

Author's Preface

With the ever increasing population, long holidays, and faster modes of transport on now easier accessible motorways. Gower has become the 'playground' for many people. Over recent years, the Peninsula has had to cope with increasing traffic flowing through its narrow roads and lanes, bringing tourists in their thousands, unfortunately, resulting in severe pressure with the ultimate land erosion and litter. It can be appreciated that, in today's modern stressed life, people need to 'get out' and relax in a change of environment, also we must not forget that tourism, up to a point, plays a large part in the economic growth of Gower and area, providing much needed revenues. However, because of the relatively small size of Gower it will soon be unable to cope with the ever increasing influx of traffic and tourists, and is already becoming affected in many ways. In the summer months traffic is often seen literally bumper to bumper on the main roads into Gower/ car parks bursting at the seams, and caravans, having been turned away from full sites, wandering aimlessly around looking for a small verge on which to park. Gower is our heritage, and although we must not be selfish in sharing the beautiful amenities of this unique area, something must be done in the very near future if we and our children will be able to continue to take full advantage of what Gower has to offer.

Fortunately, the effects of these problems have begun to be noticed by certain authorities, and certain steps have commenced to combat the severe erosion caused by continued trampling by tourists, horses, wind and sea. In 1970 the Countryside Commission recognised these particular problems and published a report identifying many areas, Gower included, as areas of National importance. Already a large amount of the South Wales coastline has been classified a heritage coast, hopefully to enable and encourage conservation and improvement.

The Nature Conservancy Council and National Trust have already played their roles in battling erosion by providing walkways, consisting of rubber mats and corduroy log paths, on well used dune areas. Also, by fencing large vulnerable dune areas such as Port Eynon and Oxwich, this enables the dunes to build up and re-establish themselves once more.

Swansea City Council have drawn up a management programme setting out many conservation and improvement proposals which have already been put into action. The only long term solution, however, to maintain the good work of erosion prevention already carried out, would be the organisation of wardening these affected areas, in liaison with the Nature

Conservancy Council (now Countryside for Wales) and local council staff. Perhaps also the job creation scheme in practice at the present time will allow adequate economic standby to provide estate workers, etc. to quickly put into action the proposals put forward for conservation in the area.

We must not forget, however, two of our main voluntary organizations which have done much to preserve the antiquities/ flora and fauna of Gower. I refer, of course, to the Gower Society and Glamorgan Naturalists Trust. The Gower Society has done much in the past to promote and encourage the affects and understanding of the Peninsula. While the Naturalists Trust, by purchasing small areas of important habitats, is building up much needed conservation areas. Both these organisations encourage the essential support and recruitment required of voluntary work forces to carry out the necessary and often mucky tasks of land management, such as footpath clearance, litter clearing/ fencing repairs and many other associated tasks.

Hopefully, the proposals put forward by various Government departments on conservation and erosion control, will soon be carried out, if not already done so, to ensure that our ancient, unique and wonderful Gower survives in its entirety for many generations to come.