

YMDDIRIEDOLAETH GERDDI HANESYDDOL CYMRU - WELSH HISTORIC GARDENS TRUST

Bulletin No. 2, August 1990

Storm-damage to historic parks and gardens in Wales.

A note under this title appeared in the last bulletin (March 1990). Since then we have been in close liaison with the Countryside Commission and are now pleased to publish the following* communiqué. We are particularly grateful to Ms. Siân Shakespeare of that organization for her co-operation in clarifying the situation of the storm-damaged sites of Wales.

The costs of restoration resulting from storm-damage may be recoverable in whole or in part from the Countryside Commission, to which the Department of the Environment has given additional money to cope with some of the problems caused by last winter's winds. Those in charge of historic parks and gardens are now urged to contact their County Councils for advice and details of grants to help repair the damage.

Eligible works include the replacement of avenues or clumps of damaged trees, surgery to those hurt but not felled, reconstruction of certain built structures, and the preparation of restoration plans. In exceptional circumstances grants are also available for clearance of sites of high landscape value: in many cases, however, clearance - especially in woodlands - is unnecessary and even harmful, both to trees and to wildlife.

The first point of contact for those hoping for financial assistance is the planning department of the relevant County Council, from which they will be passed to the storm-damage adviser at the Countryside Commission's Office for Wales in Newtown. *It is vital that they do this as soon as possible since grants for work already carried out cannot be provided.*

One lesson learnt after the 1987 storm is that it can be a mistake to rush to clear up or to replant. Expert advice should be sought and only what is necessary for safety done before planning long-term restoration.

The Welsh situation is therefore simpler and clearer than the English, in which the responsibility for this work is divided between English Heritage and Task Force Trees.

The former looks after the very finest sites and publishes two splendid booklets, *Preparing restoration schemes: a guide for owners* and *Preparing restoration schemes: a guide for professional advisers*; both are free from English Heritage, Fortress House, 23 Saville Row, London W1X 2HE. (Tel: 071.734.6010, ext. 394)

Task Force Trees, a special unit of the Countryside Commission, attends to the less spectacular sites; in the last three years it has helped fund the planting of over a million amenity trees, as well as surgery to save many others; supported the work of voluntary organisations; and encouraged local authorities to prepare landscape rehabilitation strategies. It produces a user-friendly *Action Pack*, which includes information about how to save damaged trees, how to choose, plant and care for new trees, and how to get involved in the recovery programme: free from Countryside Commission Publications, 19-23 Albert Road, Manchester M19 2EQ. (Tel: 061.224.6287)

A further useful publication, written from a distinct though related point of view, is the Nature Conservancy Council's *Nature Conservation Guidelines for the Management of Storm Damaged Woods*, free from the Nature Conservancy Council, Northminster House, Peterborough PE1 1UA. (Tel: 0733.40345)

The Trust brochure:
a call for volunteers

Calls for volunteers always alarm people, so let me explain matters as quickly as possible!

We have prepared a brochure, a copy of which is enclosed with this bulletin, that advertises our important work to the public at large in the hope of expanding the membership. It was done in haste to allow of distribution during what remains of the 1990 season, and any criticisms of it or suggestions for its successor will be gratefully received and taken into consideration during future publication.

What we now want is help with distribution. We need about a dozen people, spread over Wales, who would be prepared to undertake the responsibility of keeping sites near them constantly supplied with copies of the brochure. The sites must of course be places open to the public that are willing to display the pamphlet and whose visitors are sympathetic to the Trust's aims, but which sites those are, you will be the best judge of! Obviously, those in the care of the National Trust or Cadw are ideal; as also are such places as Nanteos, Bodnant, Bodrhyddan Hall, Plas Teg, Llanfihangel Court, Tredegar House, Margam, Picton Castle, etc.; but there must also be numberless places of lesser importance, small local gardens perhaps or even watermills, at which the brochure would do some good.

The main task is not to find the places but to keep them supplied with copies of the pamphlet and to ensure that the copies are well displayed in the welter of competing material: displays have to be checked every now and then and stocks replenished. The National Trust has kindly agreed to do this for us at its sites in its southern region, but that leaves the non-National Trust southern region and the whole northern region uncatered for. Clearly, the task is not one that could be carried out from any single centre at less than vast and unjustifiable expense, which is why we are calling for volunteers from across the Principality.

If you are prepared to help the Trust in this way, please let Susan Lloyd-Fern know, either by dropping her a post-card (Rose Cottage, Banc-Y-Felin, Carmarthen, Dyfed SA33 5ND) or by phoning her any weekday after 6 p.m. (0267 211 307).

Thank you very much.

R.R.R.G.
August 1990