

# Heritage at Risk



Historic England

South West Summary 2016



**T**he South West has an exceptionally rich and diverse heritage, especially important for its prehistoric monuments such as Maiden Castle in Dorset, the largest Iron Age hill fort in England. The region also played a key role in the nation's industrial heritage leaving an important, but sometimes challenging legacy, from its iconic Cornish tin mines to its textile mills and Brunel's engineering masterpieces for the Great Western Railway. The South West is also notable for its outstanding military heritage, for example, its array of 19th-century fortifications built to protect the coast and safeguard the nation from invasion, including the hilltop fortifications around Plymouth. As a result the South West Region has the largest number of designated sites (97,179). Challenges brought about by the passage of time and economic change sees our 2016 Heritage at Risk Register including 1,535 entries, which is 28.7% of the Heritage at Risk Register for England.

### Andrew Vines Planning Director, South West

---



The local Heritage at Risk team are fully engaged throughout the year working with external owners and partners, as well as colleagues in Historic England to improve the management of key historic sites and help reduce risk. It has

been a very successful year with 103 sites removed for positive reasons, including Berry Hillfort, near Torrridge in Devon, following clearance and vegetation management, which will be safeguarded into the future by a dedicated team of volunteers. We also visit and identify new sites for inclusion with 83 new entries assessed and added to the Register, including: 18 buildings or structures, 47 archaeological entries, 14 places of worship, 3 conservation areas and one historic wreck – The Colossus, located off the Isles of Scilly.

The reasons why sites become at risk are varied – from changing agricultural practices to natural events like storms or flooding. Loss and deterioration is also sometimes caused by economic circumstances or even neglect. We have been working to help address this by engaging with partners to survey and better understand risk, recently funding the Cornish Archaeology Service to survey and come up with positive strategies for sites on the Isles of Scilly. In addition we are working with volunteers to help monitor sites in Areas of Outstanding

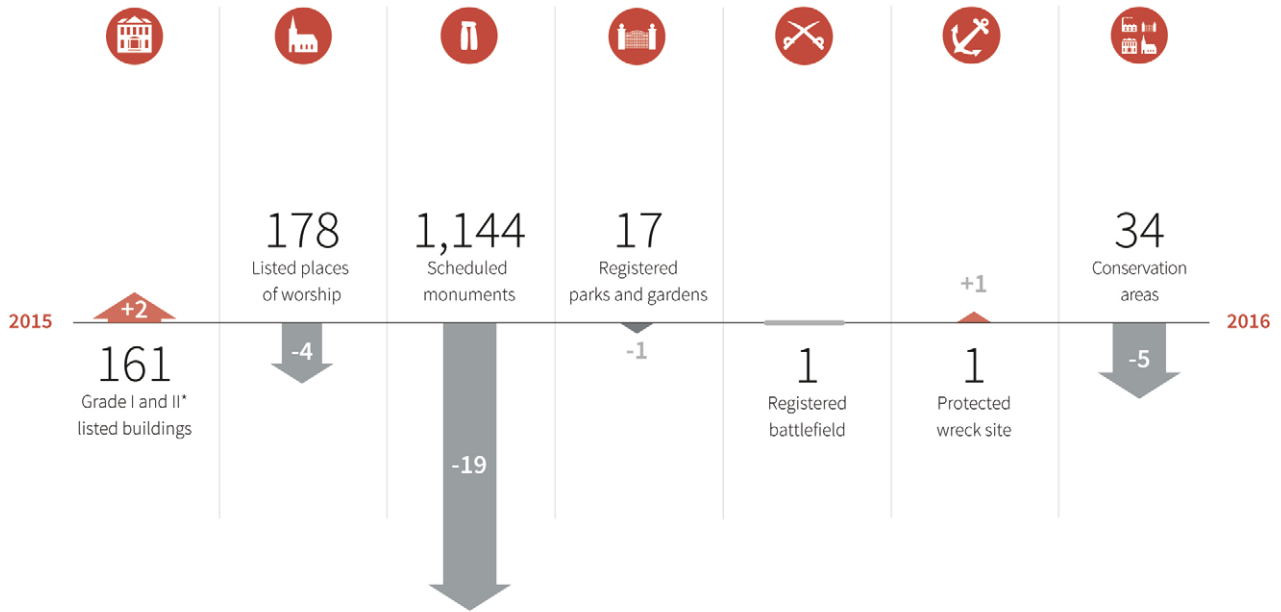
Natural Beauty in locations including The South Dorset Ridgeway (where volunteers visited over 50 sites), Quantock Hills, Bodmin Moor and in the Cotswolds. We are working closely with the National Parks for Exmoor and Dartmoor where we share a staff member dedicated to addressing 'at risk' sites.

Building local partnerships with local authorities, supporting enforcement action where necessary, working on grant aided projects (which sometimes include the Heritage Lottery Fund, National Trust, Architectural Heritage Fund, and Natural England) as well as private individuals and trusts can produce excellent outcomes. Our case studies at Mount Batten Tower and the Lizard Windmill as well as the successful on-going project to conserve Brandy Bottom Colliery are proof of what can be achieved. Historic England grants of over £1.175m have been carefully targeted to help reduce risk for 67 entries including the Stipples Stones, stone circle on Bodmin Moor. Successful rescues can be recognised and celebrated, with over 30 South West-based projects nominated for a Historic England Angel Award. These include many exceptional ones such as the restoration of the Clevedon Pier, North Somerset, which can now be safely enjoyed by many visitors to the region. We wish the best of luck to all the shortlisted projects.

### John Ette Principal Adviser, Heritage at Risk

**Cover image:** Part of the wider Bristol Coalfield, **Brandy Bottom** is a rare example of the remains of a complete 19th century steam powered colliery. It closed in 1936 and has been derelict ever since. The site has been on the Heritage at Risk Register since 2012 but work is now progressing apace to record, stabilise and repair the structures. Volunteers from the Avon Industrial Buildings Trust (AIBT) hold the lease on the monument and, with grant assistance from Historic England, are well on the way to improving the condition of the site so that it might be removed from the Register.

## Designated assets on the 2016 **South West Register**



There are **1,536** assets on the **South West Register**, **26** fewer than in 2015

## Old Windmill **Landwednack, Cornwall**



A very early tower mill, scheduled and listed grade II, which dates from the late 17th century. Originally for grinding grain, it was reused in the Second World War as a Home Guard observation platform. The windmill is a prominent and much-loved feature in the landscape, serving as a famous land and

seamark since the 17th century. Use as a windmill is well-documented but seems to have been intermittent; it is also famous as the den, in the 18th century, of the locally notorious 'Windmill Gang' of highwaymen!

The mill was added to the 2013 Heritage at Risk Register due to structural problems following removal of a temporary roof in the 1960s. The building was in an increasingly fragile state, requiring urgent repair and conservation. A significant concern was around the

Second World War opening on the west side of the tower, where timber supports had rotted away, leading to cracks and a loss of masonry. In addition, the earth mortar of the building had substantially eroded, leaving large voids, and the building was suffering movement following loss of the roof and floors.

The windmill is owned by the Cornwall Wildlife Trust and sits on the edge of a nature reserve. Historic England worked with the Trust, and with Natural England and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), to arrive at an innovative and constructive solution. The strikingly designed work, funded mainly by the HLF, involved construction within the shell of the windmill of a free-standing structure to support a roof, spiral steps and a viewing platform. The roof will help to protect the tops of the walls. This not only rescued the building but also provided an imaginative new use, allowing visitors to overlook the Lizard and the adjacent nature reserve.

# Mount Batten Tower Plymouth, Devon

Mount Batten Tower is sited on a promontory jutting into Plymouth Sound. It was built as a gun tower to help defend the harbour entrance, probably during 1645-6, and is both listed grade II\* and a part of a scheduled monument.

The tower is built of rubble with walls over three metres thick. Its entrance door is at first floor level, which helped protect it from attack. Up to eight guns were sited on the flat stone roof. Beneath this, the upper chamber has a stone vault supporting the roof, and a large fireplace. There is a smaller fireplace to the cellar. The interior is lit by small windows on the more protected north side.

Mount Batten Tower was added to the Heritage at Risk Register in 2015. Water was leaking through the walls, access was slippery, the oak lintels had rotted and there has been falls of stone internally. Historic England and Plymouth City Council have funded repairs during 2016.



The tower is now free of leaks and stonework and lintels are secure. It will be removed from the Heritage at Risk Register early next year.

Further money from the Coastal Revival Fund will provide a guard-rail around the parapets. Plans for a variety of new uses are underway.

## 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.

### For more information contact:

John Ette, Historic England South West  
29 Queen Square,  
Bristol, BS1 4ND  
Telephone: 0117 975 1308  
Email: [southwest@HistoricEngland.org.uk](mailto:southwest@HistoricEngland.org.uk)  
Twitter: @HE\_SouthWest

For a different format of this document contact our customer services department on:  
Telephone: 0370 333 0608 Textphone: 0800 015 0516  
Email: [customers@HistoricEngland.org.uk](mailto:customers@HistoricEngland.org.uk)  
Product code: 52042

Find out what's at risk by searching or downloading the online Heritage at Risk Register at:  
[HistoricEngland.org.uk/har](http://HistoricEngland.org.uk/har)