

# Orchard Pocket Park

In the early 1980's, **Northamptonshire County Council** lead the way in promoting the modern-day Pocket Park concept in the UK. Pocket Parks are small areas of countryside that are looked after by local communities for conservation and quiet recreation. They are places where everyone can explore and enjoy the pleasures of the countryside and wildlife.

The Pocket Park was originally within the grounds of the Mill House, but became detached when land for the A605 village by-pass was purchased in 1985.

The Orchard Pocket Park was created in 1997 and serves to protect and nurture an increasingly rare traditional orchard.



The **Orchard Pocket Park** is owned by Warmington Parish Council, and maintained by a group of volunteers in such a way as to manage and improve the health and productivity of the orchard fruit trees. Consideration is given to habitat and wildlife by enhancing biodiversity within the orchard, while also providing an area for us all to quietly enjoy.

If you would like to receive updates about the orchard, or can contribute a little of your time by becoming involved, please get in touch via **warmingtonorchard@gmail.com**

# Traditional Orchards

Traditional orchards are dominated by older, less intensively managed 'standard' trees that are planted at relatively low densities; they can have significant ecological value and diversity. The total area of traditional orchards within the UK has declined in recent years, making the conservation of those that remain a high priority.



In traditional orchards, fruit trees were planted with wide spaces between them and were allowed to grow larger. The orchard includes a row of cherry plum trees along the field boundary, which originally provided a windbreak for the main orchard trees and shelter for grazing animals.



Many of the apple varieties have historical associations with the local area, and are threatened by the decline of traditional orchards. Work is on-going to identify more of the fruit varieties and to map their location within the orchard. Appropriate care plans are being developed to restore and regenerate some of the older trees.



# Apple Varieties



The first **Barnack Beauty** apple was grown from seed in 1840 in Barnack, a small village in Cambridgeshire, and was later introduced to the market in 1870.

Named after a priest from Lincolnshire, and dating from 1904 or earlier, **Ellison's Orange** is an offspring of the famous Cox's Orange Pippin.



The **Lord Burghley** was discovered in the early 1800s as a seedling in Burghley Park, and was introduced to the Royal Horticultural Society in 1834.

This apple takes its name, **Bess Pool**, from the daughter of a village innkeeper who discovered it in the 1700's in a Nottinghamshire wood



The **Allington Pippin** was originally called 'South Lincoln Pippin' having been bred around 1884. It was renamed in 1894 after the village of Allington in Kent, where one of the nurseries was situated.

**Laxton's Superb** was developed in 1897 by Laxton Brothers, a famous company of plant breeders from Bedford during the Victorian era.



**Howgate Wonder** was first grown in 1916 at Howgate Lane in Bembridge on the Isle of Wight and is a cross between two traditional English cookers.

The origins of the **Egremont Russet** are obscure, but it was first recorded in 1872 and is believed to have been raised by the Earl of Egremont at Petworth in Sussex.



# Habitats



Traditional orchards contain an important mix of habitats, which support a range of wildlife. It is important that they are sympathetically managed both individually and as ‘whole’ to maintain and enhance biodiversity.



**Veteran Trees** provide a habitat for many insect species that depend on decaying wood. In turn they provide food for other wildlife. Birds take advantage of the feeding, nesting and roosting opportunities provided by the mature trees and the climbing plants such as ivy that they support.



**Fruit Trees** provide a continuity of tree cover, on which many species depend. The different bark structures and chemistry support different communities of lichen, mosses and liverworts.



**Hedgerows** provide food and shelter for a range of species. They provide nesting sites for birds, and species such as hawthorn and blackthorn are a good source of nectar. Mice, voles and other small mammals live in the bottom of hedges and in turn provide food for birds of prey and predatory mammals.



**Grassland** areas are important for the survival and natural spread of plant species – for their own sake, for the sake of the wildlife they support. Restoration, through annual cutting, helps to achieve a balance between vigorous plants and more delicate wild flowers, while the introduction of seed from local, native species helps to regenerate the grassland.



# Wildflowers



The **Primrose** (*Primula vulgaris*) flowers from as early as December until May. Insects visit the flowers in search of nectar, but only long-tongued insects can actually reach the nectar that is located at the bottom of the flower tube.

**Selfheal** (*Prunella vulgaris*) likes the short turf of grasslands and roadside verges. Its clusters of violet flowers appear from June to October and provide a nectar source for bees and wasps.



**Birdsfoot Trefoil** (*Lotus corniculatus*) is found in all kinds of grassy places and can be seen flowering from May to September. It is an important foodplant for the caterpillars of the common blue butterfly and its flowers are a good nectar source for bees.

**Germander speedwell** (*Veronica chamaedrys*) flowers from April to June and is an excellent nectar source for solitary bees.



**Lady's bedstraw** (*Galium verum*) flowers from June to September. It provides a rich sources of nectar for bumble bees and butterflies and also provides food for caterpillars.

**Lesser celandine** (*Ranunculus ficaria*) flowers from March to May. As one of the first flowers to appear after winter, they provide an important nectar source for queen bumblebees and other pollinators emerging from hibernation, and other early insects.





# Wildflowers



**Field scabious** (*Knautia arvensis*) is found in well drained grassland and in hedgerows. It has a very long flowering period, between July and October, and so is a valuable nectar source for bees and butterflies. Finches and linnets love the seeds of this plant.

**Red campion** (*Silene dioica*) flowers from May to October. The nectar of the flowers attracts bumblebees, butterflies and hoverfly (*Rhingia campestris*), and several species of moth feed on the leaves.



**Greater burdock** (*Arctium lappa*) produces thistle-like flower heads from July to September that are attractive to a range of insects, including Painted Lady and Small Tortoiseshell butterflies. Eventually they turn to sticky burs with large hooks that attach to the fur of passing animals, helping to disperse its seeds

**Common dog-violet** (*Viola riviniana*) is widespread and lives happily in many different habitats. It flowers from April to June and is very important for several fritillary butterflies, which lay their eggs on it.



**Stinging nettle** (*Urtica dioica*) is a very common plant that grows up to 2m tall in summer and has tiny green or white flowers from June to October, before dying down to the ground in winter. They are great wildlife attractors: many butterflies - among them the Peacock and Red Admiral - lay their eggs on stinging nettles and, once hatched, the caterpillars feast on the leaves. Aphids that shelter on the plants are an important food source for Ladybirds.