

ORCHARD MATTERS

NEWSLETTER OF THE CONSERVING & RESTORING TRADITIONAL ORCHARDS, ENGLAND PROJECT

Hello All, here is the very first newsletter of the Conserving & Restoring Traditional Orchards in England Project, hereon described as the Orchard Project - much less of a mouthful!

It has been a busy and exciting start for me as Orchard Project Officer. I did mean for this to be a spring newsletter, but somehow, spring seems to have slipped in to summer already. I hope you are enjoying some sunshine - here on the Somerset Levels everything is green and lush and full of life.

Through this newsletter, I would like to keep you all updated on the project's progress, to share everyone's achievements and make sure you hear about any events and workshops that will be

happening over these next two years. I also hope that it will be a good way of sharing information and ideas - I would appreciate your feedback so please share your thoughts, experiences, news and pictures with me and I can feature them here.

Have a great summer!
Best wishes,
Kate
Orchard Project Officer
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Hard Grafters

Knightshayes Court in Devon is home to the Plant Conservation Programme (PCP).

This exists to protect the Trust's most historically and botanically significant, rare or threatened plants - propagating specimens to provide replacements or 'back ups'.



I know that many of you are planning propagation of existing trees to ensure the continuation of

your local varieties - or perhaps your surveys this autumn will turn up some interesting finds...

So please let me know if you require further information on this service. Knightshayes graft in January/February, and the trees can be ready in September/October of the same year at 2.5 - 3.0 feet tall. Arrangements can be made for delivery/collection.

While the service is free for National Trust properties, it is available to all at a £10 charge per 2ltr plant (whip or single stem).

The Launch

On a sunny morning at the end of April, in the midst of the apple and pear blossom at Killerton Estate in Devon, the Orchard Project was launched.

The mix of sunshine, beautiful blossom and Killerton cider proved temptation enough for the press, who turned out in good numbers and more importantly, all ran the story the next day.

We were overwhelmed with the coverage the project received which to date, totals 73 national 'media mentions' including a headline slot on the BBC 6 O'clock news. Huge thanks are due here to Mike Collins, National Trust Press Officer and the team at Killerton; Ed Nicholson, Simon Garland and Claire Bolitho.

It was also fantastic to have the support of some of our partners on the day; Sue Clifford and Angela King (Common Ground), Chris Wedge (Natural England), Anita Burrough (People's Trust for Endangered Species) and Henry Weston and Diane Cox (Westons). Thank you all very much.



Kay Haw

The Projects

The Orchard Project is currently supporting work at 26 National Trust properties, and is also working with 15 external organisations. I will try to feature news from as many projects as possible in future newsletters but in the meantime if you would like more information, please let me know and I can give more details or put you in touch with each other.

National Trust:

WHO

Barrington Court

Beningbrough Hall
Bradenham Manor

Brockhampton Estate
Coombe
Croome Park

East Titchberry Farm/ Dunsland/
Brownsham

Godolphin House & Garden
Golden Cap Estate
Glendurgan Garden
Hardwick Estate
Killerton Estate

Lyveden New Bield
Morville Orchards
Outwood Community Orchard
Oxburgh Hall
Parke Orchards

Polesden Lacey (Home Farm)

Polesden Lacey (Landbarn Farm)
Purbeck Estate

Standen

Stowe Barton
Sissinghurst
Smallhythe Place
Stowe Barton
Woolsthorpe

Partners:

Butterfly Conservation
Charingworth Orchards
Colwall Orchard Group

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust
Dorset Wildlife Trust
FWAG

WHERE

Somerset

Yorkshire
Buckinghamshire

Herefordshire
Cornwall
Worcestershire
Devon

Cornwall
Dorset
Cornwall
Derbyshire
Devon

Northamptonshire
Shropshire
KentCommunity
Norfolk
Devon

Surrey

Surrey
Dorset

West Sussex

Cornwall
Kent
Kent
Cornwall
Lincolnshire

Throughout England
Gloucestershire
Herefordshire

Derbyshire
Dorset
Gloucestershire

WHAT

Supporting the South Somerset
Cider & Apple Juice Project
Community Orchard project
Surveys, restoration and
interpretation

Surveys, restoration
Restoration
Restoration
Surveys, restoration

Restoration, training, events
Restoring the old cider press
Creating a new orchard
Surveys, restoration
Surveys, restoration, interpretation,
equipment for cider production

Visitor engagement
Restoration
Community Orchard project
Restoration
Surveys, restoration, events,
equipment for public harvest and
pressing

Survey, restoration and visitor
engagement

Restoration and Creation
Supporting the West Purbeck Cider
Project

Surveys, restoration and equipment
for harvesting/juicing
Restoration
Creating a new orchard
Surveys & restoration
Restoration
Surveys

Training day and surveys
Restoration
Supporting practical work and
community events
Mapping Derbyshire's orchards
Survey
Event

Kemerton Conservation Trust
LBAP group - Cambridge & Peterborough
LBAP group - Norfolk
LBAP group – Suffolk
Northern Fruit Group

People's Trust for Endangered Species
Randwick C of E School
Swale Borough Council and Groundwork Kent
Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

Worcestershire
Cambridge & Peterborough
Norfolk
Suffolk
Northern England

Worcestershire
Gloucestershire
Kent

Wiltshire

Surveys, restoration, events
Events, surveys, restoration
Surveys, training
Surveys, training
Supporting the Fruit Varieties Register
Restoration and interpretation
New trees planted
Community Orchard Project
Wiltshire Traditional Orchard project

Events

The Orchard Project is supporting some great events – over the next two years we will see all sorts of orchard festivities from plum festivals to guided walks and wassails. Helen Stace of the Colwall Orchard Project (Herefordshire) tells us about the Colwall Big Blossom Picnic...

A misty morning saw nearly 50 intrepid early risers (children and

parents) start the day with a dawn chorus walk around the orchards, led by Tim Dixon. Sunrise over Snotford orchard lit up the blossom beautifully and the party returned happy to the Chase Inn, for an excellent breakfast.

Down on Broadwood orchard we laid on a self-guided nature trail, guided walks and tree pruning demonstrations. The children had great fun hunting bugs with Dr Roger and Rosy Key, making

orchard bunting with Eekbatik and climbing on the Land Rover roof rack, while the parents enjoyed the sunshine. Over a picnic lunch the Anonymous Minstrels entertained us with their mediaeval music.

All in all, this was an excellent day out, with fine weather and a great family atmosphere. Many thanks go to Susan and Freda Ballard for suggesting this event and allowing us to use their orchards.



Dr Roger Key with some intrepid bug hunters

Bookshelf

Some publications well worth investing in...

The Common Ground Book of Orchards

The Apple Source Book

The Community Orchard Handbook

Common Ground, founders of Apple Day and pioneers of the Community Orchard concept, have been campaigning for Traditional Orchards for over 20 years. They have produced some excellent publications which place orchards in their historical and cultural context, as well as providing practical advice and tips from sourcing heritage varieties to planting and planning events. Order online from their website – www.commonground.org.uk

Orchards and Groves: Their history, ecology, culture and archaeology

September 2008 Conference Proceedings featuring papers from PTES, Natural England, The National Trust, Common Ground - covers a wide range of topics. Available to buy from Wildtrack Publishing (Sheffield) email info@hallamec.plus.com

Protecting our Orchard Heritage – a good practice guide for managing orchard projects

Sustain (The alliance for better food and farming) have produced an excellent orchard project guide packed with ideas, tips, case studies and contacts. You can get it online from their website: <http://www.sustainweb.org/publications/>



Surveys

Early in May, **Butterfly Conservation** held a fantastic training day on how to survey for the newly listed BAP priority moth, *Celypha woodiana* or the Mistletoe Marble. As the name suggests, the moth relies on mistletoe to complete its lifecycle, and so traditional orchards provide an important habitat.

The day was hosted by Barrington Court, Somerset, with the training led by James McGill. The morning was spent learning about the ecology of the moth, and in the afternoon we were let loose in the orchards to look for the mines in the mistletoe leaves that signal the presence of the larvae. In the following weeks, James carried out surveys for the moth at a number of sites in Somerset, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, finding new records for the moth.

Download a Mistletoe Marble fact sheet from Butterfly Conservation's website at www.butterfly-conservation.org/downloads/41/priority_species_factsheets.html

You can find out more about mistletoe by visiting the Mistletoe Pages at www.mistletoe.org.uk.



Larvae of the Mistletoe Marble create distinctive, crescent shaped mines in mistletoe leaves. They occur at very low densities, and so finding them takes patience. Being tall helps, but a pair of binoculars will do!

This summer, the **People's Trust for Endangered Species** will be looking for the beautiful and rare Noble Chafer Beetle at the National Trust's Brockhampton Estate on the Herefordshire/Worcestershire border. The pear, apple, cherry, plum and damson orchards at Brockhampton are extensive, with plenty of good habitat for the beetle which is dependent upon decaying wood within live trees.

Download a Noble Chafer fact sheet from the PTES website www.ptes.org/files/399_noble_chafer_fact_sheet.pdf



Matt Smith



View from a Noble Chafer

A visit to Cotehele

I recently paid a visit to Cotehele Estate in the Tamar Valley, Cornwall. Cotehele is home to Chris Groves, National Trust Orchard Officer for Devon & Cornwall. It was great to spend the day at Cotehele, trying to absorb as much information as possible...

Chris showed me the recently created Mother Orchard, where 270 trees of 120 local varieties are being nurtured, and will one day provide more trees to be reintroduced to the region. Chris

is now looking to genetically fingerprint the collection, and to cross reference the results with those at Brogdale (home of the National Fruit Collection - www.brogdalecollections.co.uk). This will reveal information such as the parentage of the Cornish varieties and clear up confusion surrounding synonyms of particular varieties.

The orchard looks fantastic, with two sculptures – a giant apple and a figure and horse of living willow to lure people in. The whole site is protected by deer proof fencing, and a windbreak of mixed native

species provides protection for the young trees, as well as a wildlife refuge.

In one corner of the orchard, the newly restored cider press waits thirstily for the first apples to pass through it this autumn. It's all ready to go, and will be officially opened by the Princess Royal on the 13th July.

The two Exmoor ponies (Fudge and Ollie) charged with the important job of powering the mill have already paid a visit and seem happy with the arrangement.



The Mother Orchard at Cotehele



Orchard Website

Throughout the rest of this year, we will be developing a national orchard website – 'Orchard Network'. The site will provide an important link between the national Traditional Orchard Habitat Action Plan (HAP) and the Local HAPs. It will also act as a signpost to all the excellent existing online orchard information.

The site will not be a 'National Trust' site, as it is intended to promote and share the work of all those organisations involved in the conservation of Traditional Orchards.



We will keep you updated on progress, and hope that this will provide a useful resource for stakeholders, and for the general public alike.

Thank you.

A very big thank you to the Wimbledon National Trust Supporter Group for their gift of £2,000 for the Orchard Project.

The Vandervell Foundation have also generously donated £2,000 – thank you, and we hope you can see that your donations are being well spent.



Pommelier Extraordinaire

The Orchard Project is supporting the South Somerset Apple Juice & Cider Project.

Rachel Brewer, gardener and 'pommelier' (yes – it's a made up word) co-ordinates the harvesting of apples from five National Trust properties in South Somerset; Barrington Court, Lytes Cary, Tintinhull, Glastonbury Tor and Montacute House.

For the second year running, Rachel's blended apple juice (containing around 70 different varieties) won second place at the Royal Bath & West Show at the end of May. This is an incredible achievement given the stiff competition and the fact that Rachel and team are only in their



second year of juice production. The apples are lovingly handpicked and carefully transported to Hecks cider farm in Street where they are pressed, pasteurised and bottled.

With less than 40 food miles on the clock, the juice is then sold at all

five National Trust properties and in the restaurants.

So big congratulations to Rachel and the team. Here's hoping that the Apple Juice & Cider Project goes from strength to strength, and you go one better next year...

Workshops

We are in the midst of planning our workshops, designed to support all those involved in our project, but also open to as many others as we can accommodate! So over the next month, we will be sourcing venues and contributors and will let you know the details as soon as we have them.

Topics we are looking to cover include an introduction to apple identification, practical orchard management (planning, sourcing, planting etc), orchards and wildlife and orchard grants, funding and marketing.



Online Resources

Traditional Orchard Technical Information Notes (Natural England)
These notes, written by Chris Wedge are comprehensive and very readable, covering all the practical management aspects of Traditional Orchards including restoration.

Biodiversity studies of six traditional orchards in England (Natural England)
Research Information Note and Report.

To download, visit their website - <http://naturalengland.etraderstores.com/NaturalEnglandShop/> and use the 'search catalogue' facility in the left hand menu.

Windfall (forum for the future)

<http://www.forumforthefuture.org/blog/windfall>

Herefordshire Orchards Community Evaluation project (HOCE) has looked at six very different orchards in Herefordshire and used accounting techniques to derive a broad value of each orchard.

Climate Change focus on apple and pears (Farming Futures)

<http://www.farmingfutures.co.uk/x488.xml>

Looks at the potential impacts of climate change .

Orchards in the National Trust: an overview of their history, economics, wildlife and people (National Trust)

Available from orchards@nationaltrust.org.uk. Please put 'NT paper' in the subject title

Outwood Community Orchard

The local community of Outwood in Surrey have started the process of creating their own community orchard. With project funding, Andrew Wright (National Trust Countryside Manager, Surrey Hills – East) is leading the process, which will culminate in a celebratory wassail event.

Already the youth club have been assisting Andy in creating guards for the new trees, which will be planted this coming winter. The team are utilising the knowledge and experience of



Simon Knight

staff at Brogdale to help them identify local varieties of interest throughout the village - locals have been invited to nominate their own trees for identification. Provisions will be made to allow easy public access to the orchard, which will be a place for future community events and quiet recreation.

Mapping England's Orchards

Since 2006, the People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) has been mapping England's Traditional Orchards.

people's trust for
endangered species

Ordnance Survey data is often out of date and crucially, gives no indication of the age or condition of Traditional Orchards. On completion in 2011, the inventory will provide important baseline data on the extent and distribution of orchards throughout England, and will be used to target and inform further work.

The team study aerial photography to identify Traditional Orchard sites. Volunteers across the country confirm if these sites still exist and help to gather additional information that enables PTES to assess their condition.

If you are able to volunteer some time to survey your local orchards, then PTES would like to hear from you. Contact Anita Burrough anita@ptes.org 0207 498 4533 or visit their website www.ptes.org

PTES have also produced an excellent leaflet: Traditional Orchards – A Guide to Wildlife & Management. It looks at simple steps that can be taken to help protect the plants, birds, insects, mammals, mosses and lichens that are associated with Traditional Orchards. It also focuses on some of the real rarities that can be found such as the orchard tooth fungus and the invertebrates associated with mistletoe. Contact Anita for a copy.



Cider with Roadies

Cider with Roadies is an apple inspired project of the touring performing arts group, Common Players. It offers unique opportunities for great events where communities can be enthralled by a performance, use up spare apples, and learn more about their cultural heritage. Fun, engaging, cabaret style performances can be played out alongside Pomona – the unique travelling apple press.. It comes

with 'Apple Animateur' Adam Montague, who can advise on planting, growing and managing apple trees and orchards. The Pomona can be hired with or without an accompanying performance - perfect for autumn orchard events and celebrations.

See their website www.common-players.org.uk for more information, or email anthony@common-players.org.uk



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