



ENGLISH HERITAGE

MONUMENTS AT

RISK

YORKSHIRE &
THE HUMBER

MONUMENTS AT RISK

Scheduled monuments are our most cherished, nationally important archaeological sites and landscapes. In Yorkshire and the Humber they include prehistoric burial mounds, stone circles and hill forts, Roman towns and villas, medieval settlements, castles and abbeys and the industrial structures of our more 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 Yorkshire and Humber region has shown that 1437 (55%) of its 2621 monuments are at risk from damage, decay or loss, unless action is taken. Agriculture, natural processes, development and the recreational use of the landscape are the main agencies which put monuments at risk.

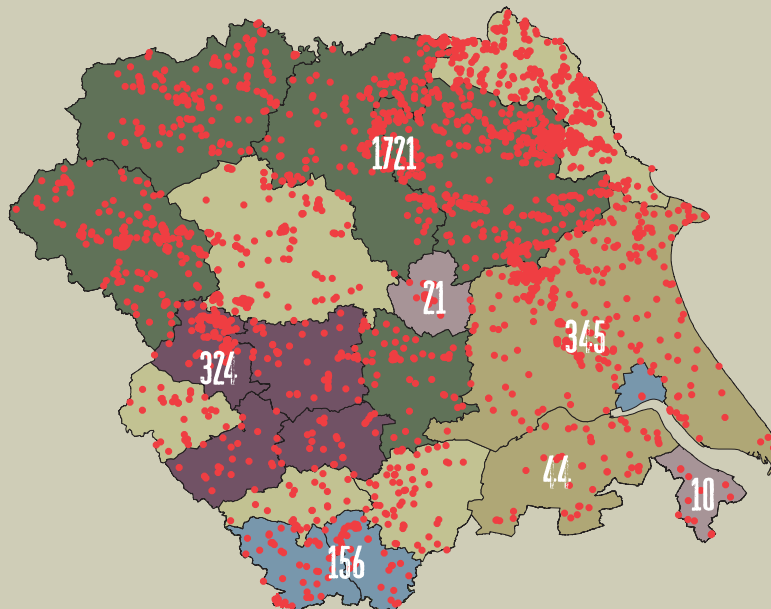
When damaged or lost, scheduled monuments cannot be replaced. Careful management is required if we are to pass them on to future generations in good condition. This requires close co-operation between the owners of scheduled monuments, government, and all organisations charged with care for the environment.

NUMBER OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS BY ADMINISTRATIVE AREA

East Riding	345
N. E. Lincolnshire	10
North Lincolnshire	44
North Yorkshire	1721
South Yorkshire	156
West Yorkshire	324
York City	21

Urban and rural land classifications

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



SCHEDULED MONUMENTS AT RISK: YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

1 Volunteers assisting with scrub removal and management at Keld Heads smelt mill and lead mine, Wensleydale. © Linda Smith, NYCC

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 Yorkshire and Humber 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.

The Yorkshire and Humber region study systematically assessed all 2621 Scheduled Monuments in the region. Its results demonstrate that with 55% of monuments at risk, there is an urgent need for action before more of our heritage is damaged or lost.



FACTS & FIGURES

Yorkshire and the Humber region encompasses 15,564km² of land with a population of c. 5 million. The average density of scheduled monuments is 1 per 5.94km², which increases to about 1 for every 2km² in the North York Moors National Park.

OWNERSHIP

2054 scheduled monuments are in private ownership, 299 are owned by local authorities, 205 are owned or managed by government or their agencies, 16 by utilities and 47 are in other forms of ownership, largely that of the Crown.

FORM AND DATE

The majority is comprised of earthworks (71%), mainly of prehistoric and medieval date, and a relatively small proportion include standing structures (15%) which are principally of medieval and later date. A significant proportion of monuments (31%) have non-earthwork components, most of which are prehistoric and include the large numbers of decorated rocks within the region.

2054
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LAND USE

27% of scheduled monuments are under grassland cover, 25% are on land with semi-natural vegetation, 16% are in woodland or forest, and 14% are under cultivation. Developed or urban land includes 17%.

2 Cottam, East Riding: prehistoric round barrow severely reduced and still under threat from annual ploughing.



3 Danby Rigg, North York Moors National Park: erosion along a well-used footpath has damaged one of the cairns in this extensive Bronze Age cairnfield which is otherwise in good condition.



4 Holme upon Spalding Moor, East Riding: intensive cultivation and drainage of the surrounding area is leading to dessication of the moat deposits at this medieval site.



MEASURING THE RISKS

The survey assessed not only the condition of each monument's fabric (whether its remains are buried or upstanding), but also included an initial evaluation of its setting and amenity value. The setting of a monument is its relation to 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 45% of scheduled monuments, and 23% were in a wholly unsatisfactory condition. Condition is in decline for more than a quarter of monuments, and only 5% are improving.

RISK

33% of monuments are at high risk and 22% are at medium risk. Consequently, more than half need urgent action.

RISK AND LAND USE

39% of high-risk monuments are located in cultivated land, 20% are in grassland, 19% are in woodland, 10% are in land covered with semi-natural vegetation and 12% are on developed or urban land. All monuments in arable land are at medium or high risk, most of them high risk. The East Riding has the greatest proportion (63%) of high-risk monuments in the region, of which three quarters are on cultivated land. 72% of low-risk monuments lie in semi-natural land or pasture.

VULNERABILITY

26% of scheduled monuments are at risk from agriculture (ploughing, erosion caused by stock, and drainage), 19% are vulnerable to unmanaged tree and scrub growth or invasion by bracken and other plants, 5% are prone to decay and neglect and 7% are threatened by development and forestry.

LEGISLATION

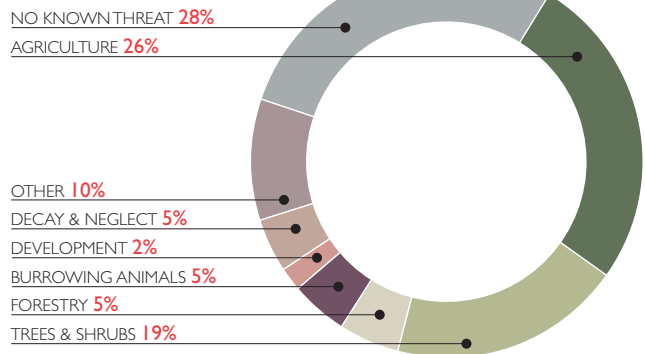
Current ancient monument legislation permits potentially damaging activities (ploughing, horticulture, forestry, gardening) across the full extent of 19% of scheduled monuments and over some part of a significant number of others in the region.

33% OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS ARE AT HIGH RISK



RISK BY TYPE OF DESIGNATION	HIGH RISK	MEDIUM RISK	LOW RISK
	SCHEDULED MONUMENTS		
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST	90	136	452
SPECIAL PROTECTED AREA	6	23	2
NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE	0	0	1
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY	45	45	110
NATIONAL PARK	219	182	608
REGISTERED PARKS & GARDENS	9	12	6
WORLD HERITAGE SITE	0	0	1

SOURCE OF RISK



5 Ayton Castle, North York Moors National Park: a medieval manorial centre with earthwork remains in satisfactory condition under permanent pasture, but the tower suffers from deteriorating stonework and invasive vegetation. It is on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk register but has undergone some conservation work. © Purcell Miller Tritton LLP.

6 Masham, North Yorkshire: medieval cross shaft with eroded stonework.

7 Humberhead Levels, East Riding: medieval moated site, neglected and overgrown with a wilderness of trees and scrub.

8 Toft Gate, North Yorkshire: post-medieval lime kiln in the Nidderdale AONB consolidated and interpreted for visitors with the help of grants from English Heritage through the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund.

9 Thornborough henges, North Yorkshire: three giant prehistoric monuments and their landscape setting at risk from activities such as intensive arable cultivation and mineral extraction.

10 Julian's Bower, North Lincolnshire: an eroded turf-cut maze to be repaired and maintained through a multi-agency community heritage project.

AMENITY VALUE

70% of monuments are visible, and 24% are partly visible. At 6% of sites the remains are entirely underground. An estimated 50% are fully accessible to the public following the introduction of the Countryside & Rights of Way 2000 Act, and just over 20% have no public access. Less than 5% of monuments have some form of interpretation on or near to the site, with developed interpretation available at only 1% of monuments.

SETTING

An initial appraisal of the setting of monuments suggests that 14% include many features of more recent date, 31% have some modern features, and 55% have few or no modern features. In 88% of cases the monument's setting has changed substantially since the monument was constructed or in use. Partial changes in setting have occurred in 10% of cases and in only 2% of cases can it be considered to be unchanged.

MANAGEMENT

Risk was not significantly reduced on land holdings that were in the old Countryside Stewardship Scheme and monuments within areas managed through the Woodland Grant scheme are generally at higher risk. However, the successful implementation of management plans for the 227 monuments directly managed by the Forestry Commission has reduced the proportion of monuments at risk: 29% of the region's monuments in woodland

are at medium risk, but only 10% of those managed by the Forestry Commission are medium-risk.

DESIGNATION

Monuments within National Park and AONB boundaries are generally at lower risk than the regional average, although monuments within the Howardian Hills AONB are at higher risk than the regional norm due to more intensive agricultural regimes.

IMPROVED AREA CONSERVATION

Many of our landscapes and townscapes 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.

11 A major programme of conservation work underway at Kirkstall Abbey, Leeds, one of England's largest Cistercian monasteries. Works include new access and interpretation facilities and improved car parking. © Richard Taylor, Leeds City Council



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.

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

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

12 Argam Dikes, East Riding: prehistoric linear earthwork preserved in modern field boundaries and suffering from plough encroachment.



13 & 14 Before and after images of Dargate Dikes, North York Moors National Park: prehistoric linear earthwork in Forestry Commission ownership and suffering from severe erosion caused by mountain bikes. A simple boardwalk trail was constructed as part of an agreed management plan for the site, reducing the impact of the mountain bikes and offering a new non-invasive form of access to the monument.



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 Yorkshire and the Humber 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 Yorkshire and the Humber 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 Environmental Stewardship Scheme.

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. We will set clear targets, therefore, for reducing the types and degree of risk to scheduled monuments in the Yorkshire and Humber region.

Thorpe Salvin Old Hall, South Yorkshire:
post-medieval manor house suffering from
gradual decay of stonework.



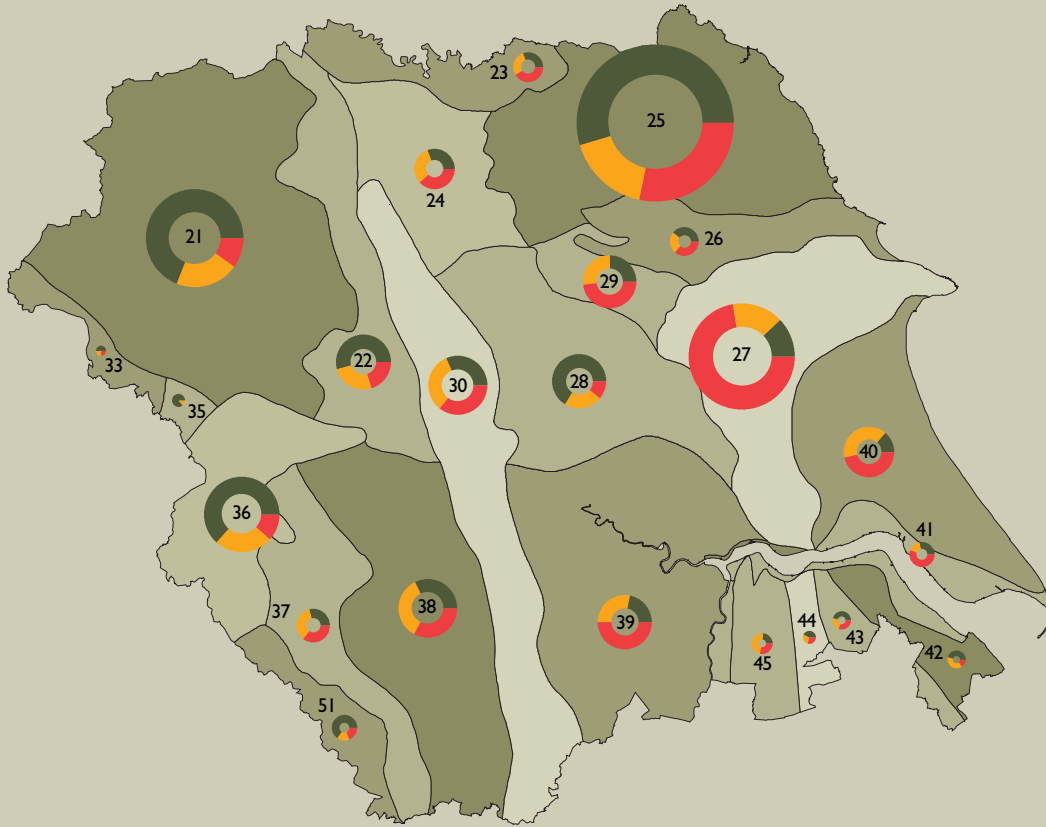
The distribution of scheduled monuments at risk in Yorkshire and the Humber by Countryside Character Area. The Joint Character Areas, defined jointly by the statutory conservation agencies, are used alongside other datasets in the targeting of environmental farming schemes. Note the numbers of monuments at high risk in arable producing areas (Areas 27, 29, 39–41, 45) and particularly in the Yorkshire Wolds (Area 27).

SCHEDULED MONUMENTS RISK CATEGORY

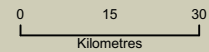
- High Risk
- Medium Risk
- Low Risk

COUNTRYSIDE CHARACTER AREAS
Number refers to CCA reference code

21	Yorkshire Dales
22	Pennine Dales Fringe
23	Tees Lowlands
24	Vale of Mowbray
25	North Yorkshire Moors and Cleveland Hills
26	Vale of Pickering
27	Yorkshire Wolds
28	Vale of York
29	Howardian Hills
30	Southern Magnesian Limestone
33	Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill
35	Lancashire Valleys
36	Southern Pennines
37	Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe
38	Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire Coalfield
39	Humberhead Levels
40	Holderness
41	Humber Estuary
42	Lincolnshire Coast and Marshes
43	Lincolnshire Wolds
44	Central Lincolnshire Vale
45	Northern Lincolnshire Edge with Coversands
51	Dark Peak



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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

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