

Heritage at Risk



Historic England

North East Summary 2016



The case studies and figures in this leaflet give you a glimpse into the reasons why some of our most precious historic buildings and places are ‘at risk’ in the North East and what we are doing to help. As our Angels Awards show, community action is increasingly important in saving many of the cherished monuments at risk like Blacka Burn Shieling. If you want to save a site we can put you in touch with people who can help – just contact us. We also need to remember that many buildings capable of economic use (a growing category on our national Register) and conservation areas offer an opportunity for heritage-led regeneration. Places like the Ouseburn Valley, Newcastle show that bringing new life to historic areas can contribute positively to the economy of the region, adding to its distinctiveness and pulling power for investment.

Carol Pyrah Planning Director, North East



The unpredictable economic climate remains the main harmful issue haunting the challenge to create viable solutions for heritage at risk in the North East. The scale of the task (for example, 12.5% of our scheduled monuments

are considered to be ‘at risk’) means it cannot be tackled alone. All parties, big and small, have a role in promoting the value of our shared heritage and its long-term survival. Promisingly, creative approaches to re-use, committed owners, partnerships and multi-source investment have resulted in 18 entries being removed from the 2015 Heritage at Risk Register .

A major achievement is the full repair of **Felton Park Glasshouse**; a complex case that took almost 20 years to resolve. Increasingly, the intricacies of delivering an appropriate solution for heritage at risk can take a prolonged effort. Appointing the proper professional team is the essential starting-point, as proven by **Linnels Mill** and **Corbridge Bottle Kilns** – two sites where carefully targeted Historic England grant aid was used to great effect by external specialists. Both have been removed from the Register.

Another successful partnership is with Natural England, whose Countryside Stewardship scheme can deliver

positive management solutions for archaeology. Closely linked is the on-going battle to deliver effective ways of controlling bracken, which is the principal vulnerability factor in 8.0% of our archaeological entries on the 2016 Register. Grants for immediate works and subsequent site management have been awarded to several owners over the past year.

An area of great potential is to continue developing awareness amongst community and volunteer groups as to how vital their contribution is in protecting heritage assets, whether it is a large conservation area or a small archaeological site. Such a policy paid dividends for **Blacka Burn Shieling**, where trained volunteers (the training part-funded by Historic England) in Northumberland National Park surveyed the site and facilitated its removal from the Register.

Whatever the success, one certainty is that the challenges haunting heritage will test everyone’s ingenuity and resolve, as demonstrated by the 18 sites added to the 2016 Register. There is no standing still, so urban cemeteries will be a priority for our work in the coming year. As will supporting local authorities in developing their own heritage at risk strategies and assisting them in taking enforcement action where appropriate. In uncertain times, only a partnership will help banish the various bogeymen threatening our shared heritage.

Kate Wilson Principal Adviser, Heritage at Risk

Cover image: Marsden Lime Kilns, Marsden, South Tyneside. The lime kilns on the coast at Marsden operated from 1874 to the 1960s, built in five phases as the demand for lime increased and improvements were made in the manufacturing process. As the site expanded, earlier single pot masonry kilns were superseded by circular brick kilns with numerous iron expansion bands. The monumental structure had been slowly deteriorating for many years but major repairs are in progress, funded by the owner and Historic England. This work will be completed in 2016, allowing removal of the site from the Heritage at Risk Register.

Designated assets on the 2016 North East Register



There are **300** assets on the North East Register, **7** fewer than in 2015

Felton Park Greenhouse Felton, Northumberland



The glasshouse at Felton Park was erected around 1830 to designs attributed to John Claudius Loudon. It measures 90 x 30 feet and stands against an 18th-century brick garden wall that is over 13 feet high. The slender, curved roof, of wrought iron glazing bars with delicate panes of fish-scale glass, rests elegantly

on a dressed stone plinth. The structure represents an important example of 19th-century architectural engineering, created at a time when estate owners were developing their gardens by introducing exotic plants from abroad. Although many glasshouses were built for horticultural purposes in the 19th century, few have survived and the curvilinear example at Felton is one of only twenty to survive in England.

Following decades of neglect, the glasshouse had been on the Heritage at Risk Register since 1998. The good news is that an extensive repair programme (managed by Spence & Dower architects and funded by the owner, Northumberland County Council, Historic England, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Country Houses Foundation) has resulted in the building being removed from the Register. The repair project showcased the wide range of specialist craft skills involved in repairing and conserving historic metal and glass. It won a commendation at the Georgian Group Architectural Awards in 2015 and a certificate of commendation at the Historic England Angel Awards in 2016. Work has also begun on introducing new plants and shrubs to join the two surviving camellias and large vine.

The site is privately owned and managed but now that the glasshouse has been repaired, it can be visited by prior arrangement with the owner (visit www.feltonparkgreenhouse.org). It is located a short walk from the centre of Felton village along a minor road.

Stockton & Darlington Railway **County Durham**

Opened in 1825, the Stockton and Darlington Railway combined locomotive-haulage of coal with the carriage of passengers by horse-drawn vehicle. Embankments, cuttings, bridge abutments and the splendid masonry arch over the River Skerne at Darlington are amongst the fragmentary remains today, parts of which are protected as a scheduled monument.

Elements of the railway have been on the Heritage at Risk Register since 2000 but multiple ownership of the scheduled monument complicates progress. Nevertheless, Historic England has engaged with numerous partners to improve the condition and maintenance of the monument. Yet, despite some heartening progress, much remains to be done as encroachment, vandalism and neglect continue to take their toll on this important piece of our industrial heritage.

An example of what can be done is the work achieved by the Brusselton Incline Group (see image), established



specifically to promote and preserve the stretch of the railway running from Brusselton to West Auckland (visit www.brusseltoninclinegroup.webs.com for more information). 2025 will see the bicentenary of the railway, giving Historic England and partners a target date by which to resolve the issues affecting the monument.

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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