

Ideas for Apple Day October 21st
21:10: 2010 21st anniversary

We are all part of an unwitting experiment – huge in its dynamics, terrifying in its potential. Climate change will alter everything actually and politically. But Common Ground holds to its founding belief that our problems lie even more profoundly in our relations with Nature.

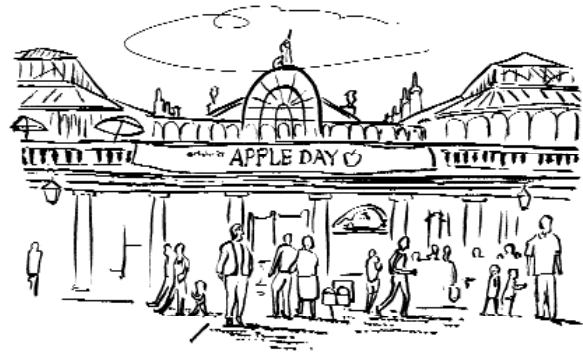
What relevance do apples and orchards have to the future we must create?

Costermongers sold apples (costards) in the streets, would that they were still crying their wares, we have let this rich inheritance slip through our fingers. At the height of our long season, apples from the other side of the world, stifled by carbon dioxide to suspend their ripening, are plucked from the superstore shelves. We have let ourselves be so deskilled that we cannot name more than a few varieties of apples (around 3,000 varieties have been grown here) and hardly any pear, plum, damson, cherry, walnut, hazel nut.... And the recipes passed down for different apples and fruit across the season have faded away. Worse, the orchards themselves have fallen or been felled. The dance, in which we are all implicated, has denuded every county, city, town and village of the trees that in blossom would bring bees, in leaf would give succour to hungry parent birds and bats, in fruit would lure butterflies and in winter light might sport mistletoe; across the year would give glamour and particularity to the scene.

Ours has been a campaign to help people think about ordinary lives in everyday nature, to lift engagement, to keep on changing for the better the way we live in the world.

We conceived Apple Day (October 21st) and Community Orchards as ways of prompting social activity, celebrating and learning that variety and richness matter to a locality and that it is possible to effect change.

In linking particular fruits with their place of origin, we hope that orchards will be recognised and conserved for their contribution to local distinctiveness including the rich diversity of wild life and the breadth of culture they support.



Common Ground originated Apple Day on October 21st 1990 in Covent Garden. Since then we have supported and promoted the creation of a calendar custom where culture and nature meet, encouraging people to come together to make the day in their own way in their own places. And this year Apple Day celebrates its 21st anniversary – on October 21st. Join in – share an apple pie, start a community orchard, re-establish a relationship with nature that gives room for food growing with bullfinches, butterflies and badgers.

The apple, so full of symbolism and stories stands for all, but the night before is All Fruits Eve....

A is for APPLES - as many as you can buy, beg, borrow or scrump they are central and essential to an Apple Day celebration. Invite local growers to sell their fruit. Ask local scrumping groups to join you. Contact greengrocers and wholesalers to see if they can support your event by supplying British apples. Alternatively, ask for an apple or apples (grown as locally as possible) as an entry fee, these can then be used for games, juicing, printing, display, etc. A is also for ALL FRUIT'S EVE – the apple carries a weight of symbolism and stands for all fruit, but if you are a damson head, cherry picker or perry drinker, cob nutter, almond growing experimental unit or plum jammer then, as in ancient times, start at sundown - preface Apple Day with your own festivities.

B is for BOBBING - one of the many games to be played on Apple Day, see Common Ground's book 'Apple Games and Customs' for lots more ideas. BEES are essential for pollinating

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blossom, no bees = no apples. Invite local beekeepers to your event, many of them have a demonstration hive showing the bees going about their business. The BIG DRAW www.campaignfordrawing.org encourages people to try their hand with pencil and pen - link this with Apple Day, attract teachers to help people make drawings of local apples or orchards, still life or stills.



C is for COMMUNITY ORCHARDS - ideal venues for Apple Day celebrations, No Man's Orchard in Kent hold a community picnic and annual tug-of-war on Apple Day.

Apple Day is also the ideal moment to put forward proposals to local people for planting a new orchard or to draw attention to an old orchard in need of care. See the 'Community Orchards' leaflet or better still order the Community Orchards Handbook from Common Ground.

CIDER - invite your local cider maker along to demonstrate the process and to sell the finished product. New Road Cyderists do not have their own orchards, but use the juice they make in demonstrations and apples they collect at Apple Day events as a starting point for the next year's vintage. CAMRA may organize a real cider bar. The making of weird CREATURES using natural materials to hand with apples as the body keeps small fingers busy for hours.

D is for DISPLAYS - nothing is more eye-catching than a wonderful array of apples displayed by variety on dark cloths or plates with their names attached. Find as many different kinds as possible, ask people to bring in named apples from their garden trees to add to the display. Start a wild life DIARY on Apple Day, record the wild visitors to your orchard, find ways of encouraging more.

E is for EXPERTS - an invaluable addition to any Apple Day. Encourage them to pass on their knowledge about orchard and fruit tree care, pruning, grafting, planting, pests and diseases, varieties, etc. Your local horticultural college or society may be able to help, or ask keen gardeners if they can offer assistance. Consult www.england-in-particular.info >>> Orchards >>> Gazetteer >>> county for local contacts who may be able to suggest an expert. EDUCATION - colleges and schools make good allies, if they are not running an event themselves invite them to yours. ESPALIERS - apple trees can be trained against walls to flourish whilst taking up very little room, do a survey to search out city potential for more fruit tree planting in small spaces. EATING - if you do nothing else eat a locally grown apple or cook an appley meal for those around you and toast this wonderful fruit with juice or cider.

F is for FOLKLORE - from curing warts to predicting future spouses, there are many customs associated with apples. Read 'Apple Games and Customs' for more ideas, research your local traditions and create some new ones.



Apples are a good source of FOOD, many schools and workplaces celebrate Apple Day in their canteens and restaurants. Previously local authorities in Bath and Kent for example encouraged cafes, restaurants, pubs and shops to create special menus and displays of apples, apple dishes and other apple products. FUNDING - if you need help seek sponsorship and window space/advertising help from local businesses, ask for donations of fruit, make sure they know that you need lots of varieties of home grown apples.

G is for GRAFTING - there are more ways to graft an apple tree than cook an egg. Hold demonstrations of grafting, pruning and other aspects of orchard management. People are intrigued and amazed at the simplicity of many of these skills, but appreciate the dexterity of

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seasoned practitioners. Many older members of the community have this sort of knowledge and are pleased to pass it on. "Apple GAMES and Customs" by Common Ground is full of examples of local traditions to spark the imagination. GIFTING - there is a long tradition of giving apples at different times of the year, give an apple on Apple Day as a symbol of friendship and to wish good health. Some fruit growers offer a mail order service for apples see your county in www.england-in-particular.info

H is for HEALTH - "an apple a day keeps the doctor away", doctor's surgeries and health centres use Apple Day as a way of encouraging healthy living. Don't forget the health benefits of being and working in orchards, organize orchard walks or workparties on Apple Day which end with a wonderful apple rich meal. HORSES were often used to turn traditional cider mills, some Rural Life Museums harness up a team for Apple Day demonstrations. Bees and orchards need each other - HONEY is one of the by-products - invite your local beekeepers to Apple Day to promote bee-keeping and sell the proceeds.



I is for IDENTIFICATION - every year queues of people bring apples in the hope of naming their anonymous garden trees. Fruit Identifiers are experts in short supply, so make sure you contact them early in the year to ensure their presence at your event. Think about training new identifiers and organize courses, but remember 6,000 varieties of apple have been named (many are synonyms) so it is not an easy

task. Contact local Horticultural Colleges, Societies, Gardening Clubs, fruit growers and nurserymen to see if they can help or ask Common Ground for suggestions. Fruit identification also plays a vital role in the re-emergence of lost varieties. The Gypsy King apple, last recorded in the 19th century was rediscovered at Apple Day at Church Stretton in Shropshire in 2004, the Profit apple turned up at Kingston Maurward, Dorset in 2001 and the White Quarantine at Probus Gardens in Cornwall in 1991.

J is for JUICE, there is nothing like watching your apples being turned into freshly pressed juice. Buy, borrow or hire a small juice press, or follow the lead of Scarthin Books in Cromford Derbyshire and invite people to bring along apples from their garden trees and orchards for juicing, what happens next is that the gymnastic Rick Allen sits back on his flamboyant beam press and people are amazed. J is also for JOHNNY APPLESEED - tell the story of this American folk hero who toured the country scattering apple pips as he went creating wayside orchards; look out for wilding fruit trees alongside motorways and railway lines, the result of generations of discarded apple cores.

K is for KITCHENS - ask local chefs and cooks to give demonstrations, organize competitions for the best apple pie, cake or chutney, encourage restaurants, cafes, school and works canteens to celebrate with special menus, experiment with different varieties in different dishes. Make cheese and apple tarts matching local apples and ciders with local cheese - Ribston Pippin with Wensleydale, Annie Elizabeth with Red Leicester. See Common Ground's 'The Apple Source Book' for ideas from many chefs and cookery writers. Collect recipes from local people and create your own Apple Day recipe book.



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L is for LONGEST PEEL - another game easily organized for Apple Day and hotly contested, Robert Allen holds the Common Ground national contest record from 2006. LANTERNS can be made from paper, withies and candles in fruit shapes as at Cambridge University Botanic Gardens in 1999 or hung from trees for All Fruits Eve. LOST VARIETIES, seek them out and take graft material from old trees to propagate for future generations, many county collections have started as a result of chance rediscoveries on Apple Day.

M is for MAGGOTS of the codling moth, one of the many problems referred to the Apple Doctor, also the focus for playing 'Pin the Maggot on the Apple' and for the song 'We are maggots, we are maggots, we eat apples every day....' written for Apple Day by schoolchildren in Devon. MUMMERS PLAYS, groups in Somerset, Stratford on Avon and London perform plays using the names of apples for characters. Encourage your local theatre group to adapt a play or to create a new one for Apple Day. MARKETS- excite your local market into making Apple Day a different market day by sourcing more varieties and local apples.



N is for NORTH - not a no-go area for fruit growing, Coul Blush hails from near Inverness. Further south the Northern Fruit Group will display over 200 apples which can be grown in the north of England at Apple Day events. NEWTON one of the many people in history and folklore with close associations with the apple: tell their stories on Apple Day. A descendant of the original tree under which Isaac Newton sat when he articulated the theory of gravity still stands in the grounds of Woolsthorpe Manor, Lincolnshire. Owned by the National Trust this

is one of the many properties that celebrate Apple Day in their houses, gardens or orchards.

O is for OLD ORCHARDS - find out if there are any in your area in need of care or protection, carry out wild life surveys, old orchards provide an excellent habitat for all sorts of creatures, have the fruit trees identified take grafts from any which are near the end of their productive lives, but leave old decaying trees as habitats for birds, insects, fungi, etc. ORGANIC GROWING ask local organic farms to give a talk on organic fruit growing, contact Garden Organic (HDRA) at Ryton Organic Gardens for information sheets.



P is for Apple PIE and POETRY. Apple Day Poet Laureate, James Crowden performed his apple, orchard and cider poems at events in 1999. The Big Apple in Herefordshire have produced a book of poetry and prose, the Hereford Poets organized an Orchards poetry competition. PAINTINGS encourage your local art gallery to focus on pictures with apples and orchards during October as a link to your event. Apples cut either horizontally or vertically can be used for making PRINTS on paper bags, cards, posters. PICKING -organize a communal picking in your Community Orchard or across the neighbourhood- it will bring new friends and new uses for forgotten fruits.

Q is for QUESTION TIME with your experts on apples, orchards and fruit growing. Encourage a Pub QUIZ with cider tastings in your local to test knowledge of all things apple.

R is for RESTORATION, seek out old orchards and old trees that have fallen into decline, see what you can do to bring them back to life, often just a little care and attention can work wonders. Organize apple and spoon RACES or apple

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ROLLING. Concoct a local apple RECIPE collection.

S is for SCHOOLS - celebrations and activities could include planning and planting an orchard in the school grounds and learning to care for the trees; making apple food and carrying out scientific experiments on apples contact Learning Through Landscapes "Fruit Full Schools" campaign. In 2009 composer Karen Wimhurst created three SONGS about the problems of importing apples as opposed to buying locally produced fruit with primary children from Archbishops Wake School in Blandford Forum, Dorset. Create a group to scour the neighbourhood, city and country, for under-used fruit trees, politely ask if you can help by legally SCRUMPING as they do to great effect in Sheffield.



T is for TREES - invite nurseries to sell local varieties. TASTING - very popular at Apple Day events, try to get as many different varieties of apples as possible so that people can compare flavours, also sample different juices and ciders. Encourage people to ask their greengrocer to source British apples in season. TRAINING and TALKS and the many other ways of passing on the vast amount of knowledge on apples and orchards which can be found amongst local people. Re-tell the story of William TELL or try out (riskassessment ... riskassessment) archery competitions. TRANSPORT to events can be a problem if they are off the beaten track organize special bus services from the nearest station to your Apple Day, the villages of Staverton and Landscope in the South Hams of Devon ran an Apple Day steam train special. T is for wood TURNING using apple wood, one of the many craft activities linked to Apple Day, other examples are banners, lanterns, paper making and printing.

U is for URBAN ORCHARDS – orchard ghosts can be traced in street names and on old maps, but many still linger as remnants behind houses, as odd trees – all worth tracing and reasserting. Some orchards are managed as public parks in London, Exeter, Manchester and Sheffield, talk to the local authority about planting fruit trees in urban parks. Some city allotments have been saved from development as at Blondin Orchard in Ealing, West London, encourage allotment holders to celebrate Apple Day and discuss possibilities. UNITE gardens into an orchard for the bees. Organize a street party for Apple Day, encourage your neighbours to plant fruit trees which can pollinate each other and provide fruit for all to share, put the pears back into Perry Close, the apples into Orchard Avenue. UNTIDINESS – is a good thing - don't be tempted to clear all the undergrowth from your orchard, ivy, brambles, nettles, etc. can be excellent habitats for wild life.

V is for VARIETIES, perhaps 2,300 culinary and desert apples plus hundreds of cider varieties have been grown in Britain, many have their own stories and local provenance, track down as many as possible, ask people to bring in samples from their garden trees for identification you may find sources of graft material for the less well know varieties to use as a starting point for nurseries and for mother orchards. See www.england-in-particular.info and The Apple Source Book for county lists of varieties.

W is for WASSAILING, traditionally celebrated on Old Twelfth Night, but start practising now by seeking out local wassailing songs and customs or creating new ones to perform in the orchard next January.



WILD LIFE, organize WALKS to highlight the birds, animals, insects, plants, etc which can be found in orchards, encourage people to record the wild life they encounter in their own orchards, encourage wild life into orchards by forgoing the use of pesticides and herbicides, investigate organic methods of fruit growing. Or

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organize WALKS to explore where orchards were and where they could be again. Don't forget that in exposed areas WALLED GARDENS shelter orchards (Reeth in Swaledale has a lovely walled Community Orchard) and the elaborate methods of training trees are an art form in themselves, pay a visit to a walled garden near you, such as West Dean Gardens in Sussex, and find out how they grow their fruit. Invite people into your orchard to gather sound WINDFALLS, use them for juicing or cooking, make cakes and pies to sell on Apple Day, leave the rest for the birds.



X is for XENOPHOBIA – the forbears of our much-loved British apples hail from the Tien Shan (the Heavenly Mountains now act as the border between China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan). Without the sharing of knowledge and genes we should be chewing on a tart, tiny yellow *malus sylvestris* – our wild crab apple. Twin your Apple Day with somewhere far flung. X marks the spot for treasure hunts, an enjoyable way for people to find their way around the orchard or to discover the fruity associations (pubs, cidermills, historical figures as well as trees) within your town or village. Use Apple Day as the starting point for an Apple Map of your area, look at the Common Ground Apple Map for inspiration, plot where trees are or where they used to be and try to restore them.

Y is for YARNS – involve storytellers to keep alive traditional myths and legends relating to apples and orchards. Natural YEAST is what makes apples turn to cider – lots of science to be learnt on Apple Day.

Zzzzzzzz zzzzz zzzzz – now take a rest.

Illustrations © Glyn Goodwin, Lucinda Rogers, Will Webb, Dan Williams for Common Ground

Common Ground publications

The Apple Map. Common Ground, 1992.
Apple Games and Customs. Common Ground, 2005.
Orchards and Wild Life. Common Ground and English Nature. Conference Papers, 1999.
The Common Ground Book of Orchards. 2000. Sue Clifford and Angela King with Philippa Davenport. *The Apple Source Book: Diverse uses for Particular apples*. Hodder & Stoughton, 2007.
The Community Orchards Handbook. Common Ground, 2008

Sue Clifford & Angela King. *England in Particular: a celebration of the commonplace, the local, the vernacular and the distinctive*. Hodder & Stoughton, 2006.

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www.commonground.org.uk for Apple Day, events list and publications (PayPal accepted)
www.england-in-particular.info for orchards, community orchards, contacts, sources, county gazetteer of varieties

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