Hackfall Woods wins 'Grand Prix' prize at Europa Nostra Awards

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The award - given for the restoration of the 18th century woodland garden, with its castle, follies, cascades and fountain - was presented to Trust staff by Plácido Domingo, the world-renowned tenor and president of Europa Nostra. The ceremony was attended by an audience of some 1,500 people including HRH Princess Margriet of The Netherlands, with the winners receiving a 10,000 Euro cheque.

The project was supported with a grant of just under £1million from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and saw a five year programme of works which have recently been completed. Now, for the first time in nearly 200 years visitors can enjoy the full Hackfall experience, thanks to the work of The Hackfall Trust, the Woodland Trust and volunteers. Further grants were also provided by the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Yorventure, through funds generated by Yorwaste Ltd, and the North Yorkshire Aggregates Grant Scheme.

Heather Swift from the Woodland Trust accepted the award: "To be recognised with the initial award was one thing, but to then be selected as one of the six Grand Prix winners was something none of us were expecting! It's great to receive external acknowledgement of all our hard work."

A team of landscape architects, ecologists and hydrologists, organised by the Landscape Agency, set about revealing the original vision of dramatic vistas, restoring follies to a sound but ruinous state, and bringing back to life the lost ponds, paths, cascades and weirs, including a gravity-fed water jet in Fountain Pond.

Fiona Spiers, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund for Yorkshire and the Humber, said: “This award is testament not only to the restoration works of this wonderful and highly significant heritage site, but also to the dedication and enthusiasm of the team and volunteers who made it happen. Well done to all.”

Patrick James, Managing Director of The Landscape Agency, added: "We are all proud winners of this European award. It is recognition of the hard work a huge team has put in over the past six years to reveal this extraordinary landscape to a wider public. The Woodland Trust and Hackfall Trust continue to maintain Hackfall and ensure that it is open to the public free of charge every day of the year. It is well worth a visit."

The jury was captivated by the authenticity of the restoration of the ruined buildings, highlighting the garden’s poetic communion with nature.

Hackfall will host a range of events and school visits throughout the year and is free to visit 365 days a year. Find out more about events, visits and volunteering and download maps / podcasts on the Woodland Trust website.

Notes to editors

Using money raised through the National Lottery, since 1994 the Heritage Lottery Fund has not only revitalised hundreds of museums, parks, historic buildings, landscapes and wildlife sites, but has also given new meaning to heritage itself. People from every walk of life are now involved with the heritage that inspires them, making choices about what they want to keep and share from the past, for future generations. HLF has supported more than 30,000

projects, allocating over £4.5billion across the UK, including £351million to 2,890 projects across the Yorkshire and the Humber region alone.

The Woodland Trust is the UK's leading charity championing native woods and trees. It has 300,000 members and supporters.

The Trust has three key aims: i) to enable the creation of more native woods and places rich in trees ii) to protect native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future iii) to inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees.
Established in 1972, the Woodland Trust now has over 1,000 sites in its care covering approximately 20,000 hectares (50,000 acres). Access to its sites is free.
More Trees, More Good is the Trust's campaign to facilitate the planting of 20million trees a year for the next 50 years. Two million through the Woodland Trust and 18 million through other channels.

The Hackfall Trust is a registered charity whose primary aim is to conserve, protect and improve the 18th century woodland garden and buildings at Hackfall.

The Trust was founded in 1987 by a group of concerned local people in response to the advertisement for sale of Hackfall on the open market when the site was already much neglected, risked falling into unsympathetic hands and faced a very uncertain future.

The Hackfall Trust was successful in finding the Woodland Trust as a sympathetic purchaser for the site and, having raised funds for its acquisition and management, has been the lead organisation in the restoration of the landscape.

Yorventure: The Landfill Communities Fund allows landfill operators to invest some of the tax they collect on behalf of the Government in environmental projects near their sites.

Yorwaste Ltd operates sites at Scorton, near Richmond, Caulklands, near Pickering, Skibeden, near Skipton, Mickleby, near Whitby, Seamer Carr, near Scarborough, Harewood Whin, near York, and West Tanfield. It has made over £7million available to projects in York and North Yorkshire. Grants are distributed by Yorventure, a Government-approved Environmental Body.

For further information contact Angela Pease, Community Projects Manager on 01937 848 848 or email angelapease@yorventure.co.uk.

The Landscape Agency (TLA) was established in 1998 by Patrick James. Over the last 12 years he has built up a team of landscape architects and designers who between them can provide the skills needed for diverse projects in landscape design, management and planning; from sustainable urban developments to historic gardens. Their offices deliver projects across the UK and Ireland.

The wide range of experience within TLA enables them to offer a range of services, from the creation of broad-scale strategic masterplans to detailed designs. Projects include some of England's most celebrated visitor attractions, busy public parks, famous historic landscapes, and beautiful private gardens.

Their established network of clients is wide-ranging, and includes leading architects, developers and national institutions, local authorities and private individuals.

Further information

Woodland Trust press office on 01476 581 121 or media@woodlandtrust.org.uk