

State of the
Historic
Environment
Report 2002

**SOUTH
WEST**

The State of the Historic Environment in the **South West** Region 2002

COVER IMAGE:
Repair and re-use
of the former St
Margaret's Leper
Hospital, Taunton.
These Grade II* listed
almshouses date from
the early 16th century,
were rebuilt in 1612,
and had been empty
and decaying for a
number of years.
The Somerset Building
Preservation Trust
initiated a project,
now completed, to
convert them to
sheltered housing in
partnership with the
Architectural Heritage
Fund, Falcon Housing,
English Heritage, the
Heritage Lottery
Fund, the Housing
Corporation, and
Somerset County
Council.

¹ Regional Trends
2001. Taken from
www.statistics.gov.uk

² The Countryside
Agency 1999
Countryside Character,
volume 8: South West.

³ Ministry of
Agriculture, Fisheries
and Food 2000 England
Rural Development
Plan 2000-2006 South
West Region.

The publication of the first annual State of the Historic Environment Report (SHER) offers the opportunity to collate relevant information and begin to analyse the condition of the historic environment in England. SHER 2002 is a pilot and the Historic Environment Review Steering Group is inviting comment on the format and content of the national and regional documents to ensure that future SHERs can be improved.

For this first year it has only been possible to produce a summary of basic information for the South West. In future years it is envisaged that this document will be more comprehensive, and that the South West Regional Historic Environment Forum will play a key role in guiding regional content and analysis. They will add to the basic content that will be available from the national SHER data collection process. They will be greatly assisted in this by the production of an Historic Environment Strategy for the South West, which is nearing completion. The statistical data presented here will provide valuable measures for assessing some of the outcomes from the implementation of the strategy. Emerging areas for future action in the South West Historic Environment will also suggest new topics upon which statistical data should be collected in successive regional SHERs.

Views on the usefulness of this document and the content of future regional SHERs are welcomed. All documents can be viewed at www.historicenvironment.org.uk

Please make your response by 28 February 2003 to:

Dr Kevin Brown, Regional Director, English Heritage,
29 Queen Square, Bristol BS1 4ND

SOUTH WEST REGIONAL PROFILE

- The South West, at 23,829 sq km, is the largest of the 9 English regions covering 18.3% of the total area of England¹. It is nearly two-thirds larger than the average English region.
- The total population of the South West is 4,935,700 compared to an average for English regions of around 5,500,000. At 9.9% of the total population of England, the South West has the third lowest population of any English region.
- Most (84%) settlements in the South West are small villages and hamlets with a population of less than 500². A higher proportion of people live in rural areas than elsewhere in England. Only a third of the Region's population live in towns of over 100,000 residents³.
- The South West has 1647 sq km of the total 9934 sq km of National Park in England covering 7% of the total region, which is close to the average for England at 8%.
- The South West has 7121 sq km of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty covering 30% of the region. This compares to 16% coverage for England as a whole.
- The Gross Domestic Product of the South West in 1999 was £58,151m compared to the average for English regions of £73,300m and a total for England of £660,108m.
- In 1998 the English Tourism Council estimated that the South West had some 8.5 million visits to historic properties, accounting for almost 15% of the national total and second only to London.
- It is estimated that visitors to the region spend some £5bn annually, accounting for 10% of the regions GDP and employing 10% of the workforce.

THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT OF THE SOUTH WEST

SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

- In July 2002 there were 7042 scheduled monuments in the region. The South West has 35% of all scheduled monuments in England, the regional average number being 2204.
- 174 applications for Scheduled Monument Consent were made in 2001/2 compared to the national average of 88 applications per region.
- One indicator of the degree of pressure on the stock of monuments is the number of Scheduled Monument Consent cases as a proportion of all Scheduled Monuments. In the South West this was 2.3% compared to a national figure of 4%⁴.

LISTED BUILDINGS

- In March 2002 the South West had 88,954 entries on the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest which was 23.7% of the national total, the highest for any English region.
- The South West region has 143 Grade I or II* listed buildings at risk (BARs). This represents 2% of all grade I and II* listed building entries compared to the national average of 3.7%.
- 8.3% of the entries in the South West on the 2002 English Heritage BAR Register are capable of economic repair, i.e. unlikely to require public subsidy to make restoration economically viable. The average regional figure, excluding London, is 10.9%
- Of all buildings or structures in the Register, 41% are capable of beneficial use and 31% of low-key use if repaired. In total, the South West has a Conservation Deficit of £37.3m, almost 11% of the national total.
- In 2002, the average number of listed buildings of all grades at risk per local authority in the region was 93, almost twice the national average of 48 buildings per local authority.

- In 2001/2 English Heritage was notified of 1195 listed building consent applications; an average of 1 application for every 75 listed buildings. The figure for all regions except London was 1 for every 64 listed buildings. In 2000/01 there were a total of 7456 listed building consent applications made to local authorities in the region, an average of 1 application for every 12 listed buildings⁵ compared to the average for England (excluding London) of 1 for every 13 applications.
- The Local Authority Conservation Provision Survey (LACP)⁶ found that on average 6 Enforcement Notices were served in 2001 per local authority in the region compared to a national average of 5.4 per local authority. The number of prosecutions per Local Authority in 2001 was 0.3 compared to a national average of 0.4 per local authority.

CONSERVATION AREAS

- In June 2002 the South West had 1603 Conservation Areas compared to a figure of 1524 in 2000. The average number of conservation areas per English Region was 1003 in 2001/2.
- During the year 2001/2, English Heritage was notified of 676 planning applications in the South West, the majority of which would have been in Conservation Areas⁷. This compares to a national average of 558 planning applications per region and is an increase of 27% from 2000/2001.
- In the South West, an average of 4 out of every 35 Conservation Areas per local authority has an adopted Conservation Area Appraisal compared to a national average of 8 out of every 28.
- In the South West, 39% of local authorities have a budget for Conservation Area Enhancement compared to the national average of 35%.
- Only 15% of local authorities have Conservation Area Advisory Committees, compared to a national average of 25%. The South West is second lowest of all 9 regions.
- In 2001/2002, £941,000 was invested by English Heritage in Area Grant Schemes compared to a regional average of £1,057,000 (excluding London).

⁴ As some monuments will be subject to more than one application in a year and scheduled monument consent is not always applied for, this figure should be treated with caution and is only one indicator of relative pressure for change.

⁵ As above. The same applies to listed building consent applications.

⁶ Local Authority Conservation Provision Survey by Oxford Brookes for the IHBC and EH, 2002.

⁷ Regulations require that planning applications in or affecting the setting of conservation areas where the area of land in respect of which the application is made is more than 1000sq.m. or where a proposal is more than 20m high should be referred to English Heritage.

⁸ Sites that have been located or recorded, or identified by documentary evidence alone.

⁹ Figures based on a 89% response rate covering 349 local authorities.

¹⁰ The Economic Contribution of Museums in the South West 2000, South West Museums Council.

WORLD HERITAGE SITES

- The South West has three of England's fourteen World Heritage sites: Stonehenge and Avebury (designated 1986), the City of Bath (designated 1987) and the Dorset and East Devon Coast (designated in 2001 for natural heritage interest).
- Two of the twelve sites in England on the UK Government's 'Tentative List' are in the South West. These are Cornish Mining Settlements and the Great Western Railway. The latter is also in the London and South East Regions.

HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS

- In October 2002 there were 285 entries on the Historic Parks and Gardens Register in the South West, compared to an average per region of 170. Regionally, 18 sites have been added to the Register since 2000.
- Registered Parks and Gardens cover approximately 30,000 ha of land in the South West, equating to an average of just over 100 ha per site.

REGISTERED BATTLEFIELDS

- Eight of England's 43 Registered Historic Battlefields are in the South West region including the most recent battle to be included, that at Sedgemoor in 1685.

MARITIME AND COASTAL ENVIRONMENT

- The South West has the longest seaboard and the highest ratio of coastline to land area of any region in the UK. It also has over 60% of the total Heritage Coast in England with 638 km of the total 1041km.
- The region has the highest number of coastal and marine Special Areas of Conservation (49) and Special Protection Areas (59).
- In August 2002, 19 out of the 39 sites of vessels lying on or in the seabed off England designated under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973 were in the South West.
- The South West also has approximately 11,300 'known and unknown' wreck sites⁸ recorded on the National Monuments Record (NMR) Maritime Record compared to a total of over 40,000 for England (28% of England's total).

RESOURCES

- In 2001/2, English Heritage offered £3,006,000 in the South West region (11% of the total for England) which included £1,924,000 on secular grants, £141,000 on church grants, £941,000 on area grants (HERS). This represented a drop in total South West funding from £4.2m in the previous year.
- Of the total English Heritage grant offered, £1,032,000 went on regeneration grants, £762,000 on Buildings at Risk and £873,000 on grants to private owners.
- The LACP survey reported that 61% of Local Authorities in the region had an historic building Grant Programme, compared with a national average of 51%. The average grant budget for historic buildings for South West local authorities was £24,937 compared to a national average of £19,779⁹.
- The Heritage Lottery Fund offered grants during 2001/2 of £24,845,000 in the region (10.4% of the total for England). This included £506,000 on Places of Worship and £1,822,000 on the Townscape Heritage Initiative and Urban Parks Programme.
- The LACP survey found that the average number of established specialist conservation staff in local authorities in the region in mid 2002 was 2.2 compared to a national average of 1.7.
- English Heritage employs 117 staff in the region: 87 full time and 30 part time. This includes custodial staff working at English Heritage sites.

MUSEUMS

- In May 2000, there were 202 museums in the South West, 53 of which were Local Authority owned. £4.8m visits were made to these museums contributing £18.6m to the South West GDP¹⁰.
- 88 museums in the South West have an archaeological collection and in total, 44% of all collections held by South West museums relate to archaeology.
- 39% of these archaeological collections are assessed as being of national importance and 48% are of regional importance.



ENGLISH HERITAGE