

Central Core Network Bulletin

Issue 1

Autumn 2001

Central Core Officially Launched!

Welcome to our first Newsletter.

The Central Core Network has been set up to simply revive interest in the importance of orchards and local fruit varieties throughout Central Scotland. It will only succeed if it truly becomes a network of people keen to search out information and share it with others.

So – wherever your interests lie, your contribution or questions will be most welcome:

- Want to plant a new school orchard, or find out how to enhance the few fruit trees already in the school grounds?
- Don't know where to start in planning a village or community orchard?
- Need advice on how to save an old, unmanaged, orchard or plant a new one?
- Want to find out about the types of fruit trees in your garden?

Someone in the Network is sure to be able to help or know where you can find out more information!

Central Core was officially launched at a community orchard-planting ceremony in Cupar, Fife, during March 2001. An Orchard Trail is being set up along the River Eden featuring a number of knarled Victorian pear trees. A small apple orchard, planted with the aid of local school children, completes the walk. A meadow is planned beneath the new fruit trees, enhanced with wildflowers. The trees themselves are local historical varieties.

Apples in Scotland

John Butterworth's long-awaited new book "Apples in Scotland—a Practical Guide to Choosing and Growing our Favourite Fruit" has now been published (retail price: £6.50).

A full review will be featured in the next Newsletter, but for

those keen to learn more as soon as possible, a copy can be obtained direct from John at Butterworth's Organic Nursery, Garden Cottage, Auchinleck Estate, Cumnock, Ayrshire, KA18 2LR (tel. 01290 551088).

Or check out John's web page—www.webage.co.uk/apples/ which will include details about his mail order service specialising in Scottish varieties of apples.

Please mention "The Central Core Newsletter" when you contact him.

CELEBRATE APPLE DAY!

FIFE: Saturday, 6 October

Join The Central Core Network at the annual NTS Plant Sale, Hill of Tarvit, Ceres, by Cupar. Thirty local varieties of apple to see, plus the launch of FWAG Fife & Kinross' new Orchard Management Plan. Apple cakes and desserts available in the NTS restaurant!

STIRLING:

Friday, 19th October

Gartmore Primary School - apple related activities for pupils including the tasty applehogs and a visit to the school orchard to dress and mulch the trees for winter. Lots of apples to eat too. Families and the community invited to share the day and to enjoy a performance of Johnny Applesseed by 9-11 year old pupils.

Sunday, 21st October, 11am-3pm

Smith Art Gallery, Stirling - The first Stirling Apple Day will include a talk on the history of apples, fruit identification, activities for children, cooking demonstrations, story telling and stall. Help compile the new Stirling District Apple Map! Apple-themed meals in the cafeteria plus a performance of Johnny Applesseed by Gartmore and Strathyre Primary Schools pupils.

Other Scottish events are listed on the

Common Ground website

(see inside for details)

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Orchards and Wildlife

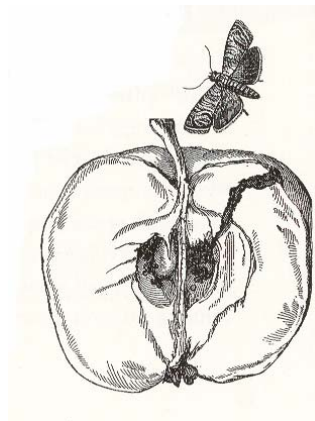
Traditional orchards can hardly be bettered as havens for wildlife, yet these man-made habitats rarely feature in surveys as they are neither woodland, grassland, hedgerow or wood pasture. Yet they can be all these habitats at once—and more if you consider the unique cultural heritage they safeguard too.

Biodiversity thrives in places that are themselves widely diverse. Underneath the trees a flower-rich grassland can evolve which can be harvested as hay or used for grazing. As the UK has lost 98% of its meadowland in the last half century, such grassland suddenly takes on its own importance, especially when considered in the larger picture of attracting pollinating insects (especially bees),

bats and birds. If the orchard is bounded by a thick hedge, cut only every second year and featuring berry-bearing trees such as hawthorn and blackthorn—the wildlife is doubly lucky.

Then there are the trees themselves. The bark is often host to rare insects which rely on both live and dead areas of wood. The heart rot, hollows, holes and sap runs which are rich in sugars and yeasts provide invaluable habitat and feeding for many invertebrates. A huge variety of lichens can be found on trees that are not

sprayed; mistletoe and ivy provides welcome winter berries for many species of birds. Bats will often roost in the larger trees, as will such birds as woodpeckers, warblers and blackcap.



Fallen fruit provides rich pickings not just for blackbirds and thrushes, but also late butterflies and bees. Hedgehogs, hares, deer and badgers all visit orchards in the autumn and winter. Badgers, in particular, revel in the energy-giving windfalls and the brambles found in the wild patches of orchards.

Free CD-ROM

“A Taste of Fruit” is an interactive CD-ROM produced by Fife-based Ann Lolley as part of the Millennium Forest for Scotland Trust Awards.

The CD offers information, activities and events inspired by orchard fruit. It mixes storytelling with how to prune trees,

wildlife advice with having fun with fruit face masks, horticultural therapy and tree dressing!

This collection will both intrigue and inspire—whether you have an interest in the wildlife found in orchards, or want to know how to make a fruit face mask!

Nearly a hundred copies have been circulated, but there are a few CDs still available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Contact Ann Lolley direct at: Lower West Wing Flat, Tarvit House, Cupar, Fife, KY15 5PD. Please quote this newsletter!

Can you identify this apple?

Need help?

Two organisations offer an identification service for a small fee. Before sending any fruits for identification, contact the organisations direct for further information on how to pack the fruit for mailing:

- The Royal Horticultural Society, RHS Garden, Wisley, Woking, Surrey. GU23 6QB
- The Brogdale Trust, Faversham, Kent. ME13 8XZ

Applekey

Such is the need for a quick identification service to be made widely available

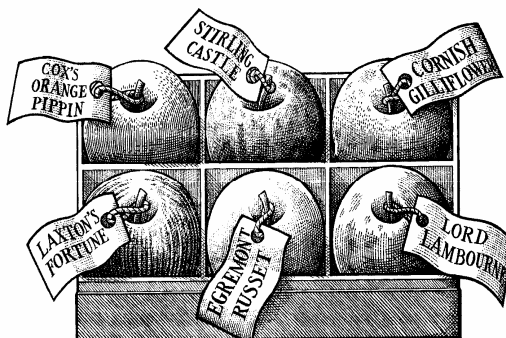
that The Central Core Network is amongst many other such organisations asked to evaluate a computer apple identification programme—“Applekey”. If the verdict is

favourable, national funding will be applied for to develop a more comprehensive key to include the majority of continental varieties.

If anyone would like to help us with the evaluation, please contact Catherine Lloyd in the first instance by the beginning of November.

Mystery Fruit

In future Newsletters we will feature mystery varieties in the hope that someone will be able to identify them. Send us your photographs now (but not the fruit!). If you would like the photographs returned, don't forget to include a stamped addressed envelope.



The Common Ground Book of Orchards

This is an excellent book—so much so, you will need to consider buying two copies if you want to give one away as a present—you will definitely need to keep the second copy!

Common Ground, creator of “Apple Day” celebrates orchards as our best relations with nature in this sumptuous book. There are chapters on how orchards shape local culture from custom to kitchen and we are urged to value old orchards of tall trees for their unique ecology and local distinctiveness.

The book is refreshing in that it demonstrates how, in town and country, Community Orchards, provide wildlife havens, wholesome fresh food and open spaces for communal celebration.

The result of more than a decade’s campaigning, the book presents a positive survival plan for orchards as places in which everyone can play a part. It offers those in search of sustainability a feast for the imagination.

Over 50 evocative photographs by the late James Ravilious enhance the book, together with Common Ground’s famously quirky sketches. Its easy reading style belies just how much information there is packed into one bumper volume. The Appendices of contacts and further information are worth the book’s price in themselves!

£18.95—ISBN 1-870364-21X.



View two chapters of the book on the web:
www.commonground.org.uk

Community Orchards

Community orchards offer a way of saving vulnerable old orchards as well as providing opportunities to plant totally new ones.

They provide places for quiet contemplation or for local festivities, a reservoir of local varieties of fruit, plus an invaluable refuge for wildlife.

In many towns and villages, a community orchard is becoming the equivalent of the wood in the countryside a hundred years ago – a communal asset providing a place to relax or play in, and a focal point to share activities and festivities.

Community orchards may be owned or

leased for, or by, the community, local authority, housing association or voluntary body. Local people can share the harvest or profit from its sale, in addition to taking responsibility for the care of the

Looking for advice? Local Authority Tree Officers or Local Agenda 21 Co-ordinators may be able to help—or contact the Central Core Network

orchard itself.

There are myriad possibilities for diversification within each orchard:

- Sale of species-rich hay or surplus snowdrops and daffodils can be profitable, for instance;
- opportunities offered for horticultural training to local colleges,
- a place for community art projects;
- a venue for a wide variety of events
- ALL THIS AND MORE!

Where are the community orchards in Central Scotland? Please write and tell us. We will feature stories and photographs in future Newsletters.

Orchard Management Plan Service

The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group offers guidance on conservation practices which benefit wildlife and their habitats without compromising productivity.

Its remit covers not only the major land uses such as agriculture, woodlands and moorlands, but also



field margins, water-courses, wetlands and hedgerows.

Specialising in Whole Farm Plans, FWAG Conservation Advisers will also draw up individual ‘modules’ to suit orchard owners as well as farmers and landowners.

In Fife and Kinross the Adviser can now offer a

personalised Orchard Management Plan so that clients can gain wide-ranging advice on planting a new orchard, or on how to renovate a relict orchard.

For further information, contact Shirley Macgowan, FWAG Fife & Kinross, Elmwood House, Carslogie Road, Cupar, Fife; tel. 01334 656546.

Central Core Network
Hon. Co-ordinator
Catherine Lloyd
Greenbank House
West End, Abernethy,
Perthshire. PH2 9JL

Phone: 01738 850566
(8.30am to 8.30pm only please)
Fax: 01738 850566

Email: cathlloyd@ukf.net

Check out the Common Ground website

[www.commonground.org
.uk](http://www.commonground.org.uk)

KEEP IN TOUCH!

Please join the Network so that we can spread the word throughout Central Scotland and link in with the many other initiatives throughout the UK

1 year's membership £5.00
3 years' membership £15.00

In future Newsletters we will feature

- *Events and training courses*
- *Details on how to set up a school orchard*
- *News on the Stirling Apple Map*
- *Case Studies of Community Orchards*
- *Advice on basic apple tree pruning*
- *Information about local grants*
- *Websites to explore*
- *Local member profiles*
- *An update on what is happening elsewhere in Scotland*
- *Information about the National Orchard Association*

Share your recipes, traditional or new

Report your wildlife sightings

(from one fruit tree or an orchard)

And—please tell us what's happening in your area

Farmers Markets

Establishing new orchards and restoring old ones is commendable—but what do we do with all the produce?

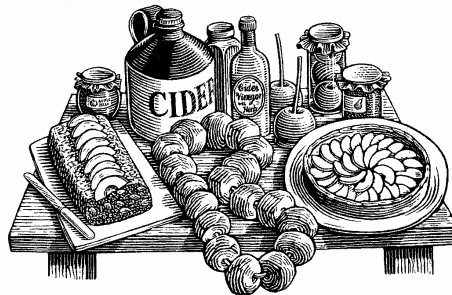
Each year literally tons of fruit falls to the ground and rots. Whilst a percentage is appreciated (and needed) by the wildlife which relies on the orchard, much of it is true waste.

At the same time, our supermarkets are flooded with hundreds of tons of imported fruit, rarely organic, and creating wealth which is not re-distributed back to the local community.

One way to dispose of our surplus fruit is via the burgeoning Farmers Markets springing up throughout the area. The concept—common in the States, but originating in medieval Europe—has long since been supplanted by our reliance on mass trans-

port of foodstuffs. But changes are afoot.

A Farmers Market is where farmers and producers come to sell their produce direct to the customer. They can only sell produce which they have made or grown themselves locally



Over 6,000 varieties of apple have been recorded—yet only nine are readily available in the shops

within a specified radius.

We now have the opportunity to revitalise our local orchards and use them as an outlet for produce.

So—if you have surplus fruit, consider first how to increase its value by making produce such as cakes, pies, chutneys, jams, wine or cider. Dried fruit is becoming more and more popular not just for eating, but for use in decorative wreaths and pot pourri.

If none of this is an option, consider the produce from the orchard itself in addition to the fresh fruit. Mistletoe is rare in Scotland (although not unknown), but what about honey, tree grafts, fungi, sculpture, treen, etc?

Or we can just enjoy the fresh fruit, either selling it via Farmers Markets or 'gifting' it to local communities, schools, hospitals and sheltered housing complexes.