

## Orchard bat survey results discussed.

Shirley Thompson of the Kent Bat Group joined us in the Community Room on 10th February, for a discussion about the results of last summer's survey of bat activity in Lynsted's Community Cherry Orchard. It was something of a 'joint' session: although organised by the Orchard Group, and using sonic detector boxes procured by the Group, most of the dozen volunteer 'surveyors' were Lynsted with Kingsdown Society members! And a few additional members joined in the discussion. Shirley was very pleased at the level of enthusiasm in the subject, and the effort put in by all. She explained that bat numbers in Britain had dropped in recent years (a point echoed by Lynsted residents). She said that remarkably little was known about the detailed behaviour of bats, and so our weekly 'counts' were a useful contribution.

In summary, the findings were: the most common bat was the Pipistrelle (the bat boxes detected two species), but a larger species, probably the Noctule, was occasionally detected at the valley end of the Orchard. Activity/numbers flying were greater between May and September. This would coincide with the use of maternity roosts first by pregnant, and later by lactating females with young. This indicated the importance of the Orchard as a foraging area, at critical periods, for a roost nearby. There was more activity on warmer evenings. Surprisingly, there was no greater activity when the blossom was out or during fruiting - when more insects (the bats' prey) would have been attracted. The Pipistrelles seemed to prefer flying in the gaps between the cherry trees, and were more often detected in the northern sectors of the Orchard. We intend to present the summarised data in a report in due course.

There was much enthusiasm for doing more, and future work could include more definite species identification, tracking the direction of movement, surveying over a larger area, 'bat watch evenings' and locating the place where the bats roost during the day. Watch out for further information and plans! We could do with more volunteers, so please contact us through [info@lynsted-orchard.org.uk](mailto:info@lynsted-orchard.org.uk).

Bob Baxter

## Cherry Day 2006

As a result of the disappointment so many felt at the cancelling of Blossom Day because of bad weather, we re-scheduled the event when the cherries were in fruit on a hot Sunday afternoon.

Over 100 people attended and enjoyed picnics under the cherry trees of Park Farm Cherry Orchard. We were entertained by the wonderful music of local group, Frayed Knot, and children from Lynsted and Norton School once again impressed us with their skilled maypole dancing.

There were pick-your-own cherries for sale and tours of the Orchard, ably provided by Brogdale tour guide, Gavin Maclennan. The Teynham and Lynsted Bitch and Stitch quilters displayed their latest work: the appliquéd quilt will be the prize of a Grand Draw to be announced at the Garden Party in aid of Cancer Research at the Walnuts, London Road, on Sunday September 3rd .

We were also pleased to have on sale the first copies of the Lynsted Cherry Orchard booklet, including the recipes from last year's cherry recipe competition. If you missed the opportunity to buy a copy, contact me on 522921 or visit the Orchard Group stand at the Lynsted Fete on 28 August. £3 a copy.

A quote from Lyn Newton, Tourism Development Officer at Swale Borough Council: "A very simple, clever and of course well executed event. I really found the whole afternoon to be both interesting, educational and of course relaxing. Congratulations to all involved - a truly unique and very special diary event."

Our thanks are due to Pip and Sue Neaves for allowing us to use the Orchard for such a memorable occasion.

Julie Barrett  
Park Farm Cherry Orchard Group



# Hallowe'en 2006

## Sunday 29th October 2005

On Sunday 29 October we held our third Hallowe'en event in Park Farm Cherry Orchard with around 120 people milling round our bonfire and enjoying the evening. Each year the number of visitors has increased and we had a record 42 children who entered for the Hallowe'en fancy dress competition and over 30 pumpkins in the carved pumpkin competition. The storyteller's tent was full of children listening to stories of bats, wizards and magic and the adults were entertained at the beer tent. We had a barbecue, toffee apples and children's games. Once again the musical accompaniment of Lynsted's own singing and guitar-playing duo, Cara, was of a very high standard and helped create a magical atmosphere.



Fancy Dress Competition winners

Our Orchard project ends in August 2007 and the Parish Council is in the process of looking at ways in which we can extend the project. We would like to thank all the people in the community who supported our Hallowe'en event this year.

A big thank you, as always, goes to Pip and Sue Neaves for allowing the community to use their beautiful orchard.



Cara provide the music



Pumpkin lanterns

This year we had two very talented young judges for our competitions. Martha Webb, dressed as a Hallowe'en cat, undertook the difficult task of judging the winners of the fancy dress competition. Rosa Sullivan, who has won our pumpkin competition twice in the past, judged the carved pumpkin competition. Both judges were very professional, fair and efficient and did a wonderful job. The results were as follows:

### Hallowe'en Fancy Dress

Over 5: 1st Alice Philpot, 2nd Page Russell-Forber, 3rd Milly Clinton

Under 5: 1st Louise Mantle, 2nd Ross Hunter, 3rd Lewis Longman

### Carved Pumpkin

1st Fiona Lock and Zoe Reed, 2nd Amy Leckie and Lewis Longman, 3rd Megan Hunter and the Webb family, Highly commended: Isabella Reed, Holly Longman, Ben Meek and Louise Mantle.



Our resident Wizard opens the event

# Village Barn Dance and Pig Roast a Great Success.

The Community Cherry Orchard was the scene of dancing and jollity, as Lynsted's local Community Overseas Aid Project held a well-attended fundraising Barn Dance on 3rd June. This was the first time a local organisation other than the Orchard Group had been prime movers in presenting a major community event. It went with a swing, on the warmest day of the year so far! Dance-goers tucked into succulent roast pig, 'Fleet of Foot' called the tune, and the beer flowed freely. A substantial sum was raised towards the Malawi Project.

The night was summed up as a great success. It was certainly a fine example of how the community space should be used! As ever, farm owners (and dancers!) Pip and Sue Neaves were thanked for their support.

Bob Baxter.



Top right: Slicing the roast pig.



Left: Orchard Project video team member aims his camera.



Right: Reeling out the music.

Below: Cutting the mustard.



## Opera and Song in an Orchard.

Despite a forecast of heavy and unpredictable showers, plans went ahead on Sunday for an evening of opera and song in Lynsted's Community Cherry Orchard. Music lovers from as far afield as Dover joined local people for a picnic among the magnificent old cherry trees. Following this, the Teynham-based Cameo Opera expertly performed a varied programme of favourite songs from opera and musical shows.

The rain stayed away, and darkness descended to create a magical atmosphere within the surrounding trees, with only the improvised 'stage' illuminated - by lights mounted on harvesting ladders!. The artists themselves remarked on how well the intimate setting 'worked', with the voices 'contained' by the surrounding foliage. A local bat made a guest fly-past - presumably to acknowledge the song from 'Die Fledermaus'!

'Congratulations on a splendid evening' said one enthusiast. 'We enjoyed it very much'.

Lynsted with Kingsdown Parish Council's Orchard Project is supported by The Heritage Lottery Fund. The co-operation of Orchard owners Pip and Sue Neaves is gratefully acknowledged.

Bob Baxter,  
21st August, 2006.



## Capturing the past: Oral History recording.

A group of Orchard Group members, including young graduates of the recent videofilming course, and members of the Lynsted with Kingsdown Society, came together on 8th July to learn how to interview people. The day-course, held in the Community Room at Lynsted church, aimed to provide us with the skills to interview senior members of the community effectively. We felt it was important to record the lives and experiences of the older parishioners before the chance was lost for ever!

Although the course was arranged primarily to prepare us to make a record of the history of cherry farming and harvesting in our area, the philosophy of the Park Farm Cherry Orchard Project is to 'spread the word' (and use of equipment) to cover other aspects of local history.

Our tutor, Roger Kitchen, of Kitchen's Ink Creative Solutions, took us through the Golden Rules of interviewing, how to pose questions, how to listen (important!), what recording equipment to use and how to make an effective archive record. In the second half of the day, three brave people (Maggie Goodwin, Joyce Gates and David Bage) offered themselves as 'guinea pigs' for the rest of us to practice on. Roger rounded off a fact-packed day with some absorbing film of other local history projects involving audio/oral recording.

Once we acquire some equipment through the Orchard Group's Heritage Lottery funding, we will be fired up and ready to go! We have built up a 'little list' of potential interviewees to approach. But would anyone reading this who might be willing to share his or her experiences of 'the old days', particularly concerning cherry husbandry and harvesting, please contact us through the email link. Thanks.

Bob Baxter.



Left to right: Roger Kitchen, Rose Ingram, Maggie Goodwin, David Bage, Bob Baxter, Norma Baxter, Tom English and Julie Barrett. John Disney took the photograph. Laura Barrett and Beccy Sidney are not shown.

# Survey of Small Mammals

**Small Mammal Survey, 18th /19th February, 2006.**

The survey was carried out by Bridget Neame for the Kent Mammal Group.

Twenty-five non-lethal traps were laid near log-piles and other sheltered areas in the orchard, and in the surrounding hedges. The weather was cold and showery.

## **Results:**

The following specimens were trapped:

**Day 1.** In the Orchard: 2 x wood mice *Apodemus sylvaticus*.  
In the hedge: 1 x yellow-necked mouse *Apodemus flavicollis*.

**Day 2.** In the Orchard: 2 x wood mice.  
In the hedge: 1 x yellow-necked mouse; 1 x wood mouse; 2 x common shrews *Sorex araneus*

Other species of which there was evidence: mole *Talpa europea*, rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*.

**Comments (by Bridget Neame and Hazel Ryan):** The lack of bank voles was surprising, and unexplained. The presence yellow-necked mice was also a surprise. They are much less common than wood mice, and are usually associated with ancient or coppiced woodland. They are much more arboreal than other mice (apart from dormice). One was male and one female, indicating a small colony. The wood mice probably forage in the Orchard at night, and hide in the hedge area during the day.

RB 14.3.06  
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[Click here to view the mammals found through our wildlife section](#)