



BISHOPTHORPE IN BLOSSOM

Orchard Project in progress!

June 2019

This Heritage Lottery funded project runs from 1 November 2018 to 31 October 2019 and is being run by a group of volunteers on behalf of Bishopthorpe Parish Council. The grant award is £8,900.

The Community Orchard takes shape

Residents have generously given their time to make the Community Orchard happen. In January, Bishopthorpe Scouts and their families, joined by other volunteers, cleared the site on the edge of Ferry Lane playing field. Brambles were cut down and decades of rubbish was pulled out, including tyres, fencing, goal posts and even an old metal bedstead! The site was then cultivated by Ainsty Lawncare and Landscapes.



The seeds are sown!



The Forest Schools group at Bishopthorpe playgroup enjoyed sowing the wildflower and grass seed in April. They were so enthusiastic they even pushed the roller together! Brunswick Organic Nursery is keeping the fruit trees safe over the summer, ready to plant out in October. Apple tree varieties to be planted include Ellison's Orange, Belle de Boskoop, Lord Lambourne, Worcester Permain, Discovery, Peasgood Nonsuch and James Grieve.

Fruit tree surveys

We are grateful to the many people who have allowed us to look at their garden fruit trees. We have found at least 10 extra 'orchards' (where there are at least 5 fruit trees within 25m of each other) to add to the National Orchard Inventory.

Can you find the biggest fruit tree in Bishopthorpe?

Measure the circumference of the trunk at chest height. The figures to beat are: apple 1.66m and pear 2.42m.

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Advice from the experts

This winter, Tony Chalcraft and Jane Thurlow held 2 training events on pruning old fruit trees. Pruning is not essential but helps keep trees healthy and more productive. The general advice is to first cut out the dead and diseased wood, then any branches that are rubbing together, and then branches crossing the middle of the tree. The ultimate aim (which may take a few years) is an open centre to the tree which 'a robin could fly through.'



Bishopthorpe walled garden

In April we were fortunate to be allowed to visit this hidden treasure. It dates from about 1767, and in its heyday was a grand example of its type, supplying the Archbishop and his household with abundant fresh fruit. Peaches, cherries, plums, apples and pears were grown. Even pineapples were grown in extravagant hot-houses against the heated central wall! Lead labels still attached to the walls give a tantalising glimpse of the varieties that were grown 150 years ago, some of which may now be extinct! Northern fruit tree expert, Anne Lee, is coming back this autumn to try to identify the remaining old trees.

Did you know...?

Fungi naturally grows on fruit trees and helps form deadwood which is important for biodiversity. There are many species and the only type to be concerned about, as it will kill the tree, is honey fungus.

Conservation Area

Much of the old part of Bishopthorpe is in a Conservation Area. This means that the permission of the City of York Council is needed for any work that affects trees, other than pruning for the purposes of fruit production.

How you can help

We are producing a booklet about the history of orchards in Bishopthorpe. If you have any photographs or memories of orchards from the 'old days' we would love to know.

Let us know about any old fruit trees: in particular, groups of 5 or more as these can be mapped as an orchard.

Help us look after the community orchard and look out for community events there.

How to get in touch

To contact the project please phone 07563 798408 or email bishorchard@yahoo.com.

For more information, including the first newsletter and monthly updates, please visit www.bishopthorpe.net/bishnet/tag/orchard/

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