

Spring 2007

Volume 2.03

ORCHARD LINK *NEWS*



*MUST THIS BE YOUR LAST
NEWSLETTER?*

Must this be your last newsletter?

An important letter from Trudy Turrell

This year Orchard Link celebrates its tenth year. Yet you will see from this brief news sheet that we are also in a state of financial crisis. We have just over £400 in the bank.

In 1997 Orchard Link was established with the help of a European grant- that allowed a group of interested orchard campaigners to investigate the options for using the products of small traditional orchards, to offer training and support to orchard owners and keep them as a sustainable element of our landscape. Since 2000 we have managed to operate on what we earn from press hire, subscriptions and a small 'nest egg' left over from the grant. Over the years the rising cost of everything- from insurance to printing and postage costs, plus the costs of servicing ageing equipment each year has meant that we do not receive enough income to cover our costs. **We currently need an extra £1000 a year just to keep Orchard Link operating.**

So where does the money go?

Although we try to run on a shoestring, some costs are unavoidable; our three seasonal newsletters cost a total of around £540 to print and over £100 to mail to members. Insurance for training and equipment hire costs over £400 per year. Our accountant (very reasonable and sympathetic!) costs around £140 and mill repair is running at around £300 after each season. Press hire and admin costs together add up to around £900 a year.

Whilst a few people undertake a lot of voluntary work to keep Orchard Link running, over recent years we have had to pay people to reliably staff our farmers market stalls, to undertake the administration which goes with a membership organisation and of course to deal with hiring out and maintaining the mills and presses in the busy autumn season. Ben Pike who offers orchard advice over the phone plus many other jobs and I,

who help organise Orchard Link, do so voluntarily, but have limits on what we can do, being self-employed and with families to run. Jacquie Sarsby, who tirelessly produces our newsletter, is also self-employed and has her own land to manage.

Crisis or opportunity?

The current financial situation can be a real opportunity to make us all think about our organisation. I'd like to think that our glass is half full rather than half empty and would consider our resources as far more than £400 in the bank. Orchard Link's tenth birthday could be a turning point; changing the organisation's direction and how it will be run.

Because of Orchard Link's history; supported by European money and some paid hours of 'staff' time, most members assume that there is a group of people with paid time and resources to run the organisation.

To survive, Orchard Link needs a change of culture. We may need to become a charity, or a trust. We shall need a committee of volunteers with clearly defined roles and we shall need all members to contribute some of their skills and time.

If Orchard Link is to survive, we don't have the luxury of doing nothing!

So what can we do?

Right now we need some members to;

- **Research grants.** A few of us have some specialist knowledge, but anyone can help with filling out forms or collecting information.

Look for sponsorship- Do you have any contacts with a local business that may be sympathetic and may benefit from having their name on our newsletter, web site or a press? The business does not have to be connected with apples or cider to wish to support orchards in our landscape.

Get publicity in a local paper or magazine? To promote what we do and gain more members. Any publication from the local paper to a parish newsletter can benefit Orchard Link.

- **Help with administration or the basic running of Orchard Link.** From packing the newsletter, to updating the members database. There are lots of jobs- many just taking an hour or two of your time which you can do from home if you have a PC or just a phone.
- **Can anyone out there service our mills?**
- **Be a fairy godmother- or father!** If you feel passionately about Orchard Link as I and many others do, you could offer to support a small area of its work. How about offering to print a seasonal newsletter – for £150(we'll print your name on it!) Or repairing one of the mills for autumn 2007? Just £20 will pay towards our 'pay as you go' phone to keep operating and giving advice. Any of the above could make a 'virtual present' for an orchard loving friend or family member- and we can send you a special card to them from you.
- **Finally remember Orchard Link in your will.** One member has already! This will not help us in the short term, but so many charities rely on the generosity of members in their wills. Just imagine a living legacy of apple trees or training orchard owners for the future.

Finally, whatever you choose to do, if you care for Orchard Link and its future, can I urge you to attend a very special urgent meeting? We have called a SPECIAL OPEN MEETING FOR ALL MEMBERS on Wednesday 25th APRIL. 7.30pm onwards at the Church House Inn, Harberton. In its tenth year Orchard Link's future is in all of our hands. I sincerely hope that it will be thriving in ten years time.
Trudy Turrell

What's on?

Wednesday 25th April

Special Open Meeting – see above.

Thursday 3rd May

Devon Apple Orchard Safari. Join Tamar Orchard Group to visit 4 orchards in the Bere peninsula. Learn about management, tree care, and environmental concerns with experts as you go. 10am- 4pm. £7.50. Call Stephen Russell on 01579 351083 or email srussell@tamarvalley.org.uk to book.

Saturday 5th May.

Lustleigh May Day celebrations:

Procession, May Queen and attendants, dancing in the Town Orchard. Usually starts at 1pm. Free entry.

Monday 7th May

Yalberton Walk with Brian Carter

Meet at 10 am at Jewson's Car Park, Aspen Way on the Yalberton Industrial Estate, Paignton, for a walk among the beautiful orchards of Yalberton to give support to the Yalberton Valley Action Group, and to hear how their campaign is proceeding.

Sunday 20th May

Stoke Gabriel May Fair. Come and enjoy a traditional fair under the apple trees in blossom at Yarde Orchard. Maypole dancing, various stalls, childrens' entertainments and teas. 2.30pm onwards at Yarde farm, Paignton Road, Stoke Gabriel, near Totnes.

Sunday 8th July

Cornwall Orchard Safari. Visit 3 apple and cherry orchards in the Tamar Valley area of Cornwall. Learn about wildlife, fruit and planning an orchard. £5 to include a vegetarian lunch. To book call Richard Vulliamy on 01579 370411.

Look out for Noble Chafers in Devon Orchards !

East Devon District Council recently hosted a wildlife conference for local tree wardens and volunteers. One of the workshops focussed on biodiversity in orchards and the Noble Chafer in particular. This eye-catching beetle with green and purple metallic colouring is the proud owner of a national Biodiversity Action Plan.

It is currently only found in old orchards in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Last reported in North Devon in 1890, it is possible that it has just escaped detection. It is similar to the more common Rose Chafer but differs in having wrinkled wing cases and a distinct indentation between thorax and wing cases. The Rose Chafer has a continuous smooth outline.

Noble Chafers lay eggs in the decaying wood of old fruit trees. The larvae feed on the same matter and take two years to develop into adults. When the adults emerge in July and August, they only live for 4 –6 weeks. So the best way to spot the species is to check the decaying wood in rotholes in fruit trees for its droppings. These are very distinctive – small, conical, black tubes that look as if they've been pushed through a tiny spaghetti maker and neatly sliced every few millimetres.

The lead partners in the Biodiversity Action Plan are PTES (People's Trust for Endangered Species). They are running a

two year project to find out how much suitable habitat is available for the Noble Chafer, which would of course also benefit many other invertebrates, epiphytes and birds. They are requesting information about the presence of traditional orchards in four counties including Devon. They would like people to record acreage, tree age and density and basic management regime.

So please get in touch with Anita Burrough at PTES who would very much appreciate help with this survey. Anita has an identification sheet for Noble Chafers which she can send to you, which you might find interesting. Her phone number is 020 7498 4533 and e-mail anita@ptes.org. She is planning to run another a workshop in Devon if there is sufficient interest.

Kate Tobin, Great Trees of East Devon Project, East Devon District Council

Yalberton Valley Update

Tireless campaigners working to save the orchards and countryside of Yalberton Valley near Paignton from becoming a housing estate and industrial site are changing the official views of Torbay Council. Now on their plans as a 'possible site' rather than the 'preferred site' for housing, Yalberton will be considered in a district wide survey of all possible opportunities for building sites by consultants undertaking a 'housing land availability assessment'. Whilst this brings new hope, to date Yalberton remains the only housing site with a plan- meaning it is still very vulnerable.

Meanwhile the Save Yalberton Valley Group have commissioned Devon Wildlife Trust to carry out a thorough survey of the wildlife. As one of Paignton's last remnants of orchards and market gardens, Yalberton only highlights the lack of protection for our traditional orchards.

You can find out more on the special walk with Brian Carter on 7th May- see 'Whats On' or visit www.saveyalbertonvalley.

[This Newsletter has been brought out with a great sense of urgency, so please forgive any sub-editing lapses!]

Growing Interest in Tamar Valley.

Tamar orchards and local apple varieties are receiving help from a newly appointed Orchard Officer at the National Trust's Cotehele, who will be creating a new 'mother' orchard near the existing one. Over coming years the Trust will be planting over 200 different apple varieties which are intrinsic to the Tamar area, which will create a gene bank for the future.

Meanwhile a new initiative- 'Tamar Grow Local' is aiming to secure a 1.5 acre plot in the Calstock area for allotments and an orchard of local apple tree varieties.

Tamar Orchard Group (a coalition of Bere Apple Fest, Tamar Orchard Volunteers and Tamar Valley AONB), have recently produced a varied programme of events for 2007. Some are featured in 'Whats On?'. For full details call Stephen Russell on 01579 351083 or email srussell@tamarvalley.org.uk

T.T.

**Contact Orchard Link at:
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Or ring 07792 664710

Don't forget to visit our web-site at:

www.orchardlink.org.uk

You can e-mail us there or at

info@orchardlink.org.uk

To hire a press or mill,

Ring Peter Cowper on 01548 531297