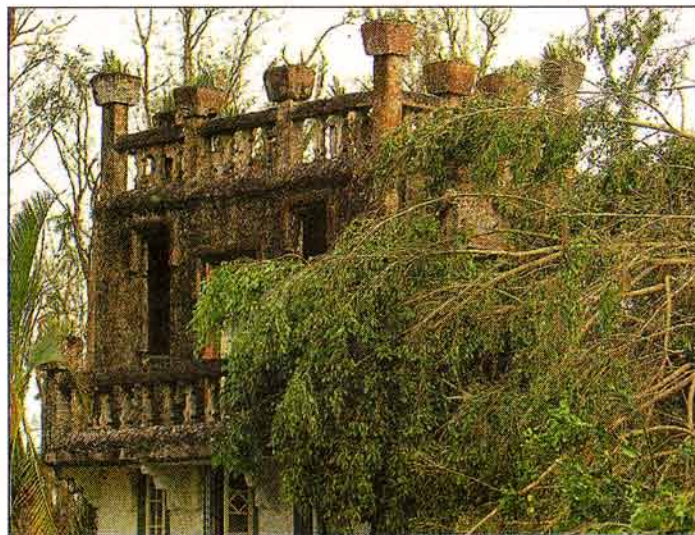




Park-owner Judy Evans inspects the ruins ● Pictures: Darren Hilder



Sign of the times . . . the damage on the gates



The sturdy castle has managed to weather the storm

Mind the P and wait for the queue

by Daniel Bateman

THE Ps were blown off the sign and some of the rainforest trees may be missing from one of north Queensland's grandest tourist attractions, but that's no reason to close down.

Paronella Park aims to clear away enough debris from its rainforest garden to reopen next week, in time to greet tourists and welcome in a new generation of business – cyclone tourism.

The award-winning, heritage-listed attraction at Mena Creek, southwest of Innisfail, suffered only minimal structural damage.

The famous castle remains – only two walls that were bound to fall from old age soon have collapsed – as does the suspension bridge, the tunnel of love and the fountain. Most of the park's battle scars are only skin deep, with the rainforest gardens mowed by Larry's high-speed winds.

Owner/operator Judy Evans said that with every day things were looking more positive.

Paronella Park was created by a Spaniard, Jose Paronella, who built the castle for wife Margarita in the 1930s.