

Colwall Orchard Group: Full end of year report for 2010/11

1. Introduction

Traditional orchards are an important element of our landscape and heritage. They are also extremely important for wildlife, particularly insects living in deadwood and the animals that feed on them. 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 were bulldozed 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:

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

We founded Colwall Orchard Group in 2007, initially to identify the orchards in the Parish, as part of the survey conducted by the People's Trust for Endangered Species. We assessed the condition of the remaining orchards and looked for noble chafer, a rare and beautiful beetle that lives on dead wood in orchard trees. Of 41 orchards assessed, 26 still survive as traditional standard orchards.



Fallen tree in unmanaged orchard



Orchard restoration in progress



Well managed orchard

In 2008, we moved on to 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

In 2009, we expanded our activities by:

- Continuing to recruit, kit out and train volunteers, to help owners to manage their orchards
- Investigating options, and applying for grant aid from Big Lottery, to create Colwall Village Garden; a community orchard with village allotments, a children's play area and other community facilities
- Introducing the Blossom Picnic to our suite of core orchard celebration events
- Providing advice to other groups interested in orchard management

In 2010, we learnt that we had not been successful in getting Lottery funding, so whilst we continued with our usual range of orchard activities, we also spent much of our time finding other ways to fund Colwall Village Garden. We eventually raised the purchase price through donations and pledges of loans and we hope to exchange contracts on the site early in 2011/12.

We started 2 other new ventures in 2010-11

- providing orchard management advice to orchard owners outside Colwall (funded through grants from the Malvern Hills AONB SDF fund).
- Offering a fruit tree variety selection and sourcing service for owners and volunteers.

2. The work of our volunteers



Volunteers learn new skills.....



are proud of their achievements...



and they have fun.

As at 18th March 2011, 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 66 active volunteers, with a core of 24 active regulars, some giving up to 145 hours of their time, and 42 volunteers 'on the fringe' attending for fewer than 10 hours each. In all this amounted to 1084 hours this financial year.

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 various grant applications for our community orchard. This voluntary support is essential to our success, both in achieving results, and in its financial value in 'match funding' the grants from the AONB and others.

Most communication with volunteers is via regular email circulation, with phone contact for those without email. We have also developed our website at www.colwallorchardgroup.org into a valuable resource for our volunteers. Through the website we advertise our task and events, promote and explain the work we are doing in Colwall's orchards, and update people on our progress towards the establishment of the Colwall Village Garden, our community orchard project. As in previous years we have continued to place articles in 'Colwall Clock' and 'West of the Hills' and in the Herefordshire Biodiversity Partnership Newsletter and other relevant journals.

3. Orchard Management

As last year, we have run a programme of orchard management tasks fortnightly, in the spring and recommencing in the autumn and throughout the winter, alternating between Fridays and Saturdays – see table below:

Orchard management (See Annex 1 for a summary of each task)

Orchard name	Management Plan?	Work prior to 10/11 (task/planting)	Planting 10/11	Pruning tasks 2010/11
Maybole Orchard	Yes	Tasks and planting		9/4/10, 27/11/10
Sunfold orchard	Yes	Tasks and planting	Y	12/11/10, 25/02/11
Broadwood Orchard	Yes	Tasks and planting		22/05/10
Snatford	Yes	Tasks and planting		31/10/10, 10/12/10, 12/03/11
Cummin's Orchard	Yes	Tasks and planting		
Malthouse orchard		Task and planting		
Netherpaths	Yes			10/04/10
Nursery orchard	Yes	Tasks and planting	Y	21/01/11
Fortune's Gate	Yes	Tasks and planting		
Downs	Yes	Task and planting		
Flapgate cottage				17/04/10
Evendine Lane		Planting		
Lamorna				
New Winnings	Yes	Task		
Old Winning	Yes			
Foxgrove	Yes			
Gas orchard		Task	Y	5/03/11
Chase Inn				23/04/10
Tump orchard				25/02/11

So far this year we have pruned about 110 large trees, and completed formative pruning on all the young trees that we have planted.



Volunteers worked in several new orchards this year at Flapgate, Netherpaths and Tump orchard

We are continuing to 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 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 carried out.

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 labelling the trees with number tags. This year our focus has been on completing the tagging of Snatford Orchard and we have now tagged over 500 trees in all.

4. Planting new trees

We continue to maintain stocks of trees from various sources in pots, or heeled in, at The Cottage, Chase Road and at Sunfold. We had grant aid allocated to plant trees in Gas Orchard, but owing to the delay in acquiring the site, we have not been able to plant them out this financial year. However, as we expect to complete the purchase in May 2011, we have moved the majority of trees down to Gas orchard in readiness for planting out. We have also acquired further trees to extend the range of fruit tree species and varieties and have raised some funds for the Group through bulk ordering of trees and sale of some existing stock to Orchard Group members and local orchard owners. We have planted 1 tree in Nursery orchard to complete the planting there and 1 tree in Sunfold.

5. Colwall Orchard Group Public events

This year, Colwall Orchard Group has maintained the 4 signature events: The Blossom picnic, Colwall Apple Day, the Mistletoe Fair and Wassailing and introduced some additional events over the course of the year to maintain our profile in the village.

2nd May 2010: Dawn Chorus and Big Blossom Picnic

Our blossom picnic this year was advertised as part of a 2 week long 'Full Bloom' festival launched by the National Trust Orchard Network. The day opened with a Dawn Chorus walk around the orchards, led by Tim Dixon and attended by 26 intrepid early risers (children and parents). The damp early morning deterred the birds, but the orchards were looking lovely. Down on Broadwood orchard we launched our Orchard Renga with children's bug poet (the Bard with the Buzz) Anneliese Emmans Dean. The children also had great fun hunting bugs with Dr Roger and Rosy Key. Sadly, the weather stayed very cold, prompting haikus about the weather and the importance of blossom, tea and cakes in raising the spirit! Despite the weather, about 100 people came to join in the fun.



Seasonal orchard celebrations: the Blossom Picnic, Apple day and Wassailing

10th July 2010: Ledbury Poetry Festival

We continued to build on our Renga through a workshop at Cummin's orchard, as part of the Ledbury Poetry Festival. We were blessed with perfect weather and Julie Boden, our poet for the afternoon, settled under an apple tree with a circle of enthusiastic scribes. Together they produced a wealth of verses, focusing on nature and seasonality. Meanwhile other visitors got creative in the art tent, inspired by the romantic setting and music from the Nonimus minstrels. The icing on the cake was a laden tea table. It was an excellent afternoon, enjoyed by crop sharers from Putley's dragon orchard and many others.

15th July 2010: Moth and bat evening

Our moth and bat evening last year was rained off, so we decided to offer it again this year, particularly focusing on efforts to find adults of the Mistletoe tortrix moth – which we had only been finding from leaf mines to date. About 15 people came along, despite the cold. The bats didn't come out to feed, but with 9 traps we recorded a grand total of 831 moths of 149 species. Highlights included the Waved black – previously thought to be extinct in Herefordshire and with larvae that feed mainly on a variety of fungi and rotten wood and *Pyraustra nigrata* a rare moth usually found on chalky downland in the south of England or the limestone pavements of Cumbria and Westmorland. So, it was an exciting night, even without the Mistletoe tortrix.

16th October 2010: Colwall Apple Day

This year we condensed our successful Apple Day event to the afternoon, starting as before with a decorated wheelbarrow procession from Colwall Green to the Cricket Ground. We invited people to bring in their spare apples for juicing and we pressed enough loads to generate 2 builders bags of pulp and still have enough apples left over to run another juicing session the following weekend. We brought John Edgely back to identify fruit for people in the village and put on an impressive display of local varieties. A new enterprise this year was an apple pie competition, judged by Patricia Hegarty – former award winning restaurateur at Hope End and a member of the Trust from whom we are buying Gas Orchard. First prize was awarded to Carol Ashman. The children enjoyed a range of games including the ever popular apple catapult and apple piñata, whilst the procession, music and dancing were ably orchestrated by the Nonimus minstrels. About 170 people joined us over the course of the afternoon.

11th December 2010: Mistletoe Fair

This year we condensed the Mistletoe Fair into 2 hours in the afternoon and managed to attract as many customers as in previous years and improve on our mistletoe sales. An added attraction this

year was Jamie's sweetie stall – which was very popular and we also sold some jam, chutney and Colwall Orchard Group Christmas cards. Many thanks to everyone who helped to make the mistletoe fair a success - those who helped cut, transport and prepare the mistletoe, those who helped on the day and those who sold mistletoe at other venues around the country. The fair and mistletoe sales raised about £500 this year.

15th January 2011: Wassailing

The third Colwall Wassail was a great success – with approx 255 people attending. The weather was dry, but rather windy (once again making it difficult to light/keep alight the flares and lanterns), the procession went well, led by the Nonimus Minstrels. We had the full Wassailing ceremony in the orchard and retired for refreshments and communal singing to a beautifully decorated and lit barn. We've had plenty of positive feedback and this seems to be firmly established in the village calendar!

6. Wildlife Surveys



Mistletoe Tortrix moth



Lesser spotted and Green woodpecker nest holes



Apple variety identification

Mistletoe tortrix visits and survey

We have continued our search for the elusive mistletoe tortrix moth. After finding some evidence of their presence last year, we brought in Dave Grundy and fellow moth-ers to carry out a thorough search for the moth on 10/11th May. Tree by tree surveys for leaf mines revealed; no signs in 3 orchards, 1 leaf mine in 1 orchard, 3 in a second orchard and 7 in a third orchard. We set up a public moth and bat evening in the best orchard in the summer, but despite an excellent catch of moths, failed to find any adult Mistletoe tortrix moths. It seems to be a genuinely rare moth!

Herefordshire Woodpecker project

We have also been participating in the Herefordshire woodpeckers project and have put up 4 woodpecker nest boxes in our orchards. We have had plenty of reports of birds drumming and found evidence of all three species of woodpecker nesting in our orchards. None of the nest boxes were used, although we have found that 2 of the boxes are showing signs of potential occupancy for the 2011 nesting season.

Apple variety identification

We have continued to find out more about the varieties of apples and pears in Colwall. We have relocated an old map of the apple varieties in Snatford and have been marrying up the Marcher Apple Network map with the trees on the ground. We brought John Edgeley back to the village for the Colwall Apple Day and found out more about apple varieties in gardens around the village, as well as getting more of our orchard apples identified. Then 5 volunteers went over to the Orchard Centre at Hartpury for an apple Identification course organised by the Orchard Network. We hope that one or more of these volunteers will continue to learn more about identifying apples so that we can develop the skills in the village. This has been extremely helpful in allowing us to identify local varieties to replant in Colwall and we have using this experience to advise other orchard owners in the AONB – see below.

7. Colwall Village Garden: Community orchard and allotments

Since 2009, we have been planning to create Colwall Village Garden – a community orchard with allotments, a children's play area and a range of other community facilities. Originally, we hoped to get funding for this ambitious project from the Big Lottery Local Food grant scheme, but early in 2010/11 we heard that our bid had been unsuccessful. We have spent much of the time since then

trying to progress our plans by other means, at a former orchard site known as Gas orchard.



Volunteers at work in Gas orchard, dismantling old fencing, burning rubbish and enjoying a well-earned break

Visit to Gas orchard	21/05/2010	An evening visit to show the volunteers and supporters the site and discuss our plans for the future
Our first task at Gas Orchard!	05/03/2011	28 volunteers came and helped out, so we got a lot done, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearing the area around the packing shed of rubbish • Heeling in 86 orchard trees • Burning 2 large heaps of cut brash from last year, with various other rubbish • Dismantling and burning 3 large bundles of chestnut paling. PS transport tally: 2 by (1) car (with tools etc), 10 by bike, 16 on foot.
	25/03/2011	12 volunteers came to Gas orchard continue tidying up the site. We shoveled out the thick layer of sheep muck, straw and other materials that had accumulated in the apple packing shed over years of lambing. We also cleared the concrete apron outside the shed, and burnt more of the rubbish from the site. Meanwhile, Deb and Tim surveyed in the line of the allotment fencing.

Fortunately, our supporters rallied round and offered loans to cover most of the purchase price. We applied to Colwall Parish Council to fund the balance, and attended 2 meetings of the Parish Council and an open meeting arranged by the Council to discuss our plans. The Parish Council declined to support the project, but an anonymous donor came forward with the outstanding funds and we have been negotiating the purchase ever since. In anticipation of the purchase, our volunteers have started to tidy up the site. We now have an award from the Herefordshire Council Community Fund to fence the site and lay out the allotments and hope to complete this work early in 2011/12.

In order to progress the project, we have had to make some changes to our governance arrangements. The committee agreed to apply for company status, so Tim Dixon and Helen Stace duly registered themselves as trustees of a new company – Colwall Orchard Trust Ltd, trading as Colwall Orchard Group. At the AGM, held on 21st March 2011, the Colwall Orchard Group was formally wound up and all its assets were transferred to the new company. At the subsequent AGM of the company, Tim and Helen stood down as Trustees and a new board of 9 Trustees was elected. We have applied for charitable status for the company, and this application is still being processed.

8. Other new projects this year

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

Orchard Renga

We made an excellent start on our plans to develop a year-long orchard Renga with some fantastic contributions at the Blossom picnic, led by the Bard with the Buzz – Anneliese Emmans Dean. We continued with the development of lovely Renga webpages, which attracted contributions from various sources, and with a session in the Ledbury Poetry Festival, led by Jane Boden. Sadly, we have not been able to commit sufficient time to this project to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion.

Orchard Management Advice

In 2010/11 our grant aid included funding to provide orchard advice to up to 6 orchard owners within the AONB. We visited 8 sites owned by 7 people across the AONB providing advice on orchard

management, tree pruning requirements and the selection of appropriate varieties for restocking the orchards. We have a further 6 orchard owners awaiting advice and our experience suggests that there could be considerable demand for this type of advice work in the future.

As a result of these visits, we have concluded that:

- There is a significant resource of old orchard trees in small 'garden orchards'. These appear to be very important in terms of connectivity and continuity with the main orchard resource.
- Older orchards, particularly those attached to houses; include some scarce varieties of fruit trees, although many owners do not know what varieties they have.
- Most owners have old trees in need of pruning, and there are very few qualified and trustworthy pruners available to do the work.
- Whilst some orchard owners, particularly those newly acquiring large properties, may be well able to afford to pay for work on their orchards, some would struggle to pay the 'going rates'.
- Several owners wishing to gap up orchards, or plant new orchards, have requested assistance with choosing appropriate varieties of fruit and sourcing suppliers. Owners do not understand:
 - the range of varieties available and their uses
 - suitability of different varieties for different situations (inc disease issues)
 - pollination issues in selecting suitable varieties to supplement existing stock

We hope to continue this orchard advice service in 2011/12 with further support from the AONB.



Catshead apple in a local garden



Advice on orchard management



Tree nursery at Sunfold

Tree supplies

A regular request over the course of the year has been for advice on tree planting. This needs to take into account a range of factors including: required size of trees, varieties appropriate to the situation, traditional local varieties, requirements for cross pollination and conditions on site. As we were ordering a substantial number of trees for the community orchard, Tim offered a combined advice and tree procurement service. By combining all the orders, we were able to get a good deal for our customers and charge a small sourcing fee for the Orchard Group.

9. Raising the profile of orchards beyond Colwall

Throughout the year, the Group has made maximum use of publicity to advertise and celebrate our events, and to publicise our progress 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 newsletter, the Herefordshire Nature Trust journal etc.

Over the course of the last year, we have increasingly been asked participate in a range of other local events and activities and to advise on other projects.

27th May 2010: Malvern Hills Transition event

Colwall Orchard group was one of a number of local organisations represented at the public launch of Transition Malvern. This was a very well attended meeting which had presentations about many environmental and ecological issues. Colwall Orchard group was featured in a film showing local community initiatives. The display of our work generated much interest with many people asking for information about the group.

31st May 2010: Colwall Fun Day

The orchard group ran a games stall at Colwall Fun Day, to support the Rotary and keep up our profile in the village. We featured some of the games from the Apple Day. The catapult was star of the show, with 2 performances in the main arena.

30th July 2010: Judging FWAG 'Best Traditional Orchard' competition

Colwall Orchard Group was invited to work alongside Chris Fairs of Bulmers to judge the Herefordshire Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group 'Best Traditional Orchard' competition. We visited 6 orchards across the county judging them for their wildlife features and management. We selected Awnells Farm in Putley as the winner, with a special award to an orchard in Bodenham for dedicated effort to restore a very neglected orchard.



Colwall Fun Day and the apple catapult, Judging orchards and our wheelbarrow of fruit for the school assembly

14th October 2010: School Assembly

This year, we were invited to run a session in the school assembly at Colwall Primary School – so we decorated our wheelbarrow, loaded it up with fruit (and nuts) from around the village and took it in to school. Tim explained the importance of our local fruit, both as fruit and as ingredients in a wide range of other foods. We left them with samples of dried fruit to whet their appetite and exhortations to get their Mums to enter the Colwall Apple Day apple pie competition. The event (and the fruit) was very popular with the children.

22nd October 2010: Training in Apple Identification

The National Trust Orchard Network has been laying on a series of training courses. 5 of us went along to a half day training course in apple identification at Hartpury College. Richard Taft had an excellent display of apple varieties and introduced us to the key characteristics of apples used for identification purposes. We then worked some of our apples through the various keys to try to identify them for ourselves.

Representation at other groups/events

We have given presentations or support to a range of different groups as summarised in this table.

Date	Group	Event
Various	Herefordshire Orchard Topic Group	HES/TED attend regularly to represent Colwall Orchard Group
Various	Natural England: Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Area (IBDA)	TED/HES represented the group in discussions re the IBDA, including the possibility of developing a funding package for an orchard based project across the IBDA.
Various	Herefordshire Year in the Orchard (HYITO)	Colwall Orchard group have signed up to the 2011 HYITO – a programme of events intended to draw people into orchards across the county. All our main events in 2011 will be badged as HYITO.
Various	Advice to Natural England	We are increasingly being approached by local advisors from Natural England working with orchard owners in the vicinity – usually seeking advice on appropriate varieties to use in new planting schemes.
Various	Orchard Network	Colwall Orchard Group is part of the National Trust Orchard Network, which is now being passed over to the Traditional Orchards HAP Steering group.

10. 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 £5,700, covering a contribution to the installation of electricity at Gas orchard (in the initial expectation of purchase early in the year) and £1,200 to fund 6 surveys and management advice for orchards within the AONB. The AONB have kindly deferred the electricity installation element to 2011-12 in recognition of the delays to purchasing Gas orchard.

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 and overall, volunteers spent at least 1084 hours this year on events and activities. (As noted above, this excludes hours spent on 'behind the scenes' activities and on developing the Big Lottery bid – see below).

The National Trust Grant offered £600 to fund surveys for Mistletoe Tortrix moth, £200 towards the Blossom picnic and £5,000 for the planting and protection of orchard trees (to be used at Gas Orchard as match funding for other grant aid). They also awarded us additional funds at the end of the project to enable us to buy a secure storage unit for all our tools and equipment. The National Trust grant did not require any match funding.

This year, we have received limited support for the main events, so we have focused on recouping our costs by more cautious expenditure on supplies, charging for entry and increased sales of refreshments. The blossom picnic operated at a loss, but this was more than offset by profits from the other events. (net profit over our 4 signature events this FY is estimated at £1,278).

11. Acknowledgements

Once again, we have had an excellent year and special thanks go to:

- All the volunteers, who have given up so much of their time, particularly those who have learned and put into practice new tree pruning skills
- my fellow committee members; Tim Dixon, Deb Turnbull, Ruth Kiely, Jan Porter and Tim Porter, Phil Howard, Howard Manning and Katherine Irvine for their hard work behind the scenes and their unflagging support throughout the year
- the orchard owners, who have collaborated with us over the year, allowed us in to prune their trees and harvest mistletoe.
- Caves Folly, for hosting the Mistletoe Fair and John and Di Bishop for hosting the Wassailing event and Orchard Renga
- the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, who funded the project through their Sustainable Development Fund, financed by Natural England.
- 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: Summary of orchard tasks

Annex 1: Summary of orchard tasks in 2010/11

Maybole	09/04/2010	Lots of volunteers, with their children and grandchildren, turned out to help clear up the large pile of brash in Maybole, much of which pre-dates our work. We sorted the brash to save pieces that were good for bugs and burnt the rest on a small site to limit damage to the turf and to avoid accidentally burning any hedgehogs or slow worms
Netherpaths	10/04/2010	6 volunteers visited this small farmstead orchard on half standard rootstocks. We pruned 19 trees in all, cutting out water shoots and suckers and dealing with crossed branches etc in the canopy.
Flapgate	17/04/2010	15 volunteers, plus 3 children, met at Flapgate to prune trees in this small cottage orchard. Tim Dixon gave volunteers, old and new, an introduction to pruning for fruit production and we pruned all the apples and pears, festooned several trees and planted 1 new tree.
Chase Inn	23/04/2010	8 volunteers convened at the Chase Inn for a spot of tree pruning in the pub garden – pruning out water shoots some further pruning for fruit production.
Snatford	24/04/2009	8 volunteers did some pruning of the encroaching hedgerow, and then started on the tree tagging, cross referring the new numbers to previous orchard maps made by the Marcher Apple Network and Rob Widdecombe. We tagged 34 trees and found nest holes of green woodpecker and lesser spotted woodpecker.
Little orchard	20/05/2010	2 volunteers made a preliminary advisory site visit to a private garden orchard.
Broadwood	22/05/2010	A select band of 7 volunteers met on 22nd May, to do some pruning of cherry trees in Broadwood orchard. We pruned 7 trees, mainly rebalancing the crowns of trees that had split or were lopsided.
pruning at Snatford	31/10/2010	12 regular volunteers were joined by 6 new volunteers for the first pruning event of the season at Snatford orchard. The experienced folk started with a walk around to see how the trees pruned in previous years had fared and then settled down to some pruning, particular further cutting back of the leaning pears. Meanwhile, Tim introduced the new folk to the life cycle of trees and the art of pruning.
Pruning at sunfold	12/11/2010	6 volunteers met at continue our work at Sunfold. 2 of the trees had shed large branches in the autumn and we spent some time clearing these. We also cut back some overshadowing holly in one hedge, cut back a bramble thicket surrounding a fallen tree (which still produces lovely apples) and weeded around the small tree nursery.
Pruning and mistletoe management at Maybole	27/11/2010	13 volunteers met to prune in Maybole. Volunteers took a lot of mistletoe out of one heavily laden tree and did a range of other pruning tasks in the orchard. We took away some of the mistletoe to store for the mistletoe fair in December.
Gathering mistletoe at Snatford	10/12/2010	13 volunteers came along to Snatford to manage mistletoe to prolong the life of the trees. Large balls of mistletoe are very heavy and can make the tree split, or fall over. We have to remove the mistletoe gradually to avoid shocking the tree and to retain the range of bugs and beasties it supports. We managed 10 trees this time.
Pruning at Nursery orchard	28/01/2011	8 volunteers met at Nursery orchard. We carried out our 3rd year of work on a collapsed tree, and worked on 8 other mature trees. Tim did some formative pruning on 7 young trees in the orchard, including adjustments to tree guards that were rubbing the young branches.
Pruning at Tump orchard and Sunfold	25/02/2011	8 volunteers met at Tump orchard where we did some restorative pruning on several large old apple trees - particularly cutting out all the water shoots to encourage the trees to fruit. We then moved on to Sunfold where we took some large upright branches out of mature apple trees and rescued a pear from encroaching bramble. Tim did formative pruning on the 7 trees there and 4 trees in Maybole.