



BISHOPTHORPE IN BLOSSOM

Orchard Project reaches fruition!

December 2019

The National Lottery funding for this project ended on 31 October 2019. The project was run by volunteers on behalf of Bishopthorpe Parish Council. The grant award was £8,900.

The Community Orchard

In less than a year, thanks to the help of so many volunteers, the site on the edge of Ferry Lane sports field has been transformed from a patch of brambles, weeds and rubbish, to a lovely grassy area. In October, Bishopthorpe Scouts and other helpers planted some of the fruit trees. The remainder will be planted in early 2020. It will be a few years before the trees bear fruit, but in the meantime, enjoy the blossom and wildflowers!



Which trees were planted



Inspiration for many of the varieties was taken from the old fruit trees growing in the village. Apples: Belle de Boskoop, Lord Lambourne, Worcester Permain, Peasgood Nonsuch, Ellison's Orange, James Grieve, Discovery, Ribston Pippin*, Flower of the Town*. Pears: Concorde, Beurre Hardy. Plums/gages: Victoria, Early Rivers, Reine Claude de Bavay. To add to the diversity, a filbert (hazelnut) and three thornless blackberries will also be planted.

*rare Yorkshire varieties, not found in the village

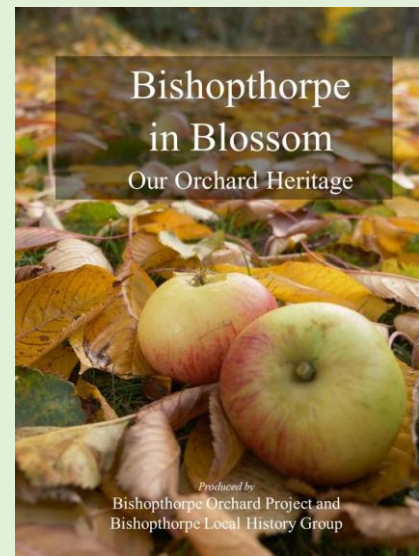
Wildflowers and bulbs

Children from the Forest School group at playgroup enjoyed helping create the orchard and they will use it for Forest School activities. Here they are planting spring bulbs. More wildflowers will be planted next spring.



Read all about it!

Our research has revealed how important fruit growing was in Bishopthorpe's history: an old fruit tree truly is a link with Bishopthorpe's past. The project's book is on sale in the village library, Brunswick Organic Nursery and the Bishopthorpe archive. It includes recent and old photos, interviews with local residents, information about local fruit varieties, and the fascinating history of the 250 year old Bishopthorpe walled garden (now looked after by Brunswick Organic Nursery).



Bishopthorpe walled garden

was once the Archbishop of York's kitchen garden. Tender pear trees were grown as espaliers against the warm south facing wall. Experts from the Northern Fruit Group identified the 8 veteran pear trees that remain. They are now tall trees and still bear fruit: their blossom can be seen peeking over the top of the walls in spring.



Thank you to everyone who took part in the project and helped make it a success!



Equipment

The project purchased the following equipment: 2 apple presses and a 'scratter' for juicing. Tools for fruit tree pruning, including a telescopic pruning saw/secateurs, loppers and fruit picker. Metal tags for recording the variety of fruit tree. 'Bug hunting' equipment for playgroup's Forest School.

The small apple press and the pruning tools are available for loan.

Find out more

The reference section of Bishopthorpe library has a range of books about orchards and fruit trees purchased by the project, as well as a copy of the project reports.

Contacts

The project will continue to be run by volunteers and can be contacted at bishorchard@yahoo.com. There is also a page on the Bishopthorpe Community website where you can find the newsletters and up to date information: www.bishopthorpe.net/bishnet/tag/orchard/