

Park Farm Community Cherry Orchard Group's AGM 2016

On 24th February, the Cherry Orchard Group held their Annual General Meeting in Lynsted Church.

Tom English, as Chairman, reported on the great success of the previous year's events including a record breaking 'Cherry Day' in July. In addition to the regular fixtures, the 'Dawn Chorus' walk led by the guest speaker of the night, Simon Ginnaw, had also been well received and thoroughly enjoyed, prompting a repeat for this year, to be held on 2nd April at 6a.m.

2015 also saw the group celebrate their 10th Anniversary, which was wonderfully commemorated by a 'full colour' booklet aptly titled, 'The First Ten Years', researched and compiled by Bob Baxter with production costs covered by Swale Borough Council.

Tom introduced the members of the committee, explained their specific roles and extended a huge 'Thank you' to Brian Pond, in the form of an engraved crystal decanter, for doing a wonderful job as Treasurer. Brian has now stepped down but will continue to be an active member of the group. Nicole Delaney was welcomed on board and all other responsibilities remain the same. Our appreciation also goes to Marlene Disney who has stepped down but will continue to act as our contact point with WI ladies and the solid support they provide at events.

Business 'out of the way', we went on to the highlight of the evening which was a talk on, 'Wildlife & The Changing Seasons of a Kent Woodland', presented by Simon Ginnaw.

Starting with Winter, Simon communicated his passion for our local woods, which are packed, 'floor to canopy', with wildlife. He described how greenfinches, chaffinches, robins, amongst others, have to feed all the daylight hours of winter in order to find enough food. As spring unfolds, wrens, nuthatches and woodpeckers begin to nest. Snowdrops appear, and then yellow primroses and pileworts followed by white-flowered wild garlic and wood anemones. Simon explained that we are very lucky in Kent as our Bluebells make up 80% of Europe's total and this is a sign of ancient woodland. They thrive in coppice woodland, which is great for wildlife like dormice. In folklore, a white bluebell indicates that the queen fairy is nearby.

Simon pointed out what hardworking parents woodpeckers are, dealing with their noisy, demanding young, the Dad feeding the boys and the Mum feeding the girls. He named the colourful butterflies, such as Red and white Admirals that are attracted to the wildflowers and explained how in folklore, bad fairies put foxgloves on foxes' feet to cushion them and enable them to creep up on their

prey. In the midst of summer there are even wild boars snuffling around the floor of the wood.

As Autumn approaches, the damp smell heralds change and all manner of fungi appear, particularly near dead wood. Bats roost and the trees shut down to create a wonderful display of colour.

Fantastic photos enhanced Simon's presentation as he emphasized how trees are the 'Silent Player' that all the wildlife depends on, as they provide food, shelter and beauty. My report only touches on the wealth of information that he imparted to us.

Simon recommended Kingswood in Challock and woodland in Hucking and Hollingbourne for those who wish to see our natural local beauty first-hand.

Report by Ann Haffenden