Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

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Protecting Scilly's Heritage...

By Nikki Banfield, Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust Communications Officer

On the 8th November 2018 Historic England released their 2018 Heritage at Risk Register; their annual snapshot of the health of England's historic places. But what's that got to do with the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust? Quite a bit; and here's why!

Due to the density of archaeological sites found in Scilly many have featured on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register over the past 20 years, and this year is no different (with a total of 8 new Scilly additions); however there are some exciting changes as overall 10 Scilly sites have been removed from the register following stable or improving classifications.

For those that aren't aware Scilly is home to a remarkable historic landscape, in which many hundreds of well-preserved prehistoric monuments survive. By far the majority are cairns and chambered tombs of the early Bronze Age.

Yet the rugged beauty and charm of the islands can make sites difficult to look after; with access limited by weather and tides and archaeology overwhelmed by scrub, bracken and invasive species like New Zealand Flax, which need to be removed.

This year seven cairns and tombs are among the sites that have been added to the 2018 Heritage at Risk Register, a list of the nation's most important historical sites which are at risk from lack of care and management; including three prehistoric entrance graves on Cruther's Hill, St Martin's and Clapper of Works on Gugh.

Although there have been some new additions there is also some good news!

Four Scheduled Ancient Monuments have been removed from the Register this year, solely due to the efforts of the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust Ranger Team and follow-up work by local volunteers of the local Community Archaeology Group.

The sites include the prehistoric entrance grave on the Carn of Works, Gugh and the Cairn near Helvear on St Mary's

The Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust is working closely with Heritage England to raise awareness of many of these features, clear them of vegetation and restore them as features in the landscape, for people to enjoy

The Trust also supports the Community Archaeology Group volunteers, who are enthusiastic about archaeology, with their work throughout the year; this is kindly made possible with additional funding from the Isles of Scilly Area of Outstanding Beauty.

By including some of the newly added sites into our work programme we hope to reverse their fortunes too!

If you would like to become a part of this exciting, important and transformational work across Scilly then keep an eye out for the monthly Community Archaeology Group sessions supported by the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust.

We hope to announce the dates for 2019 shortly; they will appear on our website and Facebook Page.

If you can't join us on one of those events then why not make a donation to the ongoing work of the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust?

Together we can ensure that Scilly's historic past survives for future generations to experience and enjoy and aim for the removal of further historic sites from next years Heritage at Risk Register following stabilisation and/or improvement.

Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust

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