



ENGLISH HERITAGE

HERITAGE AT RISK

2014

WEST MIDLANDS



HERITAGE AT RISK

Heritage at Risk is our campaign to save listed buildings and important historic sites, places and landmarks from neglect or decay. At its heart is the Heritage at Risk Register, an online database containing details of each site known to be at risk. It is analysed and updated annually and this leaflet summarises the results.

Over the past year we have focused much of our effort on assessing listed Places of Worship, and visiting those considered to be in poor or very bad condition as a result of local reports. We now know that of the 14,775 listed places of worship in

England, 6% (887) are at risk and as such are included on this year's Register. These additions mean the overall number of sites on the Register has increased to 5,753. However, 575 sites have been removed from the 2013 Register, which includes one of our biggest achievements this year, Newman brothers Coffin Furniture Works, Birmingham.

Veryan Heal, Planning and Conservation Director, West Midlands

In 2013 there was an overall decrease in the number of scheduled monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens and conservation areas on the Heritage at Risk Register in the West Midlands. The increase in the number of listed places of worship on the 2014 Register reflects our focus on assessments for this type of listed building. The good news is that in the West Midlands the percentage at risk (5.2%) is lower than the national average. We attach priority to the challenge this presents for congregations and continue to fund Support Officers in the Dioceses of Hereford, Worcester and Lichfield and with their help, find solutions for places of worship at risk. Last year 16 were removed from the Register. The progress made at St Mary, Jackfield is testament to the great efforts being made by congregations to tackle the condition of their buildings.

Many of the archaeological sites, buildings and structures on the Register are not capable of economic use and some have been at risk for many years. Inspirational owners and imaginative solutions are needed for these sites which also tend to be heavily reliant on grant aid. We provided £1.4m in grants to 20 sites in 2013. We are currently working hard with Natural England to ensure that funding for the historic environment remains on the agenda for agri-environment schemes. In 2013 these were instrumental in delivering funding and solutions for many sites including Kilpeck Castle, Herefordshire; Creswell Chapel, Staffordshire and the Romano-British settlement remains near Evesham.

Partnerships continue to be central to our strategy for tackling heritage at risk in 2014. Their efficacy is shown by major achievements in the last year which include the repair and re-use of one of our top ten priority sites, Middleport Pottery, Stoke on Trent. Here, in addition to providing funding, we helped put together a team including the City of Stoke on Trent, The Prince's Regeneration Trust and Burleigh. The team won a substantial grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund which has saved the site and helped regenerate the locality. Helping broker such deals was also instrumental in the rescue of the Coffin Works in Birmingham and the Service Wing at Croome Court, Worcestershire.

The enthusiasm and commitment of owners is, of course, essential for a cared-for historic environment. Last year, almost half the sites removed from the Register were saved by owners, from the Old Foundry, Stourbridge rescued by a medical practice to Lilleshall park and garden and a moated site at Tardebigge in Worcestershire. Tapping into this will continue to be a core priority for our Heritage at Risk Team in 2014.



Sarah Lewis,
Principal Adviser, Heritage at Risk

CHURCH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN, JACKFIELD, TELFORD AND WREKIN

The first phase of repairs to the spire and roof at St Mary Jackfield are the result of the dedication, tenacity and fund-raising efforts of a small group at the church working with the Building Support and Community Partnership Officers at Hereford Diocese. Without their efforts this church might well have been abandoned. Instead, the need to raise funds has encouraged the parish to look beyond itself for help with the result that the church building is now more valued and supported by the community as a whole.

2014 WEST MIDLANDS REGISTER: WEST MIDLANDS

55 SITES REMOVED FROM THE **2013** REGISTER

£1.4m
20 SITES



WHAT'S ON THE HERITAGE AT RISK REGISTER?

51
CONSERVATION
AREAS (7.3%)



NATIONAL AVERAGE

WEST MIDLANDS

IN THE WEST MIDLANDS THERE ARE...



4%



5%

97
BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES



6%



5.2%

76
PLACES OF WORSHIP



15.2%

14.8%

210
SCHEDULED MONUMENTS



5.7%



4.6%

7
PARKS & GARDENS

...ON THE REGISTER



SNODHILL CASTLE, SNODHILL, HEREFORDSHIRE

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY:

The Marches are defined by the remains of castles erected by the Normans as they sought to control and subdue this turbulent area following the Conquest. Snodhill Castle however, stands out as a rare survival of a shell keep with gatehouse and high status accommodation occupied from the 12th to the 16th century. The scheduled monument includes the motte, keep, bailey, remains of bailey walls and towers, defensive earthworks and remnants of fishponds.

The elevated position of the castle affords fantastic views out over the Herefordshire countryside and into Wales. In modern times this romantic ruin became a favourite with local residents for picnics and walks. However, over the last 15 years it has become increasingly overgrown. The owners neglected the monument, preventing

grazing which in the past had kept the vegetation in check. Access is now difficult. The views have been obscured by trees and sections of the old castle walls have collapsed. Local residents have not forgotten Snodhill, however, as they recall what an asset it was and could be again.

IS IT AT RISK?

Snodhill Castle has been at risk since 1998; it is one of our top ten priorities in the West Midlands. The prime concerns are the unstable condition of some sections of the walls to the bailey and the keep. The motte is also home to badgers whose sets have undermined the walls. Unmanaged trees have collapsed, crushing areas of wall beneath them to the point where the remains of the keep and great hall are under threat. Ivy infests the remains of the bailey towers.

WHAT'S THE CURRENT SITUATION?

In 2013 English Heritage helped to negotiate a long lease of the castle to the locally based Vivat Trust. Vivat organised volunteers to carry out vegetation clearance and English Heritage had the monument fully surveyed. Our engineers and architects have inspected the upstanding remains and identified priorities for urgent stabilisation works. We will be working with the Trust over the next year to undertake a more detailed condition survey, design a programme of urgent repairs and source funding. At the same time, we hope to explore the scope for a community based Heritage Lottery Fund project. This would deliver longer term conservation and management of the site with improved access, interpretation and community involvement.

HELP HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic buildings are irreplaceable; they give us our sense of place and contribute to our quality of life. These precious buildings need to be looked after for future generations, but how do we know what needs our help the most? English Heritage is encouraging community groups, volunteers, building owners and local authorities, across the country to come together to record the condition of grade II listed buildings in their area. Volunteers will visit a selection of grade II buildings local to them and answer questions, in the form of a survey, about the condition of the building. This information will be collected together and shared with local planning authorities to help identify those grade II buildings most at risk. Visit www.english-heritage.org.uk/help/historicbuildings to find out more.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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LILLESBALL HALL, NEAR NEWPORT, SHROPSHIRE

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY:

A grade II registered park and garden, Lilleshall was originally a private country estate with a mansion and grounds that appear to have been by a partnership between Sir John Wyattville and the 2nd Duke of Sutherland's wife. After a period as one of the earliest country house visitor attractions in England, Lilleshall was developed as a National Sports Centre, offering a range of facilities to help athletes develop sporting excellence. A separate part of the historic estate is laid out as a golf course.

IS IT AT RISK?

Lilleshall was included in the first group of registered parks and gardens to be added to the Heritage at Risk Register in 2009. The intrusiveness and insensitive location of some post-war development and the lack of an overall plan (informed by the historic significance of the site) were the principal reasons why the site was added to the Heritage at Risk Register.

Lilleshall was removed from the Heritage at Risk Register in 2014 thanks to the strategic work carried out by the National Sports centre in delivering a comprehensive conservation management plan

which has led to a better understanding of the heritage of the site as a whole.

WHAT'S THE CURRENT SITUATION?

Following contact by English Heritage, the National Sports Centre has funded a comprehensive conservation management plan which sets out parameters for future development, priorities for conservation of heritage assets on the site and a long-term management plan.

The National Sports Centre already recognised that the quality and attractiveness of the designed landscape created an environment conducive to the mental concentration sought by aspiring sportsmen and women. The conservation management plan has helped the Centre develop their understanding of the landscape and their enthusiasm for it has grown still further. The result is a tool that will deliver positive outcomes for both the Centre and the designed landscape.

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

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