

Daffurn's Orchard – Newsletter – 2010

As the end of another eventual and successful year approaches we find ourselves in what to others must seem an enviable position. The management of the orchard both as a nature reserve and as an example of a traditional local orchard has continued; support has been terrific, outside interest is as strong as ever and fund-raising very successful. Our small 'committee' of local people (representing the community) and me (representing Kemerton Conservation Trust) has worked well.

Winter work parties cut back a second section of outgrown hedge down the western boundary, the larger material stacked for wildlife and the remainder 'processed' through the Trust's shredder. Some reduction of Mistletoe was required during pruning operations which were scaled back this year as the trees looked well. Invading scrub was cleared from around the fence-line. Peter Doble used the farm machinery to cut the roadside hedge and the field side.

The young trees are progressing well while the old, restored ones have literally 'blossomed'! However, the exceptionally cold winter may well have caused the death of 3 trees and they will be replaced as new stock becomes available (see later). The spring flowers were stunning and a large number of people enjoyed coming to see the displays. In January/February scions were taken for grafting from Joeby Crab and Barland perry pear. We hope to replace dead trees with this young stock which Walcot Organic Nurseries are growing.

Once again there was a lot of interest from the media – we were asked to contribute to a Gardener's World programme but at too short notice for both parties. However, Midlands Today filmed a piece about the importance of recording and monitoring wildlife – particularly in such places.

Members of the Worcestershire Recorders visited twice to survey for insects and plants as part of the National Trust Orchard Project. Kate Aubury and team found bats roosting in our boxes.

Thanks also to the project we were able to offer people places on courses such as juicing, cider making, apple identification and others. We look forward to feedback from those attending.

The annual Apple Day was a great success (see reports elsewhere)

In November, members of the Identification Committee from The Marcher Apple Network were invited to visit us with the chance to see three completely differently managed orchards – including Daffurns. The day was intended purely in appreciation for all the support that they have given the Trust over the past few years – not least in succeeding in identifying all but a few apple trees in Daffurns Orchard. However, they could not resist taking away samples which may well see the remainder named! The visitors were full of praise for what we are doing here at Kemerton. Surprisingly they learned quite a lot from the visit – they liked our trial tree guards, will discuss doing their own calendar next year and will be looking to set up their equivalent of Kemerton Orchard Workers! Many thanks to Olivia and Neil for hosting the lunch. We should now be able to continue with updating the tree map and making tree labels.