

# Blossom Day 2011

## Blossom Day at Park Farm

Our annual Blossom Day on Easter Sunday was bathed in spring sunshine. The blossom was there, but, due to the flowering being early this year, was mainly in the form of a sumptuous carpet of petals! Picnickers were able to enjoy the lively playing of Derek and his Jazz Friends, whilst sampling delicious home-made cakes and tea produced by Marlene Disney and the ladies of Lynsted and Teynham Womens' Institute. There were plenty of customers at Emlyn and Linda Morgan's drinks stall, too!

Spring lambs and their mothers grazed quietly nearby, completing a traditional orchard scene. Children's games, on an Easter theme, organised by Clare Stewart, kept the youngsters busy. The Easter Bonnet competition brought forth some stunning hat decorations, and Lis Heriz-Smith emerged the overall winner, with an eggy creation in gold and green. Grateful thanks went to Sioux Peto of Polka Dot Art Centre, for not only judging the competition but also providing the prizes!

Sadly our cherry orchard expert was indisposed at the last minute, but the writer did his best to step in and explain the basics of cherry husbandry and the Lynsted's Orchard Project to those interested. All in all, the Day was a wonderful chance for local people to gather for a relaxing chat under the shade of the grand old cherry trees. Grateful thanks are due, as ever, to orchard owners Pip and Sue Neaves, for allowing our events to take place in their orchard.



# Cherry Day 2011

## Cherry Day - Cool!

The weather proved showery and blustery on the morning of the Orchard Group's seventh consecutive Cherry Day on July 9th. There were even fears of a first-ever Cherry Day cancellation! But the usual veteran team braved the elements to see that the gazebos went up, and tables and chairs etc. appeared from storage. And then sun came out.

Steve and the Frayed Knot band struck up around noon, and the visitors streamed in. Numbers were estimated at upwards of 200, indicating that our decision to change from Sunday to Saturday may have been a sound one. As ever, cherry enthusiasts came from far and wide to enjoy the celebrations - and take advantage of the chance to pick ripe cherries straight from the laden trees. Tom English and Richard were kept busy selling punnets to fill. One family travelled all the way from Borden - Hampshire - and many came from the London area. Our fame is spreading!

The children of Lynsted and Norton School, under the direction of Julie West, once again wove their magical coloured tape-patterns around the maypole. This year they were helped out of a music 'glitch' by the kind intervention of the musicians from Oyster Morris who provided a traditional, and impromptu, live accompaniment! The morris dance side, from Whitstable, now regular performers at Cherry Day, presented their cheery sets of traditional dances. It all seemed to blend so well with the background of the stately old cherry trees.

The hamburger stand, under the new management of Clive and Anne Dawes, did brisk business, as did Emlyn and Linda Morgan in the beer tent (the Oyster men being particularly partial to the cherry cider on offer). Marlene Disney's Lynsted with Teynham WI team dished out delicious cream teas all afternoon, whilst the Pond family operated the ever-popular skittles game.

We welcomed some new craft stalls this year, including hurdle-maker Norman Adds. John Hobbs brought his vintage motorbikes. That provided a nucleus for further quality oldies, such as John Pitts' Post Office van (complete with Postman Pat), and Clive Friend's Morris Minor. Colin Barnard even deserted his post at the Polka Dot craft stand to bring his 39year-old camper van to join the collection of veterans! Ann Rumble (cards and pictures), Maria McCarthy (poetry word-blocks) and Kay Wreford (Lynsted honey) also ran busy stalls.

Sadly our tour guide was unable to be with us on this occasion, having been called away on other duties, but otherwise everything went to plan, and everyone enjoyed themselves.

As ever, the Group owes a huge debt of gratitude to Pip Neaves for not only providing the venue, and help with the preparations, but also ensuring quantities of succulent fruit for the immensely popular PYO part of the activities.

Future Group events include a 'Bat Talk-and-Walk' on Friday 5th August and 'Opera and Song in the Orchard' on Saturday 20th August. See notices with details elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Events such as Cherry Day are now well established - almost as parish institutions. The original organising team, however, is beginning to show its age. We badly need some new blood, not only for site preparation, but also to lend a hand during events. Aid with collecting payment for food, photography for publicity/archives and marshalling of cars are examples. If you feel you could help the Community Orchard keep going, please contact the writer or any member of the Orchard Group.

## Hallowe'en 2011

### Halloween in the Orchard - eight years on.

It was with a rather tentative 'experimental' Halloween party that the idea of a community event in the old cherry orchard at Park Farm was first tried out in 2004. That was a success, albeit on a small scale. Now, Halloween and other seasonal events in the Orchard have become popular and established parts of the local calendar.

This year the Orchard hosted more families than ever, and the festivities, held on Saturday 29th October, went off with a swing under pleasantly mild weather conditions. The Orchard was alive with small witches, devils and skeletons, not to mention numerous grinning pumpkins. 'Frayed Knot' provided the music, Ann ran a busy games tent, and a breathless June claimed to have been storytelling non-stop within her magic wigwam! The bonfire roared away under the careful supervision of Pip. There was keen competition for best costume and best carved pumpkin: Val and Lottie, aided by the herding skills of Norma, did the judging. Competition winners were as follows:

#### **Fancy Dress**

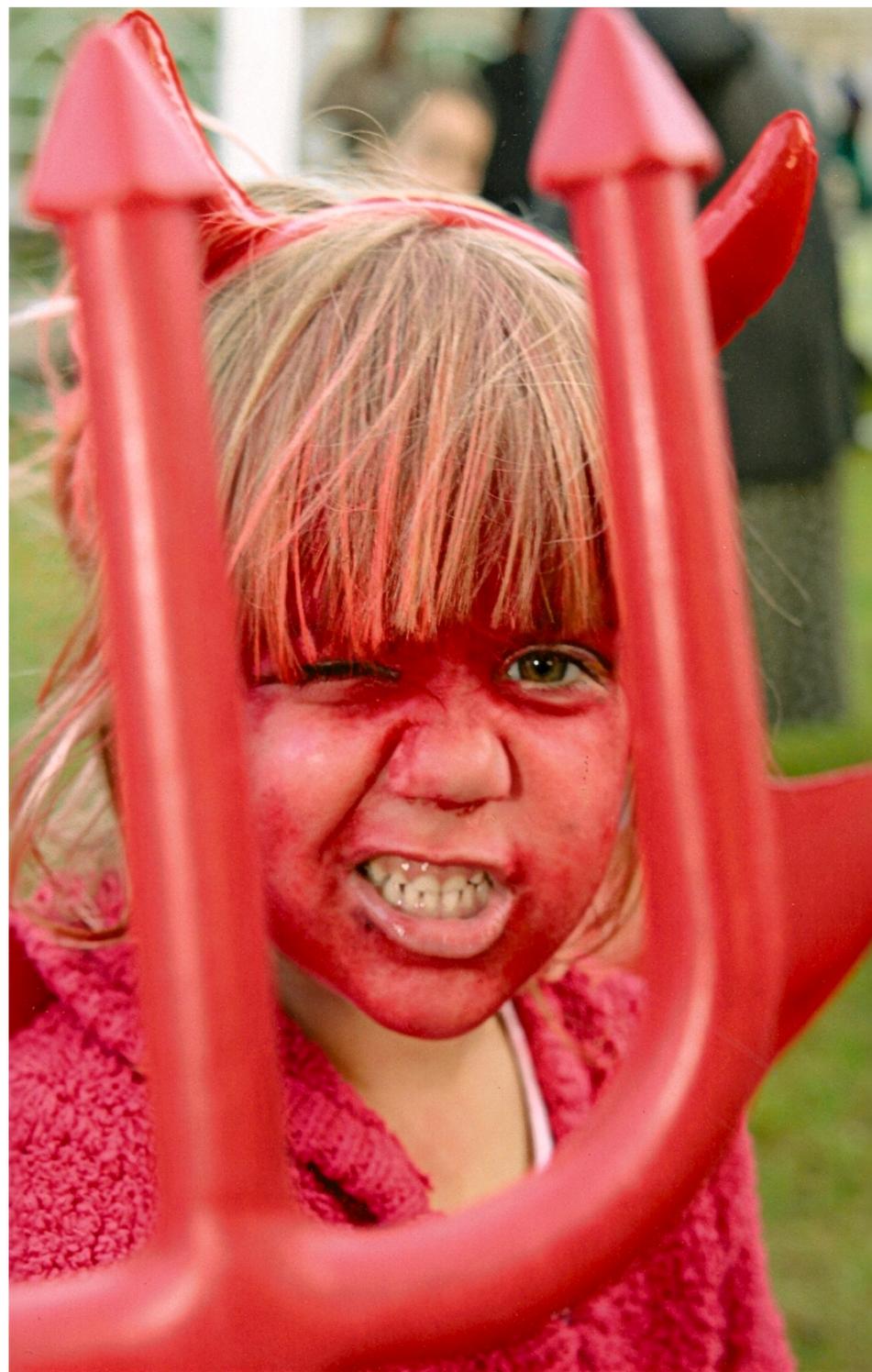
First Prize, Nancy Morris-Blayney; 2nd Prize, Savannah Neaves; 3rd Prize, Kitty Irani

#### **Carved Pumpkin**

1st Prize, Freya Webb; 2nd Prize, Jason Phipps; 3rd Prize, Charlotte Jack.

Linda and Emlyn enjoyed a brisk trade at the drinks counter, Marlene aided by Rose, Myra and Clive F dished out pizzas, scones and hot soup, and Anne and Clive D, aided by Frank, virtually sold out on the hamburger stall.

Of course, these events do not run themselves, and Brian(on gate), Doug(parking), Tom (camera) and the tent erectors/dismantlers Peter, Jim, Jenny, Graham and the Dawes family, did sterling work. Some old wizard grabbed Frayed Knot's microphone occasionally to make announcements and keep things going. The Fete Committee are thanked for the loan of their generator. And of course thanks are due to Pip and Sue for yet again allowing access to their beautiful orchard - which looked particularly fine in its autumn colours.





## Further Events in 2011

### **Blossom, Bats, Bradbournes and Baritones - Lynsted Orchard's busy year**

As to the forthcoming activities, the Orchard Group will be manning the 'farming' stall at Lynsted with Kingsdown Society's Local Heritage Project Open Day in Lynsted Church on 11th June. After that, the spotlight will be on our annual Cherry Day. With the idea of attracting even more visitors to this popular event, this will be held this year on a Saturday - 9th July, from noon till 4pm. It will feature the Oyster Morris from Whitstable, local band Frayed Knot, maypole dancing by the children of Lynsted and Norton School, a beer and wine tent, a hamburger stand, cream teas, craft stalls, vintage vehicles, cherry heritage tours and the ever-popular Pick-your-Own cherries from the 14 varieties of fruit-laden trees. Entry is free, apart from a small charge for car-parking.

To cater for friends with an interest in wildlife, we have arranged another 'bat evening' on Saturday 5th August. Shirley Thompson MBE, from the Kent Bat Group, will be presenting an illustrated introduction to the world of these flying mammals in Lynsted Church Community Room at 7.45pm. Shirley will then lead us on an exploration of the church, churchyard, cherry orchard and nearby lanes, armed with electronic bat-boxes that make the creatures' echolocation signals audible. There will be a £1 charge for this event (accompanied children free), payable on the evening. The last time Shirley came, we detected four different species of bat - so we can look forward to a productive evening!

Cameo Opera will be presenting a programme of songs from the shows and opera favourites - 'Opera and Song in the Orchard' on the evening of Saturday 20th August. This will be a 'posh picnic' affair where patrons are asked to bring something to sit on. Tickets (£10) need to be purchased in advance: contact Norma Baxter on 01795 521 515. The concert will be held in Lynsted Church if the weather is inclement. A similar event in 2006 was a brilliant success, the magnificent cherry trees providing a wonderful setting. We look forward to a repeat of that magical evening.

Parents may wish to note in the family diary that our annual free-entry Hallowe'en Children's Party will be held in the Orchard, this year on Saturday 29th October. Note that this is a break from our usual practice of holding this event on the Sunday. Details will be available later in the year.

For further details of events, contact us via [info@lynsted-orchard.org.uk](mailto:info@lynsted-orchard.org.uk).