



your Orchard

Issue no. 10
January 2012

A periodical newsletter for all those interested in the work of the Bridport Community Orchard Group

“ I never thought that I could feel so enthusiastic about potatoes! ”

Rose L. from Bridport

Potatoes and apples

Bridport Community Orchard celebrated potatoes and apples over the weekend of 14th-15th January. Potato Day was the brain child of Jude Hopkins and Marion Palmer and this is their report:

Eleven months ago a few of us went to Drimpton to their Potato Day. It was so crowded and overwhelming, but such a wonderful idea that Marion then and there asked Pennard Plants if they would come to Bridport and do a day here, and that's what happened. Marion and I did the basic organising during a few cafe sessions, realised we needed an organisation to work with (the Marion and Jude Potato Day didn't sound so good), and the Orchard Group took it on. It was advertised on the Plan B and Orchard e-mail lists, and from that we got some wonderful volunteer helpers and cake and soup makers, and best of all beautiful posters.

The day was fantastic, a steady flow of people, lots of relaxing and talking over coffee and soup and a really happy friendly atmosphere, which was



Photos by Tricia Hawkins

Potato Day in St Mary's Church Hall

commented on by the Pennard people. They took £1300 so went away happy and will be back on the second Saturday in January 2013!!

Huge thanks to all the people who helped – with advertising, monies, setting up and taking down, serving, clearing, washing up etc etc. *Jude Hopkins and Malcolm Drew*

(This event looks like being a regular in our calendar, and was enjoyed by many people. It is also a good fund raiser, so well done Jude! Jill Lloyd - Chair)

Bridport Community Orchard Group contacts:

Jill Lloyd -
Chair of BCOG
01308 458480
jill.lloyd15@talktalk.net

Sheila Hawkins -
Secretary
sheila811@gmail.com

David Hawkins -
Treasurer
david.hawko@hotmail.co.uk

Tricia Hawkins
Newsletter Editor
tricia.hawkins@hotmail.co.uk

Bridport Town Council
01308 456722

**“ Here's to thee, old apple tree,
That blooms well, bears well.
Hats full, caps full, three bushel
bags full,
An' all under one tree.
Waes Hail! Waes Hail! Waes Hail! ”**

And thus 150 brave souls, many bolstered by copious quantities of hot cider kindly donated by Dorset Nectar, toasted the fruit trees in the Orchard to ensure a bountiful crop in 2012.

The tradition of wassailing in Dorset is an ancient one, but the principle remains the same - to provide cider and bread to feed the trees and the birds that pollinate them, and make enough noise to scare the evil spirits right back into Somerset.



Photos by Tricia Hawkins

This year the cacophony was complemented by the singing of all our favourite wassailing songs, and dancing from the Monkton Wyld Morris. We can safely look forward to hats full, caps full, and at least three bushel bags full!

Andy Jefferies



"Cheers Team!" says Jill Lloyd - BCOG Chair

We have now completed three full and enjoyable years in the Orchard. The 65 trees are well established, the new hedge and the laid hedge are growing well, The pond has been completed, with a new artificial Epalyn liner, a dipping platform built, and a new shed erected. The allotments are well tended, and the community allotment has a polytunnel.

The Town Council has repaired the wall by the churchyard entrance, and resurfaced the path in that area which had worn away with much use.

The whole site now has a settled feeling and is well used by the community both formally and informally.

Events in the Orchard

This list, month by month, illustrates how much activity there is and how many varied groups are involved.

We began 2011 in **January** with the third **Wassailing** ceremony, the pouring rain failed to dampen either the spirits of nearly 100 participants or their thirst for hot cider. Later in the month was the **AGM** and party in the Arts Centre, and a hedge-laying workshop.

In **June** the Dorset Wildlife Trust **Big Butterfly Bonanza** made a big impact on the Arts Centre, Bucky Doo Square, South Street, and finally in the Orchard.

Oliver Letwin, MP visited the Orchard in **July**, and the **Sing for Water Aid** performance took place. Nikki Northover and the Arts Centre ran **dance workshops** in **August** and we were at **Melplash Show** with Bridport Town Council. We also had a Sunday afternoon **picnic on the beach** at West Bay.

In **September** we hosted a visit by the **National Trust** from Kinsgston Lacey,

Chair's report for 2011

seeking advice on setting up a community orchard, and the **Alzheimer's Society** paused in their **Memory Walk** to sing under the hawthorn tree wearing their Hat Festival hats. We were awarded the **Taste of Dorset 'Grow Your Own'** award at a grand function hosted by the Blackmore Vale magazine and, as well as the certificate and commemorative plate, we were presented with a stylish purple wheel barrow,

We celebrated the traditional **Apple Day** in **October** jointly with Treewise and the Town Council. This event is now well established, with many local groups taking part. It draws large numbers of people and this year we were especially pleased to welcome **Groves Nurseries**, the **Dorset Wildlife Trust** and the **Monkton Wyld Morris dancers**. It was also a splendid inaugural **pond-dipping** occasion, and after the hours and days of wrestling in mud, it was a special delight to see the children's enjoyment in seeing the insect life of the pond. We rounded off 2011 in **December** with a **Christmas party** in No. 10 café. We began **2012** in **January** with **Potato Day** in Church House and our fourth **Wassailing** ceremony.

Monthly volunteer days

The second Sunday of each month (and on other occasions) has seen groups of 10 - 50 volunteers, putting a great deal of work into the Orchard in all weathers. They have tended the fruit trees, weeded, mulched, watered, pruned, and monitored them for disease or damage, weeded the new hedge, scythed and raked the grass, completed the pond, built the dipping platform and erected the polytunnel and new shed.

The community allotment has flourished, and been productive. This group meets every week, and besides gardening, has attended cooking workshops at **Local Food Links**. Students from **Mount Joy School** also visit regularly.

Thanks

As in past years, we have been most generously supported by many local individuals, groups and businesses and it is my pleasure to use this occasion to thank them publicly.

First, and most important, to **Bridport Town Council** for their invaluable contribution to this joint project - Daryl Chambers is unfailingly helpful; Apple Day would be impossible without his team who also cut the grass in the Orchard. We thank **Linda Bullock** for the generous gift of new notice boards.

Groves Nurseries generously sponsor our newsletter; **Round Table** have given us a shed; the **Lions** started the fund to buy apple juicing equipment; **Waitrose** supported us in September as one of their community groups; **and Jewsons** provided the timber for the dipping platform.

We are also grateful to **The George** in South Street for free use of a room for committee meetings; **Footprints** for printing; **Bridport Arts Centre** for hosting our AGM; **St Mary's Church** for the use of Church House and the local press for publicity

Many local businesses gave us their products for Apple Day which enables us to raise funds to support our work all year, so we are most grateful to and thank:

Clippers for beverages; **Forrest Preserves** for chutneys; **Denhay and Ford Farms** for cheese; **Leakers** for bread; **Moore's** for flapjacks; local cider makers at **West Milton, Bettiscombe** and **Dorset Nectar** for cider; **Bridge Farm** who gave us cider for wassailing last January; **No. 10 café**; and **Dorset Wildlife Trust** for the use of marquees. Apples were given by **Elwell Fruit Farm, Warners** in North Chideock, **the Walled garden** in Little

Bredy, **Sidney Gale House** and **Bob Gillis (Town Clerk)**.

Looking ahead to 2012

The open piece of land at the top of **Park Road** will shortly be transferred from WDDC to Town Council ownership, As part of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations, we plan to plant some fruit and other trees in the grassy area at the top of Park Road, to enhance a public amenity area as a habitat more attractive to humans and wildlife, This is generously supported financially by the Lions Club of Bridport

We are seeking funding to continue the excellent work done by Carolyn Brightwater in establishing a thriving **Gardening Club**. We have now taken on two new allotments across Priory Lane beside the bowls club, and provided funding can be found, new groups of people will be working there.

We hope to purchase our own **apple juicing equipment** this year.

We already have our regular events pencilled in, as well as new ones to mark the **Diamond Jubilee** and the **Spirit of Bridport**. The newsletter and website will keep you up to date.

Finally, to all the people who have contributed to the Orchard this year, to the hard working committee for their enthusiasm, commitment and ability, and all other regular and occasional volunteers, members, supporters and the public:

Thank you!

Jill Lloyd - Chair BCOG

Treasurer's report for 2011



We received seven grants in 2011:

- **Co-operative Membership – Community Fund for £1,500** - for the Community Allotments Gardening Club, principally for the co-ordinator.
- **POPP for £1,130** - Also for the Community Allotments Gardening Club, trees, publicity, tools, training, volunteers and admin.
- **Waitrose for £470** - for the fruit juicing equipment.
- **Wessex Water – Watermark Award for £350** - for the rain harvesting and pond dipping equipment
- **Bridport Lions for £200** - fruit juicing equipment
- **West Dorset DC - Priority Project for £169.20** - Hedging workshop & trees
- **Dorset Biodiversity Partnership for £76.75** – balance of previous grant used towards the pond liner

We also raised other receipts for BCOG funds, our two primary events in the Orchard:

- **Wassailing in January - £76** - donations for song sheets and apple juice but costs totalled £57.
- **Apple day - £227** - Net surplus for BCOG

We have welcomed C R Groves assistance of **£266** as sponsorship of our regular newsletter.

We also received small donations from our involvement at the AGM, Butterfly Bonanza, Food Fair, Melplash Show and an individual donation – total of **£36** plus some vouchers for wild flower seeds.

The seven grants received totalled **£3,895.95** with a remaining total left to spend over the next year, mainly on the Gardening Club and the fruit juicing equipment. The surplus of **BCOG funds** at the end of the year amounts to **£432.71** much lower than the end on 2010. **Operating costs** amounted to £672, net £406 following the Groves sponsorship. Exceptional costs include £283 for the gardening club materials, in particular the polytunnel, £121 for the pond and £57 for the gardening club seeds. **Event costs at £633** are excluded as the Apple Day and Wassailing day proceeds are net.

The surplus of BCOG funds (**Unrestricted funds**) amounts to **£432.71** and the total of the surplus of the grants (**Restricted funds**) is **£2,506.52**. These equal the balance of the bank accounts at **£2,939.23**.

A donation of £209.90 from Colmers WI in 2010 has been transferred from **Unrestricted to Restricted** funds as a substantial amount has not yet been spent on trees and seeds.

During the year **Round Table** provided funds to purchase a second shed for the Orchard.
David Hawkins - Treasurer, BCOG

We welcome any ideas for the improvement, use and management of the Orchard. Please get in touch with us, either directly, or via our excellent website

www.bridportcommunityorchard.org.uk

We are always keen to recruit and welcome new members. We work hard and play hard, so do come and join us.



Apple Day 2011

Our main annual event, Apple Day, was held on Saturday 8th October last year. As always, we were delighted to welcome back our regular stallholders, who never fail to provide eye catching, informative and colourful displays. Cakes, chutneys, honey, and, of course, cider and freshly pressed apple juice, from apples sourced locally, were available to taste and buy. We were pleased to welcome for the first time Groves Nurseries, giving advice about, and selling, fruit trees and other plants; Dorset Wildlife Trust, who in addition to their information stand, ran very popular and enjoyable pond dipping sessions; West Dorset Beekeeping Association and the Monkton Wyld Morris Dancers. Members of the Gardening Club prepared and served delicious soup on the Community Allotment, and both the BCOG refreshment stall and the café in Church House was very busy serving refreshments.

Entertainment was provided by music from the Yellow Room, Acapella singing, Morris dancing, and story telling round the fire. The MC (Andy) surprised and delighted everyone by announcing events with a blast from his Tibetan prayer horn, the sun shone, and much fun was had by everyone. Huge thanks are due to all contributors and volunteers, who made the day such a success. We're looking forward to this year's Apple Day already!
Sheila Hawkins and Susannah Madigan

www.bridportcommunityorchard.org.uk



Your Space

We welcome your comments, letters, articles or any orchard-related items for inclusion in our next issue. Please send anything you have – no matter how long or short – to the editor:

tricia.hawkins@hotmail.co.uk

Remember – it's *your* Orchard!

News in brief

Christmas Party

As has now become tradition, the Orchard Group Committee celebrated the Christmas season by having a party; this time at the cafe **No. 10** in East Street. And what a fantastic event it was. The proprietor, Paul Hindes prepared a selection of food that really was a feast for any pair of eyes, and the sight of its tasteful display was a joy to behold. The food included a flan, a whole range of Continental style salads, a frittata, and some fish and lamb for the carnivores too. For pudding there was apple pie and mince pies, and this was all topped off by some superb home made custard. What a feast! About 22 people attended; committee members, volunteer workers, and partners. The service from **No. 10** staff was very attentive and second to none. Overall, a wonderful event much enjoyed by all of those attending, and a perfect reward for all of the hard work put into the orchard over the last 12 months by the Committee and volunteers alike.

Paul Arthur

Bridport Community Orchard is Branching Out

WDDC has recently been transferring ownership of a number of parcels of land. One of these is a small sloping area at the top of **Park Road**. At present (covenanted to remain a public open space), it consists of rough grass and a few ornamental trees. We at BCO think we can do better! **Bridport Town Council** has now taken ownership and is happy to manage the site jointly with the Community Orchard. **Bridport Lions** have kindly offered up to £500 to fund some trees. So we are aiming to have a planting day in March to put in some apple and other native trees including a **Jubilee Oak**. These, along with some wildflower planting will enhance the wonderful views over the town towards the coast, seen from the two benches already in situ, and much appreciated by anyone who has made the pretty stiff uphill walk to the site. We are hoping to involve local residents in the project and canvass their views and ideas on what is going to be an ongoing and rewarding project.

Gill Massey



Bridport Community Orchard Group

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(in alphabetical order)



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