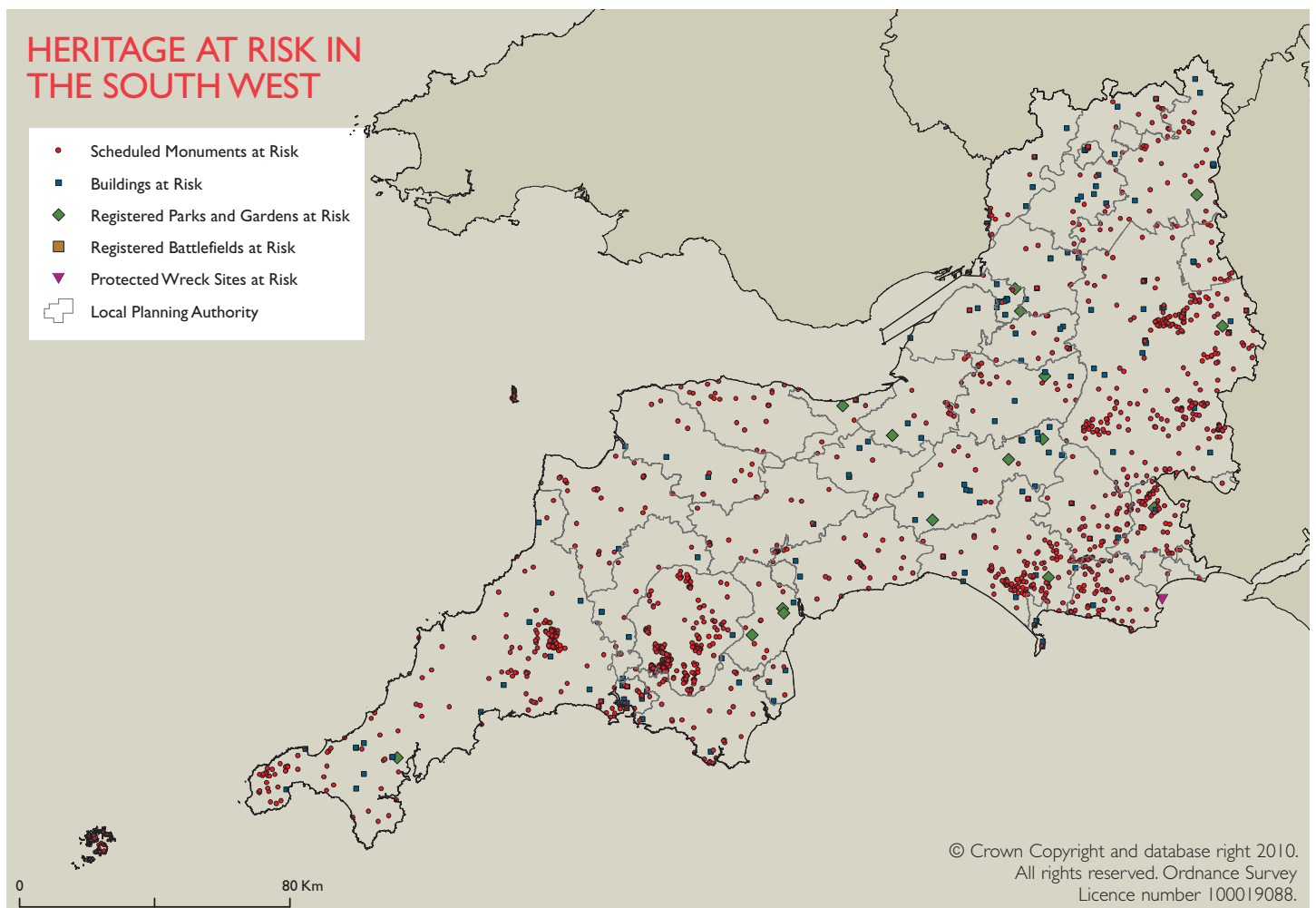
### What we know

- 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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