

Blossom Day 2010

Bumper Bloom Bud-Burst at Park Farm!

Despite worrying showers in the morning, the sun came right out in time for the annual Blossom Day family picnic at Lynsted's Community Orchard on Sunday 25th April.

The cherry blossom was at its most magnificent for years, and, as luck would have it, was at its best 'on the day'. The bees went about their pollinating business among the flowers, as a selection of popular and light classical tunes, played by the Sittingbourne Wind Ensemble, wafted through the trees. Emlyn and Linda at the wine and beer stall made brisk business, alongside the Marlene's ladies of the Lynsted with Teynham Womens' Institute plying delicious homemade soup, tea and cakes. Sadly, key participants in the maypole dancing display were missing - stranded in foreign parts by that volcanic ash - so we had to go without that popular attraction.

Cherry expert Gavin Maclennan was unable to join us, so the Orchard Group chairman did his best to explain the Orchard and project to interested parties on the 'tour'. Everyone seemed pleased to relax and chat with friends in the unaccustomed, but very welcome, sunshine and under a brilliant white canopy of blossom. Pip and Sue Neaves were thanked for their kindness in making their magnificent traditional orchard available again. Those present were reminded that Cherry Day would be on 11th July this year, with a concert by the Detling Singers the evening before, in Lynsted Church. The brass band picnic was scheduled for Saturday 7th August. Watch out for further details!

[Click here to view photographs by professional photographer, Tomy Jones](#)



Hallowe'en 2010

Lynsted's Hallowe'en Children's Party a Roaring Success.

After the disappointment of having last year's event cancelled by the weather, it was great to enjoy a terrific 2010 Hallowe'en Party in Lynsted's Community Orchard on October 31st.

The misty weather added to the spooky atmosphere as night fell, and there seemed to be more elves, ghosts, fairies and skeletons than usual running about under the old trees. Uncle Pip did a grand job stoking the huge bonfire at one end of the cosy avenue of marquees containing food, drinks, storytelling and games ('throwing the eye' proved particularly popular!). Frayed Knot pumped out foot-stomping golden oldies, candle-lit pumpkin faces grinned from their display stand, and a goodly crowd had a most enjoyable time.

There was only one thing sadly missing: the sight of David Bage chatting away, glass in hand and sporting his battered old top hat. He will be greatly missed as the Orchard Project's firmest supporter.

Winners of the competitions were:

Costumes (fancy dress) -

- first prize: Sid Morris-Blayney
- second prize: Molly Miller
- third prize: Archie Covey

Carved pumpkins -

- first prize: Ned Eagles
- second prize: Rosie
- third prize: Claudia

Our events need quite a bit of setting up, and this is my chance, on behalf of the Orchard Group, to thank all those new volunteers who responded so well to our 'call for help'. Indeed I must thank all who contributed so much time and effort to make this Party such a big success. Thanks also go to The Lynsted with Kingsdown Society for the loan of a marquee, and to the Fete Committee for the use of its generator. And of course a big 'thank you' to Pip and Sue Neaves for allowing us to use their dear old cherry orchard.

For more information about Park Farm Community Cherry Orchard, visit www.lynsted-orchard.org.uk.

Bob Baxter (AKA the Wizened Wizard)



Inaugural AGM February 2010

Lynsted's Community Orchard Group holds first AGM.

The first Annual General Meeting of the now independent Park Farm Community Cherry Orchard Group was held on 4th February at the Belle Friday Centre. Several members of the public were present.

The chairman, in his report, explained how the Group became independent of the Parish Council the previous March, and how a Steering Committee was formed at a strongly supported inaugural meeting on 23rd March.

A very successful Blossom Day was held in April. On this occasion, the Mayor of Swale was present, and he dedicated a carved oak seat as a memorial to John Disney. John had been a leading figure in establishing the Community Orchard, but had sadly died in 2008.

On 10th July the Detling Singers provided a charming programme of readings and song in Lynsted Church, on the theme of 'the Kentish Orchard'. This formed an apt musical prelude to a most enjoyable Cherry Day the following afternoon. As usual, there were games, guided tours, food, drink, craft stalls, live music - and of course the chance to pluck ripe cherries straight from the tree. The Malawi Group staged another successful fundraising barn dance on 4th July.

Unfortunately the annual Halloween Party had to be cancelled because of bad weather.

The slow-worm colony, displaced from a local building site, had become established in a special fenced off area in the Orchard. Wildlife was again the theme when a class from Lynsted and Norton School had a study day in the Orchard in September.

The Mid Kent Downs Countryside Partnership, source of much advice and support, held a booklet launch in the Orchard in July. Later they again descended on Lynsted to celebrate the completion of their community orchards project.

In all, it had been a busy and successful year. The Orchard had brought enjoyment and information to many, and the finance account was comfortably 'in the black'. The chairman thanked his colleagues on the Steering Committee, and indeed all who had given support and help over the year. On behalf of the Group, he expressed his thanks to Pip and Sue Neaves for continuing to allow access to their wonderful orchard. He wished the new Executive Committee good fortune in the coming year.

He closed by emphasising that the Community Orchard project could only operate with the support of volunteers. The current team, after six years of effort, was feeling the strain - more help was needed, especially in the run-up to the various events! Anyone with a little time to spare was urged to get in touch with any member of the committee.

Hon Treasurer, Brian Pond, presented the audited accounts. These showed a healthy balance of £3,541.

Bob Baxter was elected as chairman of the Executive Committee. Existing members of the Steering Committee were elected to the Executive Committee en bloc, with one exception: Marlene Disney felt unable to offer herself for election because of other commitments, but was very willing to help, as usual, with catering aspects of Group activities. He emphasised that friends, spouses and supporters were always very welcome to attend, and contribute to, committee meetings.

Composition of the new committee:

Chairman: Bob Baxter.

Vice-chairman: Tom English

Hon. Secretary: Julie Barrett,

Hon. treasurer: Brian Pond.

Webmaster: Paul Cross.

Members: Clare Stewart, Emlyn Morgan, Frank Champion, vacancy.

Full details of the AGM, including the full chairman's report, and other information about the Community Orchard, are available on the website: www.lynsted-orchard.org.uk. or via the Secretary, or Chairman.

Bob Baxter

Prom in the Orchard 2010

Huge Success of the Brass Band Concert in Lynsted's Community Orchard.

The weather was cloudy and changeable during the preparations, but the Park Farm Community Cherry Orchard Group was lucky on the night with a calm, mild evening for its Brass Band 'Prom' on Saturday 7th August. The grand old cherry orchard proved a fine setting for a lively programme of music. Upward of 120 concert picnickers enjoyed a range of melodies, from Shostakovitch to Abba and from Glenn Miller to Henry Wood.

All were played with skill and precision by the Medway Band, who demonstrated why they were acclaimed as one of the finest brass bands in SE England. Those dressing up for the occasion added sparkle and sense of occasion, and posh frocks and bow ties were in abundance.

Event organiser Emlyn Morgan cut a particularly fine figure, as he passed in full DJ among the tables, bearing cooling glasses of Pimm's. (An appropriate touch, since James Pimm of nearby Newnham invented the famous drink). The Union Flag was lowered as the Evening Hymn and Last Post were played to close the formal part of the evening. Many revellers stayed on, however, to savour the unique atmosphere of a truly magical evening.

'A 30-piece brass band was certainly a new venture for us' said Emlyn, 'but it proved to be a great success, clearly enjoyed by all!'

The Orchard owners, Pip and Sue Neaves, were thanked for yet again allowing their lovely orchards to be used for this event. Any proceeds will go towards sustaining the Orchard as a community resource, and space for events.



Event organiser Emlyn Morgan serves Pimms



Happy picnickers enjoys the concert



Soloist David Cooper entralls the crowd