



Wolds End Orchard Annual Report 2022

January to December 2022 saw us really finding our feet in the Orchard. Projects, events, workshops, harvesting, and Saturday morning work-parties took place during the year fuelled by 46 Orcharders: so firstly a huge thank you to each and every one involved, for their time, good humour, and hard work.

It's always good to reflect on our objectives at this time of year. For Wolds End Orchard (WEO), it is enshrined in The Campden Society constitution '*to preserve and conserve for the public benefit the whole of Wolds End Orchard as a traditional orchard; and enable education of the public about its history and traditions*'. Our work supports nature, wildlife, our community - and improves biodiversity.

New projects during the year included the preparation and seeding of a new **Wildflower Bank** supported by Cotswold National Landscape and the Glorious Grasslands Team. Preparation work was hard graft but enabled sowing of a quantity of wildflower seed collected from local 'donor' meadows.

Half a dozen **young trees** were donated to us and planted during the year. **Tree labelling** work continued as we patiently work to identify more varieties – a complex but rewarding task. Six **DNA tests** took place this year, with three more varieties categorically confirmed. Grants enabled us to design new tree labels for the younger trees where we know the varieties, and for the mature and veteran trees as we identify them.

Grants and donations also helped us to do more essential **veteran tree pruning** with a local fruit tree expert; as well as **hiring equipment for annual mowing, strimming, and hedge cutting**. These annual tasks keep the orchard accessible & healthy for nature as well as Orcharders and visitors.

The apple harvest in autumn 2022 was bountiful. Through the hard work of Orcharders fruit picking over a number of weekends, a local firm Merrylegs produced 537 bottles of Wolds End Orchard Apple Juice, now on sale to raise funds. More apples from WEO and elsewhere in Campden were taken to Cotswold Fruit Company to combine with other apples gathered from across Gloucestershire and we received equivalent of 20% of fruit back as bottled juice, free of charge, which we chose to donate to North Cotswold Food Bank.

Events during the year started with a fabulous **Wassail!** in January supported by the Magnificent Campden Wassailers and attended by around 70 people. The new **Orchard Art Group** heralded spring with successful last Friday afternoon of the month sessions throughout the year – these are opportunities to paint, photograph or just wander in the orchard & enjoy nature's bounty. **Blossom Weekend** was popular with locals and visitors to Campden with the first of our 168 guests heralding from Canada! Our first appearance as part of the **Campden Open Gardens** line-up enabled us to share our wildflower treasures including the first orchid to be spotted. A **Tree Pruning Workshop** was followed by an entertaining talk by fruit tree expert, Martin Hayes, about *The Changing Nature of Countryside*; the **Annual Town Picnic** was again well attended by over 80 people who enjoyed talented local musicians playing live throughout the afternoon. Over 200 people enjoyed **Apple Day** activities, expanded to include an Apple Identification stall led by Steve Oram from the People Trust for Endangered Species, who has supported WEO for many years; an 'Apple a Day' community art project kicked off; we made juice, ate cake and enjoyed the Shakespeare Mummers' amusing Apple Play - this community day resulted in lots of smiling faces all round.

Grants and donations underpin all our projects in the orchard. We thank the individuals & grant giving organisations that make our work possible including: Cotswolds National Landscape Caring for the Cotswolds Grant - £1430; National Lottery Communities Fund Grant - £1500; Mid-Counties Co-Operative Supporting Communities Grant - £500; Gloucestershire County Council via Cllr Lynden Stowe Build Back Better Grant - £500.

The WEO Christmas Drinks provided our first real opportunity to celebrate socially as a team, given previous attempts had been cancelled due to the pandemic. We welcomed not only our wonderful Orchardeers, but also the Orchard Art Group members; Andy Parsons, the CEO of Cotswold National Landscape; Cllr Gina Blomefield; Philip Smith; and David Lindgren from Gloucestershire Orchard Trust. We were treated to a surprise visit by local band The Hoo, rounding off the celebration of a pleasurable hard year's work.

Wolds End Orchard today is the culmination of the support, vision and hard work of many people across the town and from surrounding villages. We look forward to continuing our work and to welcoming as many of you as possible to join us at the 2023 events or helping out during the year.

Wolds End Orchard Sub Committee

Julianne Davis, Geoffrey White, Geoff Carr, Susie Tombs, Mike Newman, John Ellis, Chris Leese, Donna Evans



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