

Ancient Yews – Initiatives for enlightened conservation embraced by the Church in Wales and the Church of England

As of June 2014, the Church of Wales is beginning a yew programme:

<http://www.churchinwales.org.uk/news/2014/06/doctor-yew-campaign-to-protect-wales-amazing-regenerating-trees/>

Conservation Initiative

In doing this the Church in Wales is creating better protection for Ancient Yews in its churchyards. The work is supported by the churchyard conservation organisation, Caring for God's Acre, and the Ancient Yew Group which has contributed to the project by locating, enumerating, and classifying important yews enabling the Church in Wales to:

- raise awareness of old yews,
- send out certificates to parishes and communities,
- apply the best advice for managing old yews, encouraging their sensitive care and management.

Training Initiative

The AYG is currently in (or expects shortly to be in) talks with the Arboricultural Association, the International Society of Arboriculturalists, the Ancient Tree Forum which has made good progress with this vision, LANTRA and similar organisations, to set up a structure which would, by providing training and accreditation:

- clarify the cultural requirements of ancient and veteran yews for arborists,
- provide formal training for such ancient tree works,
- simplify the task of finding a suitable contractor when work on old yews become necessary.

These aims sit very well with the progress made by the Church of England, who have already drafted and published a provisional guidance document on their Churchcare web page with these initiatives in mind:

http://www.churchcare.co.uk/images/Trees_Guidance- version_2a.pdf

It is hoped that these putative changes to Faculty law will be fully ratified in due course. There is a hope that these new regulations concerning old yews will be extended to all ancient and veteran trees, and the AYG offer to advise the Ancient Tree Hunt on how their records can be organised and updated for the specific function of protecting exceptional trees of other species in churchyards.

The Ancient Yew Group can be contacted here:

<http://www.ancient-yew.org/s.php/contact-us/1/3>