

# Dragon Orchard

“Even if I knew  
that tomorrow the world  
would go to pieces,  
I would still plant my apple tree”

- Dr Martin Luther King



The English countryside is so much part of our lives that it is often taken for granted. Many of the landscapes and habitats we value today are the by-products of past land management practices. However, Farming and the Countryside are under threat. There has been a shift away from small, local shops towards larger retailers, and the drive to meet consumers' demands for low prices and consistent quality has led to greater intensification and specialisation, to the disadvantage of many smaller, traditionally managed farms. As a result many people no longer have ready access to quality local goods that have been produced in a sustainable way and consumers have become distanced from the origins of what they buy.

Dragon Orchard Cropsharers was conceived by Ann and Norman Stanier to redress the balance in some small way. At Dragon Orchard the same methods of growing have been practiced for many years. Top quality native apples and pears are produced naturally under an integrated crop management regime using minimum sprays to keep the diseases at bay whilst encouraging natural predators to control pests. The fruit is left to ripen on the trees, unlike most commercial orchards, allowing it to develop its full flavour. It is then carefully hand picked, graded and packed into boxes. A number of apple varieties are grown, particularly for their flavour and keeping qualities, including Bramleys, Blenheim Orange, Cox's Orange Pippin, Egremont Russet, Lord Lambourne and James Grieve. Discovery and Worcester apples, which do not store long term, are made into delicious single variety apple juice.

Norman was born and brought up on the farm but moved away to train as a PE teacher. After spending time with VSO in Jamaica, he became involved in Outdoor Activities. One of his first jobs was with Outward Bound in Devon which is where he met Ann. They married shortly after Ann graduated from university having studied Environmental Science. After travelling for a while they returned to set up home in London, where Norman ran an urban based Outdoor Activity programme. A change of jobs led to a move to the Midlands and Norman managed the Ackers Trust, a challenging urban Outdoor centre in Inner City Birmingham.

In 1990 Ann and Norman had a major life review about how they wanted to live their lives and returned, with their two sons, Patrick and Hugh, to Norman's family home to help his parents run the orchard. They were already developing their main business, WallWalkers, which they still run from the farm. They built their award-winning eco-friendly house in 1995 and now divide their time between the two businesses, whilst actively farming the land.

In the time since moving to the farm, fruit growing and selling for the small-scale producer has become ever more challenging. It is a privilege to live in such beautiful surroundings and it is a delight to share the pleasures of the orchard with others. Through Dragon Orchard Cropsharers it is our sincere hope to be able to cherish and maintain the orchard and the wildlife within it for many years to come.

## ***On Dragon Orchard Cropsharers' from Rick Stein's Food Heroes:***

*“English orchards, with their profusion of native apple, plum and pear varieties, are becoming more and more rare. They just don't pay - apples are cheaper from abroad - so many farmers simply cannot afford to keep their orchards; they need the land for more profitable crops. The Stanier family at Dragon Orchard faced a stark choice - stop growing apples altogether or find some way of making money from them. They came up with a novel idea - crop-sharing. For an annual fee, a family can become part of Dragon Orchard, visiting four times a year to see what is going on at the farm (and, depending on the season, this can include wassailing, blossom time, harvesting or cider-making). At the end of each season they will receive a share of the orchard's bounty - boxes of apples of numerous varieties, pears, bottled juice, cider and jams. It is a great way to explore the life cycle of a working orchard and you will be saving a traditional English orchard from being grubbed up and lost forever”.*

# Your Share of the Harvest 2009



***For an Annual Subscription of £325.00 payable on joining this Community Supported Agriculture Scheme, Dragon Orchard Cropsharers will be entitled to:***

- 🍏 Visit the orchard at least once every season.
- 🍏 Participate in a series of Open Weekends arranged for you to come to Dragon Orchard and enjoy it in its different guises. The starkness of bare winter wood contrasts with the spring blossom, the growing fruit in summer leading to the rich autumnal harvest. You will be able to stroll through the trees, sniff the blossom, smell the new mown grass and watch the fruit ripen.
- 🍏 Join guided walks round the fruit farm with explanations on fruit growing and an introduction to the local flora and fauna. There will also be a chance to participate in visits to local producers and craft workers.
- 🍏 Take part in Seasonal Celebrations: Wassailing, Blossomtime and Cider Tasting, Harvest and Flower Festivals.
- 🍏 Attend Apple events in association with the locally based Big Apple organisation which promotes all things 'appley' in the Ledbury area.
- 🍏 Quarterly Newsletters to keep you informed of happenings on the farm and its surroundings.
- 🍏 Advice on local accommodation, places to visit and things to do in the area.
- 🍏 Tips on fruit growing and recipes, plus tasting and sampling.
- 🍏 An Autumnal share of the crop from Dragon Orchard which will include at least:

*Two 20 lb mixed boxes of eating apples*

*- from the different varieties grown*

*Two 20 lb box of cooking apples*

*- and some excellent recipes for using them*

*1 dozen bottles of Once Upon a Tree Apple Juice*

*1 dozen bottles of Dragon Orchard Table Cider*

*Homemade Jams and jellies & chutney*

*Pears*

We also offer an amended share, for those who require fewer apples. Two boxes of apples can be substituted with extra apple juice. Your Share of the crop can be collected from the farm in October/November. If you are unable to collect, we can send it to you at delivery cost price or we can sometimes make personal deliveries.

## Calendar of Events 2009

***May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>***

*Spring Cropsharers' Weekend and  
'Big Apple' Blossomtime Weekend*

***July 3<sup>rd</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup>***

*Ledbury Poetry Festival*

***July 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>***

*Summer Cropsharers' Weekend*

***September 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>***

*Abergavenny Food Festival*

***October 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>***

*Autumn Cropsharers' Weekend and  
'Big Apple' Harvest Weekend*

***October 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>***

*Flavours of Herefordshire Food Festival  
at Hereford Racecourse*

***October/November***

*Dragon Orchard open for Cropshare collection*

***January 2010***

*Winter Cropsharers' Weekend with Wassailing*

# Dragon Orchard

## Cropsharer's Agreement

This agreement is made on (date) ..... between Dragon Orchard  
and (Name of Cropsharer) .....  
of (Address) .....  
Telephone No ..... Email .....

1. It is agreed as follows:  
Dragon Orchard hereby grants to the Cropsharer the right to access the orchard on designated 'Open Weekends' during the year and to the orchard produce detailed in any given year, from the Dragon Orchard in Putley, near Ledbury in Herefordshire, England from the date of this agreement upon payment of an annual fee of £325.00.
2. The Cropsharer agrees:
  - a. To pay the Annual Fee promptly and free from all deductions.
  - b. Not to assign this Agreement without the written permission of the Orchard, such permission not to be unreasonably withheld.
3. Dragon Orchard agrees:
  - a. To use its best endeavours to ensure the orchard is maintained in a good state of cultivation and fertility in accordance with the principles of good horticultural practice.
  - b. To maintain a register of all Cropsharers which will be available for inspection on request.
4. Dragon Orchard reserves the right to source fruit from other local orchards if necessary, to maintain a sufficient supply for the Cropsharers. If this is the case, full details will be supplied to all Cropsharers including information about the aforementioned orchards.
5. This agreement shall not create any leasehold interest or tenancy or other right of occupation other than the right to the harvest from the orchard as described herein and the right to access on stated Open Weekends.
6. No Agency or Partnership is intended to be created by this Agreement beyond the right to receive the produce of the orchard in accordance with terms of the present Agreement.
7. The produce provided to the Cropsharer is on the basis that it is for the Cropsharer's private consumption.
8. This Agreement sets out in entirety all terms and provisions and all amendments shall be made in writing and signed by both parties.
9. Should Dragon Orchard become incapable of performing its obligations under this Agreement or there is any delay in carrying out such performance because of any event beyond its control (including act of God, civil disturbance, war, fire, flood, drought, shipwreck or strike) or any Government legislation or the actions of any Court, then Dragon Orchard shall immediately upon becoming aware of such event give Notice to the Cropsharer and shall do everything possible to resume performance. Upon giving such Notice this Agreement shall thereupon be terminated unless the parties have agreed otherwise in writing and the only obligations on Dragon Orchard shall be to refund the whole or the appropriate part of the annual fee paid for that year.
10. This Agreement will be renewable under the same conditions at the expiry of the current term subject to the acceptance by both Dragon Orchard and the Cropsharer.

**Signed on behalf of the Cropsharer** .....

**Signed on behalf of Dragon Orchard** .....