

Wildlife

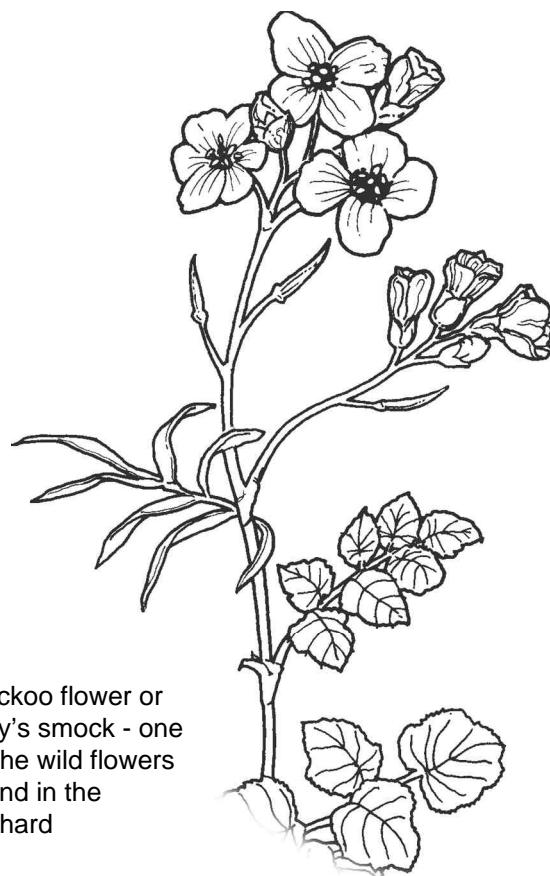
There are a staggering 33 different species of lichens and mosses to be found on the fruit trees at No Man's Orchard!

A lichen is not a single organism in the way that most other living things are, but rather a combination of two organisms - a fungus and an alga - which are dependent on each other to live.

Mosses are usually small simple plants - they do not produce flowers or seeds, and most have no internal means for transporting water or nutrients.



Mosses and lichens on an old orchard tree.



Cuckoo flower or lady's smock - one of the wild flowers found in the orchard

Until 1993 the grassland under the orchard trees had been fertilised and sprayed with herbicides. However, an end to the practice of spraying together with positive management (mowing in mid-June and October) has led to a noticeable increase in the number and diversity of wildflowers growing.

Some dead or decaying trees are left as they provide ideal habitat for dead wood specialists such as beetles and fungi. Dead wood habitats are declining nationally as there is often a tendency to 'tidy up' the countryside, sometimes to the detriment of wildlife.

Look out for birds such as great and lesser spotted woodpeckers, song thrushes, wrens, and starlings that all use the fruit trees to nest in. Willow warbler, chiffchaff, kestrel, jay, house martin, swift and long tailed tit are just some of the birds seen amongst the branches or flying overhead.

The orchard is also home to many insects. A recent moth survey recorded dozens of species, and the old trees, blossom and windfall fruit provide homes and food for a variety of beetles, flies and bees.

Foxes, rabbits, badgers, stoats, slow worms and grass snakes are just some of the other wild animals that use the orchard.

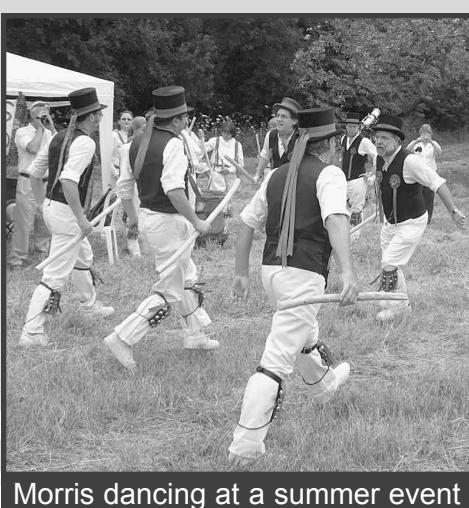


Great spotted woodpecker

Community



Unveiling the new serpent



Morris dancing at a summer event

Sculpture

There has been a serpent seat sculpture in the orchard since 1996, when two local art students created one from oak and apple wood with help from volunteers. When this original serpent reached the end of its life, artist Steve Portchmouth was commissioned to make a new one. This new oak sculpture was installed in 2008 and unveiled that year (as pictured above).

Events

The orchard has been a venue for many events over the years, from Apple Day to woodland events and poetry days. It is available for the local community to use for events. Contact the Parish Council for details (see reverse).

Adopt an apple tree

This scheme allows you to take as much fruit as you like from the tree you adopt. Trees can be adopted for a year or for life. Contact the Parish Council for details (see reverse).

Volunteers

Should you wish to get involved in the management of No Man's Orchard, or other countryside sites, please contact the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership (see reverse).



Apple picking



Volunteers at work

Orchard Management

The orchard is managed by Chartham and Harbledown Parish Councils, assisted by the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership. Funding is provided by a Countryside Stewardship Agreement (a national countryside conservation scheme administered by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs).

Access

The site is an open access site and is maintained for the quiet enjoyment of everyone. You are welcome to take the time to wander in amongst the trees, or stop and have a picnic (although there are no bins so please take your litter home).