

Cornwall Orchard Network Spring Meet Up

Sat 11th May 2024 at Kehelland Trust

Present: Sally Pyner (Kehelland Trust), Sally Luker, Derek Green & Fiona Tate (Budding Nature), Andrew Ormerod (Ethno-botanist, orchardist), Gavin Nichol (Badger's Food Forest, Penzance), Nick Waitz (Treverbyn Community Trust), Aneta Staciwa (TR1), James Fergusson (The Wilding Mother Orchard, Penarvon, various other orchards, 'Some Interesting Apples'), Gisela Agar, Elise Langley (St Ives Community Orchard), Ann Manley, Rupert Manley (St Ives Community Orchard & Chylasson Fields), Hetty Ninnis (Newquay Community Orchard, Fenten Fenna Farm), Michelle West (St Day Orchard & Trenoweth Community Orchard), Joseph Taylor (Gweek), Tess Rose Dickenson & Dion Swann (Gillyflower Farm), Sam Reed (Buryas Bridge Orchard), Colin Hawke (Trenance Orchard, St Newlyn East), Duncan Petty, Pauline Penna, Kath Bonnelame & Rachael William (Trenoweth Community Orchard), Simon Trehone (Proposed Mylor Community Orchard), Tom Kemp x 2 (Trefusis/Working Woodlands Cornwall/proposed Mylor Community Orchard), Nigel Miles (Camborne Town Council/TR14), Judy Allies (Tregurra Community Orchard, Truro), Keith Polkinhorne Transformation CPR) Natalie Polkinhorne (Interested future orchard owner), Conor Kendrew (Cornwall Wildlife Trust/Aral Farm), Melissa Ralph (Cornwall Council orchards, worker & Helston volunteer), Beatrix Swanson (Cider & orchard enthusiast & writer), Alfie Robinson (Volunteer), Guy Needham (Cornwall Wildlife Trust), Hannah Currah x 2 (Forestry & scything contractor), Rae Argent (PL15), Terry Sutcliffe & Virg Davies (Bosavern Community Farm), Laura Fox (Cornwall Wildlife Trust), Kelly Strange (Cormac - Cornwall Council orchards), Michelle Lawson (Resilient Orchards Cornwall & Trenoweth Community Orchard), Meike Weiser (Forest for Cornwall), Caitlin de Silvey, University of Exeter (Some Interesting Apples, The Wilding Mother Orchard, Penarvon).

Apologies: Dave Bouch (National Trust - Cotehele), Camilla Swiderska (Hamatethy Farm LLP), Luke New (Mounts Bay Academy Orchard and personal interest), Al Garnett (proposed Lanner orchard & Tremough Campus Orchard), Charlotte (Camel CSA), Lucy Davis (PlanIt Earth, Sancreed), William Arnold (Some Interesting Apples, Wilding Mother Orchard).

(46 Attendees)

1. Welcome & introduction to Kehelland Trust by Sally Pyner, Horticultural & Projects Manager

Kehelland Trust is a 16 acre horticulture site that holds both college & adult day service provision for young people and adults with disabilities. Not all work and learning is related directly to horticulture, but we know it all benefits hugely from being set against a rich and diverse outdoor setting.

Sally has worked at Kehelland Trust since 2002 and has been involved in the orchards at Kehelland and celebrations around their importance since 2004. She previously worked at Cornwall Wildlife Trust and has a passion for integrating good wildlife practice with horticulture. She has been the horticultural coordinator at Kehelland Trust since 2015 taking the site to peat-free and chemically-light status and, more recently looking at more regenerative management of the land including no-dig alongside organic & biodynamic principles. She has been coordinating the grafting of apple trees on site for the last 5 years and more recently this has been supported by Forest for Cornwall in setting up a Community Tree Nursery and starting more bare-root production of Cornish Heritage varieties. In partnership with Resilient Orchards Cornwall they have been able to increase workshops for orchard management and grafting and go some way to improve their orchard husbandry, but they accept they still have much to learn!

2. Introduction to Cornwall Orchard Network – first in person meet up

- Michelle L. from Resilient Orchards Cornwall introduced the work of ROC, an orchard management

CIC offering services to private orchard owners as well as grant funded work planting, maintenance and training with community orchard groups, town councils, housing associations and Cornwall Council, Forest for Cornwall and Cormac.

- Cornwall Orchard Network

ML then explained the setting up of Cornwall Orchard Network. The network existed as a facebook group and then as an email list for a few years in response to working with or meeting with a number of community orchard groups in different parts of Cornwall (mostly in the West), and the recorded decline in traditional orchards and therefore the potential benefit of linking up to support one another, share news and to support recovery of this under threat habitat. The proposal for a meet up was suggested last year via the email group with positive feedback, so here we are. The intention of Cornwall Orchard Network is to share community orchard and other orchard news, best practice, orchard skills, and support one another with orchard management approaches, and practicalities like leases and volunteer management.

3. Dedication

We dedicated the event to Raymond Yarwood who was a passionate advocate of forest gardening and shared his enthusiasm of growing and using the produce with his wife Sylvia Yarwood, with many local people. More about his forest garden in Hayle here:

<https://www.towansforestgarden.co.uk/>

4. Presentations*

- **Andrew Ormerod:** 'The multiple values of orchards'
- **Derek Green from Budding Nature CIC:** 'The ecology of the orchard'

In summary, we heard from Andrew Ormerod on the value of orchards with reference to Blossom Day celebrations held around the last week of April <https://www.orchardnetwork.org.uk/orchard-blossom-day>; the historic celebration in Japan of cherry orchard celebrations; the need to support older orchards not just planting new ones and referenced a number of orchard surveys including in Hereford, where the survey highlighted the wide value of orchards to the community, the local economy AND biodiversity; and Haye Farm Orchard at St Veep.

Derek Green from Budding Nature then introduced us to nature recovery, orchards role in nature recovery, orchard food webs, encouraging the use of identification, surveying and monitoring if you have intentions to introduce a new species or alter the environment. Budding Nature are developing training for orchard enthusiasts in how to identify key indicator species to aid with monitoring.

*See additional notes taken by ML for further detail from the presentations.

5. Skills share and go round

All attendees then split into 4 x groups to discuss;

1. Who they are and which community orchard, other orchard or organisation they are linked to, if any, and a bit about why they were here
2. What skills they have to offer/share
3. What they seek from the network

The notes from all 4 groups have been collated below, including some additional information about the orchard where known and links.

A. Orchard connections

- Alfie R, Potager Community Garden CIC <https://www.potagergarden.org/community/> volunteer & keen to learn.
- Tess Rose & Dion, Gillyflower Farm & Orchard, Fowey Valley <https://www.gillyflowerfarm.com/> A productive commercial garden and orchard, 2000 fruit trees, 5 yrs old and a potager style vegetable plot. Mission is 'to produce quality food on a commercial scale whilst working to create a healthier, more bio-diverse and resilient landscape'. Gillyflower Farm is a Community Interest Company. Heritage and modern varieties, not intention to produce cider but championing distinct, individual and local varieties grown on industrial scale for eating/cooking etc. Designed by Philip Macmillan Brown (Heligan). Mixed fruit.
- Beatrix, cider maker and writer, volunteers on orchard projects including Potager Community Garden and aims to plant her own. <https://www.potagergarden.org/community/>
- Elise, Gisela, Ann and Rupert, St Ives Community Orchard, includes a forest garden. Organised a session on Natural Farming this year and have an interest in this approach. Ann & Rupert also have own land with small, young, orchard. Rupert grows trees from seed, local native species. <https://www.stivesorchard.co.uk/>
- Hetty, Newquay Community Orchard, 8 yrs old, windswept site. Modern, Cornish and Devon varieties of apple, small pear orchard. Has a forest garden. Had their first good harvest last year. <https://newquayorchard.co.uk/> Also a Director of 'Fenten Fenna Farm' which contains an older orchard, over 20yrs + new orchard planting. Also on site is 'Wasted Apple Cider' <https://wastedapple.co.uk/> <https://www.fentenfenna.co.uk/>
- Michelle, a freelance orchardist for Resilient Orchards Cornwall CIC (and one of the Directors) ROC provides orchard management services to private orchard holders, plus supports community orchard groups via grant funding and runs workshops on orchard related themes including working in partnership with Budding Nature on an orchard bioblitz for previous two yrs at Tehidy orchard, and with Kehelland Trust on grafting & pruning skills, and F4C and Cormac on orchard care. <https://www.resilientorchards.org.uk/> Also is a volunteer at Trenoweth Community Orchard, Redruth, a wildlife friendly orchard, with forest garden approaches, mixed fruit, shrubs, underplanting & support plants, nitrogen fixing shrubs & trees, apple trees grown from seed, top grafting of existing trees etc.
- Sarah and Hannan, Are land workers, and have skills in/are currently engaged in work, in woodland management, hedge laying, coppicing, scything, vegetable growing, have an existing orchard + planting new. Nr Pensilva, Liskeard
- Judy, Volunteers at Tregurra Community Orchard, Truro, a duchy planted orchard of mostly apples, some young plums, on a challenging site with a natural spring running through the middle, next to Waitrose. (ROC has licence with Duchy to help manage the trees here).
- Michelle W, Volunteers at St Day Community Orchard, young planting of mostly apple trees sourced from Kehelland Trust, and volunteers at Trenoweth Community Orchard too – especially with scything.

- Terry, Bosavern Community Farm, Orchard manager for new planting of mixed fruit trees. <https://www.bosaverncommunityfarm.org.uk/>
- Connor, works at Cornwall Wildlife Trust. Farm & Woodland Management Advisor. Has own land as well. Cornwall Wildlife Trust have an orchard at their Five Acres Nature Reserve. Connor can offer skills in tree planting, appropriate species, shelter belts, placement within the landscape. <https://www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/>
- Andrew, Tehidy Community Orchard (Cormac owned and managed) Andrew – knowledge on types of trees and location particularly around Redruth area. Particularly knowledgeable about ‘pitchers’ (fruit trees grown from own roots) including creating pitcher rootstocks.
- Joe, Gweek, has land with 30-40 fruit trees. Plan to deliver workshops. Interested in network for common food security issues and for growing support. Developing ‘connecting in nature spaces’. Developing his site for training and workshops.
- Rae, has land on edge of Bodmin Moor / Callington wanting to manage trees that are on the land.
- Laura, Cornwall Wildlife Trust Environment records centre. Recording wildlife and biodiversity <https://www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/>
- Andrew O, Member of UK Orchard Network and Farm Woodland Forum. Interested in biodiversity in fruit trees, research and growing from seed
- Guy, Cornwall Wildlife Trust. Marketing and Finance for Rural and marine environment <https://www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/>
- Rachel, Kath & Pauline from Trenoweth Community Orchard, North Country, Redruth. Approx 32 mixed fruit trees (apple, plum, quince, medlar, cherry, asian pear, amelanchier, crataegus sp., cherry plum) incorporates forest garden features including nitrogen fixing shrubs like Elaeagnus sp. comfrey, underplanting & fruit bushes. Planted into a wildlife rich field of brambles, nettles etc which have been retained in areas. Currently managed by scything.
- Colin Hawke, who ran the Cornwall Orchard Project in the 1990’s, he has a small orchard at home and gives talks about orchards (in Cornwall and Britany) to community groups (adults). Also has own orchard he manages at Trenance, St Newlyn East.
- Sally and Fi, from Budding Nature CIC, Sally is involved in Paul Community Orchard, Fi works at a primary school in Gwinear which has a few fruit trees
- Meike Weiser, Project Officer for Forest for Cornwall, supports community orchard creation county-wide, has funded grafting workshops at Kehelland Trust and supported volunteer training events in orchard pruning and care. Meike can provide links to CC services for orchard planning (utility checks, historic records, biological records, nature recovery team etc), in addition to funding opportunities. Also has experience of supporting communities to plant orchards prior to F4C. <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment/countryside/forest-for-cornwall-programme/>
- Aneta, has her own orchard, 30 new trees near Wendron Cricket Club. Aneta would love to offer her time to volunteer at other orchards to learn how to manage her own and can offer cooking skills, she comes from Poland and has many apple recipes. Seeks advice for new orchard owner.
- James from ‘Some Interesting Apples’ at Kestle Barton, 40 x Cornish varieties, orchard consultant and cider maker Vagrant Cider <https://www.vagrantcider.co.uk/landing> also ‘Mother Wilding Orchard’ at Penarvon. [https://sites.exeter.ac.uk/someinterestingapples/#:~:text=Some%20Interesting%20Apples%](https://sites.exeter.ac.uk/someinterestingapples/#:~:text=Some%20Interesting%20Apples%20)

[20\(SIA\)%20is,result%20of%20a%20discarded%20core\)](#) Offers free consultancy for community orchard groups, paid advice to private customers, juicing/cider making -any surplus apples can be dropped/collected. James wants your apples to turn them into cider, will collect or can drop at Penryn. <https://www.jamesfergusson.co.uk/>

- Melissa and Kelly, from Cormac, 'Making Space for Nature' project, support community nature projects on Cornwall Council estates/land. Also, like Meike, have links to CC services for orchard planning (utility checks, historic records, biological records, nature recovery team, Cormac parks management teams).
- Nigel Miles, Nature Recovery Consultant for Camborne Town Council, has 15 Orchard trees, plus hedgerow, other trees etc at his home in Camborne. Wishes to expand nature locally.
- Keith Polkinghorne The.Bushcraft.Dude@gmail.com ancestral skills Instructor. Community Health and Wellbeing Officer (NHS funded), working to improve people's lives (including through nature).
- Natalie Polkinghorne, interested in humans connection with nature particularly through textiles/ natural fibres, wanting to promote value of items created by hand. They wish to purchase some land.
- Tom Kemp, involved in creating a Community Orchard in Mylor and an Agro Forestry project with F4C, using pig pasture and investigating other ways of using surplus apples. Skills are orchard design and planting. Wishes - to network more with the local orchard scene, learn grafting skills. Working Woodlands Cornwall CIC <https://workingwoodlandscornwall.com/>
- Simon Tremane, involved in creating Community Orchard in Mylor. A village project, hoping for F4C support, to include apples, nuts and Kea plums etc hoping for community involvement, Wassails, juicing days etc
- Derek Green, from Budding Nature CIC: ecological knowledge, Bioblitzes, surveys, monitoring, education/talks, volunteer training
- Sam Reed, creating a mixed orchard near Newlyn (Buryas Bridge Orchard) with a friend with F4C funding. We are also grafting stock of Cornish varieties of fruit, wild pear etc, again with F4C help for future sale. Self employed gardener and scyther. Wishes - general networking
- Gavin, Badgers Food Forest CIC a community food growing project. Nature recovery, education, helping deprived families in Pz area to discover and use locally grown food. Integrates music and drumming, particularly using drumming to promote mycelium. badgersfoodforest@gmail.com Wishes - general networking and to promote project. <https://globaljamming.org/badgers-food-forest>
- Nick, Treverbyn Community Trust (Laddock, St Austel) Knowledgeable in chemistry, soil health building, Biochar, ramial woodchip, does educational outreach via The Really Lovely Van. Has funding to advise and help people on all the above. Wishes - more people to help with Treverbyn community hall and land. <https://www.thehall.org.uk/>
- Virginia Davies, works at Trythall Primary School, a very outdoorsy school. Has a 2 acre community orchard that the children use, engage in apple pressing etc. Interested in vetch planting, peas for Bees, and miner bees. Wishes - To involve less fortunate children in using the orchard/meadow site. To learn scything.

B. Other common issues raised & advice sought

- **Apple pressing kit** can be hired from a variety of places including: Truro tools library, Resilient Orchards Cornwall (Hayle), Caradon Orchard Network (East Cornwall).

- **Requests for more volunteers & help** came up a lot – Trenoweth Community Orchard (Redruth), Cormac managed orchards on Council sites, Treverbyn, Joe in Gweek has 2000 trees to plant.. offers to assist welcome!
- **Labelling** of trees (St Ives Community Orchard) – What3Words – but not precise enough, depends on good signal; have tagged trees with numbered metal discs (£20 for 150) but kids took some. Gillyflower Orchard use Sector Mentor – chip tag on each tree, can log details via app, eg pruning regime, maintenance, yield. Pay for tags + yearly fee. Are compiling info re varieties: uses, information, when to pick etc. Asked to share. Newquay Orchard – Cornish varieties, have a tree map and spreadsheet – easy to manage as trees are in lines. Label trees with slates painted with paint pen but these get moved by the public!
- **Identification** of fruit trees – need more people able to do this. Sally Pyner visited St Ives recently to help with identification, and runs an apple ID stall every year at Kehelland and sometimes to Chyan Community Apple Day too that people can take apples too. Books and resources there too to help.
- **Storage** - Gillyflower Orchard has plans to do this in a shed
- **Increasing biodiversity** – plants and shrubs that are particularly beneficial for fruit trees & orchards
- **Future meet-ups** – orchard visits, walk & talk. Learn together on a chosen subject. Newquay Orchard offered a meeting space. [St Ives Community Orchard has a community learning centre, could be a venue.]
- **Best trees for particular locations** eg near the sea, windy and exposed sites
- **Shelter belts** ideas for best species, density and planting
- **Advice about underplanting** and attracting wildlife and increasing biodiversity
- **Other fruit** than apple - quince, medlar, walnut, plum, cherry - what grows best where?
- **Skill sharing** between groups -pruning, grafting, aftercare, budding, forest gardening
- **Funding** for education and volunteer training
- **Map/database** to match places with people and skills
- **Advice** for new orchard owners
- **Tool library** to share orchard resources, turf cutter, juicer, scythes (see above for apple press hire)
- **Wildlife surveys** how to access these or to learn to them ourselves
- **Advice** for those wishing to start a community orchard – how to start, how to access funding
- **Community Trials** - Andrew O is always looking for sites and funding for research
- **Identifying fruit varieties** when have inherited an orchard, if there is no plan or tree ID
- **Ways of communicating and interacting with one another** Web-based discussion; website? (There is a holding page on ROC website see details below) Web chat? WhatsApp group?
- **Wants: Cornish Pommeau** - distilled cider and apple juice (new product).

6. Discussion email list

The Cornwall Orchard Network currently communicates via an email list

cornwallorchardnetwork@lists.riseup.net

The email list goes to everyone if you email this in the to box:

cornwallorchardnetwork@lists.riseup.net and there are currently 68 people signed up.

To subscribe to the elist if you are not already, you can either:

1. Send an email direct to: cornwallorchardnetwork-subscribe@lists.riseup.net
2. Supply your email address to Michelle at resilientorchardscornwall@gmail.com or
To unsubscribe:
Send an email to cornwallorchardnetwork-unsubscribe@lists.riseup.net

Note: You do not need to sign up to Riseup.net to connect to this list.

All people on the list are considered members of Cornwall Orchard Network, but there are others who may not want to be on the e-list.

There is currently a holding page for Cornwall Orchard Network on Resilient Orchards Cornwall website <https://www.resilientorchards.org.uk/cornwall-orchard-network/>. The network currently have no funds. We received a small grant from F4C of £800 (Thank you!) to go towards the actual day of the Network meeting, and coordination for this was largely done voluntarily, so any future host would need to bare this in mind. If anyone wants to volunteer time for any aspect of the network, including funding, please do email the discussion list or for proposal at future meet up.

7. Afternoon sessions

Some people stayed on for the afternoon activities at Kehelland Trust including a biochar demonstration by Nick Waitz from Treverbyn Trust, and an Orchard & Wildlife Question time session in the afternoon. The question time session actually ended up being an extension of the network go round, although with 26 people rather than the full 45 in the morning, and some of the questions raised were answered there, so do have a look at the notes, attached.

8. Future meet up

There was an enthusiasm to meet again and the following organisations have tentatively proposed hosting a meet up: Newquay Community Orchard, Camel CSA – did I missed anyone else who offered?

Thoughts about a future meet up revolved around choosing a theme and then everyone coming and sharing on that theme with each other; visits to other orchards, community or otherwise; other types of skillsharing; develop ways to communicate effectively i.e. forum for discussion?.