



ORCHARD LINK *NEWS*

Pressing for Action

Can you help find a permanent home for this historic Cider Press? It was saved by the Holbeton, Yealmpton and Brixton Society who in 1980 used it to press cider. Now in storage it needs a site where, the Society hopes, people will be able to see, appreciate and even put it to work again.

Geoff Davies from the Society explains:

"The cider press was regularly used by farmer William Dennis at Bowden Farm in Yealmpton until the late 1950's. Although this was not the only cider press in use at Yealmpton, it was the largest, and served to crush apples from other farms and orchards in the area. Yealmptonians had a strong affection for this cider press, and in 1980 many villagers were present at the farm to participate in the final pressing before its dismantling and removal to make way for the conversion of the farm into residential buildings. HYB Society wished to preserve the press and it was hoped that it could be used as a visual feature in the grounds of the Yealmpton Community Centre when it was built. Money ran out and did not allow this: the press has remained in storage in Yealmpton, unused for the past 20 years.

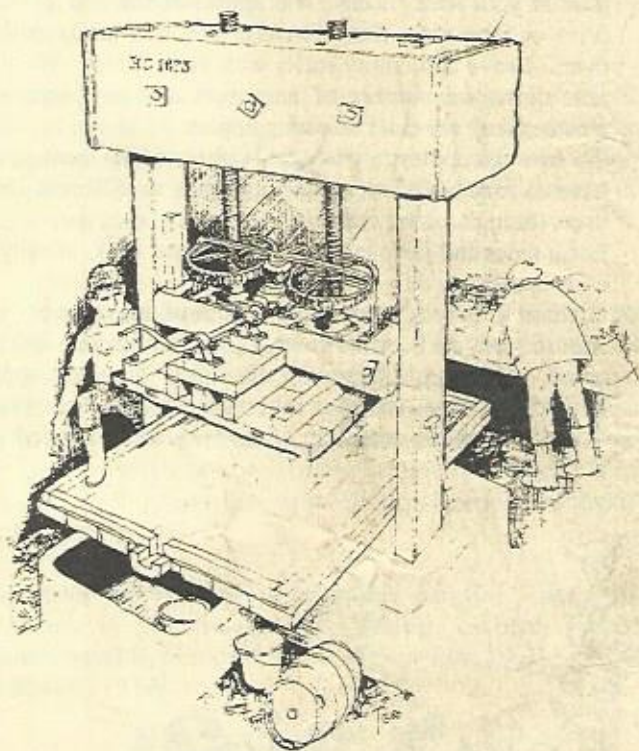
The cider press inspired the design of the parish magazine, Yealmpton Press, which carries the drawing of a cider press on its front cover every month. There is hope that a new development in Yealmpton could use the press as the centrepiece of a village green. Again, financial considerations threaten to be a stumbling block. The Society hopes that a new home will soon be found for the press, to allow the owners of the storage facility to free up their space. Any alternative offer to make use of the press will be welcome. It would be satisfying to see the press restored to its former glory after is years of redundancy."

If you'd like to know more – or think you would like to have the press call Geoff Davis on 01752 880135.

Read on page 3 of Bowden's last pressing day.

INSIDE

- * Find out how to sell your surplus apples through Orchard Link.
- * Have a look at our new web page
- * Learn how to prune new apple trees.
- * Join South Hams Organic Gardeners' Society – There's 20% off membership fees to Orchard Link Members!



Welcome to Nicola and Harvestline!

As we reach the busy season of the year we're pleased to welcome Nicola Herbert on board. Nicola, who is based near Loddiswell will have the job of organising this season's apple collection – co-ordinating the needs of cidemakers, those who have apples, and the lorry's collections route around our narrow winding lanes!

Having years of experience in training staff, public relations, running her own employment agency and lately restoring a ruined farmhouse to a thriving holiday accommodation business – Nicola is adept at juggling demands.

From 1st September to 30th October, there will be a specially dedicated phone line which Nicola will answer. So if you have apples to sell or are a cider, juice or preserve maker requiring them, call Harvestline. Harvestline will be open at the following times.

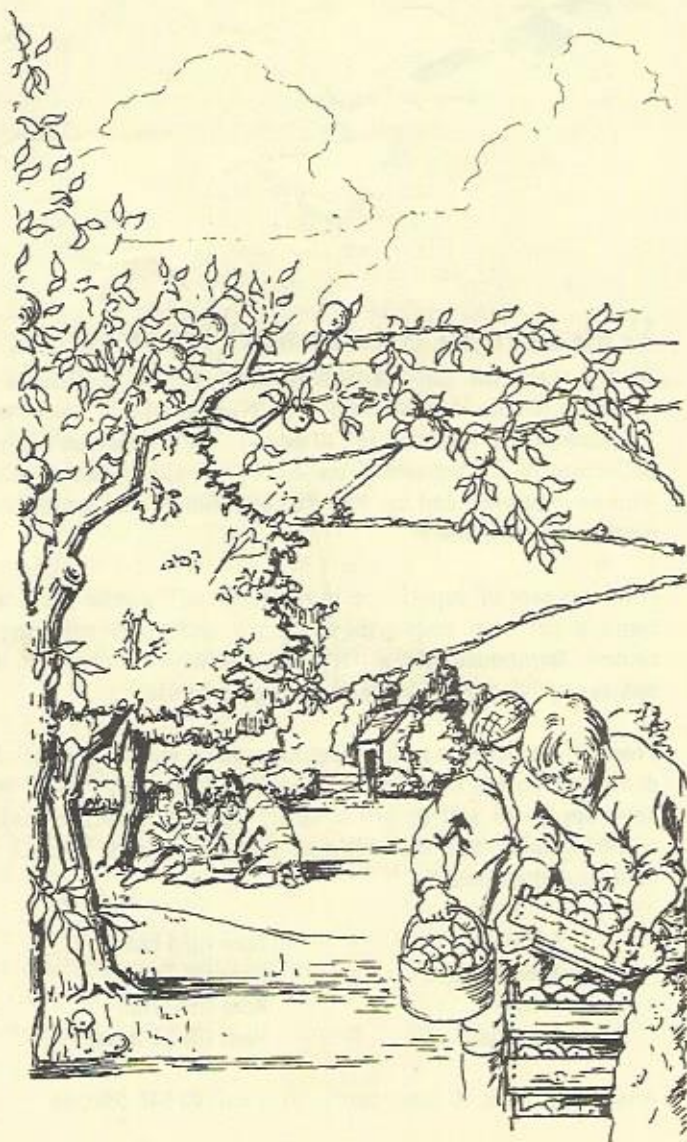
Mondays	–	8am till 11am
Wednesdays	–	5pm till 8pm
Fridays	–	8am till 11am
Saturdays	–	9am till 12 noon

Answerphone at all other times. Just call 01548 550516.

The Autumn Collection Scheme and How it Works

Selling your apples through Orchard Link is simple, just follow these steps.

1. If you have apples to spare, call Nicola as soon as you can. Someone from Orchard Link will drop sacks to your door.
2. Collect your apples by the date agreed. If you cannot do this yourself Nicola should have a list of people able to pick in your area. Leave the apples at the end of your drive or farm gate, from where a lorry can easily collect them. Leave any empty sacks with your apples. We will note down the number of bags sent and any details ie whether they are cider or eating apples.
3. We take the apples to whoever wishes to buy them. (We have to match varieties and quantities to different local users throughout the season).
4. Local cider and juice makers pay Orchard Link, usually in early spring.
5. Orchard Link sends a cheque for 50% of the value of your fruit to you. As a guide, cider apples sell for £80-£90 per tonne, and a tonne is around 40 sacks. Cooking apples and special local varieties may sell for more, but much depends upon the condition of the fruit and local demand at the time.

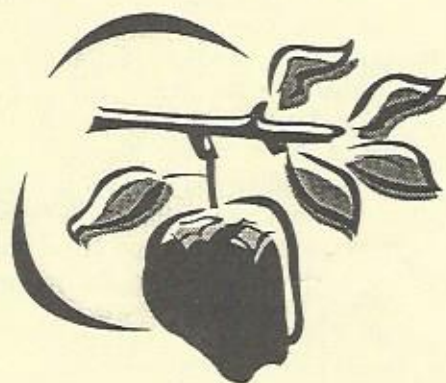


Orchard Link Goes to Market!

Kingsbridge's first Farmers Market in August was a resounding success. So Orchard Link will be having its own stall at the October Market on Saturday 2nd October 10am till 2pm in the town square.

Beside our stall Keith Sinclair will be crushing and pressing Orchard Link apples on his portable cider press. Come and see it in action and taste the juice fresh from the press.

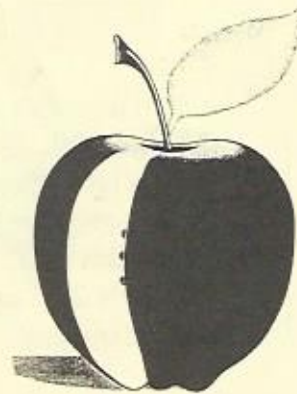
We'll have displays, newsletters and leaflets as well as selling eating and cooking apples, so come and see us, to buy or sell. In fact if you have eating or cooking apples ready by then, give us a call either we'll collect from you or you could drop them at the stall. If you know your apple varieties, then tell us we'd love to be able to sell some real local varieties of South Devon apples. If you're free to give a hand, we would we would love some help! Hope to see you there.



Claim 20% off Membership to South Hams Organic Gardeners Society (SHOGS)!

If you're keen on your garden as well as your orchard, why not join SHOGS? They run a year round programme of events, practical get togethers and training days. Just see the selection available in 'What's On'. Now they're offering a year's membership to Orchard Link members for £4 instead of the usual £5, a real bargain.

See Jill Davies at the special SHOGS barbeque (see 'What's On') or call her on 01548 853220 to join.



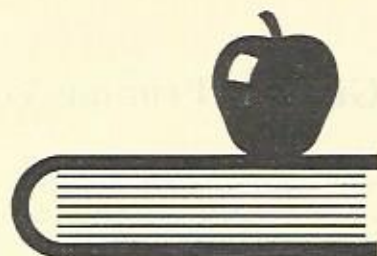
Community Cider Making

A description of the Bowden Press in Action 1980

"Well over 200 people came to Bowden pound house, some to watch and photograph, others to help, up to the elbows in pulp and pips. A large number of people now know the basics of the operation; the refinements will obviously take a little longer. Indeed the pressing of the juice is nothing compared with the skills involved in turning it into drinkable cider. It seems that everyone who knows anything about it has given different advice. Thus the barrels should be covered with hessian to stop the Vinegar Fly from getting in; they should be left uncovered to allow the rubbish to ferment out. Nothing should be added at all; a piece of meat should be added to assist fermentation; meat is too expensive, so add a rat (more than one member has seen this done in the past. HYB cider is guaranteed free from rats). It should be ready to drink in 6 weeks....10 weeks.....by the New Year....and so on. We shall learn a lot from the different experiences of our members with their little polythene containers.

Just about everyone lent a hand, Mr Michael Bastard let us use the press. Mr Dennis showed us how to lay up the mock, and worked very hard indeed. He was supposed to be supervising, but, as he said as he took his coat off, the only way to explain was to demonstrate. Then Mr Roger Owen, the Modbury thatcher, gave us two bundles of reed; Mr David Brammall of 'County Pine' lent us one of the original knives used for shearing the mock (which he had reshafted and resharpened), and Mr Jim Cross produced the tenner, used for filling the barrels. Mr Roy Pratt, the farmer at Bowden, gave us help in dragging the crusher and lending us odd items such as the notorious brush, and even tested half a pint of the juice. And we would not have got very far with the crushing without the belt drive from Mr David Steer's tractor. Where do we stop? It was an enormous effort by the village.

To start with, one man, then two, turn the handle. When this becomes too difficult and the flow has stopped, the handle is removed and a 31 bar is inserted into the capstan. Finally the 7' bar is used, and the full strength of 2 or 3 men force the plate down. A last few turns are applied last thing at night. In our case, 5 members gave the mock a last screw at 11pm, and found 6 more gallons had come off by next morning.



Cidermaking on a Small Scale

If the description of cidermaking on Bowden's old cider press has inspired you, but you don't feel that ambitious, have a look at a new book by Michael Pooley and John Lomax 'Real Cidermaking on a Small Scale'.

In a very readable narrative, Michael and John describe their own practical cidermaking, which involves family and friends. There are copious troubleshooting tips, photographs of all the stages and even detailed drainings to show you how to build your own simple but effective cider press.

I can empathise with the author's sentiments that "The most important aspect to the philosophy behind small-scale cidermaking is the celebration of the fact that it is low-tech and labour intensive. Therein lies its secret. The product is ultimately delicious and wholesome because at every stage it is completely touched by the human hand! Unlike many modern commercial concoctions, which try to avoid, if at all possible, going anywhere near a human being (or an apple for that matter!).

At £6.95 this book is an enjoyable bargain! The book is available by post from Michael Pooley, 1 Cherry Tree Hill, Coalbrookdale, Shropshire TS8 7EQ or from bookshops ISBN 1-854486-195-6.



Don't Burn Your Apple Wood!

If you are doing a good deal of pruning over the winter, why not sell your apple wood? Woodturners value it, and even as firewood it can fetch a reasonable price.

To advertise it locally free to woodland contractors, turners, furniture makers and others, call 'Woodlots' magazine on 0131-228-4176 or call Phi Parkin, who organises the South Hams Woodland Campaign on 01803 861140.

The Rough Guide to Pruning Young Apples

Many of you will have planted young apple trees in the last few years and now will be scratching your heads, thinking that you really should get around to pruning your trees. For some of you this will be a daunting experience, a plunge into an area that seems full of mystique.

So in this article I will attempt to demystify the pruning of young apple trees. As space is limited I shall restrict my comments to pruning standard or half-standard trees on vigorous (usually M25) rootstocks, though the principles are similar for most young apple trees.

The first question many people ask is why prune young apple trees at all? The answer is that formative pruning is essential to produce a well-shaped tree with a good spacing of branches at the right angle. Apple trees left unpruned will grow into a tangle of branches that do not allow good air circulation, thus encouraging disease. Apples are likely to become fewer and prone to disease.

All pruning of young apple trees is carried out in the dormant season ie when the tree bears no leaves, usually from November to March. Standard trees bear their first branches at two metres, while on half-standards this is around 1½ metres. So the first requirement is to grow the tree to the height where the first branches will shoot from. Once this has been reached cut at an angle just above a bud on the main leader. This will encourage the buds just below this cut to form young branches. Any shoots lower down the trunk can gradually be reduced in size. They will eventually be cut off altogether, but keeping some growth lower down at this stage helps to build up a stout trunk.

By the following winter the tree should have formed several laterals (side shoots coming out from the trunk). Four to six of these can be selected to form the framework of branches. When there is a choice it is important to select branches that make a wide angle to the trunk as these will be less likely to split in future years. The branches selected should be shortened by about half their length, cutting to an outward or upward facing bud. It is also likely that a replacement leader (upward growing main shoot) will have formed. You have the choice of removing this to form a wider growing tree or repeating the above process to form a new tier of branches about ¼ metre above the first tier by again pruning the leader. In following years gradually build up the framework of the tree by selecting well placed laterals and sub-laterals, and shortening them by pruning around one third of the new growth each year. This encourages further branching to occur. Remove shoots that are badly spaced, crossing, or are growing toward the middle of the tree. It is important to keep an open centre to the tree, allowing light and sun to penetrate and air to circulate.

Four to five years into your pruning routine you start to think about pruning to encourage the formation of the fruit, but that is a subject for another day. This is a very simple guide to pruning young trees, but hopefully it will set you on the right

tracks. Two books that explain the subject more fully are: *Pruning and Training* by Christopher Brickell and *The Fruit Garden Displayed* by Harry Baker both published by RHS. Happy Pruning!

Ben Pike, South Hams Orchard Series



Taking Shelter

If you are planning a new orchard or thinking of planting more trees in an existing one, spare a thought for the effect of wind and weather on your trees. Apple trees grow much better if sheltered from the prevailing wind. Shelter improves their general growth and stops too many blossoms blowing off before they are set or apples being blown to the ground before they are ready to harvest.

For this reason, Bowhayes Farm, who grow around 20 different apple trees produce a variety of willows and poplars especially suited for growing as shelter belts. Provided the young trees are kept weed free, poplars will grow an amazing 6-8' a year and willows will reach 20-24' after 3 growing seasons. The rate of growth makes the production of timber or firewood a real possibility – in addition to apples!

Full details of the special poplar and willow species available and how best to grow them are given in a free fact sheet from Bowhayes. See the advert on the inside back page.

What's on?

- Sat Sept 4th - See Orchard Link's display at the Kingsbridge Show. All day.
- Sat Sep 9th - 'The Hedges of Netherton Combe' A circular 3-4 mile walk around the hedges and acres of traditional orchards of Netherton near Shaldon. Start at 10am at the Coombe Cellars Pub. Return for a pub lunch. Contact Mary de Lemos for more details. Tel: 01626 361101 ext 2753.
- Sun Sep 12th - Don't miss Orchard Link's Cidermaker's Picnic at Heron Valley Cider, Loddiswell! 11.15am onwards. It's FREE to Orchard Link Members. Book your place by calling 01548 550516.
- Sat Sep 18th - SHOGS Annual Open Day and Barbeque at Tresillian, High Street, Kingsbridge 2.30 - 6.30pm. Garden tour and activities.
- Sat Oct 2nd - Come and buy apples, meet us or lend a hand at our stall in Kingsbridge Farmers Market, Town Square, Kingsbridge 10am till 2pm.

- Thur Oct 21 - is **National Apple Day** join in with Apple Days in Devon.
- Sun Oct 17 - Apple Day at the National Trust's Killerton House near Exeter. Call (01392) 881345 for details.
- Sun Oct 17th - Apple Day at Rosemoor, Great Torrington. Demonstrations, stalls, displays, and identification. Call Michael Gee on (01272) 376365
- Thur Oct 21 - Apple Day at the National Trust's Knighthayes Court tel (01884) 254665 for details.
- Sat or Sun 23/24 Oct - Apple Day and Cider Fair at Eggesford Garden Centre, near Chulmleigh tel (01769) 580250 for details.
- Sat Oct 23 - Apple and Pumpkin Day organised by Riverford Farm Foods at Kitley Farm Shop, Yealmpton. Barbeque, cider and juice tastings, apples to taste. Apples and apple trees to buy, also pumpkin lantern carving. 10.30am to 4pm. Tel: 01752 880925 or 880263
- Sun Oct 24 - Apple and Pumpkin Day at Riverford Riverford Farm shop near Staverton. Similar activities to the Kitley event, except the barbeque. 10.30am to 4pm. Tel: 01803 762523.

- Sat 6 Nov - Learn to lay a hedge in a small orchard with Tamar Valley Orchard Volunteers. Tel (01579) 370411 or (01822) 833804 for details.

Looking ahead:

- Sat 15th Jan - Join in the Millennium Wassail at Stoke Gabriel's Community Orchard. Traditional Wassailing, a mumming play, morris dancers and storytelling. 7.00pm onwards. Call the Coast and Countryside Service on (01803) 861140.
- Sun 30th Jan - Learn to Prune a hands on course with our orchard advisor Ben Pike. Book places through the Coast and Countryside Service (number above).

See us at Kingsbridge Show

Meet us, find out more about Orchard Link and arrange for your apple collection, come to our display at the Kingsbridge Show on Saturday 4th September.

Tresillian Garden Project

The Tresillian Garden Project is offering a selection of practical gardening courses, based in the Tresillian Garden in Kingsbridge. There are 11 Saturday workshops organised through the South Hams Organic Gardens Society. Half day workshops cost £7.50 or £5.00 to SHOGS members, full day workshops £15.00 or £10.00. Orchard Link members may be especially interested in:

- Sat 13th Nov - Pruning (half day)
 Sat 11th Dec - Gardening for Wildlife (full day)
 Sat 22nd Jan - Composting (half day)
 Sat 29th Jan - Pond Management (full day)

Devon Hedge Week

For those of you with traditional hedges around your orchards (and that's most of us), knowing how to care for and manage them is all part of managing your orchard. So you may be interested in the Devon-wide programme of events for Devon Hedge Week (4th - 12th September). From wildlife walks to practical demonstrations, there's a great range of walks and training days on offer. Simply call Nik Ward on 01392 266368 for a free programme of events.

Hedge Your Bets

And learn to lay your own hedges, with three locally based courses organised by the Devon Rural Skills Trust. For details of the following courses which cost £15 or £10 to DRST members, call Bruce Baker on 01364 72172 (after 6.30pm) for full details.

- Sat 9th Oct - Stone Facing, Holne
 Sat 23rd Oct - Hedge Steeping, South Brent
 Sat 6th Nov - Hedge Steeping, Midlands Style, Dartington.

Local Living

Orchard Link members and supporters might be interested in 'Local Living' a newsletter and initiative to encourage us all to buy thoughtfully and locally. Using local produce and minimising transport of it, is what Orchard Link is all about.

Here Geoffrey Haggis explains the ideas behind Local Living. 'Local Living is a quarterly news sheet exploring all we can do in the South Hams to develop a more sensible lifestyle for the 21st century. If we look at life from an environmental viewpoint, it is amazing how much follows from this: organic farming (better for our health and for wildlife); locally-produced food (saves the energy use and pollution of long-distance transport); wood and paper from well-managed forests; woodland renewal; orchard renewal; renewable energy; better recycling; houses made from local materials; fair trade with the third world. Local Living has articles on all these issues. It is available on subscription (phone 01803-866138) and at Greenlife and the Ticklemore Cheese shop in Totnes, Nicholson's in Kingsbridge.'



Guide to Countryside Contractors

If you've ever wondered where you can find someone to lay a hedge, plant trees or advise you on orchard care, then you'll welcome the new Woodland and Countryside Services Directory soon to be published by the Coast and Countryside Service in conjunction with the South Hams Woodland Campaign.

The directory will be issued to local landowners and householders who request details of contractors. It will feature a wide range of services, including landscape designers, woodland managers, orchard management consultants, stone wallers, fencing companies, environmental educators, timber merchants, conservation advisers, hedge layers, forestry contractors and tree nurseries.

Anyone providing woodland or countryside services in the South Hams may advertise free of charge in the directory, simply call Phi Parkin on 01803 861140 by 10th September.

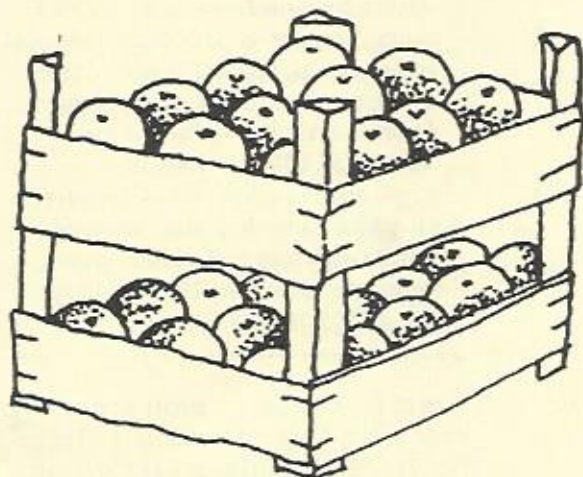
If you would like a copy of the directory simply call the above number. It will be available by late October/early November.

At the risk of repeating ourselves, if you're intending to sell you apples through Orchard Link's collection scheme this Autumn. Here's some sound advice....

Do Some 'Housework' Before the Harvest

As you sit back and enjoy the sunshine it seems as though everything in the orchard is taking care of itself, and up to a point it will, however this is an early reminder that if you wish (and I sincerely hope you do) to harvest your fruit you will need to do a little preparation to make the job easier in the autumn.

1. In August and early September, consider how you will keep the grass (and especially nettles!) down around the trees, to enable you to easily find and pick your fruit. You'll need either to let sheep graze, before any fruit falls, or strim or scythe around each tree under the canopy.
2. Check that you can easily get sacks of apples in and out of the orchard to your drive or gateway where we can collect them. Do you need to cut a path through long grass or move things about a bit, so you can maybe get a wheelbarrow through?
3. Make sure you have contacted Orchard Link in good time and that you have arranged for us to drop collecting bags off to you.
4. Organise someone to do the picking. If you are unable to do it yourself, see 'How to be a local hero' for ideas!
5. Sit back, relax and wait for the fruit to ripen!



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For a free information sheet or advice telephone Gordon Hill on 01404 812229, or write to Bowhayes Farm, Venn Ottery, Ottery St Mary, Devon EX11 1RX. Fax No 01404 815800. Full web site - www.bowhayesfarm.co.uk.

For seasonal gardening advice, garden events and open days pick up a copy of

Devon Country Gardener magazine

Available free from nurseries and garden centres, National Trust and open gardens, or direct by subscription from Landsman Publishing Ltd on 01297 551001

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Thank you to all our advertisers - their support has helped our newsletter's extra pages.

We're on the Web!

Orchard Link has joined the information superhighway and will now be linking orchard link owners across cyberspace. If that all sounds a bit high tech for us – just have a look at our pages on web site on: <http://telematics.ex.ac.uk/fr-mp.htm>. when you see Exeter Telematics Centre, look for the 'Making Locality Pay' section. Click on that, then click on Orchard Link which is listed as an option on the left hand side of your screen.

For a small concern based in Devon, we're really excited that anyone in the world could know what we do – we couldn't have dreamed of setting up our own web site, but have Patrick Dillon and a special initiative called 'Making Locality Pay' to thank for designing and providing a site free of charge.

The initiative is an exciting one as far as we're concerned because its based on the premise that businesses which use and promote locally distinctive products, produced in an environmentally sensitive way and have a definite regional identity should be specially marketed, because they contribute to conserving our local character, landscape and way of life.

After attending a training day on the initiative, Orchard Link was chosen for a free web site because the organisers felt that it was so in keeping with their aims. Using and selling local apples, minimising their transport, helping conserve old and traditional orchards and supporting the production of local cider, juice and preserves fitted the bill.

As Patrick explained, few businesses, other than those directly involved in tourism, leisure and heritage, have successfully utilised local distinctiveness and regional identity in marketing services and products and developing their commercial profile. Fewer still have actively traded on the links between local distinctiveness and environmentally sensitive forms of land management. However, research undertaken by the Countryside Agency and others has shown a growing demand for products that help maintain the diversity and richness of the countryside.

Making Locality Pay is also a web-based training course for businesses which is based around a number of modules and resources that develop understanding of locality and its distinctive characteristics. It shows how to connect cultural, landscape and heritage features with services and products and help local businesses define and extend their market niche. It has been developed with support from the Countryside Agency and European Social Fund. Between September and December 1999, Making Locality Pay will be trialed in the South-West.

You can follow the course free of charge at your own pace. If you have internet connection and are prepared to spend about six hours working through the course then we would like to hear from you. There are no registration or tuition fees, and the course can be completed for the cost of the local telephone connection to the internet – less than £5 at off peak rates. If you also have a small business which helps to maintain the diversity and richness of the countryside, contact Kirsty Tabrett on 01392 264758 for further details.

Orchard Link News is produced by ORCHARD LINK. It is free to members.

- * For details on membership contact Trudy Turrell at Orchard Link, Follaton House, Plymouth Road, Totnes. Tel 01803 861140.
- * For details of Orchard Link's apple collection scheme contact Nicola Herbert on Harvestline. Tel 01548 550516. See front page for opening hours.



You are invited to a **Cidermakers Picnic** Sunday 12th September.

A special event for Orchard Link members.

Come and meet other Orchard Link members and find out how your apples are turned into fine cider and juice at Heron Valley Cider near Loddiswell.

Meet at 11.15am for a guided tour of Heron Valley Cider by expert cidemaker Steve Bradley. Sample the apple juice and cider which he makes then enjoy a delicious Ploughman's lunch with cider in fields overlooking the River Avon.

This event (tour and lunch) is **FREE** to Orchard Link Members (maximum 2 lunches per family). Non members are welcome for £5 per head, the cost of which will be deducted from the membership price if you join.

You can also buy some cider and juice to take home – at wholesale prices!

To assess numbers for catering you must **book** places in advance. Simply call 01548 550516.

