



Steyning Community Orchard Newsletter. March 2022

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Catch-up on events since Sept 2021

Sill time for last minute pruning (just!)

'Planting' Mistletoe

MPF Orchard new trees

First trees planted in the Abbey Road new orchard

Steyning Festival Green Day in May 2022

Wassail in Jan 2023

Take a look at our website

Hello and welcome to your Community Orchard Newsletter

Our last Newsletter was back in September 2021, so with apologies for the long gap, hopefully this will bring you up to date with what we've been up to - it's a lot !

A special welcome to our new subscribers since our last Newsletter. This now goes out to over 300 of you!

What a long way we've come since we planted the first tree in the Memorial Playing Field Community Orchard at our first Apple Day in October 2014. We have just planted our 39th, 40th, 41st and 42nd trees in this orchard (see later).

We agreed the limits of this Orchard with Steyning Parish Council in 2020 and expect to complete the planting here in 2024. By that time we will have planted close on 50 new trees, all donated by local residents, making it a substantial orchard by any standards. It will only improve with time as the trees mature, with most of them having a life expectancy of over 100yrs, so will outlive all of us!

Between 2017 and 2021 we planted 22 fruit trees in a new Orchard on the Steyning Downland Scheme (the "Downland Orchard"). This Orchard is now full, with the trees thriving and already producing fruit.

Last month we planted the first 3 trees in a new Orchard at Abbey Road in Steyning. The area is a registered Village Green and owned by the Parish Council. The site is tucked away in the corner of the recreational side of the Abbey Road Open space just off Church Mead. (see later for report) 30 friends and family of the 3 tree donors came long to share in the event.

That makes 70 fruit trees we've planted in our 3 Orchards, plus 30 more in 2 other local Orchards.

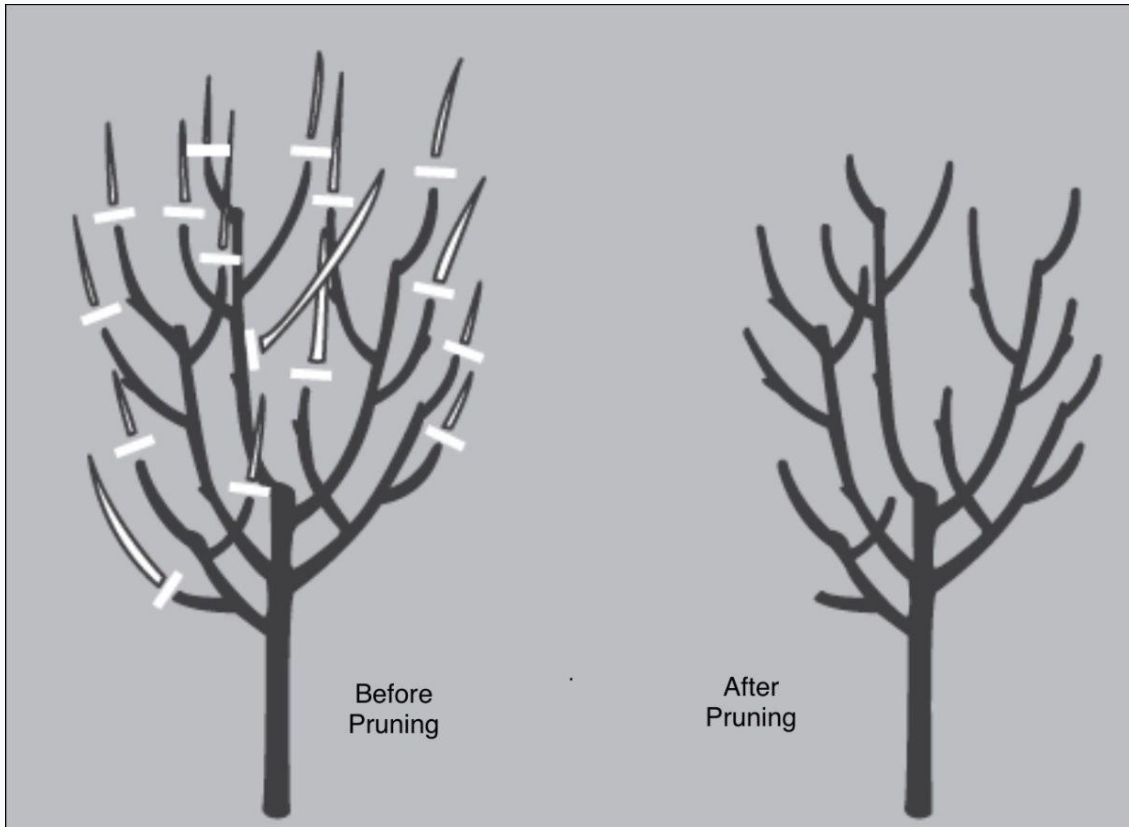
Lots more to tell you about, so please read on...

Apple juicing in the orchard in late Sept last year

We made good use of the remaining apple crop during a public apple pressing session in the main orchard last September. With the help of several families, some of whom bought their own apples to press, we produced over 100 bottles of delicious juice. We then had a stall at the October Steyning Farmer's market and despite the awful weather, we sold 80 bottles of juice and some of our greetings cards, and cleared over £100 for orchard funds.



Last chance pruning tips



Pruning your Apple Trees

Spring is almost here, so if you have not had a chance to prune your apple trees this is your last chance.

Most fruit trees can be pruned now but some (eg, those with stones such as plums and cherries) have specific times of year when you should prune. If in doubt do some quick internet/book research.

Firstly, **get the right tools for the job**: A good pruning saw and a sharp, clean pair of secateurs. Next, **look at the tree** and think about how you would like the tree to look once you have pruned it. If it needs to be made smaller then you should aim to take about one third of the crown away at most. If it just a routine maintenance prune then reduce the new growth by one third.

Remove any dead branches and any branches that are

rubbing against each other from within the crown, and take out other branches that are growing towards the centre or the top of the tree. You want the branches to grow towards the light and to a place where you can reach the apples that will grow.

Finally, **stand back** and look at the tree and see how it looks. If it looks OK, leave it alone, let nature take its course next year and see how the tree recovers.

If you have any questions then please feel free to contact us at the Community Orchard or have a chat with a local gardener or tree surgeon!

Post-Christmas Mistletoe berries recycled..

Some of the Christmas mistletoe berries were placed on one of our older apple trees. They are covered with a sticky substance that sticks onto the tree branch. They grow very slowly for a few years. The second photo shows Mistletoe on another tree that has been there for 4 years.



2022 Tree Planting



We planted the first three Apple trees in our new Orchard at Abbey Rd, Steyning at the end of February. Over 30 friends and family of the 3 tree donors came along to share in the event. Many thanks to Susie, Sally and Michael for donating the trees. Brilliant weather, and a stunning location just behind Steyning Parish Church.

We registered these trees with the Queens Green Canopy, created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022. Take a look at the map here to see more <https://queensgreencanopy.org/>

If you would like more details about donating a tree here, please email us.

stevningorchard@gmail.com





The following week, we added four more Sussex Apple trees to our main Community Orchard on the Memorial Playing Field. Unfortunately the weather changed from the previous week, so if you think everyone looks cold in the picture - they were. It was freezing! Huge thanks to John, Linda, Tim and Pat for donating the trees. These were Cockle Pippin, Aldwick Beauty, Tinsley Quince and Wadhurst Pippin. That's 22 Sussex variety apples in this Orchard now. We have also registered these trees with the Queens Green Canopy tree planting initiative.

Steyping Festival's Green Day

Fletcher's Croft field (Cuthman's Field)

Saturday 28th May. 11am to 4.45pm.

On the first Saturday of the Steyping Festival, we will be taking part in the Green Day with many other local environment and conservation groups including Greening Steyping (Life on the Verge and Habitat Survey Nature Map), Steyping Downland Scheme, Churches Eco Groups, Steyping in Bloom and Steyping for Trees.

So do drop by and have a chat about how our Orchards are contributing to improving biodiversity locally and helping to create those wildlife corridors and stepping stones that are so essential to helping our wildlife thrive.

Wassail - will try again in 2023.

As you will know by now, we had to cancel our **Wassail** again this year. Whilst it might have been OK to hold the Wassail itself in the Orchard, the social aspects of the event in the cricket club afterwards would have been problematic with some Covid restrictions still in place. Having now missed 2 years, we are

determined to have a Wassail in January 2023!

Community Orchard Website

We refreshed and updated our Orchard webpage during 2021. It describes all our Orchards and has lists and descriptions of all the fruit trees we have planted. (2022 additions will be added soon) Do take a look.

[Click here to go to our WebSite](#)



The next Newsletter is due to be published in June 2022

Any comments, suggestions, feedback, please email us on :-

steyningorchard@gmail.com



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