

# Colwall Orchard Group: end of year report for 2009/10

## 1. Introduction

Traditional orchards are an important element of our landscape and heritage. They are also extremely important for wildlife, particularly insect's living in deadwood and the animals that feed on these. In recognition of their wildlife importance, orchards became a 'priority' habitat under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan in 2007.

Colwall has a rich history of orcharding, with the earliest farmstead orchard currently dated back to 1577, and 350 acres of orchard established from 1858 to supply a fruit packing and processing business in the village. This business closed in 1961 and since then, with no demand for orchard produce, many orchards have been bulldozed down or neglected and Colwall lost the traditional skills needed to prune the trees and use their produce to best effect. The Colwall Orchard Group is working to restore the remaining orchards to a fruitful future by:

- Working with orchard owners to reintroduce active management
- Training volunteers to rescue prune orchard trees
- Encouraging local people to celebrate and protect orchards.

We founded Colwall Orchard Group in 2007, initially to identify the orchards in the Parish. In association with the People's Trust for Endangered Species, we assessed the condition of the remaining orchards and looked for noble chafer, a rare beetle that lives on dead wood in orchard trees. We assessed 41 orchards, of which 26 were still traditional standard orchards. We are still finding new orchards in Colwall

In 2008, we moved on encouraging owners and the people of Colwall to value their orchards and bringing the orchards back into proper management, by:

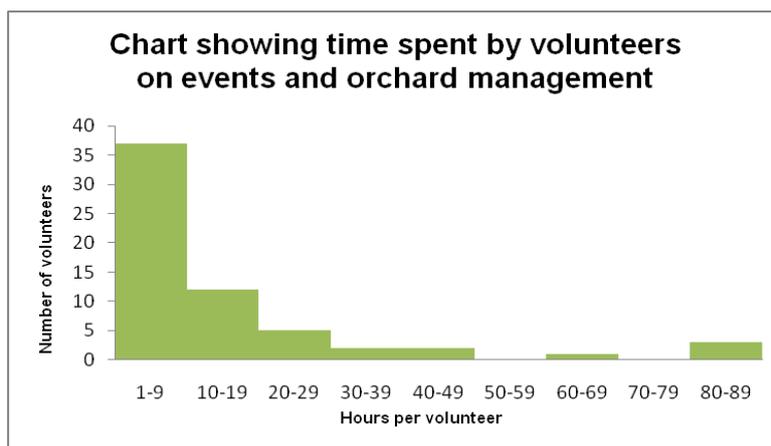
- Recruiting, kitting out and training volunteers to prune trees
- Providing management advice to owners and helping with practical management
- Planting new orchard trees to regenerate the orchards
- Holding public events to raise the local profile of the orchards (a fungus foray, Colwall Apple Day, the Mistletoe Fair and Wassailing)

In 2009, we have expanded our activities by:

- Continuing to recruit, kit out and train volunteers, so that we can help owners to manage their orchards
- Investigating options to create a community orchard, including finding a suitable site and preparing a funding bid to the Big Lottery Local Food grant scheme.
- Introducing the Blossom Picnic to our suite of core events
- Providing advice to other groups interested in orchard management

## 2. Recruiting volunteers

As at 31st March 2010, the volunteer contact list stands at 102 individuals. Over the course of the year, we have kept a record of volunteers supporting and attending our events, and carrying out orchard management.



This shows that we have 62 active volunteers, with a core of 25 active 'regulars', some giving up to 88 hours of their time, and 37 volunteers 'on the fringe' attending for fewer than 10 hours.

This calculation is the minimum volunteer contribution, as it does not include time spent 'behind the scenes' on admin, committee work, publicity etc, nor time spent preparing the Big Lottery Local Food grant application for our community orchard. This FY, there are even more volunteers helping with 'behind the scenes' tasks to support the project, including some who never get involved in our events. This voluntary support is essential to the successful operation of the project, both in terms of achieving results, and in terms of its financial value in 'match funding' the grants from the AONB.

Most communication with the volunteers is via regular email circulation, with phone contact for those without email. We issued a Spring Newsletter, but have not had capacity to create further issues this FY. However, we have now created a website for the [Colwall Village Garden](#) to promote and explain the work we are doing on the community orchard project, as well as providing information on the activities of the Colwall Orchard Group. We also continued to place blogs on the [Colwall Greener website](#) and announce our events in 'The Colwall Clock' and 'West of the Hills'.

### 3. Grant aid and project finances in 09/10

Initially, the group applied for funding from 2 sources: the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Sustainable Development Fund and the National Trust's 'Conserving and enhancing traditional orchards' grant fund.

The initial AONB grant awarded was for £9,860, covering staff costs, tree planting, more equipment, interpretation materials, support for community events and 2 new projects; the feasibility study and supporting costs for the development of the Colwall Village Garden project and funding to carry out oral history interviews. In October the AONB offered a further grant of £960 to cover additional oral history interviews, apple identification and a training course by Thrive.

AONB grants are offered at a maximum contribution of 75%, with the cash offered matched against volunteer time and contributions in kind. Our volunteer time greatly exceeded the match funding requirement of £3,320. Overall, volunteers spent at least 824 hours this year on events and activities part funded by the AONB. (As noted above, this excludes hours spent on 'behind the scenes' activities and on developing the Big Lottery bid – see below).

Number of volunteer hours (events and activities only)	Cost per hour	Value
790 ordinary hours	£7 per hour	£5,530
34 expert hours	£21 per hour	£714
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£6,244</b>

Contributions in kind were raised from a variety of sources including:

- Natural England support, releasing staff time through their staff personal development programme
- Natural England absorbing some administrative costs (printing and postage)
- Discounts and donations from suppliers.

The National Trust Grant offered £1,600 as support for the Blossom picnic, costs for a survey of the saproxylic fauna of the orchards and funding for apple identification. The National Trust grant did not require any match funding.

Throughout the year we have attempted to recoup some of the costs from each of the events. Donations and sale of refreshments cover most of the general costs for our events, but currently are not sufficient to cover expert contributions such as Apple identification, Morris Dancing or children's workshops or the more expensive supplies such as Wassailing flares. In addition, in the early part of the year we continued to experience 'cash flow' issues due to the delay between expenditure and the submission and subsequent payment of the grant. To overcome these 2 problems we contracted out our volunteer services to train orchard owners in the 'Grow with Wyre' orchard project and Tim Dixon, one of our members, organised a benefit concert by the Spooky Men's Chorale to raise funds for the project.

Hence funds raised at the events this year included:

- £60 from sale of refreshments and donations at the Blossom picnic
- £250 from sale of refreshments and mistletoe at the Mistletoe Fair

- £162 from other mistletoe sales
- £787 from sale of refreshment and donations at the Apple Day
- £238 from donations at the Wassailing (inc £33 at lantern workshop)
- £325 from other donations
- £480 from contracting out volunteer services to the Grow with Wyre project
- £700 from Spooky Men's Chorale benefit concert

#### 4. Colwall Orchard Group governance

The 2009/10 Group activities were co-ordinated by a formal Committee and supported by informal 'event planning' meetings prior to each of our core events.

**Table of Colwall Orchard Group Committee meetings 09/10**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Notes</b>
18/05/09	Report on the Phase 1 submission to the Big Lottery Local Food grant scheme and discussion re grant applications to be submitted to NT and AONB and the 09/10 programme of events
1/06/09	Stage 1 application to Big Lottery successful. Update on potential orchard sites. Motion to establish a Memorandum of Association with Colwall allotment Association and proceed to a full application to Big Lottery agreed. Discussion of steps needed.
15/06/09	This was a joint meeting with Colwall Allotment Association. Reported on visit by Jim Langridge. Agreed joint Governance arrangements. Discussed forthcoming events.
16/07/09	Reviewed options on a number of potentially available parcels of land, reviewed the stakeholder engagement programme. Discussed Governance issues and established the Colwall Village Garden Steering Group and relevant Task and Finish Groups to conduct all ongoing CVG business.
13/10/09	Adopted H&S, Equal Ops and Environmental policies. The committee resolved to seek membership approval to become a company limited by guarantee and to consider charitable status.
15/11/09	The Cttee considered further changes to the constitution to enable the Group to proceed with the Colwall Village Garden project and resolved to call a Special General Meeting to seek these changes.
09/02/10	The Cttee reviewed the Lottery Bid and considered means of raising match funding. The Cttee considered how to progress outstanding items from the 09/10 grants and considered options for new work in 10/11 – including the Orchard Renga.
05/03/10 AGM	The AGM received from the Chairman, the Event organiser, the Secretary, and the Treasurer. The Group approved motions to change the articles, seek company status and chairtable status, raise the subscription fees to £5/10 for single/family membership (with bursary as before)* and elected the committee (8 nominated members elected and 2 members co-opted).
23/03/10	Arrangements put in hand to start the process of seeking charitable status and seek further match funding. Cttee also considered options for trade making or copywriting of the logo, the 10/11 programme of events (linked by the orchard Renga) and the website.

\* **Note:** At the end of the 09/10 FY, paid up members stood at 25 single memberships and 12 family memberships – representing at least 49 paid up members (out of approx 62 active members, and 102 people on the contact list). At the 09/10 AGM, we raised formal membership to £5 for individuals and £10 for families, with the option of a bursary for those who feel unable to pay. Payment of the membership fee will be essential to qualify for the insurance cover arranged for the Group, and will be pursued more rigourously in 2010/11.

The key business during this FY was the ongoing attempt by the Colwall Orchard Group, in association with the Colwall Allotment Association, to acquire some land on which to establish a community orchard with allotments (see below).

#### 5. Acquiring tools

We made a good start in purchase of tools etc last year, and following our experience over the last year, we have used some of the funds this year to purchase additional tools that have been in short supply on the volunteer tasks.

### Pruning:

- Further Zubat and hyauchi pole saws for high pruning
- Further secateurs for formative pruning
- Loppers and bow saws for processing the brash
- Spare blades for the saws

### Events:

- Gazebo, as backup shelter for outdoor events
- Folding tables for outdoor and indoor events
- Display boards for use at events

### Interpretation

- Creation of a designed logo for Colwall Orchard Group and Colwall Village Garden
- Preparation of designed 'Pull ups' for display at events
- Preparation of an 'Orchard Wildlife' poster for stand at the Autumn show
- Printing of various banner etc to advertise events

Since last year, the group has been given free access to storage space in a garage in Upper Colwall, and most tools and kit are now divided between the garage and the home of 2 key volunteers. The BTCV insurance now includes an element to cover the kit.

## 6. Orchard Management

Last year we prepared Management Plans for 12 orchards, and worked in 9 of these orchards and in 2 further orchards which did not have management plans. This year we have continued to implement MPs in 6 orchards, arranged to start work in another of the orchards with a Management Plan (task cancelled due to snow, to be rearranged) and brought in another 2 orchards without plans. This brings the total number of orchards we have worked with over the last 2 years up to 16 orchards altogether.

This year, we ran a programme of orchard management tasks fortnightly, throughout the winter, alternating between Friday's and Saturdays. Unfortunately, we only managed 9 tasks in 8 orchards, as 2 were cancelled due to snow. The table below summarises our work over the last 2 years. We are intending to extend pruning into April to compensate for the cancelled tasks and complete the 09/10 schedule.

### Orchard management

Orchard name	MP?	Work last year (task/planting)	Planting 09/10	Tasks 2009/10
Maybole Orchard	Y	T/P	P	Tasks 20/11/09, 05/03/10
Sunfold orchard	Y	T/P	P	Tasks 20/11/09, 27/03/10
Broadwood Orchard	Y	T/P	P	Task 14/06/09
Snatford	Y	T/P	P	Task 5/02/10
Cummin's Orchard	Y	T/P	P	Task 5/12/09
Malthouse orchard	N		P	Task 23/01/010
Netherpaths	Y			Visit planned for 10/04/10 (original date 8/01/10 cancelled due to snow)
Nursery orchard	Y	T/P		Task 18/12/09
Fortune's Gate	Y	T/P		No (visit 20/02/10 cancelled due to snow)
Downs	Y	T/P		
Flapgate cottage	N			Visit planned for 17/04/10
Evendine Lane	N	P		
Lamorna	N			
New Winnings	Y	T		
Old Winning	Y			
Foxgrove	Y			
Gas orchard	N			Task 25/10/09

So far this year we have pruned about 128 large trees, and done formative pruning on all the 50 young trees that were planted in 08/09.

We are now self sufficient for orchard management training purposes, using experienced volunteers to train our new recruits, so we did not need to bring in any external trainers this year. We train the new recruits in small groups, whilst the experienced volunteers get on with their pruning, and then integrate new volunteers into the group as their confidence grows, usually 'buddied' with one or more experienced volunteers.

**Note:** The group has purchased public liability insurance and cover for the volunteers via BTCV. To meet Health and Safety requirements we carry out risk assessments of the main sites visited and task done.

In order to maintain records of all the management work we have done in the orchards, and any interesting wildlife found on or in the trees, we have been tagging the trees with aluminium number tags. So far, we have tagged 327 trees.

## 7. Planting new trees

This season we have acquired trees from a number of sources. Last year we took graftwood from Moorcroft Pears at Moorcroft Farm in Colwall, and Colwall Quoining apples from a tree on Parish Council land. These were grafted by Nick Dunn of Trees for Life, and resulted in 12 Colwall Quoining and 5 Moorcroft Pears, which have now been purchased and brought back to Colwall. Tim Dixon acquired a number of fruit trees at auction, on closure of a local nursery, and these trees are stored in pots at his Colwall home. 19 of these have been sold on to the orchard group and planted out this year. Herefordshire Council had surplus stock from their 09/10 planting scheme and donated 67 trees to the group, 11 of these have been planted out.

We only had funds to plant out 30 trees this year, so the unplanted stock is being held in pots or lined out in Upper Colwall or at Sunfold orchard. As last year, we decided to focus volunteer effort on pruning, and employed contractors to do the tree planting. Tree planting this year is summarised in the table below:

### Orchard plantings 09/10

Orchard	Violette	Hfds Russet	Hfds Cross	Blenheim Red	Gaucher Bigarreau	Bosbury Pippin	Winter banana	Van	Opal	Victoria	Old Home	Conference	Totals
Sunfold	1	1	1			1					1		5
Maybole	1	1	1						1		1		5
Malthouse	1						1		1	1		1	5
Cummin's		1	1			1			1		1		5
Broadwood		1			2			2					5
Snatford		1	1	1		1					1		5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>30</b>

## 8. Public events

This year, Colwall Orchard Group added a new public event, the Colwall Big Blossom Picnic, to bring our suite of 'core' events up to 4: The Blossom picnic, Colwall Apple Day, the Mistletoe Fair and Wassailing. However, as last year, we attended a range of other events to raise our profile in the village.

### 5<sup>th</sup> May 2009: Dawn Chorus and Big Blossom Picnic

The day opened with a Dawn Chorus walk around the orchards, led by Tim Dixon and attended by nearly 50 intrepid early risers (children and parents). Sunrise over Snatford orchard lit up the blossom beautifully and the party returned to the Chase Inn for an excellent breakfast. Down on Broadwood orchard we laid on a self-guided nature trail, guided walks and tree pruning demonstrations. The children had great fun hunting bugs with Dr Roger and Rosy Key, making orchard bunting with Eekbatik and climbing on a Land Rover roof rack, while the parents enjoyed the sunshine. Over a

picnic lunch, the Anonymous Minstrels entertained us with mediaeval music. All in all, this was an excellent day out, with fine weather and a great family atmosphere, attended by about 70 people.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> June 2009 Village Affair**

This event was organised by Colwall CE Primary School. Colwall Orchard Group had a stand to promote the activities of the group and to introduce the concept of the Colwall Village Garden and gather ideas for development of the site.

#### **11<sup>th</sup> July 2009 West Fest and the Colwall Festival**

Colwall Orchard Group was stretched to attend 2 events on the same day, but managed to cover both. We provided a basic static stand and display as part of the Colwall Greener Open Day in the Colwall Festival. We provided further displays and materials for the West Fest event, where we particularly keen to canvas views from younger people on the design of the Colwall Village Garden. Sadly, West Fest was poorly attended this year due to poor weather.

#### **13<sup>th</sup> July 2009 Moth and Bat walk**

This was offered as part of the programme for the Colwall Festival, with moth expertise provided by Robin Hemming and bat expertise by Ste West. Unfortunately, the evening was greeted with torrential rain, so this event was rained off.

#### **25-27<sup>th</sup> September Malvern Show**

Colwall Orchard Group was offered a stand at in the Perry Pear tent at the Autumn Show at the Three Counties Showground. We took our new pull up displays and a poster on orchard wildlife and used the event to collect ideas and signatures of support for the Colwall Village Garden. This was an excellent networking opportunity, and we also took the opportunity to have many of our local pears identified by Jim Chapman.

#### **16<sup>th</sup> October: Colwall Apple Day**

This was our first 'stand alone' Apple Day, and was run at the Colwall Cricket Ground. The event started with a decorated wheelbarrow procession starting outside the Colwall Primary School, led by the Outside Capering Crew Morris side, who also performed during the event. We provided refreshments, including a pig roast, and laid on apple identification, apple games and apple juicing. We estimated that at least 170 people came to this event.

#### **12<sup>th</sup> December: Colwall Mistletoe Fair at Cave's Folly**

Continuing this event from the previous year, we offered mistletoe in a range of sizes, from complete balls to small bunches tied into sprigs with a range of ribbons and decorations and offered mulled cider and cakes for visitors. We raised £250 at the event, and went on to offer surplus mistletoe through a variety of outlets to raise a further £160.

#### **16<sup>th</sup> January 2010: Lantern making workshop**

This workshop, aimed at children of primary school age, was intended to stimulate interest in the Wassailing. Unfortunately, only 14 children booked and 12 turned up for the event, but they did make some lovely lanterns.

#### **23<sup>rd</sup> January 2010: Wassailing**

The date for Wassailing had to be changed at relatively short notice, due to a double booking at the Yew Tree. Despite this, we had an excellent turnout of about 200 people and clear, calm weather allowed us to hold our torch lit procession to the orchard, where we Wassailed the oldest tree in the orchard before retiring to a barn, beautifully decorated for the event, for Lamb's Wool (a traditional cider drink) and communal singing. The Wassailers then returned to the Yew Tree Inn for further refreshments.

## **9. Visits by funding bodies**

During 2009/10 we were visited by our main funders, National Trust and Malvern Hills AONB and by the Regional Director of Natural England. We also participated in a fact finding visit made by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

#### **27<sup>th</sup> June 2009 Visit by Kate Merry, National Trust**

Kate Merry, the National Trust's Orchard Project Officer visited to review some of the work funded by the 'Conserving and enhancing traditional orchards' fund. We visited Snafford, Broadwood and Maybole orchards to view tree pruning, tree planting and Keith Alexander's invertebrate traps.

### **30<sup>th</sup> October 2009 Malvern Hills JAC Tour**

Two key volunteers from the Group hosted a JAC visit to Cummin's Farm orchard, where they explained the activities of the group, including tree pruning and planting. At lunch, apples from Cummins were juiced to provide drinks for JAC members and dessert apples from Sunfold and other Colwall orchards were provided to supplement the cheese course.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> December 2009 Natural England Regional Director's visit to Malvern Hills AONB**

The Natural England Regional Director and Protected Landscape Officer visited the AONB to review the activities of the SDF projects. Helen Stace met AONB staff and tehri visitors at Cummins Orcahrd to demonstrate the work of Colwall Orchard Group.

### **4<sup>th</sup> February 2010 Heritage Lottery Fund fact-finding visit**

Natural England, Herefordshire Nature Trust, Malvern Hills AONB and Wye Valley AONB are currently developing a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a project to link the AONBs, along a corridor that includes Colwall Parish. HLF officials visited the project area in February, and Colwall Orchard Group gave a presentation about their existing activities over a working lunch.

## **10. Raising the profile of orchards beyond Colwall**

Over the course of the last year we have increasingly been asked for advice on orchard management and on setting up and running orchard projects. We have given presentations to a range of different groups as summarised in the table below:

### **Representation at other groups/events**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Event</b>
09/04/09	Herefordshire Orchard Topic Group	HES attended to represent Colwall Orchard Group
18/04/09	Ledbury Really UseLess group	Ledbury RUG fact finding visit to discuss intitation of a potential orchard project in Ledbury
25/04/09	Herefordshire Local Records Centre	HES slide show presentation to the Herefordshire Recorders Annual meeting
06/05/09	Colwall Parish Council	TED slide show at Annual Meeting
05/09/09	CPRE (Ledbury branch)	HES slide show presentation
09/09/09	Ledbury Food Mapping project	TED attended to represent Colwall Orchard Group
07/10/09	Malvern Transition Town	TED slide show presentation on the work of Colwall Orchard Group
04/03/10	Hfds Orchard Topic Group	HES presentation re the work of the Cowall Orchard Group and plans for the Colwall Village Garden
10/03/10	Marcher Apple Network	Request for assistance with their orchard at Donnington (visit deferred until after Easter)

In addition, we were contracted by the 'Grow with Wyre' orchard project to send 2 of our experienced volunteers to the Wyre Forest for 2 days to train orchard owners in tree pruning skills.

We had limited capacity to assist people beyond Colwall this year due to the heavy commitment on our own projects, including an extensive community engagement programme and other work required to ddevelop the Colwall Village Garden bid – see below. We hope to have more time available tin future years to start to assist further afield and already have outreach events booked in May.

## **11. Colwall Village Garden: Community orchard and allotments**

One of Colwall Orchard Groups original objectives was to find an orchard that we could purchase or lease to manage as a community orcahrd. Despite our efforts over the last 2 years, we have not been able to secure tenure over any of the existing orchards. Early in 2009, we realised that the only way to achieve this objective was to purchase some land on which to create our own orchard. Shortly

thereafter, the Colwall Allotment Association came to a similar conclusion regarding the establishment of allotments, having tried, unsuccessfully, to secure tenure on 5 different parcels of land. We agreed to join forces to purchase land to on which to create a community orchard, with allotments and other community facilities.

We submitted an initial Phase 1 application to the Big Lottery Local Food grant scheme, and learnt in early May that we had been successful and were invited to submit a Phase 2 application. We set up a formal Steering Group to oversee preparation of the bid, supported by 4 task and finish groups covering different aspects (site planning, organisation and governance, project planning and stakeholder engagement). Several plots of land came up for sale during this time, and after a full options appraisal we selected Gas Orchard as our favoured site. Fortunately, the owners of this have agreed to keep it off the open market whilst we pursue our funding bid.

In planning for the Colwall Village Garden, we undertook an extensive needs assessment through consultation with local, regional and national organisations, collation of community statistics and a review of regional strategies and policy documents. In total we contacted 44 local community groups, 22 regional/county groups and organisations and 30 national organisations. Our volunteers attended about 25 local public events to present the concept of the village garden and discuss the needs of local people (See table in Annex 1). We also started to develop a series of partnership arrangements with key organisations keen to be involved with the project. At these various public events, volunteers spoke individually to over 1200 people who signed in support of the project. 525 of these individuals live in Colwall, representing 380 households (36% of village households). A further 273 live in nearby parishes with 426 people from further afield.

We submitted our final bid in January 2010, and are now awaiting news of the outcome. Further information, including the complete set of bid documents, is available on the [Colwall Village Garden](#) website. This work required substantial commitment of volunteer time, with 25 individuals heavily involved in the 5 working groups. We have not been able to collate information on the total volunteer time committed to this project, but to provide some perspective on this, one of these key volunteers spent 330 hours on Colwall Orchard Group activities between April and mid November.

## **12. Wildlife Surveys**

### **Invertebrate surveys**

We commissioned Dr Keith Alexander to survey the Colwall orchards for invertebrates. He made 3 site visits and left interception traps in the orchards between visits. He found the Colwall orchards to be amongst the richest known for this fauna in Britain, supporting a wide variety of nationally scarce species (thought to be confined to fewer than 100 of the 10km squares of the OS national grid) as well as at least two species of British Red Data Book status.

### **Mistletoe tortrix visits and survey**

Visits early in 2009 failed to reveal any evidence of mistletoe tortrix moth, so further visits were made in May. Eventually, one leaf mine was found on mistletoe in a tree in Snatford orchard.

Note: the moth experts now have more experience of searching for mistletoe tortrix, so the surveyors are booked to return in May 2010, and attempt to trap adults in July.

### **Apple variety identification**

We have been wanting to find out more about the varieties in the Colwall Orchards since we started, but have only recently managed to get all the trees number tagged. This year we commissioned visits from John Edgeley (retired lecturer from Pershore College) to make a start on apple identification. He made 2 visits to the orchards, identifying apples in Cummins, Maybole, Sunfold, Nursery Orchard. He also attended Colwall apple Day and to identify apples brought in from around the village.

## **13. Other new projects this year**

This year we continued with some of the activities we started last year, but also introduced several new elements:

### **Oral histories**

As we learnt more about the orchards, we realised that there were still some people in the village who could remember the original Ballard fruit enterprises. We decided that it would be a good idea to interview them and make recordings of their recollections. So far we have interviewed and gathered

the personal reminiscences five people. Three of these used to work in the orchards as employees of Stephen and Charles Ballard, (Gerald Marshall, Alec Berry and Willie Ludvig, all now in their 80s and 90s). The other two are descendants of the original Ballard family (Freda Ballard, daughter of Charles, and Pat Hegarty, daughter of Stephen junior, both great grand daughters of Stephen Ballard the civil engineer who established the Ballard family's estate in Colwall.).

The living memories cover, principally, the period immediately after the second World War, when the orchards were already established, until the closure of the fruit canning factory in 1960. There were hundreds of acres of orchards in Colwall, and a further 100 acres of cherry orchard on the western slopes of the Hills. The histories start to build a valuable record of the range of fruit being grown and the varieties that were planted, including the grafting that went on as fashions changed and different varieties were demanded. They are scattered with personal anecdotes such as early experiments with concrete - adding the plum stones to the mix, picking cherries up 40ft ladders, and Freda Ballard being taught maths in the orchards by a German prisoner of war using apples.

As the interviews progressed, we have compiled a list of other potential interviewees. We have now invested in professional quality recording equipment, so that we can continue this work without having to borrow or hire in the kit. The interviews have given us a fascinating insight into the orchards around the village, and recordings and transcriptions will be placed on the website.

### **Spooky Men's Chorale benefit concert (5<sup>th</sup> September 2009)**

Tim Dixon organised a benefit concert at Colwall Village Hall. This was the final gig of the Spooky tour, and rapidly sold out, with people travelling from all over England to attend. This raised £700 to support the work of Colwall Orchard Group.

### **Volunteers visit to Moccas Park National Nature Reserve (1<sup>st</sup> November 2009)**

This event was organised as a special treat for volunteers, originally planned for May, to co-incide with the bluebells flowering. It was deferred due to atrocious weather in May and went ahead in November despite stormy weather on the day too. The dozen volunteers who braved the storm were given a tour of the Park and shown some of the management techniques used for the veteran oaks and other trees at Moccas. The volunteers had lunch at the Pandy Inn and viewed Arthur's Stone before returning home.

### **Production of orchard batik**

Once again, we funded Marie-Therese King of EekBatik to work with children from Colwall Primary School to produce a summer/autumn orchard themed banners to complement the winter/spring banner made last year.

### **Colwall Christmas cards**

The orchard banner made in 2008/09 included a beautiful panel that we felt would make an excellent Christmas card. We approached Colwall Primary School and agreed to commission Christmas Cards based on this image through Art for Schools, for a joint fund raising project. Colwall Orchard Group ordered 105 packs of 12 Christmas cards, costing £302. To date we have sold 51 packs of cards to the value of £255, with 54 packs in hand for sale next year (sale value £260). If we sell all the packs next year as anticipated, we will have made a profit of £203.

### **12/03/10 Juicing training**

Colwall Orchard Group hope to set up a crop share agreement with one or more orchard owners, so that we can obtain larger quantities of fruit to process into juice and/or cider. We originally planned to send a couple of volunteers on the Juicing course run by Pershore Collage. However, after discussion with Pershore College, we were able to negotiate a 'bespoke' training day for Colwall Orchard Group. This allowed us to train 12 volunteers for the costs originally budgeted for training 2 volunteers.

## **14. Publicity**

Throughout the year, the Group has made maximum use of publicity to advertise and celebrate our events, and to publicise our work towards the Colwall Village Garden. We continued to achieve a high profile in the local press, and also targeted publicity at key specialist audiences, including articles in the National Orchard forum, the Herefordshire Nature Trust journal etc. See Annex 2 for a summary of publicity

## **15.Acknowledgements**

Special thanks go to:

- the orchard owners, who have collaborated with us over the year, allowed us in to prune their trees, and plant new trees.
- To the volunteers, who have given up so much of their time, particularly those who have learned and put into practice new tree pruning skills
- To my fellow committee members, Tim Dixon, Deb Turnbull, Ruth Kiely, Jan Porter and Tim Porter, for their hard work behind the scenes and their unflagging support throughout the year
- Members of the CVG Steering Committee and the supporting task and finish groups for their work preparing the bid to the Heritage Lottery Local Food grant scheme.
- John Bishop and Freda Ballard for allowing us to offer their mistletoe for donations
- Caves Folly, for hosting the Mistletoe Fair
- John and Di Bishop, and the Yew Tree Inn for hosting the Wassailing event
- The Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, who have funded the project with 2 grants from their Sustainable Development Fund, financed by Natural England. Particular thanks to David Armitage for his support and his patience in sorting out the grant claims
- The National Trust/Natural England 'Orchard Countdown 2010' fund for supporting the project
- Everyone else who has worked with us throughout the year.

**Helen Stace**  
**Founder**  
**Colwall Orchard Group**

## **ANNEXES**

Annex 1: Review of community engagement activities for the Colwall Village Garden

Annex 2: Review of publicity for project

## Annex 1: Summary of community engagement for Colwall Village Garden

<b>Event</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Date</b>
<i>Herefordshire Orchard Topic Group</i>	Networking to exchange ideas and seek support from relevant County organisations	09 Apr 09
<i>Talk to Herefordshire Recorders Conference</i>	Networking to exchange ideas and seek support from relevant County organisations	25 Apr 09
<i>Blossom picnic (inc tree pruning demo)</i>	Present concept of Colwall Village Garden, gather ideas and assess community interest/needs	02 May 09
<i>Colwall Primary School Fair</i>	Present concept, gather ideas and assess community interest/requirements	05 Jun 09
<i>Site visit by Kate Merry, National Trust</i>	Demonstrate project achievements to major funding sponsor and elicit National Trust support	04 Jul 09
<i>Colwall Greener open Day, as part of Colwall Festival</i>	Present concept, gather ideas and assess community interest/requirements	11 Jul 09
<i>West Fest (Festival in adjacent parish)</i>	Ditto: particularly for young people	11 Jul 09
<i>Presentation to AGM of Ledbury Branch CPRE</i>	Present concept and gather support	05 Sep 09
<i>Spooky Men's Chorale – fund raising concert</i>	Display presenting concept and gather support and ideas	05 Sep 09
<i>Ledbury Food Mapping project (CPRE)</i>	Networking opportunity, focusing on sustainable local food issues	09 Sep 09
<i>Colwall Shops (2 volunteers with Display)</i>	Information exchange, personal discussion with local people to gather ideas and obtain support.	14, 16 and 19 Sep 09
<i>Displays at the Library and the Doctors Surgery</i>	Provide information on The Colwall Village Garden	From 15 Sep 09
<i>Flu Jab session at Colwall Park Hotel (2 volunteers &amp; Display)</i>	Information exchange and one to one discussions, focused on needs of the elderly	26 Sep 09
<i>Malvern Autumn Show (6 volunteers with display, in Perry Pear marquee)</i>	Networking with other orchard based organisations. Presentation of the concept to the public and one to one discussions to gather ideas and support.	26 Sep 09 27 Sep 09
<i>Pub Talks</i>	Provide information on The Colwall Village Garden and discussions to gather ideas and support	Sep & Oct 09
<i>Colwall School Open Day</i>	Ditto: focus on needs of children	1 Oct 09
<i>Colwall Parish Council (presentation)</i>	Provide information on The Colwall Village Garden and seek Parish Council support	01 Oct 09
<i>Talk to Malvern Transition Town</i>	Information exchange and idea gathering	07 Oct 09
<i>Meeting with Herefordshire Nature Trust</i>	Meeting to discuss collaboration with HNT re their Phase 1 application to Big Lottery Local Food Grant	07 Oct 09
<i>Apple Day (Colwall Orchard Group signature event)</i>	Information exchange, gather ideas and further fine tune objectives/plans	17 Oct 09
<i>AONB Joint Advisory Committee Tour (at John Bishop's Orchard)</i>	Demonstrate project achievements to major funding sponsor and discuss aspirations for The Colwall Village Garden	30 Oct 09
<i>Public meeting at Village Hall</i>	Present the final project and fine tune our ideas	02 Nov 09
<i>Site visit with Natural England</i>	'Pre Farm Environment Plan' visit to confirm eligibility for Higher Level Stewardship	03 Nov 09
<i>Women's Institute</i>	Information exchange and discuss aspirations	08 Nov 09

**Annex 2: Review of Publicity for Project**

Date	Type of publicity	Copy provided
xxx	Video clip for Malvern Hills Transition Town video	
01/04/09	Article for Herefordshire LBAP Newsletter	
10/04/09	Article for May issue of Colwall Clock	
17/04/09	Article for Colwall Parish Council Newsletter	
28/04/09	Press release for Big Blossom Picnic	
08/06/09	Article for July Clock	
06/09	Started Colwall	
07/09	Hfd Biodiversity Newsletter	
10/09/09	Article for October Clock	
25/09/09	Article ofr Orchard Matters	
09/10/09	Press release for Apple Day	
11/11/09	Article for November Clock	
4/12/09	Piece for Colwall School Newsletter re Mistletoe Fair	
8/12/09	Press release for Mistletoe Fair	
9/12/09	Article for January Clock	
9/12/09	Piece for West of the Hills	
11/01/10	Piece for school Newsletter re Lantern Making workshop	
23/01/10	Video of the Wassailing	
22/0210	Article for Flycatcher	
	Research visit for article in The Geographical Magazine	