



The Acorn Spring/Summer 2012



Cheshire Landscape Trust



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SCORELINE

139 Parishes 185 Tree Wardens

Cheshire Landscape Trust, RmA022,
The Heath Business & Technical Park,
Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 4QX

01928 518018

cltoffice@tiscali.co.uk

www.cheshirelandscapetrust.org.uk

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and Chester

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Musings from my tree

Another planting season has just drawn to a close and time to step back and assess all we have achieved. Our main focus during the past 6 months has been community orchards and many of you have been involved with helping us plant up new orchards for the benefit of communities across Cheshire.

Our final total for the season was 22 new community orchards established throughout Cheshire, Halton and Warrington. Over 350 people were involved in the planting events ranging in age from pre-school to over 85 years old. We are already in the process of building a list of new orchard sites for the next planting season and have several potential spots in mind. If you know of an area in your patch that you think would be ideal for a community orchard please do let us know and we might be able to help you. We will, of course, have to secure funding first to carry out this work but we're working on it!



We also held a couple of hedge laying events over the winter and with the help of several enthusiastic beginners we managed to lay about 30m of hedge at Moore Nature Reserve. Thanks to Duncan MacNaughton from the Forestry Commission for allowing us to come over and hack at the hedges at Moore. Thanks also to Pete Tonge for leading on the workshops.



So now it's on to the summer events and the Cheshire Show is once again on the horizon. Cheshire Landscape Trust will be in the Rural Life marquee once again so please do drop in and visit us if you are at the Show. We're right next to the WI marquee so you can't miss us. Several Tree Wardens have kindly offered their services to help on our stand which will feature the Trust's raffle and information on the community orchard work.

In this copy of The Acorn you will find an article asking for nominations in the 2012 Hedgerow

Awards. If you know of a hedgerow that you think is deserving of an award please do get a copy of the nomination form from CPRE's website or drop me an email or a call and I'll send you one. Judging will take place over the summer and the awards will be presented at the Ploughing Match in September.

Finally, towards the end of the year Cheshire Landscape Trust will be holding its first annual lecture, which is building on the fascinating talks that were featured at our fundraising event at the end of last year. On October 9th at Capesthorpe Hall there will be a talk by the former Head Gardener at Tatton Park and RHS Show gold medal winner, Sam Youd. Further information will follow in due course but get the date in your diaries now.

Katie Lowe
Cheshire Landscape Trust



Insecticide blamed for bee deaths

Taken from www.bbc.co.uk 29th March 2012, author not acknowledge



Use of a specific group of insecticides is having a serious impact on bumblebee populations, according to a team of Scottish scientists. The Stirling University researchers found exposure even to low levels of neonicotinoid pesticides had a serious impact on the health of bumblebees.

Bee populations have fallen sharply, and scientists say urgent action is needed to reverse the decline. Of particular concern is an 85% drop in the number of queens. That means 85% fewer nests in the following year.

The research found bumblebee colony growth slowed after exposure to the chemicals. This may partly be to blame for colony collapse disorder, a mysterious phenomenon which has hit large numbers of hives in Europe and North America in recent years.

Professor Dave Goulson, who led the Stirling research, said: "Some bumblebee species have declined hugely. For example in North America, several bumblebee species which used to be common have more or less disappeared from the entire continent. In the UK, three species have gone extinct. Bumblebees pollinate many of our crops and wild flowers. The use of neonicotinoid pesticides on flowering crops clearly poses a threat to their health, and urgently needs to be re-evaluated."

Homing systems

Neonicotinoids were introduced in the early 1990s and are now widely used around the world. The chemicals are nerve agents that spread to the nectar and pollen of flowering plants. Doses of the pesticides used on crops are not allowed to be lethal to bees, but the evidence suggests there may be significant indirect effects, such as interfering with an insect's ability to navigate.

The UN recently warned that the threat to the honey bee was now a global phenomenon, but despite extensive research the exact causes for declining bee populations are not known.

In a similar experiment, another group of French researchers tracked foraging honeybees and found that the pesticides tripled their chances of dying away from the hive. The chemical was thought to disrupt the bees' homing systems, causing them to get lost and perish.

The Stirling University research has been published in Science magazine. Environmental group Friends of the Earth called the findings "very significant". Paul de Zylva, head of the group's Nature and Ecosystems Programme, said: "The bee is a cherished icon of the British countryside and our gardens and is the farmer's friend that helps pollinate our food crops so we cannot afford further decline. We now need the Government to look seriously at the emerging evidence from here and other countries and consider whether neonicotinoid pesticides should continue to be used freely in the UK."



Dates for your Diary

The Ploughing Match

Wednesday 26th September 2012

Hatley Farm, Hatley Lane, Frodsham. WA6 6XX

For more information please go to www.cheshireploughing.co.uk

Cheshire Landscape Trust Fundraiser

Sam Youd 'Cuttings from a Gardner's Diary'

Tuesday 9th October (6-8pm), Capesthorne Hall

For more details or tickets contact Cheshire Landscape Trust.

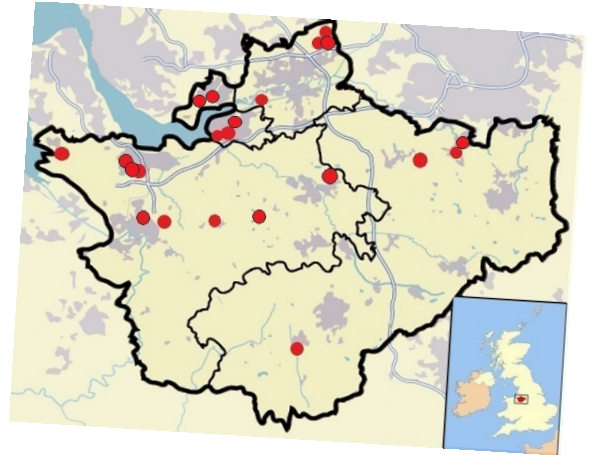


Cheshire Landscape Trust's Community Orchard Project 2011/12



During the last planting season, Cheshire Landscape Trust has been busy establishing community orchards right across Cheshire, Halton and Warrington. Here are our main achievements of the project:

- 22 orchards planted, each dot on the map is one new orchard
- 177 trees planted
- 9 apple trees planted at each site (except for Culcheth High School with 11 trees, Wolverham Primary School, Ellesmere Port and Meriton Park, Handforth, where there were 6 in each, Chestnut Lodge Primary School with 5 trees, Astmoor Primary School with 3 and St Basils RC Primary School in Widnes with 2).
- Apple trees provided were a mix of Fiesta, Golden Spire, Howgate Wonder, James Grieve, Keswick Codlin, Lord Derby, Lord Lambourne, Newton Wonder, Ribston Pippin, St Edmunds Russet and Yorkshire Greening.
- Planting sites have included 9 schools, 6 public parks, 3 nature reserves, a community garden, alongside a public footpath, a business park and the home of the Lord Lieutenant.
- Over 350 people have helped to plant the fruit trees, ranging in age from pre-school to over 85.
- 47 organisations and groups have taken part in the Community Orchard Project planting events.
- Thanks to our funders: The Big Tree Plant and Woodland Trust in the Mersey Forest, Natural England and William Dean Countryside Trust.



This report was put together by Katie Lowe, CLT Chief Executive





Village's Olympic tree & Tree-mendous effort by school

Village's Olympic tree will grow for 100 years

A PRIMARY school in Northampton is one of only 11 in the country to be part of a London 2012 Olympic oak tree-planting project. The Conservative MP for south Northamptonshire, Andrea Leadsom, visited Hardingstone Primary School on Friday to plant an acorn from the original Coubertin oak in Much Wenlock, the birthplace of Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Games.



The tree will be part of a 'ribbon' of 40 trees planted at locations across the country between Much Wenlock and the Olympic Park in London. Debbie Cotterill, a governor at Hardingstone Primary School, said: "The ceremony went really well, despite the bad weather. The children sang songs and they've done lovely artwork for the Olympics. We also had a good turnout of parents and some players from the Saints also came along."

Hardingstone was chosen to have a tree planted as it is part of the London 2012 Get Set Network. The school has also been given a plaque to mark the planting of the tree and representatives from the Woodland Trust and the Forestry Commission have provided advice about how to look after it.

Mrs Cotterill said: "The idea is that the tree will last for 100 years as it is being grown from the Coubertin oak in Much Wenlock which dates back to the 19th century."

Two pupils from Hardingstone Primary will also attend the tree-planting at the London 2012 Olympic Park site.

Mrs Leadsom said; "The children sang beautifully and the event was really well attended, even though it was a traditionally English spring day with a bit of rain. And in the future, when the children see the tree, they will look back on this time as a really special thing to remember."

The ribbon of trees passes through various points from Much Wenlock to the Olympic Park, including Stoke Mandeville, the birthplace of the Paralympic Games. The trees have been grown from acorns taken from a tree planted in Linden Field in Much Wenlock, in 1890 in honour of Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic movement.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo 30th April 2012, author not acknowledged



National Park supports tree-mendous effort by schoolchildren

Writer Mark Twain said: "The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The second best time is now." Pembrokeshire pupils have put these words of wisdom into action and, with help and funding from the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and South Hook LNG, recently helped to plant more than 1,000 trees and shrubs at three county schools.

The Authority's Woodland Officer Celia Thomas said: "Schoolchildren and volunteers have helped to plant these trees at several sites – including Ysgol Ger y Llan, Ysgol Bro Gwaun and Prendergast School, which together accounted for more than 1,000 trees and shrubs.

"With planting schemes like this we can increase the biodiversity of school grounds and increase the amount of woodland cover in Pembrokeshire. We can also help to address the decline in traditional orchards throughout the UK, as well as providing something for everyone to enjoy, from spring blossoms to autumn fruits."

The National Park Authority's Rangers and volunteer Tree Wardens worked with community and school volunteers to dig in native fruit-bearing tree and hedgerow shrubs including hawthorn, hazel, rowan, honeysuckle, crab apple and wild pear.

Funding for the projects has come from a significant donation from South Hook LNG's Community Development Fund and some from the National Park Authority itself.

Communities in Pembrokeshire have also benefited from the planting of Welsh apple trees, creating community orchards, funded by the National Park Authority. The South Hook LNG donation also supported the purchase of barn owl nest-boxes to bolster efforts to increase numbers of this protected species in the National Park and across Pembrokeshire.

For more information contact Conservation Officer Julie Garlick at the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority on 0845 345 7275.

Photograph right shows student Osian Lewis helps Ranger Carol Owen to plant native trees, increasing the amount of woodland cover in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park.

News Wales 18th April, Author not acknowledged.





Leeds launches another community orchard

Posted by Martin Wainwright taken from www.guardian.co.uk



Piping hot apple juice and wassailing songs drown out the rain as gardeners in Headingley celebrate their new project at St Chad's. Rain is good for the garden, everyone said, as it poured down relentlessly on a soggy but cheerful celebration yesterday in Leeds.

A non-stop downpour drummed on the gazebo tent rigged up for the day by the activists - and they really *are* active - of Headingley Community Orchard by the war memorial on Headingley's Otley Road.

Always green but previously rather sterile, the acre or so of land belongs to Wade's Charity, a venerable Leeds body originally founded to ensure that the city's streets were kept wide enough for merchant Thomas Wade to shift his woollen goods. It has long since developed into the purchaser and guardian of a great many open spaces in the

city, which is one of Europe's greenest.

Wade's and the city council agreed to the orchardeers' plan to plant apple, pear, plum and cherry trees on the site as the Remembrance Orchard, the latest piece in a jigsaw of small plots which is developing in Headingley, one of Leeds' most interesting and historic suburbs. Arthur Ransome grew up here and was taught to skate on nearby ponds by the Russian anarchist Prince Kropotkin. Prince Alemayehu, the heir to the Ethiopian throne who was captured and taken to Britain after the storming of his father, Emperor Tewodros II's fortress at Magdala in 1868, died here of pleurisy contracted in the damp and smoky climate.

The orchards started when lively-minded locals including a young doctor, Steve Halpin, and academic Janie Percy-Smith, attempted to buy a field between Headingley and Meanwood for a community orchard but were outbid. Changing tactics, they began finding smaller spaces in the area to plant as 'mini-orchards' with enthusiastic support from many other local groups, including the children of Shire Oak school and the Headingley Development Trust which backs other initiatives such as a farmers' market and the Natural Food Store.

The St Chad's land, fronting directly on to one of the busiest commuter snarls into Leeds from the affluent outer northern suburbs, is the highest profile so far of the various portions. Its trees have been enhanced by a long flower border along the boundary wall and an octagonal seat made by Horticap, a local organisation which gives education and training in horticulture to adults with learning disabilities.

The orchard's planting also relates to Headingley's history and current gardening practices; Halpin and his colleagues are checking out local streets to see which types of fruit tree are already being grown. Two of the initial trees are Ribston Pippins, descendants of a famous English apple developed at Little Ribston Hall near Knaresborough.

Who will do the harvesting? As many local people as possible, says Percy-Smith. The city council at one stage raised fears that pupils of Lawnswood comprehensive school might pick the apples and pears. Exactly so, she told them. What could be better than school students picking fruit here to eat, rather than buying processed food at the garage shop just up the road?

Here's another clip of the orchard launch, which was refreshed by glasses of heated-up Leeds Urban Harvest apple juice, made of fruit from trees in Leeds which would otherwise have been left to rot.

30th April 2012



The cider house rules: homes with orchards

David Hoppit, www.telegraph.co.uk



Few things surely can lift the spirits more than the sight of spring blossom at an English orchard, with a chorus of busy bees going about their business. But during the last third of the 20th century, more than half of our fruit trees were grubbed up.

Kent, once the Garden of England, lost 85 per cent of its orchards, not least because shoppers tended to buy supermarket apples from overseas. Large, uniform and shiny they may have been, but bland of taste compared with our cox, pippins and russets.

There are more than 2,300 varieties of English apple, some dating from Roman times; and in days gone by it was not unusual to plant 200 different trees in a single orchard. Among them would have been local species bred for the making of cider.

Thankfully, the decline has been reversed. In two decades three million new trees have been planted, half of them specifically for cider (and now cider brandy) production. Many apple varieties are preserved at the East Malling Research Centre and also at the Royal Horticultural Society gardens in Wisley, where in recent years cider has been made and sold.

Down in Somerset, where farm workers' wages used to include four pints of cider a day, it is still a big part of everyday life. Further back in time it was used for baptising babies, as it was cleaner than water.

We brew more than 130 million gallons of cider and scrumpy each autumn. The word "scrumpy" derives from a West Country dialect word "scrump", meaning small or misshapen. While there are many commercial orchards it is quite normal for locals to brew their own and sell surplus apples to local cider makers.

When aircraft designer John Lawrence built his house on a plot in Corton Denham, not far from Yeovil, he was intrigued to find two ancient cider apple trees. That was the start of a hobby that has become almost an obsession for John, who now produces 1,500 gallons of top-quality cider every year. So successful has his adventure been that he is now extending his garage, immaculately arrayed with barrels and fermentation equipment. Sadly his beloved Porsche in which he used to deliver to local pubs and farm shops will have to be sold, to make way for more equipment.

The quality of life in Somerset is infectious and over the years many have escaped the rat-race to enjoy the views and friendship the county has to offer. One such couple was Pat and David Vale who moved to Sandbrook House in Galhampton, near Castle Cary, after retiring in 1981.

They ran the little farm and enjoyed the good life, grazing their cows, sheep and pigs in the orchards and learning the art of cider making and planting more trees. David died in 1988 but Pat soldiered on, picking apples by hand and giving them to local cider makers in return for a few bottles for herself.

Nigel Stewart started his research into the cider industry during his time at agriculture college and now, 17 years on, he has built a thriving business at Bridge Farm in East Chinnock. Some of his cider is now sent for distilling into cider brandy which, after years of wrangling, finally received the blessing of the EU last September.

Another renowned cider maker in the area is Julian Temperley at Burrow Hill orchards and distillery. Julian, the father of the fashion designer Alice Temperley, is surely the godfather of Somerset cider. His 160 acres of fruit, grazed by sheep and pigs, is spread out beneath a dominant hill capped with one tree that is visible from miles away. The range of outbuildings are stuffed with ancient treasures, presses and barrels that tell the story of cider.

In addition to a wide variety of ciders, Julian has developed brandies and delicious aperitifs that rival any cognacs and sherries. In the huge bonded warehouse row upon row of apple brandy awaits future bottling and, as with malt whiskies, reduces by at least a third over the years – the angels' share.

Natural England is actively encouraging land owners to preserve and increase areas allocated for orchards, not least because they are so valuable to wildlife. If they are managed organically, with little or no chemical spraying, so much the better. It advises planting on sheltered south-facing slopes and away from valley bottom frost pockets.

30th April 2012





Dane Valley Woodland project & Volunteers work to repair river banks



DANE VALLEY: A joint venture driven by the Peak District National Park in collaboration with the Forestry Commission, Natural England, The Woodland Trust, and local Parishes of Wincle, Bosley, Heaton and Wildboarclough. Cheshire Landscape Trust is also a supporter of this initiative.

The woodlands here are typically narrow and steep sided with fast flowing streams- real Clough woodland of upland oak/birch in character. There has been little intervention in these woodlands in the last 200 years since the Napoleonic wars and they are suffering from a variety of problems such as livestock grazing,

trees falling and causing land slips, poor regeneration and low understorey light levels affecting the ancient semi-natural ground flora survival.

The aim is to bring these woodlands back into sustainable management using the Forestry Commission's England Woodland Grant Scheme and Natural England's Environmental Stewardship schemes.

So far, the project has undertaken woodland management plans linked to planting and management schemes for about 80 hectares of these precious wildlife habitats. A successful bid for HLF money has just given the project another welcome boost, with the aim to widen it to include work such as an oral record of the area, schools and community involvement and comprehensive wildlife surveys undertaken by volunteers.

For further information contact Rebekah Newman on Rebekah.Newman@peakdistrict.gov.uk



Volunteers work to repair river banks:

On a wet, cold and windy day with the river running fast and high members of the Friends of The Carrs joined forces with Cheshire East Rangers and National Trust volunteers to carry out repair and maintenance work to the banks of the River Bollin. The day began with repairing and extending the willow weaving on the areas of the river bank which the Environment Agency repaired last year.

The willow was taken from a tree that had fallen into the river some months ago so by cutting and using the shooting branches from this fallen tree it also meant the obstruction to the natural flow of the river was removed - two benefits for the price of one! The willow planted last year was also pruned and the cuttings planted into the river bank to help consolidate the banks further.

In addition the working party repaired three new areas of river bank that had become badly eroded and planted willow to try and prevent further erosion. Some preparatory work was also undertaken on a further stretch of river bank in anticipation of more work, hopefully later in the year.

Plans to remove some large items of litter from the river were thwarted by the high water level and this will now have to be tackled later in the summer when the water level is lower. Colin Shepherd, Chairman of The Friends of The Carrs said "Co-operation between the groups is growing and we are particularly grateful to the National Trust volunteers for joining us and helping to carry out this essential work. On the day the weather was not at all kind to us and the fortitude shown by those taking part and the amount of work they completed was remarkable. Despite the inclement weather we all enjoyed ourselves, even if some of us ached a bit afterwards".

The next event on The Carrs will be the first of the Balsam Bash days on Sunday May 20th when they will be pulling out the invasive Himalayan Balsam from the river banks and surrounding areas of The Carrs. Volunteers may also carry out some of the uncompleted jobs from last week's working party day.

Volunteers are most welcome for the Balsam Bash, they will be meeting at the Parish Hall at 2pm on May 20th. No particular skills are required.

By Lisa Reeves, taken from www.wilmslow.co.uk



How gardeners can help Britain's wildlife

*Taken from www.guardian.co.uk written by Kate Bradbury on
19th April 2012*



On a cycling trip to Sussex and Hampshire, Kate Bradbury considers how intensive farming methods have affected Britain's wildlife and what we can do to help.

I spent the four days of Easter cycling around the countryside of Sussex and Hampshire. By 'countryside' I mean intensively managed farmland, flailed hedgerows and the occasional golf course. There were nice bits, of course, but overall the environment was pretty hostile for your average wild creature.

I wondered how the local wildlife managed to survive in such conditions. Take hedgehogs, for example, which have declined by 25% in the last 10 years alone, due in part to the loss of rural habitat to intensively managed farmland. At various points of my journey it was clear to see: for miles around were enormous fields of oilseed rape bordered by scrawny hedges. Where would a hedgehog sleep among those? Where would it find food? Where would it rear its young? Nowhere.

In small pockets where wildflowers were allowed to flourish, there were lots of red-tailed, buff-tailed and common carder bumblebees. I saw my first speckled wood and orange tip butterflies of the year. Yet at other points of my journey the sight of a bee was a rarity and I didn't see any butterflies at all. But it was the different sounds of the countryside that really struck me; in more sensitively-managed areas the calls of skylarks and chiffchaffs were so loud; elsewhere birdsong was noticeably absent.

This was the first time I'd directly observed the intensive management of farmland and corresponding lack of wildlife. Previously, I'd only known the facts, which I've written about from my desk in London: since the second world war, we've lost 97% of our lowland meadows and, in some parts of the country, as much as 50% of our hedgerows. But here it was, in front of me, for miles around. Meadows, woodland, hedgerows, even long stubby bits of grass, all represent habitats for some creature or other. Gardens can't make up for the loss of these landscapes, but they can provide habitats for some of our more adaptable wildlife.

It's already been proved that gardens are better for many bees than farmed land: neglected corners and holes under sheds provide the perfect nesting sites, while flowers offer nectar from February to November. We can meet the needs of hedgehogs with a pile of leaves, stack of logs or a compost heap (although a mixed, native hedge is five-star accommodation if you have the space for one), and a few choice caterpillar food plants would make our back yards better all-round habitats for butterflies and moths.

There are plenty of farmers, charities and organisations trying to save what precious few wild habitats we have left. The rest is up to us.

