



May 2018

**Welcome** to our monthly bulletin. We aim to bring you the latest news from our 3-year Heritage Lottery funded project in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.



**Orchards in the late spring**

This is an old commercial orchard in Walsoken, Norfolk, growing mostly Bramley's Seedling, with some Howgate Wonder as pollinators. They are over 50 years old and typical of the low and spreading "half-standard open-centre" tree form favoured by commercial growers in the area during the 1960s.



The orchard is still in commercial production and the trees have been mechanically pruned in recent years, giving them this very distinctive "flat-top" appearance. *Photos: Bob Lever, May 2018*

## Orchards East launch in Essex

We were delighted to welcome over 50 people to our launch in Essex on 25th March at Marks Tey Village Hall. There were five short presentations during the morning. Paul Read (Suffolk Traditional Orchard Group) described what orchards are and where they come from; Lorna Shaw (Essex Wildlife Trust) demonstrated how they are mapping historic orchards in the county; Tom Williamson (University of East Anglia) gave an introduction to historical orchard research; and Neil Wiffen (Essex Record Office) described the origins of the Essex apple d'Arcy Spice.

Howard Jones, OE Project Manager, encouraged people to get involved in a variety of OE projects including orchard surveys, historical research and the oral history project. After lunch, the group visited Crapes Fruit Farm, a 15 acre wildlife-rich family orchard. The owner, Andrew Tann, is the eldest of the third generation of the family to live at the farm. He has a collection of many varieties of apple which his father, John, compiled. These include very traditional and lesser-known varieties such as Blenheim Orange and D'Arcy Spice.

# Orchard Survey Update

A huge thank you! to the many people who have volunteered to survey parishes across the six East Anglian counties. The number of parishes being surveyed in each county are shown below:

- Bedfordshire 38 parishes
- Essex 26 parishes
- Norfolk 69 parishes
- Cambridgeshire 6 parishes
- Hertfordshire 44 parishes
- Suffolk Many of the parishes have been surveyed previously by Suffolk Traditional Orchard Group. An update event will be organised at a place and date to be arranged.

We have linked up with the Youth Stem Award clubs in comprehensive schools and we already have two schools signed up to do surveys over the summer. We are also working with the U3A groups in Kings Lynn and Southend-on-Sea. The Tree Warden Network in Suffolk is keen to get involved and we hope Tree Wardens in other counties will be interested in the project and get in touch with us.

## Training Days

Audley End and Cressing Temple (Essex) - dates to be arranged.

Training days were held in Norfolk on 20th April and in Hertfordshire on 7th July.

Training days will be arranged elsewhere once the volunteer numbers are sufficient.

***We are continuing to recruit volunteers, so please get in touch if you would like to get involved!***

Contact Howard Jones to volunteer

# Culinary Project Update

Monica Askay is a culinary historian. She is passionate about raising awareness of apples and other orchard fruits and nuts, and their culinary uses. Last year, she gave cookery demonstrations with tastings of a range of dishes, historical, traditional and modern, at several Orchards East apple day events, including Audley End House and SWT's Redgrave & Lopham Fen. Recipe sheets are free and Monica loves to chat about cooking with

everyone. This year, the project is aiming to provide workshops at schools in areas of rural deprivation and with homeless and refugee groups.



## ORCHARDS EAST RECIPES FOR MAY

I must begin with a note on the storage of fruit. Traditionally some orchard fruits would have been stored for use later on. This, however, does not apply to plums and dessert pears which deteriorate quite quickly after picking. Some apple varieties do indeed improve and mellow with keeping, although it should be said that early apple varieties do not keep. Wardens (hard cooking pears) can also be kept (indeed it is said that the name “warden” derives from their keeping qualities). Wizen apples and pears the following spring and early summer may look unpromising, but can still be used in a variety of dishes. Ignore the appearance of the skin! They do, however, need to be peeled, chopped (and any bad bits discarded) and cooked rather than eaten raw or cooked whole.

Those of us who do store fruit for several months after picking all have our own methods which work for us. I store apples and pears in a single layer in the discarded flat cardboard salad boxes available in supermarkets and on market stalls. I then stack the boxes and keep them in my white van (kept cool as white reflects heat). For most of the year the van is filled with a delicious apple aroma! Others find different methods work best for them. If I need to keep several examples of a single variety together in a bag, I use paper, and not plastic which would make them sweat and therefore deteriorate faster. There is no need to wrap the fruit individually in newspaper, although you will need to check the fruit from time to time and remove any that are going bad.

### **APPLE CRUMBLE** (Serves 4)

1 lb / 454g apples ----- I like to use a mixture of varieties, both culinary and dessert, which gives the cooked fruit an interesting taste and texture

5 oz / 145g soft light brown sugar (or to taste)

Juice and zest of a lemon

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon, or mixed spice, or ginger, or a pinch of ground cloves

Topping:

4 oz / 110g wholemeal flour

2 oz / 60g plain white flour

3 oz / 85g butter

3 oz / 85g demerara sugar

2 tablespoons rolled oats or chopped nuts (optional)

The same spice as used above, in the same quantity

Preheat the oven to 180°C / 170°C Fan / Gas 4.

Wash, peel, core and coarsely chop the apples. Arrange them in a deep ovenproof dish, layered with the lemon juice and zest, sugar and your choice of spice.

Make the crumble topping. Sift the flours together with the spice. Cut the butter into small pieces and rub into the flour mix with your fingertips to the “breadcrumb” stage. Stir in the sugar and oats / chopped nuts (if using).

Spoon the topping over the fruit.

Cook until the topping is browned and the fruit is cooked through (test with a skewer, approx 40 minutes or so?).

Serve with double cream, custard or crème fraîche.

Note: This crumble recipe can be adapted for any fruit. The spices and type of sugar used can be varied, although using demerara for the topping does give it a crunchy texture. I also enjoy eating this cold with Greek yoghurt for breakfast. The crumble is said to have originated during the WW2 and Post-war rationing period when the limitations of rationing made conventional pastry-making difficult.

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## **WARDENS POACHED IN PERONELLE’S BLUSH**

It is particularly important to cut wardens open after storage. They may appear fine from the outside but pears do go brown from the centre. Ignore the appearance of the skin! This recipe is a variation of one of my favourite and most impressive recipes, with a long history. I normally poach (peeled but with the stalk intact) pears whole in red wine (I choose a shiraz, both for its colour and its spicy flavour). I make them a couple of days in advance so that the colour is gradually absorbed by the whole fruit. I then serve the pears upright with a gilded (using sugarcraft gilding) bay leaf inserted by the stalk. Cutting up the fruit is more suitable for wardens which have been stored.

Peronelle’s Blush is one of Aspell’s (based in Suffolk) ciders, which has an added dash of blackberry juice. It gives the wardens an attractive pastel pink tinge and delicate flavour.

6 – 8 (depending on size) wardens or hard cooking pears (I used St Germain



which are quite large. This year they have kept until towards the end of April but would not have kept any longer.)

500ml Peronelle's Blush

Caster sugar to taste

Cinnamon stick or whole star anise

Preheat the oven to 130°C / 120°C Fan / Gas ½

Peel, core and quarter the pears, and place them in a wide shallow casserole dish with a lid. Add the cinnamon stick or whole star anise, if using. Add caster sugar to taste. (I found I needed to add 4 or 5 oz as Peronelle's Blush is quite sharp and the pears I used a little tannic). Add the Peronelle's Blush. Put the lid on the casserole and poach the pears in the oven until tender when pierced with a skewer. The time will depend on the size and ripeness of the pears. Refrigerate once cold. After a couple of days the colour will permeate the fruit. This is a very versatile recipe with many variations. Delia Smith gives recipes for using conventionally-coloured cider or marsala both of which result in pears in shades of amber. For a touch of the exotic, I noticed that Diana Henry in her new book *How to Eat a Peach* poaches pears with lime juice and zest, and dried hibiscus flowers! Non-alcoholic versions can be made using grape, apple or pear juice, or use water with the addition of a vanilla pod.

*Enjoy!!*

## Orchard Events

OE is involved in the following events. Please note that there will also be many other apple days and festivals taking place across East Anglia  
(click on the link for details)

21/22 July [Strumpshaw Tree Fair, Norfolk](#)

16 Sep [Easton Lodge Gardens, Essex EEAOP](#)

22/23 Sept Audley End House Apple Festival, Essex (details tbc)

29 Sep Fairfield Orchard Apple Day, Hertfordshire (details tbc)

29 Sep [Oxburgh Hall Apple Day, Norfolk EEAOP](#)

30 Sep [Potton Apple Day, Bedfordshire EEAOP](#)

6 Oct [Stamford Apple Day, Bedfordshire EEAOP](#)

6 Oct [Rivers Heritage Site and Orchard Apple Day, Sawbrideworth Hertfordshire](#)

7 Oct SWT Foxburrow Farm Apple Day, Suffolk (date and details tbc)

7 Oct [Jeacock's Apple Day, Hertfordshire](#)

7 Oct [Tewin Orchard Apple day, Hertfordshire](#)

7 Oct [Wragby Apple Day, Lincolnshire EEAOP](#)

9 Oct Eye Autumn Fair, Suffolk (details tbc)

13 Oct [Burwash Manor Apple Day, Cambridgeshire EEAOP](#)

14 Oct SWT Redgrave & Lopham Fen Apple Day, Suffolk (date and details tbc)

14 Oct [Norfolk Rural Life Museum Apple Day EEAOP](#)

14 Oct [Cressing Temple Walled Garden Apple Day Essex EEAOP](#)

19/20 Oct [Museum of East Anglian Life Cider and Song Fest, Suffolk](#)

20 Oct [Ely Apple Day, Cambridgeshire EEAOP](#)

21 Oct [Cambridge University Botanic Gardens Apple Day EEAOP](#)



**LOTTERY FUNDED**



**University of East Anglia**

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