



Colwall Orchard Group

Restoring, promoting and celebrating traditional orchards

Newsletter – Summer 2021

Dear COG Member

This is a celebratory year for COG! It is 10 years ago that we managed to purchase the site we now know as Colwall Village Garden. In 2011 the allotments plots were created, plans for planting a community orchard were drawn up and the site was prepared for its future in Colwall as a place for wildlife to thrive and for the whole community to enjoy. A base for seasonal events and regular activities as well as allotment plots and a hub for those interested in caring for the environment and sharing in the tasks of managing the site. Our vision for the site has continued to grow as we collaborate ideas and enthusiasm and learn about what is possible.



Meadow at Colwall Village Garden

It has been an incredible 10 years with the support from our members and the local community going from strength to strength. We look forward to another 10 years of success when the orchard trees will become bigger, stronger and more fruitful. As the orchard matures its impact will be greater both visibly and for wildlife. A traditional orchard ecosystem supports many species of flora, fauna and not forgetting the important fungi.

We also look forward to welcoming more people to contribute and take on new challenges that the future will present. We need succession of both the orchard with new young trees planted frequently to create an orchard of mixed ages; and of the people who will look after this important part of our natural heritage.

A big thank you to those who had the vision and were there to make it happen 10 years ago. You know who you are! And thanks to the current caretakers as well as those that have yet to realise it is their destiny to feel responsible for Colwall Village Garden in the future!

Read on for news of summer events (fingers crossed these are going to happen this year!), an update from the allotments, what's happening in the bee-hives and the pests and diseases to look out for in apple trees.

Best wishes and good health to you

Wendy Thompson, COG Trustee and Secretary

On behalf of the COG Board of Directors and Trustees

Events!

We are pleased to be planning a few events again for the summer and autumn this year. The cob oven will be stoked up soon and we hope that we can actually meet up and celebrate! Hurray!

Our events and activities will be compliant with Covid-19 restrictions and guidance and will be cancelled if necessary. But as I write outdoor events with up to 30 people are ok, so here are some dates for your diaries.



Meadow Walks – 12th June to 4th July

A waymarked trail, with information about the wildflowers, will guide you through the COG meadows at Colwall Village Garden and Lugg's Mill Orchard, along with two meadows created on the adjoining small-holding Brookmead. We suggest you allow at least an hour to enjoy the walk.

The meadows are all located in Old Church Road, Colwall, WR13 6HB and you can start at either Colwall Village Garden or Lugg's Mill Orchard. Limited parking available at both sites.

If you would prefer a guided walk which gives you a chance to learn more about the meadows flora and fauna, discuss starting your own garden meadow or share successes and failures please contact us at events@colwallorchardgroup.org. Numbers will be limited so please book early. A donation of £5 per person is suggested for the guided walk.

Sunday Morning Volunteering (and pizza): Sunday 20th June, 10am to 1pm

After a morning of light tasks to maintain Colwall Village Garden, we will share a cob-oven baked pizza lunch (between 1-2pm). Numbers are restricted and so to book a place please email events@colwallorchardgroup.org.

Picnic at Lugg's Mill Orchard – Sunday 27th June, 12 noon to 4pm

We hope you are able to come along and celebrate both the meadows and other improvements we have made to Lugg's Mill Orchard for both people and nature. Free event – just bring your own picnic.

Note: You will need to stay in groups of under 30 people and comply with Covid guidance on Hands-Face-Space.

This falls within our 4 weeks of meadow walks (see above) so also an opportunity to take a stroll around the meadow trail. No booking required.



Colwall Village Garden 10th anniversary

We hope to celebrate the anniversary of purchasing Colwall Village Garden with a party – but with numbers of people gathering outside restricted to 30, we will have to wait a while longer. More details to follow.

Art in the Orchard – Saturday 4th to Sunday 12th September, each day 10am to 4pm

We are delighted that Colwall Village Garden will be the venue for the first time this year for H.Art (Herefordshire Art). Thirteen local artists will display and sell their working and COG will run the Orchard Café during this event. More information here <https://www.h-art.org.uk/explore/venue/art-orchard>. Hope that you can find time to pop by.

Colwall Allotments

The allotment plots at Colwall Village Garden are an important part of the site. They were always a part of the vision and plan and they were a significant reason for purchasing the land in 2011.

At the time there were two groups, both influenced heavily by Helen Stace. One was established to survey the traditional orchards in Colwall with a view to putting in place plans to restore them (became COG); and another group was seeking an allotment site for Colwall. The two came together with the perfect opportunity

to purchase the land in Old Church Road. The funds were raised quickly from donations and loans from many generous individuals and were paid back over the next few years.



The allotments bring a special character to Colwall Village Garden with allotment plot holders visiting the site regularly and forming a friendly community of gardeners. Many of the plot holders are also active volunteers with COG. The allotment community keeps the site vibrant and has helped to make it known to the people of Colwall. Indeed, the allotments have become increasingly important to the village with a very healthy waiting list for a plot.

brought a range of pollinators to the site attracted by the vegetables, fruits and flowers grown. A walk around the allotment plots during the summer-time, when everything is at its most productive, is a delight.

The diverse planting has also



Colwall Allotment Association have been managing the allotments for 10-years. In 2021 we will see a small change in that the site will be managed directly by COG and supported by an Allotment Working Group. This gets around legal technicalities of who can offer a tenancy agreement to plot holders, insurance complications and responsibilities. As COG is already a registered charity and as we have shared the purchase of the land, working more closely seems a sensible move.



The site will continue to be managed by volunteers working to keep plot holders informed, supplied with mulch and compost, and with regular work parties to keep paths trim and free from obstacles. We are grateful to all the allotment holders for making the site the special place that it is.

Practical Volunteering with COG

Our regular Friday morning volunteer sessions have resumed! We have been carefully managing things so that we can work in groups of up to 6, but for last few weeks have actually managed to meet as a full group and eat cake! Obviously after the hard work had been done.

There have been many achievements including the creation of several hibernaculum (see picture) to provide homes for bugs, new bespoke seating at Lugg's Mill (see below) with more to follow at Colwall Village Garden, lots and lots of mulching our orchard trees, and planting plug plants to compliment the meadows at our two orchards. We've also been pruning in many local orchards.



If you'd like to volunteer with COG, please get in touch via members@colwallorchardgroup.org and we will add you to our email list and keep you informed of what's on offer. As well as the Friday morning practical volunteering you could get involved by making preserves (jam, chutney and jelly) or by helping at an event.

News from the Apiary

Report by COG Bee Keepers, Andrew Spray and Lisanne Llewellyn

It was a strange start to the year with the cold wet spring, but all three honey bee colonies survived the winter and are now actively foraging in the orchard and allotments.

In May and June the bees have a tendency to swarm. This is a natural process where new queens are produced and leave the hive with a swarm of worker bees to establish a new colony elsewhere.

So far this year we have caught two swarms, and successfully hived one at Colwall Village Garden. We're hoping this will yield extra honey in future.

The bees can be a bit fiesty this time of year, so we are trying to do inspections late afternoon or early evening when there are not too many people around.

With much less Oil Seed Rape planted in surrounding fields it will be interesting to see how this affects the honey flavour..... We'll find out in September!



COG Annual General Meeting

Our Annual General meeting has traditionally taken place at the end of March but last year due to Covid19 restrictions we postponed it until June and held it by email voting. This year we have decided to provisionally plan to hold our AGM on 22nd July at 7pm. Further information and confirmation will follow by email.

Pests and diseases: Aphids on Apple Trees

By Andy Ball, COG Trustee

This time of year can see significant increases in the populations of aphid colonies and you may well start to see signs of this on your apple trees.

There are five main species of aphids that you are likely to encounter:

- the **Rosy Apple Aphid** (aka the 'Blue Bug') is a common culprit causing curled, discoloured and contorted leaves. The aphids are pink to grey.
- the less common **Rosy Leaf Curling Aphid** causes similar damage but the leaves are discoloured a bright red.
- you may also find the **Woolly Aphid** (pictured) which is a brown to greyish purple colour usually hidden below copious amounts of secreted white woolly wax.
- the **Apple Grass Aphid** is also common but the yellow-green, plump aphids are unlikely to cause much damage to leaves unless populations are large.
- finally there's the **Green Apple aphid** which is a bright green to yellow green aphid mainly affecting young plants



It's quite common for most varieties of apple trees to suffer some aphid damage each year with buds, blossom and young shoots being affected which can impair both growth and cropping.

Aphids have very fine mouth parts that pierce plant tissues and enable them to suck up sap. This feeding activity distorts and weakens new growth. Aphids can ingest large amounts of sap, and excess water and sugars are excreted as a dark, sticky substance called 'honeydew'. The presence of honeydew then encourages the growth of sooty

moulds which are fungi which can block light from entering leaves affecting the plant's ability to photosynthesise.

The good news is that nature has provided a bountiful array of predators to help keep aphid populations down. Some birds, especially blue tits, are voracious aphid feeders, and they work alongside numerous insects including ladybirds, lacewings, hoverflies, parasitic wasps and midges that also prey on aphids.

COG has a 'no-spray' policy but for organic gardeners sprays based upon fatty acids, which are a contact pesticide, are approved for use. Previously sprays based upon the use of Pyrethrins (Pyrethrum 5 EC) was approved for organic use but approval for use of this product on apples has been revoked and all old stocks should have been used by the end of May last year.

So, aphids are something to be aware of, to keep an eye on, but our advice for the amateur grower would be to tolerate some damage to your apple trees and accept that aphids are an important part of the food chain. Encouraging birds and beneficial insects into your garden/orchard will help keep aphids at bay in a naturally balanced way.

COG Online Shop



We have apple juice (still selling at 6 x 300ml bottles for £15), cider vinegar as well as a selection of jams and jelly for sale. More varieties of jam will be on the way as we begin to harvest summer fruit very soon. The most recent addition is Rhubarb and Ginger Jam (a great year for rhubarb!) and we have Medlar Jelly left from a late batch that we made at Christmas. Check the [COG Online Shop](#) for all produce for sale.

For Sale

We have been having a tidy up and a bit of a clear out. We now have a number of items we would like to pass on to a new home. See the list here with guide prices.

If you are interested in any of the items email members@colwallorchardgroup.org

- Aluminium orchard ladder - £50
- Stihl FS56R Strimmer - £75
- Ryobi RLT30PRT Stimmer/Chainsaw. Recently serviced - £75
- Demijohns - £3 each
- 9L fruit press - £50
- 12L fruit press - £75
- Pine chairs x 7 (1 with split seat, 1 with broken leg) - £30
- Compost bins - free to a good home
- Water butts (210 litre) - £10 each
- Elite Windsor Lean-To Aluminium Greenhouse 4x6ft, with horticultural glazing and Elite aluminium base. Brand new and unused. £390. Can deliver if its local.



Fruit tree orders

We are preparing to order fruit trees earlier this year – by the end of August. It means we have a better chance of getting the variety of fruit tree you want and we should get an earlier delivery date.



The benefit to you of making a tree order via Colwall Orchard Group is that you'll get a better price, along with some advice if you need it. By combining lots of tree orders we ensure that we get trade discount and we share that with you. The benefits to us are we support the purchase and planting of more traditional fruit trees which benefits nature and the environment, and we raise funds to contribute to restoring traditional orchards in the Colwall area.

So we are asking you to start thinking about fruit trees you may wish to plant in your gardens and orchards over the summer months. **Please get your final**

order to us by 31st August.

We are happy to provide advice and further information. If you'd like this please contact andyball@colwallorchardgroup.org. To get you started take a look at the descriptions of local fruit varieties on our web site <https://colwallorchardgroup.org/local-fruit-varieties> or look through the online catalogues of our main nursery suppliers: [Frank Matthews](#), [Walcot Nursery](#), [R V Roger](#) and [Lodge Farm](#).

We also intend to offer trees to those wishing to gap up, extend or create new traditional orchards in Colwall through our **Traditional Orchards for the Future Initiative 2021**. More details will follow but if you are interested please get in touch.

Lugg's Mill new footpath is official!



We are delighted to announce that we have created a new Public Right of Way across Lugg's Mill Orchard.

The footpath connects the orchard to other footpaths in the village. Thanks to Lindsay and Jane for allowing the creation of the route across their adjoining land at Brookmead, to achieve a link to Colwall via Crescent Road.

It has already become an extremely popular circular walking route for many of us living in Colwall as well as with visitors to the area. It is all part of our aim to connect people with our orchards and to experience the wonderful opportunities to enjoy the natural environment.

The official waymark signs are in place and Herefordshire Council have confirmed that the creation order under Section 25 of the Highways Act 1980 is complete. A Notice will appear in the Gazette on 11th June and in due course the new route will appear on Ordnance Survey maps.

COG News Blog

Some of the items in this newsletter have been lifted from the news page on our website which is updated regularly with the latest stories on what we've been up to. Check this out to keep in touch <https://colwallorchardgroup.org/news-1>. Between newsletters we will send notifications to you about content on the news page from time to time.

Also look out for more information on events on our website at <https://colwallorchardgroup.org/events>

As ever a BIG thank you for your continued support to restore, promote and celebrate traditional orchards in Colwall. If you would like more information about getting involved, or have any suggestions or comments, we are always pleased to hear from you.

From the [COG Board](#)

Contact information:

Email: secretary@colwallorchardgroup.org or members@colwallorchardgroup.org or for information about our events events@colwallorchardgroup.org

Web: www.colwallorchardgroup.org

Social media: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#)