

A single red apple with a yellowish-orange blush hangs from a dark branch. The apple is the central focus, with a few green leaves attached to the stem. The background is a clear, bright blue sky, with some blurred branches and leaves visible on the left side.

Forgotten Fruit

**How craft cider is reviving traditional
orchards in UK farming**

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Introduction

- Traditional orchards have declined by 81% since the 1900s*.
- Great value for biodiversity (both the fruit, but also as wildlife refuges), local community, and climate change resilience.
- An introduction to, and discussion of what cider producers are doing and the methods that are maximising the positive impact of orchards, while appreciating a natural, indigenous alcoholic drink!



BARLEYWOOD
ORCHARD







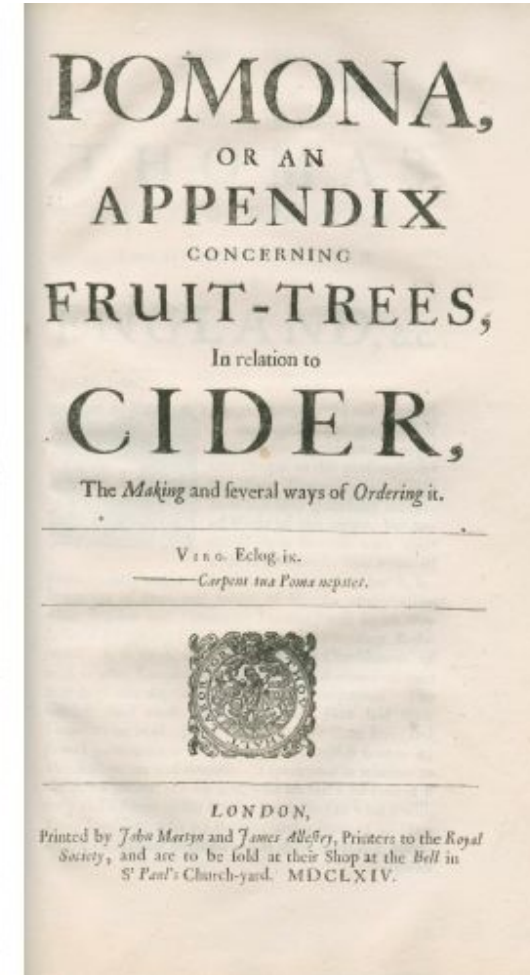
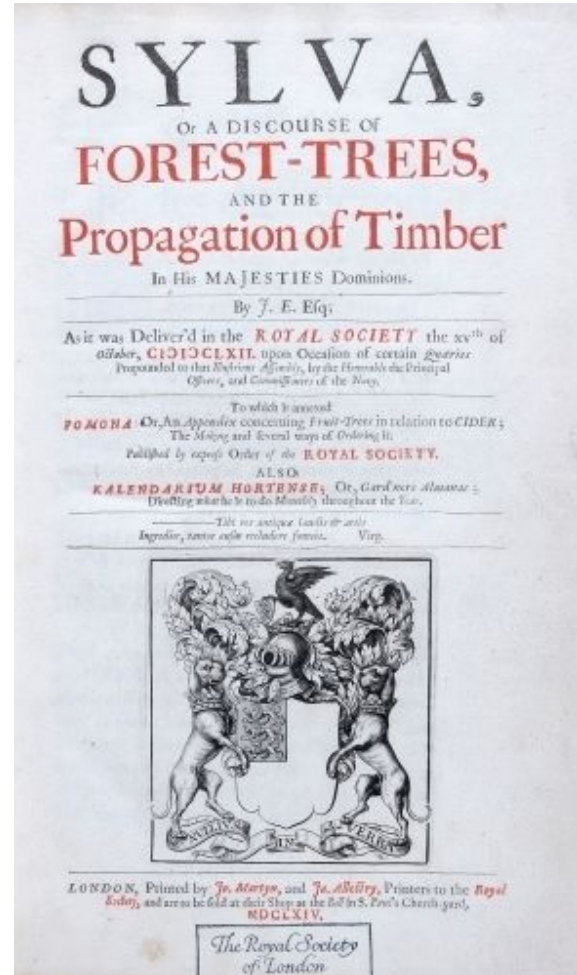
ARTISTRRAW
Cider



Photo: Billie Charity

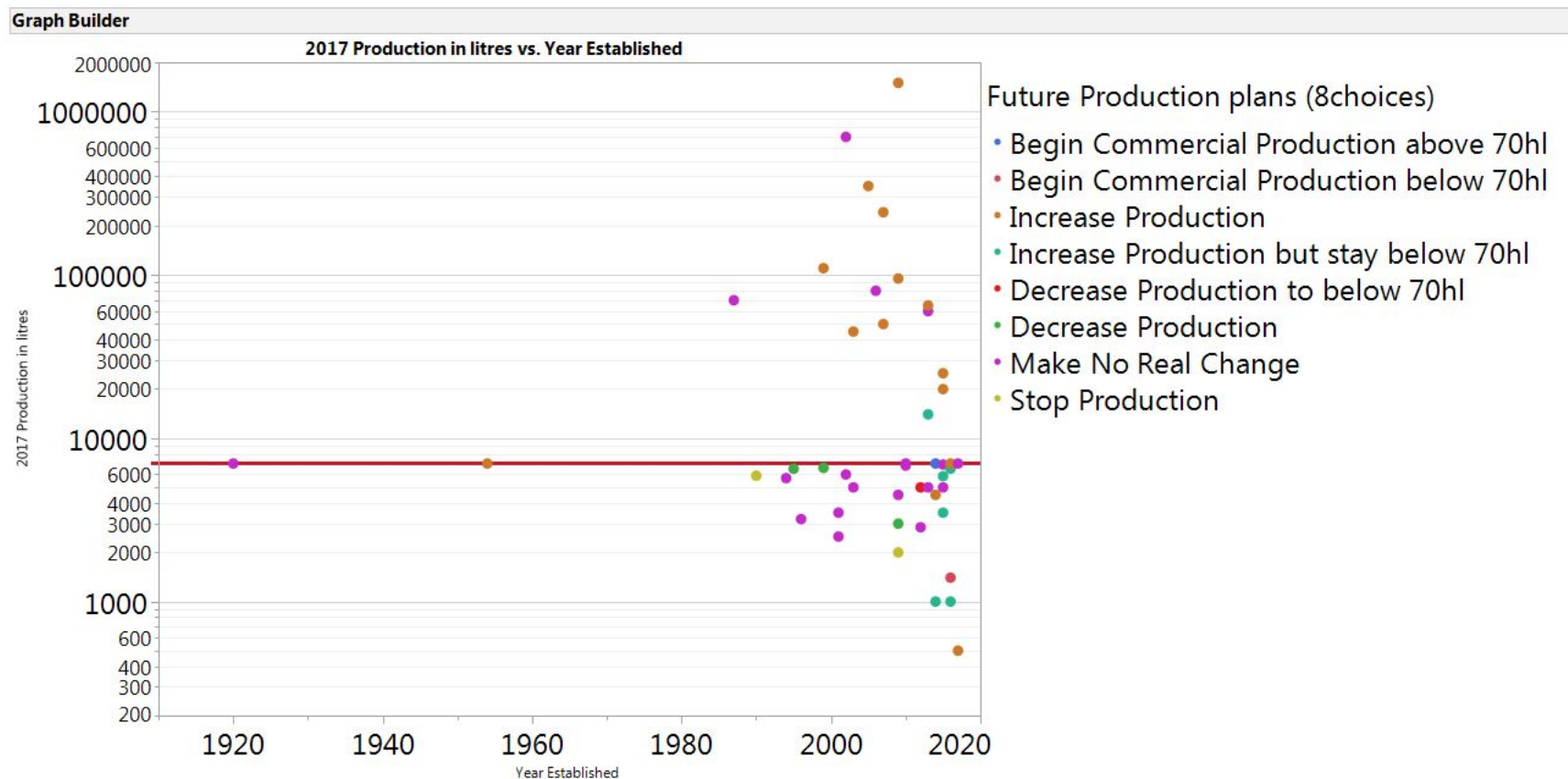
Cider: a potted history

- It is thought that cider and perry have been made possibly since Roman times, but certainly French monks settling in Dorset in 1100s were known to make apple based beverages.
- By 1600 interest in cider production was growing, especially in Herefordshire with Lord Scudamore doing many experiments.
- By ~1630s glass making was undergoing a lot of innovation as Royal Decree had prohibited the use of wood (charcoal) in glass making (preferring to build ships!)
- 1660 – the Royal Society grew from Gresham College – some of the first manuscripts submitted for publication concerned the production of cider
 - Sylva, by John Evelyn FRS contained an appendix 'Pomona – an appendix concerning fruit trees in relation to cider – the making and several ways of ordering it.' 1664



Modern British cider

- Vast majority of UK's cider now made in large factories using apple juice concentrate, and a wide variety of permitted additives (the joys of the 1970s)
- Resurgence in last few years in interest in cider
 - Many new cideries have opened their doors in the last five years (data below to 2018)



The Artistraw Story

- Started making cider (strictly personal consumption) in 2003 from unwanted apples in Herefordshire
 - Caught the bug!
- Migrated away from city life in 2017 to set up Artistraw as a commercial natural cidery.
- “Artistraw” is a Hereford dialect word for shrew – hence the shrew themed brand.

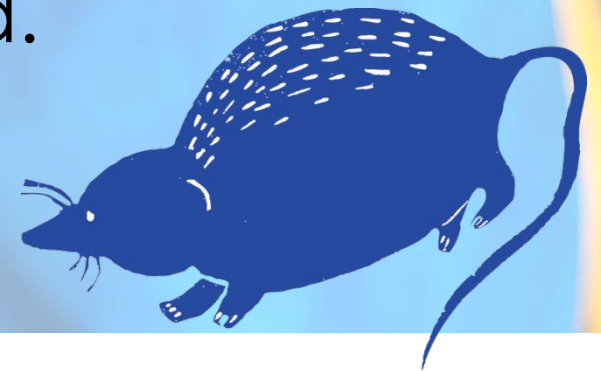


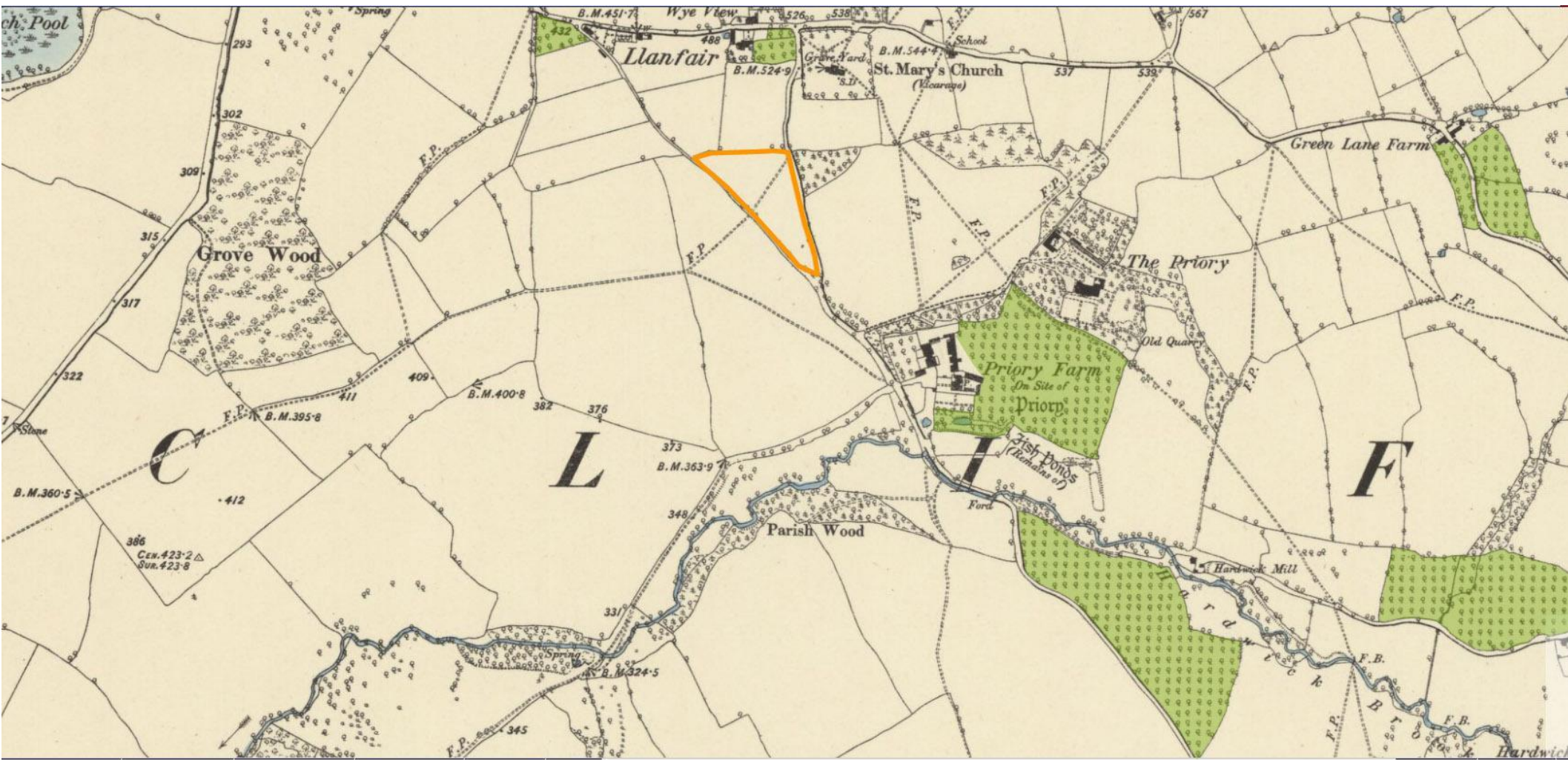


Photo: Billie Charity

Finding fruit

- Herefordshire is blessed with some ancient surviving traditional orchards
 - Generally used as grazing
 - Last major planting was in the post war period by Bulmers, until the arrival of progress in the form of intensive bush orchards.
 - Often neglected, in most standard orchards left today the fruit is left for the birds.
- The hardest part of reviving the orchards is negotiating access and keeping stock off them during harvest.

Finding fruit Clifford 1886



Ordnance Survey
Herefordshire Sheet XXXI.NW
Surveyed: 1886, Published: 1887

Finding fruit

Clifford 2023



DEFRA magic map – still wrong even though I told them actual extent of the orchard...





Harvesting fruit

- Traditionally this was done as a community wide effort
 - Women and children to the fore!
 - Fruit would be gathered into heaps in the orchard ('tumping')
 - Sometimes fruit was taken by wagon to a factory, sometimes a mobile press would process the fruit in the orchard.
 - The really hard work is the crushing or milling of the apples



Photo: Finn Beales



Photos: Finn
Beales

Slow ambient fermentations

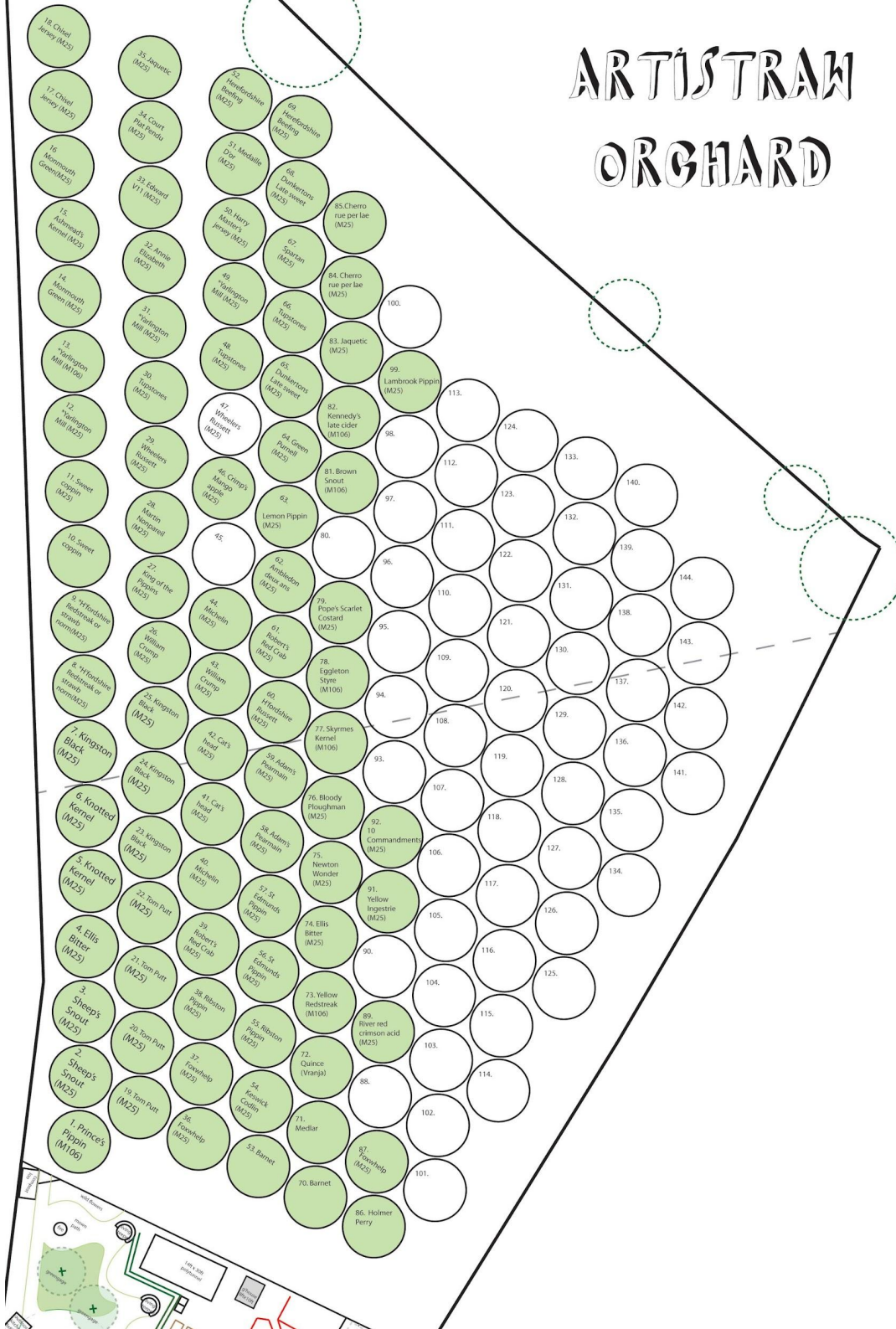
- Low nutrient fruit juice from older trees perfect for natural cidermaking
- Slow, controllable fermentations over 3-8 months give a depth of flavour not found in commercial 'brewed' ciders.
- No additional energy input required
- Cider maturation process is space and time intensive □ high working capital requirement



Our own orchard

- We have grafted over 100 apple trees to populate our own new orchard.
 - 2 acres, first trees planted in March 2019.
 - High diversity of trees in orchard, so far over 40 varieties represented in ~85 trees planted
- Standard full sized trees on 27' isometric (triangular) spacings
 - Mulched annually with wood-chippings and cardboard (if necessary)
- Sward control currently:
 - Annual hay cut
 - Grazing twice a year (autumn + spring)
 - Wildflower meadow
 - Many species such as bird's foot trefoil, common spotted orchid, lesser knapweed, Autumn hawkbit, ribwort plantain, chick weed, yellow rattle, ox-eye daisy, mallow, ...
- "Organic-in-all-but-certification" management. No agrichemicals on the holding.
- Pest management through integrated ecosystem. Windbreak tall hedge to SW of orchard is essential habitat.
- When mature orchard can be expected on a good year to provide the majority of fruit needed for production (at current volumes)

ARTISTRAN ORCHARD







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Wine Cider Cheese

We specialise in natural wine & cider and handmade British farmhouse cheese. Made simply by small producers who care for their environment.



Bottles & cheese to go
Drinks & nibbles to have in
Wine & cider tastings

Updated Christmas opening hours
for December and January [here](#)

Private hire available
email us on hello@pullo.shop

Online shop - local delivery &
UK mainland shipping





Links

- People's Trust for Endangered Species
<https://ptes.org/campaigns/traditional-orchard-project/>
- Three Counties Cider and Perry Association
<https://tccpa.co.uk/>
- National Association of Cidermakers *<https://cideruk.com/>*
- The Orchard Project *www.theorchardproject.org.uk/*
- Common Ground *www.commonground.org.uk/*
- Cider Women *www.facebook.com/CiderWomen*
- Orchard Network *www.orchardnetwork.org.uk/*

