



ENGLISH HERITAGE

MONUMENTS AT

RISK

NORTH EAST

MONUMENTS AT RISK

Scheduled monuments are our most cherished, nationally important archaeological sites and landscapes. In the North East they include prehistoric burial mounds, carved rocks and hillforts, Roman camps, medieval settlements and castles, and the industrial structures of our recent past.

They are a unique inheritance that tell the story of many generations of human endeavour and life. They create our sense of time and place, and add greatly to the distinctiveness of our towns and countryside.

Although protected by law, scheduled monuments are vulnerable to a wide range of human activities and natural processes. Survey in the North East region has shown that 761 (55%) of its 1389 monuments are at some level of risk from damage, decay or loss, unless action is taken. Trees and scrub, bracken, agriculture and decay and neglect are the main agencies putting monuments at risk.

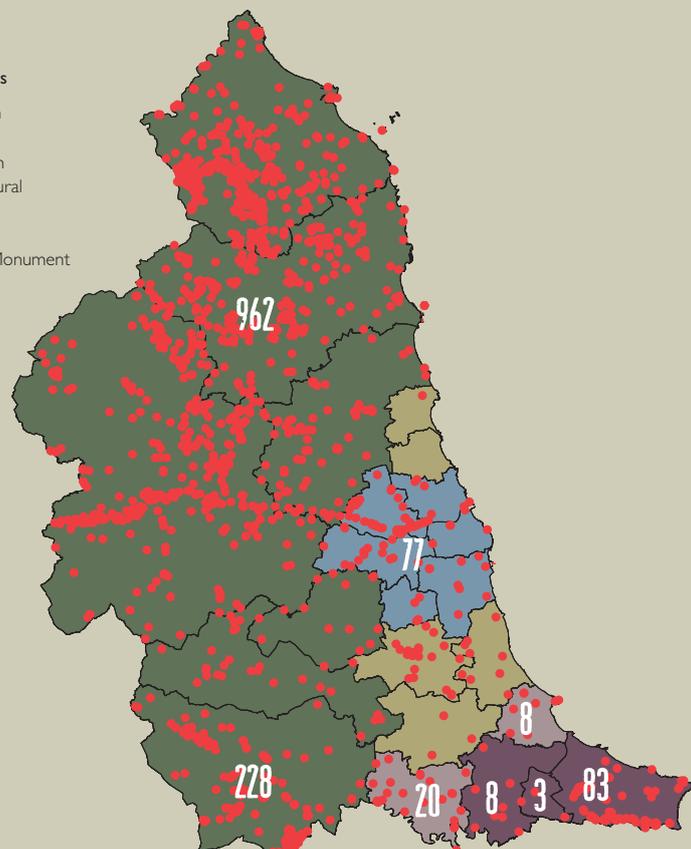
When damaged or lost, scheduled monuments cannot be replaced. Careful management is required if we are to pass them on to future generations in good condition. This requires close co-operation between the owners of scheduled monuments, government, and all organisations charged with care for the environment.

NUMBER OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS BY ADMINISTRATIVE AREA

County Durham	228
Darlington	20
Hartlepool	8
Middlesbrough	3
Northumberland	962
Redcar and Cleveland	83
Stockton-on-Tees	8
Tyne and Wear	77

Urban and rural land classifications

- Major Urban
- Large Urban
- Other Urban
- Significant Rural
- Rural 50
- Rural 80
- Scheduled Monument



Front cover Monday Cleugh Iron Age hillfort near Wooler, Northumberland. This site is in good order – but many legally protected monuments are not in an acceptable condition. © Alun Bull

SCHEDULED MONUMENTS AT RISK: NORTH EAST

In 1998 English Heritage published a national Monuments at Risk Survey (MARS). This showed that since 1945, an average of one archaeological site had been destroyed every day. These losses include scheduled monuments – historic sites designated as being nationally important. As a follow up, English Heritage has now undertaken a more detailed assessment of the risks currently facing scheduled monuments in the North East region.

The survey had two main objectives:

- to evaluate the condition, amenity value and setting of scheduled monuments in the region and the extent to which they are at risk
- to establish priorities for action and monument management.

Since 2004, following completion of a pilot study in the East Midlands, surveys have been completed in all the other English regions. The North East survey found that with 55% of monuments at risk, there is an urgent need for action before more of our heritage is damaged or lost.

1 Dunston Staiths on the River Tyne at Gateshead, subject to vandalism and neglect. The local authority has recently produced a conservation plan and feasibility study as a first step towards preserving this impressive landmark.



FACTS & FIGURES

The North East region encompasses 8,592km² of land with a population of approximately 2.5 million. The average density of scheduled monuments is 1 per 6.18km².

OWNERSHIP

1120 scheduled monuments are in private ownership, 97 are owned by local authorities, 137 by government or their agencies, and 4 by utilities.

FORM AND DATE

The majority of scheduled monuments are either all or in part made up of earthworks (69%), mainly of prehistoric and medieval date, or standing structures (28%) that are principally of medieval and later date.

1120
SCHEDULED
MONUMENTS ARE IN
PRIVATE
OWNERSHIP

LAND USE

38% of scheduled monuments are under grassland cover, 9% are on developed or urban land, 4% are under cultivation, 32% are on semi-natural land, and 7% are in woodland.

2 Damage caused by badgers on a section of ditch and counterscarp on Hadrian's Wall.



3 Middle Greenlaws level lead mine and ore works in Weardale, County Durham has been subjected to several episodes of flood damage.

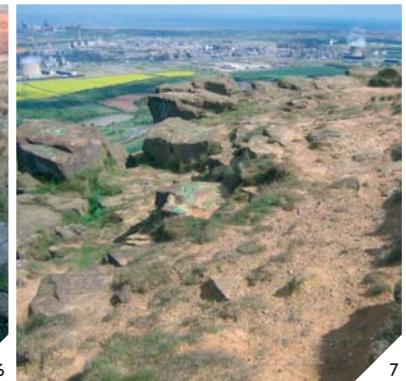


4 Seven Sisters round barrow at Copt Hill near Sunderland. No longer at risk from being clipped during ploughing it is now managed as a visitor attraction by Sunderland City Council and the Friends of Copt Hill.



MEASURING THE RISKS

The study assessed not only the condition of each monument's fabric (whether its remains are buried or upstanding), it also included an initial evaluation of its setting and amenity value. The setting of a monument is its general surroundings and is usually fundamental to forming an understanding and appreciation of the site itself. Amenity value is what the visitor can appreciate of the monument when visiting the site. Inappropriate development or land use next to a scheduled monument can be an eyesore, or can lead to the site becoming an 'island', cut-off from its surroundings. Other impacts such as traffic, noise and dust from nearby mineral extraction can also spoil the enjoyment of visitors.



KEY FINDINGS

CONDITION

Significant problems were noted on 31% of scheduled monuments and 10% were in a wholly unsatisfactory condition. Condition is in decline for 13% of monuments, and only 4% are improving.

RISK

18% of monuments are at high risk (at risk in the short term) and 37% are at medium risk. Consequently, just over a half need urgent action to prevent deterioration, loss or damage.

18% OF MONUMENTS ARE AT HIGH RISK

RISK AND LAND USE

59% of high risk monuments are in grassland, 15% are in woodland and 9% of high risk monuments are located in cultivated land. 12% of the monuments in Co Durham are high risk, 20% in Redcar and Cleveland, 19% in Northumberland and 17% in Tyne and Wear.

VULNERABILITY

9% of scheduled monuments are at risk from agriculture (mainly ploughing and erosion caused by stock), 14% are vulnerable to plant growth (mainly bracken), 4% are vulnerable to unmanaged trees and scrub, 5% are prone to decay and neglect and 5% are threatened by development or forestry. Other threats include damage by vehicles, tipping and vandalism.



RISK BY TYPE OF DESIGNATION	HIGH RISK	MEDIUM RISK	LOW RISK
	SCHEDULED MONUMENTS		
NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK	71	171	176
NORTH YORK MOORS NATIONAL PARK	7	15	32
HADRIAN'S WALL WORLD HERITAGE ZONE	14	79	30
NORTH PENNINES AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB):	12	30	66
NORTHUMBERLAND COAST AONB	3	5	12
SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST	23	70	100

SOURCE OF RISK

OTHER (VANDALISM, METAL DETECTING, VISITOR EROSION, DUMPING) **13%**

DECAY AND NEGLECT **5%**

PLANT GROWTH (MAINLY BRACKEN) **14%**

TREES AND SCRUB **4%**

BURROWING ANIMALS **3%**

FORESTRY **3%**

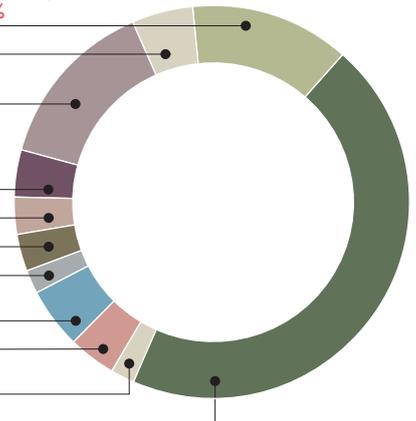
DEVELOPMENT **2%**

ARABLE PLOUGHING OR CLIPPING **5%**

LIVESTOCK EROSION **4%**

VEHICLE DAMAGE **2%**

NO KNOWN THREAT **45%**



5 This prehistoric standing stone on a roadside verge in Northumberland appears to have been used as target practice for an air rifle. The local police have agreed to patrol the area to act as a deterrent.

6 Volunteers for the Northumberland and Durham Rock Art Recording Project being trained on one of the many prehistoric cup marked rocks on Barningham Moor, County Durham.

7 Eston Nab prehistoric hillfort and settlement near Middlesbrough suffers damage from unauthorised vehicles and heathland fires. An increase in police patrols has started to reduce these threats.

8 St Ebba's chapel in Northumberland is prone to coastal erosion, and wear and tear by walkers.

9 Volunteers repairing a wall at Housesteads milecastle on Hadrian's Wall.

LEGISLATION

Current ancient monument legislation permits potentially damaging activities (ploughing, horticulture, forestry, gardening) on all or parts of 6% of scheduled monuments.

80% OF MONUMENTS ARE VISIBLE

AMENITY VALUE

80% of monuments are visible, and 15% are partly visible. Buried remains alone survive for 4%. 38% are fully accessible to the able-bodied public, and 23% have no public access. Developed interpretation is available at only 2% of monuments, 6% have some interpretation, and 80% have none available on-site.

SETTING

An initial appraisal of the setting of monuments suggests that 12% include many features of more recent date, 36% have some modern features, and 51% have few or no modern features. In 84% of cases the monument's setting has changed substantially since the monument was constructed or in use. Partial changes in setting have occurred in 15% of cases. In 1% of cases it can be considered to be unchanged.

84% OF MONUMENTS' SETTINGS HAVE CHANGED SUBSTANTIALLY

IMPROVED AREA CONSERVATION

Many of our landscapes and townscape are recognised as being of special importance because of their historic, natural, or aesthetic qualities – or because they are in need of economic regeneration. These areas normally benefit from strong safeguards against unsympathetic development, and can be eligible for grant schemes that could significantly help to reduce the extent to which scheduled monuments within their boundaries are at risk.

10 A prehistoric burial mound in Northumberland. It is surrounded by arable farmland and is under a Section 17 management agreement to maintain a 5m protective grassland margin.



In some cases the risks to scheduled monuments can be reduced simply by good land management, or by informed planning policies and decisions that take full account of the national importance of historic sites. However, some monuments do require significant resources in order to stabilise their condition, to carry out repairs, or to change the way in which the land on and around the monument is used. Two of the various approaches used for working towards alleviating risks are:

Small grants in the form of management agreements: under section 17 the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 English Heritage is empowered to enter short-term agreements

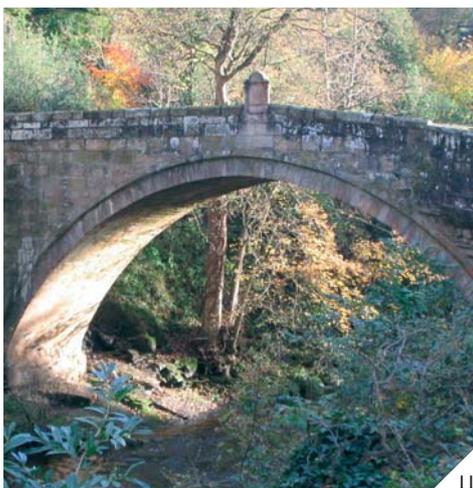
with landowners or tenants to promote the preservation and good management of scheduled monuments. There are currently 40 of these Section 17 management agreements in the North East, established for example for bracken spraying, rabbit control, repair of erosion and scrub clearance.

Research projects: for example the Northumberland and Durham Rock Art Recording Project. This is run by Northumberland and Durham County Councils and funded by English Heritage. Volunteers are recording all known rock carvings in the North East and the intention is to create a database accessible on the internet. One of its many uses will be for research into conservation and management.

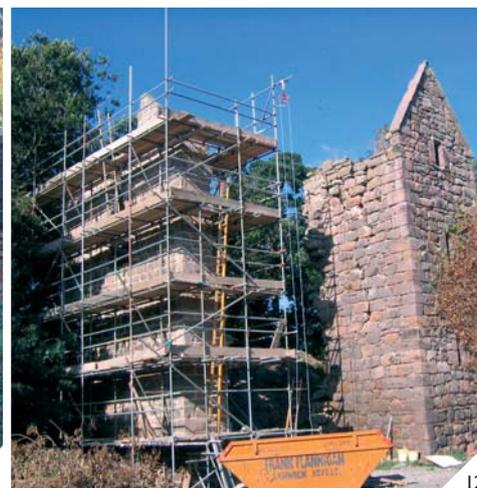
For the first time the priorities for improved scheduled monument management have been identified throughout the North East region. At the strategic level, the major sources of risk to the condition of monuments in the region have been identified. At the individual site level, practical management needs have been identified.

Practical advice on the management of scheduled monuments is available from the Historic Environment Local Management website at www.helm.org.uk

11 The narrow Linnels Bridge on the B6306 near Hexham in Northumberland, at risk from damage by vehicles.



12 A programme of repair has recently been completed on Doddington Bastle in Northumberland which was jointly funded by English Heritage and Defra.



13 Shittleheugh bastle near Otterburn in Northumberland, one of many post-medieval defended farmhouses requiring attention throughout the border country.



THE RISKS TO
SCHEDULED MONUMENTS
CAN BE REDUCED
BY GOOD
LAND MANAGEMENT

THE WAY FORWARD

There will be no easy or overnight solution to the issues identified by the North East Scheduled Monuments at Risk study. Although English Heritage has a statutory duty to promote the conservation of ancient monuments, our financial resources can only solve a small fraction of the problems. Other partners will also play a vital role in improving the condition of these important sites and, in some cases, legislative change is required.

The current level of risk to scheduled monuments in the North East must be reduced. Over half are in need of management action to prevent further deterioration, loss or damage. English Heritage believes that no monuments legally protected in the public interest should be at high risk.

One of the impediments to efficient and effective management of scheduled monuments has until now been England's overly complicated system of heritage legislation. We therefore welcome government's commitment to reform the current arrangements for the protection of the historic environment in the context of the draft Heritage Protection Bill presented to Parliament in April 2008.

English Heritage believes that concerted effort by landowners, local and national government and the organisations that make decisions about our environment can make a real difference. We particularly encourage public sector funding bodies to achieve a balance between historic, natural and other environmental issues when deciding grant priorities and we welcome the enhanced profile accorded to the heritage by the Entry Level and Higher Level agri-environmental schemes.

We believe that reducing the risk to scheduled monuments should be accorded a similar priority to the achievement of biodiversity targets, and that these efforts can often be mutually supportive.

English Heritage is committed to measuring its success as an organisation by securing a year-on-year reduction in the number of buildings, monuments and landscapes at risk. As part of a wider Historic Environment at Risk campaign we will set targets for reducing the types and degree of threats to scheduled monuments at risk in the North East.

Sockburn Chapel, near Darlington, under repair.



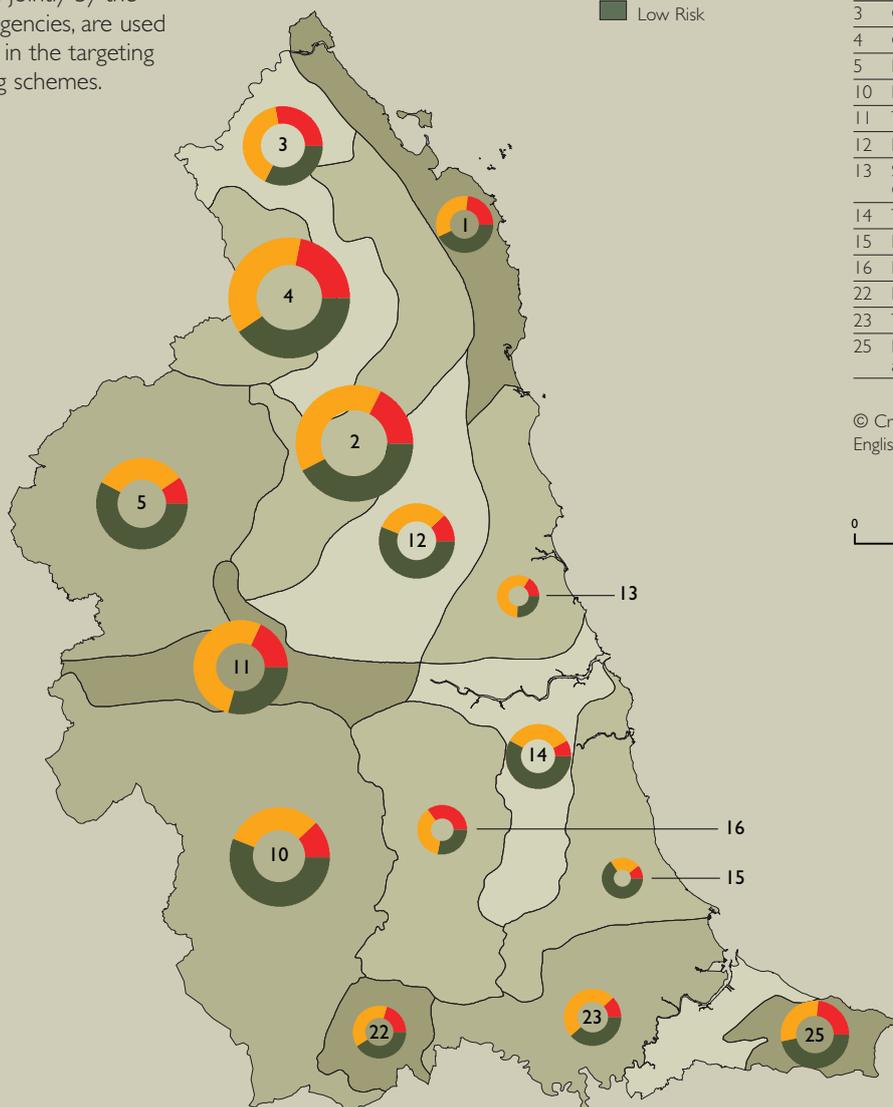
The distribution of scheduled monuments at risk in the North East analysed using Countryside Character Areas. The Joint Character Areas, defined jointly by the statutory conservation agencies, are used alongside other datasets in the targeting of environmental farming schemes.

SCHEDULED MONUMENTS RISK CATEGORY

- High Risk
- Medium Risk
- Low Risk

COUNTRYSIDE CHARACTER AREAS
Number refers to CCA reference code

1	North Northumberland Coastal Plain
2	Northumberland Sandstone Hills
3	Cheviot Fringe
4	Cheviots
5	Border Moors and Forests
10	North Pennines
11	Tyne Gap and Hadrian's Wall
12	Mid Northumberland
13	South East Northumberland Coastal Plain
14	Tyne And Wear Lowlands
15	Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau
16	Durham Coalfield Pennine Fringe
22	Pennine Dales Fringe
23	Tees Lowlands
25	North Yorkshire Moors and Cleveland Hills



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved.
English Heritage.100019088.2006

This document is one of a series of publications produced as part of English Heritage's new national Heritage at Risk campaign. More information about Heritage at Risk and other titles in the series can be found at www.english-heritage.org.uk/risk

For copies of this leaflet, or if you would like it in a different format, please contact our Customer Services department. Tel: 0870 333 1181; Fax: 01793 414926; Textphone: 01793 414878; E-mail: customers@english-heritage.org.uk



75% recycled
This report is printed on 75% recycled paper

Unless otherwise stated, all photographs are copyright of English Heritage. Published by English Heritage, July 2008. Product Code 51441. www.english-heritage.org.uk