



ORCHARD LINK NEWS

Packed Programme for Autumn

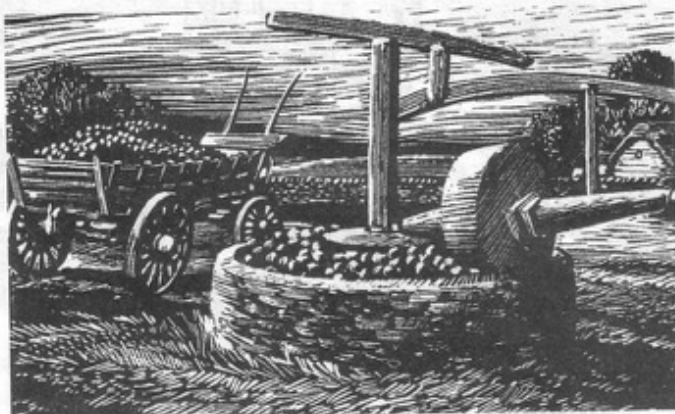
Although always a busy season, I think this Autumn could be Orchard Link's busiest ever. Take a look at 'What's On' and you'll see what I mean!

Not only do we have a large number of pressing days – at farmers markets, and autumn events, but thanks to Life Into Landscape funding, we're organising a number of 'Prune, Work and Learn' days, in addition to our usual pruning courses. (See 'What's On' for dates and details). These events offer us the chance to make a real difference to some orchards which are used and enjoyed by the wider community – whilst also providing some valuable training to anyone interested in managing both old and new traditional orchards.

I hope that you will be able to take advantage of some of the events on offer – to press or sell your fruit, learn or improve your skills and meet other like-minded folk. If events are to be a success we need your input and feedback. Our stalls and community pressing events particularly need volunteers – if you could spare a day or even a couple of hours, please give Trudy or Ben a call (numbers on back page). It's always enjoyable to help at the stall – and we can usually offer you plenty of juice to take home.

And talking of enjoyable events, Wendy Stayte and Jackie Sarsby have organised an Autumn social – a 'harvest supper' for members. – Hosted by Sue and David Halpin, it will be a 'bring a dish' feast – with, I'm sure, the odd apple-inspired sweet or savoury and cider too. Can anyone play an instrument? If so please bring it along. There's also the chance to learn to make cider with experts, Petrina and Kevin frost at Grimstonleigh on 31st October.

So raise your glass to a busy and enjoyable season. I look forward to seeing many members and new faces too, over the coming months cheers! Trudy Turrell



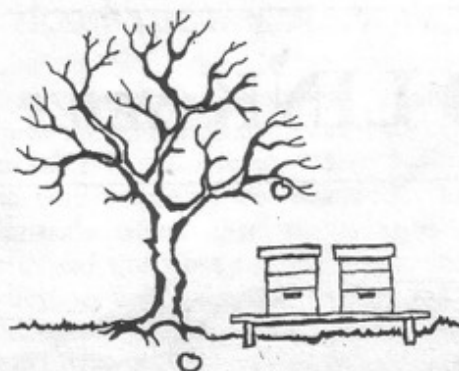
PRESS HIRE THIS AUTUMN

Orchard Link member Dick Ensor will be storing and hiring out the presses this year. He can be contacted on 01548 831544. Full details and prices will be posted on the web site and separate information sheet.

Meanwhile, Ben Pike will still be able to help those with quantities of apples to sell and will be keeping in touch with local cider and juice makers who need fruit. Call him on the usual Orchard Link number – 07792 664710 or email: benpike@talk21.com

Inside:

- ♦ Pressing days, training days and social events
- ♦ Which apple tree to plant? Choosing disease resistant varieties.
- ♦ A cider trail for South Devon?



Which apple tree shall I plant?

Vol. 2

In the spring edition of Orchard Link News, I wrote about the influence of rootstocks and pollination in choosing which apple tree to plant. In this edition we will be looking at the different types of apple and the role of disease resistance.

The first obvious question to ask is what you wish to use the apples for. Cider, eating, cooking and juicing are the main categories, with many apples having dual use, such as an eating apple that can also be used for cider or cooking, Tom Putt for example. Even within one of these categories there are many subdivisions, such as cooking apples that cook to a puree, or stay whole and are suitable for tarts.

Taste is a very difficult area as it is so personal. Words like rich, subacid, aromatic, sweet, juicy, crisp, sharp, and fruit drop are banded around. All I can say is think carefully what you like, and if possible taste the variety first.

Another consideration is whether you wish to store your apples over the winter. Everyone has bucketful's of apples in October, but few after Christmas, so well

stored keeping apples that can last until May have great value. Examples of late-keeping apples that grow well in Devon are Ashmeads Kernel, Barnack Beauty, Roundway Magnum Bonum and Rosemary Russet. Combine these with a very early eating apple such as Plum Vite, ready in July, and you see that it is possible to eat apples from your orchard during most of the year. Late-keeping cooking apples include Annie Elizabeth, Ponsford, Peter Lock and Newton wonder. Ice Apple, originating from Hatherleigh is reputed to keep until June.

Resistance to disease plays a vital part in choosing which apple to plant in the South West. The climate here is damp, and fungal diseases like scab and canker thrive here, so planting varieties with resistance to these diseases is most important. It is often local varieties that show most resistance to disease. Local nurserymen and farmers would select healthy cultivars, and some of these old varieties still survive because they have stood the test of time. Devonshire Quarrenden was first recorded in 1678, while Lucombe's Pine and Lucombe's Seedling are two healthy varieties that originated from the Lucombe and Pince Nursery in Exeter around 1800.

Many nationally well known varieties will not thrive here unless constantly sprayed. Cox's Orange Pippin is one of the most disease prone apples that there is, yet it is probably the most widely sold in local garden centres. It is also a sound policy to buy trees from local nurseries with knowledge of local conditions. Bear in mind also, that most books advising on good varieties to plant are not taking our damp climate into account.

Finally as an Orchard Link member, don't forget that you are entitled to free advice, so you are welcome to call 07792-664710 to check that you are on the right track.

RealDrink in the making...

Before I bought Yarde Farm in Stoke Gabriel, which came with a traditional orchard, I had never made anything in my life other than decisions, reports etc. Seeing the crop drop made me think that having a go at making cider seemed the obvious thing to do. With the help of some friends nearby who had bought the Churchwards' place, I made my first 130 gallons of cider.

Nobody was more surprised than me that with relatively little effort a delicious completely natural drink was produced a few months later. The cider only lasted till October except for a few bottles held back for special occasions.

Spurred on by this beginners luck, I upped my production to 300 gallons and even made some juice with a pasteuriser made from a bath! It did manage to successfully pasteurise several hundred bottles, although too slowly for any serious production. I also started to try various methods of sparkling cider following a visit to the Pays D'Auge cider route.

I had been thinking about whether to make more for sale but was being deterred by the unknown (to me) matter of marketing. I could make the stuff, although the art of cider-making was only just beginning to demand many fine-tuned decisions. What was an unknown quantity was the time and techniques required to sell. Would this time be worthwhile compared to other things I did?

The decision was made for me when a registration with a US based cider newsgroup got one response – from Modbury! It turned out that Richard, an ex-professional cider-maker, was moving and would sell a complete set of equipment, including an apple harvester. This prompted a friend to pay half for the equipment and RealDrink Ltd was borne!

RealDrink products exceed all known definitions of "real" and ensures the drinks are as natural as it is possible to achieve. Here are our aims:

- Use local Devon produce
- Use produce from traditional orchards that are organic or better i.e. managed without sprays or chemical fertilisers
- Identify orchard source of produce
- Use only 100% fresh produce
- Use no additives whatsoever unless absolutely essential
- Modern design and packaging
- Environmentally friendly

We are launching our products for sale later this year: initially elderflower cordial, apple juice and then cider in the spring. We are also trialling a few products not available here yet, which we hope to launch next year – watch this space!

So look out for us – you will be able to buy on-line at www.realdrink.org or Telephone: 01803 782461 - and let us know what you think of our products!

LOCAL CIDER ROUTE?

We heard in Steve's article about the cider route in Pays D'Auge. There is one in Hereford and Somerset, so why not here in Devon? This could be a good means of promoting the area, it's produce and be an opportunity for producers to educate and market to locals and tourists alike.

The Pays D'Auge route was 40km of lanes easily accessed with a simple apple on the road signs. There were about 20 small producers all willing to show their facilities and wares. It was a pleasant drive through the country accessing quiet parts that may not otherwise be found so provided a pleasant trip on a rainy day.

SW Tourism is prioritising food and drink as their most important priority and may be approached for support along with SWRDA and other interested bodies.

What do you think? Producers and anyone else interested should contact Alan White, Orchard Link on 01803 868366 or tq9ltd@hotmail.com.

WHAT'S ON?

Contacts for events:

Charles Staniland. (Orchard Link pruning courses) Tel.01364 653169.

Coast and Countryside Events.
Tel 01803 861384.

Orchard Link events- see address and no. on back page.

September

Saturday 25th - Dittsum Plum Day. Celebrate and help conserve Dittisham's heritage of plums. Village heritage walk 1pm, plum teas in the village hall with plum doctor (Orchard Link's Ben Pike!) OL information stall(2-5pm). Lantern procession 6.30pm. with storytelling and a hog roast. Call Rebecca A'Court on 07969 746720 for further details, also for details of the FREE lantern making workshops in Dittisham on 14th and 17th Sept.

October

 **Saturday 2nd - OL stall at Kingsbridge Farmers Market,** on the Quay, 9am-1pm. We shall be pressing apples and selling fruit. Why not bring some of your surplus apples and lend a hand?

Saturday 9th - apple pressing at Otterton Mill, Ottery St Mary. OL's large press will be in action, with craft displays, food etc. 12 noon onwards.

Sunday 10th Avon Mill garden Centre's Autumn Festival. 11am onwards. Orchard Link will be pressing apples using the large wooden press. Helpers most welcome! This is a super event with local crafts, storytelling, cookery and floristry demonstrations and hot soup.

Saturday 16th Tamar Apple Festival. Bere Ferrers church hall 2-5pm. (trains arrive from Plymouth at 1.45pm.) Pruning demonstrations in the orchard, grafting demonstrations, apple pressing, apples for sale, toffee apples, apple pies and apple teas. If you'd like to help, call Brian Lamb on 01822 841309.

Sunday 17th Apple Day at Cockington. A bumper day at Cockington Court, Torquay. Food and cider tastings, apple pressing, crafts,

music and entertainments. For full details contact Kate Foster on 01803 606035.

Friday 22nd - Harvest Supper. An Orchard Link members social evening kindly hosted by Sue and David Halpin - at Haytor Vale. Bring a salad, savoury or sweet dish and we'll have a feast to share! OL will provide some cider and juice- bring an instrument if you can play. Please call Jackie Sarsby on 01803 866870 by 8th October, if you would like to attend.

Saturday 23rd - Apple pressing and stalls at Dartmouth market. Come and bring your surplus fruit, help with pressing or buy cakes and bric a brac- all to raise funds for Dartmouth's community orchard. 9am onwards, for further details, contact Dick Ensor on 01548 831544.

Sunday 24th Apple Day 2-5pm at Welcombe Barton, between Bideford and Bude. Apple pressing - please bring your apples, Devon apple cake cream teas. Further details, call 01288 331692.

Saturday 30th Pressing at Totnes Farmers Market- outside in the Civic Square. 9am-1pm. This year we have teamed up with Totnes Community Supported Farming group who will have other autumn produce on sale- also a special bus after 12.30pm to Velwell orchard, Dartington. Tour the site, enjoy leek and potato soup using veg grown by volunteers- all FREE! Help and apples very welcome on the stall.

Saturday 30th - Holbeton Community Orchard Day. Come and collect up and press apples on OL's press in the orchard.

Hedgelaying demonstration and a barbeque after the pressing. Free- all welcome. For details contact John Sherrell on 01752 872815

Sunday 31st. Cidermaking at Grimpstonleigh. Petrina and Kevin Frost have kindly invited OL members for a morning of learning to make good cider. Come and try your hand and see how it's done- then taste some made earlier.. 10.30am-1pm. Please call 01548 521258 to ensure your place- numbers limited. This event is FREE.

November

Saturday 6th - OL Pressing at Kingsbridge Farmers Market. 9am-1pm. Come and bring your surplus apples to press or sell.

Sunday 21st - 'Milk, sloe gin, cider and fudge' Coast and Countryside event. A visit to Grimpstonleigh – to see its orchards, cider making equipment and taste cider and juice, then around the neighbouring dairy farm, ending with tea, home made cakes and a taste of Kim Harvey's home made fudge! 2pm-5pm Adults £3, children £1, teas extra. Grimpstonleigh is just off the Totnes-Kingsbridge road, after the Mounts.

Sunday 21st Prune, Work and Learn at Ashprington Community orchard. This is a chance to learn to prune 10 year old traditional trees. Planting plum trees and mulching too. 10.30am-3.30pm. £5/£4 to OL members, free to Ashprington residents. Contact Charles Staniland to book.

Sunday 28th - Prune, work and learn at Tuckenhay. Learn to prune large old trees. See the event above for details.

December.

Sunday 5th. Pruning course at Berry Pomeroy. 10am-4pm. £20 /£15 to OL members. Call Charles Staniland for details.

January

Saturday 15th - Wassail at Stoke Gabriel. Celebrate a centuries old tradition in the old parish orchard. Wassailing queen, morris dancing, folk singing, storytelling. Starts at 6pm with a barbeque outside the Victoria and Albert pub-late finish. Adults £2, children £1, families £5.

Sunday 23rd. Prune, work and learn at Yarde Orchard Stoke Gabriel. Owned by OL member Steve Mittler- this is a chance to see his orchard and there's a glass of cider or juice over lunch too. 10.30am-3pm £5/£4 OL members. For details contact Charles Staniland.

Sunday 30th. Pruning course at Staverton. 10am-4pm. £20/£15 for OL members. Call Charles Staniland for details and to book.

February

Sunday 6th. Prune, work and learn 10.30am- 3pm. Come and help to prune

young trees and manage Dartmouth's community orchard, by College Way. Fantastic views of the Dart! £5/£4 OL members. Contact Charles Staniland for details.

PRUNE, WORK AND LEARN.

Come and learn how to care for and manage our heritage of traditional orchards. Thanks to funding from the Life into Landscape programme in South Devon, Orchard Link are offering three special events led by orchard expert Charles Staniland. During each 'hands on' day participants can learn to prune large old apple trees, younger trees and also how to manage a traditional orchard. They'll also be helping to restore three fabulous old orchards in South Devon at Tuckenhay, Stoke Gabriel and Dartmouth.

We're also offering more formal pruning workshops with hands on training on both large old and smaller young trees Sunday 30th January at Staverton and Sunday 5th December at Berry Pomeroy. Please call Charles Staniland on 01364 653169 for further details of all these events and to book.

ORCHARD GRANTS IN SOUTH DEVON

Don't forget that if you have a traditional orchard in South Devon – you may be eligible to a 'Life Into Landscape' grant for restoration, management and planting – but only for the next 18 months – after that the scheme will have closed.

To find out more, simply call David Leach at the Devon Wildlife Trust on 01392 – 279244.

BOTTLES PLEASE!

If you have been saving plastic and glass bottles (but not plastic milk containers please!), we'd be very happy to receive them – just bring them along to any of the events at which there is an OL stall – Thank you

MUSIC IN THE TREES

I thought that the following article, written by a craftsman instrument maker, showed a new dimension to orchards:-

Fruitwoods have been sought after in the manufacture of musical instruments, hand tools and small decorative items throughout history. They have a particular character not found in other timbers. The essence of which is their tight grain structure and ability to take a good polish. Their use in hand tools is no doubt due to the high finish they take.. A quality tool should feel good in the hand, so dense, shiny timbers fit the bill precisely. Apple always seems to have been the favourite, possibly not least because its colour shines through when polished.

Apple and plum are the traditional northern European materials for many instruments. Plum, for example, is used in France for their traditional bagpipes. In Turkey it is used to make the "Mey" and in Macedonia the "Zurla", both folk reed instruments. Apple is used extensively in recorders, fifes and whistles. Pear is used for larger recorders and flutes. The less dense woods produce a warmer tone than the heavier ones. Pear and cherry being the lightest, give a soft tone compared to apple, which is much brighter. Plum falls somewhere between the two. This, for reasons I don't fully understand, leads to the lower pitch instruments sounding better in pear. Recorders and many bagpipes work better in apple or plum. The small, high-pitched instruments are best in apple and British boxwood as it has the edge over apple but not by much.

The only two other woods of any worth for wind instruments are maple and sycamore, maple being the harder of the two. Historically, in Britain, they were used for the larger instruments, probably due to the size of the tree. Fruit trees are not only shorter but are rarely circular in section and like to grow in a sort of spiral. This makes it difficult to cut out good, long, straight-grained pieces.

The real problem I have making instruments from British fruit woods is the trouble I have getting hold of good material. Commercial trees are usually grubbed out before they reach the sort of size where the timber is at its best. Pear seems to be the only exception, as in Europe it is grown along the sides of roads where it reaches its full height. Plum in particular, I find very difficult to source. It's a shame because, even though fruit woods crack like crazy, bend as they dry and don't come in nice square planks, I love working with them.

Sean Jones

If you can help me in my quest for British fruitwoods, do drop me a line at:-

sean@jonesinstruments.co.uk

(0118)9814600

Sean Jones Instruments,
63, West Street,
Tadley, Hants



John Harrison

We were very sad to hear of Orchard Link member John Harrison's recent death. An enthusiastic orchard owner, John came to many Orchard Link events and it was always a pleasure to chat with him. Many will remember seeing John at our last Annual Gathering at Hazelwood. Our sincere sympathies go to his wife and family.

WHY 'AN APPLE A DAY' MIGHT KEEP THE DOCTOR AWAY

It is already well known that aspirin has considerable health benefits and more benefits are still being discovered. Willow bark is not the only source of the compound; indeed humans' natural diet would once have contained small but significant quantities of salicylates from fruit and vegetables and these can perhaps be considered a micronutrient, akin to vitamins and antioxidants, essential to maintaining good health. In future, it may even be named "vitamin S".

Many plant species, including those that produce fruit, make salicylate as a defence mechanism: it induces damaged and diseased cells to commit suicide and people who eat fruit (and vegetables) are thought to be healthier. However, the concentration of the compound is declining, probably because people tend to insist on eating pristine, uniform produce from supermarkets that has been sprayed with pesticides, such that the plants do not "need" to produce salicylate as a defence mechanism any more. Fruit which has been organically grown has higher levels.

More research is needed to prove conclusively that eating at least five portions of organic fruit and vegetables is the best option, although the potential public health benefits are so great that it would be wrong to ignore this important issue.

Based on an article entitled "An Aspirin a Day" by Gareth Morgan, New Scientist 7th Feb 2004.

ORCHARD LINK LIBRARY

'The Fruit Garden Displayed', 'The Common Ground Book of Orchards' and 'The English Apple' are just some of the titles in Orchard Link's small but useful collection of apple and orcharding books.

In the past we have displayed some on our stall and have lent some out to members.

Now, thanks to Jackie Sarsby, an OL member who lives in Totnes town, we are able to lend them all out free of charge.

If you wish to browse our selection of titles and borrow a couple of books – just give Jackie a call on 01803 866870 to arrange a time.

We would of course welcome any donations of books on fruit or orcharding, if any members have duplicate copies, or books which they no longer use.

COCKINGTON MEMORIAL ORCHARD

Planting a cider apple tree in Cockington's Memorial Orchard is a way for bereaved families to remember their loved ones.

The Memorial Orchard will also help reinstate some of the orchards and trees lost in Devon in recent years.

Trees in the orchard, which are a variety of local species, cost £250, which includes the planting, a cage and a wooden plaque with inscription.

Contact Kate Foster at Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust on 01803 606035 for further details.

Contact Orchard link at:-

ORCHARD LINK, PO BOX 109,
TOTNES, TQ9 5XR.

Or call – 07792 664710.

Don't forget to visit our new website at:
www.orchardlink.org.uk

You can email us there or at one of the following:

benpike@talk21.com

trudy.turrell@southhams.gov.uk