

Bisley Community Orchard – A History

The idea was to celebrate Gloucestershire's varieties, provide a community fruit resource for the village, and help enhance biodiversity by creating new habitat for bees and other wildlife. Bisley village residents voted to give the £400 money won as a result of Bisley's Calor Gas 'Gloucestershire Environment Village of the Year' Award 2008 to this project. A further £600 grant was raised from the O2 Fund.



Planting the trees

To start the project, Dave Kaspar of Days Orchard (Day's Apple Juice) led a well attended orchard workshop during Bisley's Zero Waste Week in January 2009. A plan for the new community orchard was devised by Jilly Cobbe with the help of the Trustees of the Charity of the Ancient Parish of Bisley who own the Chestergate Allotment site and lease it to the Parish Council.

The Community Orchard Group bought 17 indigenous Gloucestershire Apple varieties and two perry pears. Planting was delayed by the terrible winter of 2009-10 but finally 25 people came together and the little trees were planted on 7 February 2010. We celebrated with home made apple cakes and apple juice and a wonderful song written specially for our Orchard by Bairbre McAteer. We sang the song and celebrated our orchard:

*A blessing on our trees
For our Bisley community.
May you grow up strong
And give us fruit all harvest long.
We'll plant you firm and true
May it rain and shine on you.
Here's wishing us good cheer
And see you back again next year.*

In 2010 Bisley Community Orchard Group held a Planting and Wassail afternoon following the Award of Edible Hedgerow Trees from the Woodland Trust.



The mayor of Plessala, Joseph Sauve, planted a tree in the Bisley Community Orchard during the [Twinning Association](#) visit over the 2012 Jubilee weekend.



The Community Orchard is maintained by active volunteers, but also by the donations given to the community in memory of Lyn Hemming. The Community Orchard Group is grateful to Lyn's family for this generous gift.



The volunteers busy weeding, staking and mulching.

On 5th May 2013, 30 friends, family and members of the Bisley Community Orchard Group gathered on site to celebrate the Cotswold Tree Wardens presentation of a memorial tree to commemorate Lyn Hemming.

Ann Jones, Chair of CTW, gave a lovely speech honouring Lyn's work, as Bisley Tree Warden, with them. The tree they presented was a very rare Gloucestershire indigenous variety of perry pear. This critically endangered type is called a 'beetroot pear' (*Pyrus* sp. var. Beetroot Pear - Wick Court Ella) because of its red stems. We can hear Lyn laughing at that, and looking forward, in heaven, to a good quaff!

