

ORCHARD LINK *NEWS*



photo: Matthew Needham

Tree Pruning with Charles Staniland

Matthew Needham writes: "...Sometimes the neat diagrams in pruning books aren't much help when faced with the demands of a real tree, particularly one that has been established for a while. Through theory and hands-on work, Charles encourages us to consider why we are pruning, how much to remove and when. His wise experience and clear presentation are invaluable. I have come away with increased confidence and a new understanding that pruning is both more simple and more subtle than I had realised before..."

ORCHARD LINK ANNUAL GATHERING 2007

Members of Orchard Link are invited to Orchard Link's Annual Gathering on Sunday 2nd September 2007. This year we are holding the Annual Gathering at Higher Yalberton on the Western fringes of Paignton, an area of beautiful, productive orchards where cider has been made for centuries and where it is still made and sold today. The orchards of Higher and Lower Yalberton are presently under threat of development as a proposed site for a New Town, and we shall be the guests of the residents of this lovely area and their Action Group, many of whom are involved in orcharding or cider-making. The places we shall visit at Yalberton are close to one another, and lunch and the AGM will be at Stoke Gabriel Village Hall, which is a short car journey away.

The Programme for the day will be as follows:

10.00 am Park at Yalberton Barn, Yalberton Road, Paignton, where we meet and have coffee as guests of Val and John Gillespie.

10.30 Introduction to Yalberton and its orchards, past and present.

11.0 Richard Hunt of Higher Yalberton Farm will take us to his Cider Barn and Cellar and tell us about his cider-making business today.

12.0 Jackie Gillespie and Barry Jobson, who also make cider, invite us to a cider-tasting in the old Cider Barn of Yalberton Farm, and there will be an opportunity to view the work of two Yalberton craftswomen, Susie Gillespie, who weaves with natural linen, and Hilary Burns, who makes baskets from locally grown willows.

13.0 Drive to Stoke Gabriel Village Hall for what we confidently expect to be an excellent lunch using the combined skills of Yalberton and Orchard Link cooks!

14.0 The Orchard Link AGM.

15.0 The Gathering finishes, but people may want to walk back along the lanes lined with orchards, or explore the pretty village of Stoke Gabriel.

Directions to Yalberton Barn, Yalberton Road, Higher Yalberton: From Brixham, take the A3022 until you reach the turn-off for Sainsburys (Paignton) on your left. Follow this lane, not turning to right or left. You will come to King William Cottage on your right and then a cider barn on your left. After the barn, turn left before the little bridge up the track to Yalberton Barn (there will be signs here). If you come via Totnes, follow the A385 until you reach the Torbay Ring Road, turn right towards Brixham on the A3022, and continue until you see the Sainsbury's turn-off on your right. Continue as above. Orchard Link membership entitles you to 2 free tickets for this event (including lunches). Extra tickets cost £8 each for adults and £4 each for children. To receive your tickets, please book by Friday 24th August, using the form below, and send it with a stamped self-addressed envelope, (and your cheque if you require extra tickets,) to: Orchard Link, c/o J. Sarsby, 22 Leechwell St., Totnes, TQ9 5SX. (tel 01803 866870)

Name of Orchard Link Member

Address

Email address: tel.no:

Please send me free ticket(s) for the 2007 Annual Gathering. I enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for you to send them to me.

Please also send me adult tickets at £8 each, and child tickets at £4 each, totalling £..... I enclose a cheque made out to OrchardLink

Signature:

EDITORIAL

There have been important changes in Orchard Link: it is still a non profit-making company limited by guarantee, but now it has a Committee and needs members to be much more involved in its activities and in fund-raising: do read Ben Pike's article which explains what has been happening.

Meanwhile, Charles Staniland has been getting to grips with the question of hygiene when we press fruit. This is a very important matter and we are having to bring in some new rules. **At pressing days, we will only be accepting apples from orchards that have been ungrazed for at least 8 weeks before the apples are collected. We could well run short of apples for this reason, so we want to encourage people to bring along any suitable surplus apples that they have. Please do come to the pressing days listed in 'What's On' if you can.**

Peter Cowper writes about hiring the presses for juice- or cider-making, but we need a new person to look after hiring out the presses next year: see 'Situation Vacant'. Trudy Turrell, our Chairman, has put together a list of interesting activities in 'What's On', and our cover picture is a reminder that training days are an important part of helping orchards to thrive. Learn to prune with Charles Staniland and to make cider with Kevin Frost. Ben Pike also offers useful information about making use of buds (on p. 12).

Our **Orchard Link Annual Gathering** is on September 2nd this year: if you have not yet, as a member, sent off for your free tickets, fill in the form and send it off post-haste so we know by August 25th at the very latest that you're coming and want your place at the table! It is going to be held at Higher Yalberton on the edge of Paignton, (with lunch at Stoke Gabriel Village Hall.) It is a beautiful valley full of orchards where cider has been made for hundreds of years and where it is still made and sold today. The Save Yalberton Valley Action Group is campaigning to save the orchards from development, and of course we want to help them in whatever way we can. Come and see this beautiful valley and learn about the history of the orchards, about cider-making today and the ways in which people can fight to save orchards. (And come to meet other members and taste their juice and cider!) We need to fund-raise, and Robin and Veronica Cross are organising a raffle at the Gathering, so bring a prize if you can, and buy lots of tickets!

Don't forget that we have a library of orcharding books which you can borrow as members. Now, I hope you enjoy the Newsletter!

Jacquie Sarsby (Editor)



Cider-making at Yalberton

What's On?

Saturday 1st September - **Kingsbridge Show**. Kingsbridge Show have kindly given us a stand free of charge, so we should be grateful for **volunteers to help staff it please!** Bring along some of your fruit to sell, (sharing profits with O.L.) Call Trudy on 01803 849270 or email: trudy@trudyturrell.plus.com

Sunday 2nd September - **Orchard Link's ANNUAL GATHERING**, based at Stoke Gabriel and Yalberton. **FREE TICKETS IF YOU ARE A MEMBER**. See the Editorial, and fill up the form if you have forgotten to reply to the invitation.

Saturday 6th October - **Kingsbridge Farmers Market** - on The Quay, Kingsbridge 8.30am- 1pm. We need volunteers to press apples, bottle juice and talk to the public who visit our stall. Call or email Trudy (details above).

Sunday 14th October - **Avon Mill Garden Centre Autumn Festival** - Once again we shall be pressing on the large wooden press at this

enjoyable event (10am - 5pm). Lots of craft stalls, a café, storytelling etc, so bring the whole family and call or email Trudy if you can help: we need lots of helpers for a few hours at a shift.

Sunday 14th October - Apple Day at Cockington Court. A great day with stalls, food, drink, crafts and activities. 10am onwards. For further details see www.countryside-trust.org.uk

Sunday 21st October - National Apple Day - Cider-making Day at Lower Grimpstonleigh, near Kingsbridge. Kevin Frost has invited us to press apples from his orchard of old local varieties and to teach us how to make cider. 10am - 2.30pm. Bring a packed lunch, coffee provided on arrival. £16 or £12 to Orchard Link members. For further details and to BOOK, call Ben on 01803 732212 or email him at: info@orchardlink.org.uk

Saturday 27th - Totnes Farmers Market. We'll be pressing outside the Civic Hall and need help! 8.30am - 1pm. Call or email Trudy if you can offer help.

3rd November- Kingsbridge Farmers Market - we may have a stall and pressing if members wish to - call or email Trudy if interested.

Sunday 2nd December - Learn to Prune - with tuition from Charles Staniland, in orchards at Berry Pomeroy. 10.30am - 4pm, £20 or £15 to Orchard Link members. Call Charles on 01364 653169 to BOOK. There will be another pruning course on 13th January too.

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New Committee, New 'Culture' for Orchard Link

Ben Pike

Many of you will have been alarmed by your last newsletter. It suggested that you might not receive any more newsletters because Orchard Link was seriously short of money. Hearteningly, fifteen members were alarmed enough to come to a meeting to discuss and resolve our difficulties. From this meeting, a new committee was formed to take Orchard Link forward. Perhaps even more importantly for the long-term good of Orchard Link, a change of culture has started to take shape, with Orchard Link now perceived as a members' organisation, run by members for the benefit of members (and their orchards!). The last newsletter also prompted a generous anonymous donation of £400. Thank you to whoever it was; this has helped to keep Orchard Link afloat.

The new committee has been grappling with many issues, including ways of saving and raising money, whether to turn Orchard Link into a charity, and hygiene issues at pressing days. Few decisions have been made yet while the major issues are investigated in depth, but some things have already become clear. One is that we need to raise funds. All members could help with this, whether it is by holding a fund-raising event or donating a raffle prize for the annual gathering. Let a committee member know and we'll do our best to support you.

Orchard Link is committed to various pressing events during the autumn (see dates in What's On). We need your help to make this possible. These events raise money for Orchard Link and are an important shop window for us. In the past, we have had to pay people when we have not had enough volunteers. We have now made a commitment not to do this as it drains our funds, so we need you to volunteer. It is great fun and a good way to meet fellow members. Please contact Trudy Turrell on 01803-868366 to offer your help. We are still looking for someone to organise the pressing days during the autumn. Let us know if that person is you.

Your New Committee Members

Their email addresses and tel. nos. are as follows:

Chairman : Trudy Turrell <trudy@trudyturrell.plus.com>
tel. 01803-868366

Vice-chairman: Ben Pike <ben@sharpham.plus.com>
tel. 01803-732212

Meeting chairman: Phil Sheardown tel. 01803-865301
<canoe@canoeadventures.co.uk>

Membership Secretary: Ray Willis and Sharon McQuarrie
<ray@wmead2.wanadoo.co.uk> tel.01364-643250

Events and training: Ben Pike and Trudy Turrell

Newsletter Editor: Jacquie Sarsby <jsarsby@btinternet.com>
tel. 01803-866870

Website management and grant research: Graham Peters
<grahampeters@crookfarm.co.uk> tel. 01803 868834

Social events: Veronica and Robin Cross:
<info@beesonhols.co.uk> tel. 01548-581270
Mandy Speakman: <mandyspeak@hotmail.com>
tel. 01647-253020

Treasurer: Mick Godfrey: spinningmaud@yahoo.co.uk
tel. 01548-821156

Meeting Secretary: Tony Harber <apharber@tesco.co.uk>
Tel. 01395-445392

Press Hire: Peter Cowper <radpet@aol.com> tel. 01548-531297.

It has been very heartening to see the number of members that care enough about Orchard Link to step forward and help. With such commitment, the future looks bright. There is still plenty of room for others to help, so please step forward and help Orchard Link realise it's full potential; there is so much more that we could do.

Editor's Note: Do you know the National Orchard Forum, which can keep you in touch with other orchard groups all over the country? Their web-site is : www.nat-orchard-forum.org.uk

HIRE ORCHARD LINK'S APPLE PRESS

Orchard link has a mobile apple pressing kit to enable you to turn your apples into juice at home. We also have a larger oak press which can be hired out for events and community pressing days.

THE SMALL PRESS

The mobile kit is a stainless steel 2hp mill which works off mains electricity, and a compact rack and screw cloth press from Vigo. There are also pressing cloths and buckets. You can collect this kit in your own trailer. It will also fit into a larger estate car.

You will be able to process up to half a tonne of apples per day. This would amount to about 75 gallons of juice which can be frozen or turned into cider.

THE OAK PRESS

This is on a trailer which you collect with your own vehicle. Four people can move the press on and off the trailer. Mills and buckets come with the press but not on the trailer.

2007 HIRE CHARGES

Weekday hire	1 day	£35
	2 days	£60
Weekend hire	1 day	£45
	2 days	£80

To hire equipment contact: Peter Cowper tel. 01548 531297.

SITUATION VACANT!

We are looking for an organised, enthusiastic person to hire out Orchard Link's presses and mills for Autumn 2008. This is an essential role in Orchard Link and one for which we can offer some payment.

The job entails booking and hiring out our pressing equipment between late September late November and ensuring that it is kept in working order and clean for each hirer. You will need a telephone, use of a car and storage space for the small press, two mills and a small trailer.

The position also offers free use of the press equipment when not on loan, plus you will meet many other Orchard link members during the season! Peter Cowper who currently deals with hiring the equipment will also be happy to advise and help his successor 'learn the ropes'.

If you are interested, call Peter on 01548 531297 or Trudy on 01803 849270.

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PRESSING DAYS AND MARKET STALLS

Trudy Turrell

Once again I am planning ahead for our stalls at farmers markets. They are fun, a revenue earner and often a means of gathering new members as we show the wider public what we do. As usual I am asking members if they would be able to help on the stalls, pressing apples, filling bottles and talking to people about what we do.

This year, as you will be aware, Orchard Link is having to watch the pennies closely and the stalls will bring in some much needed cash for the organisation. In the spirit which has given us an active and enthusiastic working committee in recent months, I am hoping that members will volunteer for the stalls listed in 'What's On?'

This year we are aiming to improve on our hygiene on the stalls - and shall be following some of the basic guidelines set out for farmers' market stall-holders. This will involve wearing rubber gloves, only using new, not reused bottles, washing the apples thoroughly and not accepting apples from orchards in which livestock have been recently grazed, to reduce any risk of contamination. These are simple rules to follow and should increase our credibility and professionalism as well as safety. For this reason and also because it makes for smoother working, I am asking volunteers to be available for a whole morning of any farmers' market they opt for. (We will of course allow you a break in the middle and will expect to have enough people on hand to make the morning easy and enjoyable.) By being there all morning we will not have volunteers coming and going and so having to brief each new person in the middle of pressing.

I hope that we will have a keen team of people at each market, so please consider whether you can offer to attend one. Volunteering for just one stall this autumn will ensure that we can continue this vital aspect of our work, which is such a good 'shop window' to people. Call or email me (email preferred!) on trudy@trudyturrell.plus.com tel. 01803 849270. I look forward to hearing from you!

HARVESTLINE

Ben Pike

As usual, we will be operating Harvestline during September and October. For the uninitiated, this service matches up members with excess apples with people who are looking to buy apples. Apples are usually sold to cider and juice makers, but we have also helped jam and chilli sauce makers.

So, if you have apples to sell, please phone the Harvestline, 07792-664710 and we will put you in touch with someone who will buy them.

We have already had 3 requests as follows:

Neil McDonald of Orchard Pig Cider and Apple juice is looking to buy bittersweet cider apples. Contact him on neil@cedarwalk.com
Paul Sweeney is after half a ton of Kingston Black, Yarlington Mill, Sweet Coppin, Harry Masters or Foxwhelp. You can reach him at wrenburyhse@yahoo.co.uk

Millwhite's cider would like 10 tons of cider apples. They are based in Hertfordshire, but will collect locally. millwhites@hotmail.co.uk

It is always best to call early in the season as many people make arrangements early in the day.

Another option if you have spare apples is to bring them along to one of our pressing days (see What's on).

We will juice your apples so that you can take some juice away and leave the rest for Orchard Link to sell and raise funds. This year we will not be able to take windfall apples from grazed orchards (see Editorial). This is due to hygiene concerns, particularly with regard to patulin.

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BEING BUDWISE *Ben Pike*

Although we usually think of apple tree pruning as a large scale operation involving pruning saws and loppers, it can sometimes involve the manipulation of single buds. In fact, whole new trees can be derived from a single bud in an operation known as budding. Carried out in late summer, this involves the marrying of a bud and some surrounding bark with a rootstock, and allowing it to grow until the growth emanating from the bud starts to form a new tree. It's extraordinary to think that a whole tree can arise from one bud, similar perhaps to a new plant growing from a small seed.

Once we have a young tree, we often want to train into a particular shape. This can involve the encouragement or discouragement of particular buds forming from the leader. The techniques used are known as nicking and notching.

Nicking is removing a small wedge shaped piece of bark below a bud, restricting the flow of sap to the bud. This weakens the growth from that bud, or may cause it to turn into a fruit bud. One use for nicking would be when the leader is cut back and you wish to encourage wide-angled branches to form lower down. Nicking below the top two buds will encourage this process instead of the vigorous upright growth that may occur.

Notching is making the same kind of cut just above a bud. This encourages the bud to make more vigorous growth than it might otherwise do. This type of cut is used to make buds break low down on a branch or in a position where a branch is required for a trained form

of tree, for instance, I have recently used it where I had a gap in the framework of an espalier pear.

Buds can also be rubbed out as a method of pruning if it is already clear that any growth arising from that bud will not be needed. I use this method frequently when pruning the leader of fruit trees. If a simple secateur cut is used, it is likely that several young branches will form at a fairly upright angle to the trunk, whereas branches with a wide angle are desirable because they are stronger. My remedy is to leave the topmost bud to form a replacement leader, and then to rub out the next two or three buds down. This allows the buds further down to grow on at a wide angle.

So you can see that because a bud is not just a bud, but a potential branch, if it's potential is recognised early, it can either be encouraged or discouraged. Removal or discouragement at this stage requires less effort and is less harmful to the tree.

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THE ORCHARDS OF BLACKLAKE FARM

Tony Harber

Blacklake, a traditional East Devon farm, has three orchards: New Orchard on relatively prime land, Pit Orchard, recently planted in a wettish area using ridge and furrows, and Goyle Orchard in a steeply sloping coombe valley, locally a "goyle". The Goyle has never been mechanically cultivated and is only accessible to tractors at two points. It is rich botanically, with orchids amongst many varieties of wild flowers, and has badgers, deer and many types of butterfly. Each orchard is periodically grazed by sheep.

New Orchard, with around 35 trees of all ages is the main production orchard. Varieties of cookers crop in the shade of large oaks despite canker and lichen growth. Several Tom Putt, a local multipurpose variety, thrive in the more open areas and it is primarily from these that a few hundred bottles of apple juice are prepared each year. A few cookers are sold at local farmers markets but the remaining crop is unmarketed. Other named varieties are Sunset, Bramley and Pippin and there are several anonymous older trees....

Pit Orchard has about 15 survivors, with most losses on the ridge adjacent to the uphill side - too wet despite the ridge. The trees were planted 5 to 7 years ago and are beginning to crop. To the southwest a tall, thick hedge encouraged vigorous upward tree growth, although the trees are now bushing nicely since the hedge was layed a couple of years ago.

The Goyle has a dozen or so old trees and 30 trees planted 9 years ago under a stewardship grant. The five varieties of newer trees are Fair Maid of Devon, Halstow Natural, Aston Bittersweet, Golden Bittersweet and Town Farm 59, all cider apples ranging from sweet to full sharp so that a range of ciders might be possible. Again, until this last winter there was a continuous high hedgerow along the south side of the Goyle, and bearing in mind the steep banks, there was little light reaching many of the trees. Hedge-laying took place this winter and several ash trees were also removed to give a striking increase in light. Previously most of the trees grew vigorously upwards with wide spacing between the branches. This has been countered with heavy pruning and tying down and some of the trees are assuming a better shape though half have not yet cropped.

The marl banks in the Goyle are quite unstable and most of the older trees have uprooted at some point in their lives and either continued on one side of the root ball or re-rooted from along the original trunk. Some of the damage was caused by cattle which used to be overwintered in the Goyle several years previously before conservation of this area began. The lower Goyle was allowed to become overgrown. As an example, one older tree had become so entangled with bramble growth that good-sized branches 3 metres above ground were torn off. The area is now cleared and the tree recovering and fruiting. At the very bottom of the Goyle, further apple trees were uncovered just this year by spotting their prolific blossom.

Apple juice at the farm is made and pasteurised with modern equipment, but the old apple loft, chute and traditional screw press remain, and the present owners have no intention of removing them although it is unlikely that they will ever work again commercially. ৗৗৗ

'APPLES AT BEESON FARM' was the name of our Spring Social Event hosted by Robin and Veronica Cross at Beeson Farm, Beesands near Kingsbridge on 4th March 2007. There was no room to mention this in our short, Spring 'Crisis Newsletter', but this was a highly successful event, even though held on a day of driving rain.

Dr. Jerry Cross gave his audience a highly professional and interesting talk on pests and diseases of cider apples and how to deal with them in an environmentally friendly way. Dr Cross is a leading top fruit specialist at East Malling Research Station. He is also Robin's brother, so we were lucky to have the opportunity to listen to such an eminent speaker, who also answered questions very ably and helpfully.

There was a very good lunch of pasties (meat or vegetarian) and salads with cider or juice, followed by apple crumble, and the afternoon began with a judging and sampling of members' own ciders and apple juices. Bottles were covered up and numbered and everyone became judge and jury in a blind-tasting. This was, as you can imagine, a very popular event. Towards the end of the day, the rain held off and members were able to go out and look at the trees in the young orchard, with the opportunity to discuss again some of the problems which Dr Cross had been talking about in the morning. Many thanks to Robin and Veronica Cross for a most enjoyable and useful day. We hope to have a resume of some of Dr Cross's advice on pests and diseases and how to treat them, in a future issue of the Newsletter.

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**Request from Jackie Taylor: SPARE FRUIT TO SELL?**

I am starting up a business based on a forest garden i.e. fruit and nut trees and bushes, also under-planted, along with plants with a range of other uses such as edible leaves as salads, herbs and teas, fuel, medicines, dyes, saps, bee plants, fodder, windbreaks etc. In due course there will be ducks for pest control and eggs. I shall eventually sell the surplus produce, processing some of it. I have a customer for jam and chutney, and do not yet have the produce to make them with. Have you got suitable fruit to sell me? My customer needs it to be unsprayed and reasonably priced. I would like plums, quinces, pears, cooking apples and any other summer and autumn fruit, then next year, rhubarb, currants, gooseberries, green walnuts etc. We would also like to buy dessert plums for home consumption. Any favourite recipes for jam, chutney, or pickled walnuts would also be appreciated. To contact me: email [jackie.taylor@eclipse.co.uk](mailto:jackie.taylor@eclipse.co.uk)

tel. 01803840862, 28 Weston Lane, Totnes, TQ9 5UN.

**Request from Nicky Love, Campcraft: WANTED: TO BUY: 1-4 acres**, south-ish facing, grassland/orchard in Devon, in order to create sustainable Forest Garden (fruit, nuts, herbs etc) educate children and create nature habitat. Please contact Nicky 07986 620088 or email: [nhackney@wildmail.com](mailto:nhackney@wildmail.com)

**Contact Orchard Link at:  
ORCHARD LINK, P.O. BOX 109,  
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**Or ring 07792 664710**

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If you would like to write something for the Newsletter, tell the editor:

Jacquie Sarsby, tel 01803 866870, email: [jsarsby@btinternet.com](mailto:jsarsby@btinternet.com)

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