

Acre of trees from Devon will grow on the Sandringham Estate

# Apples for the Queen's basket

RICHARD AUSTIN



AN ORCHARD of Devonshire apple trees is to be planted in the Queen's Sandringham Estate to mark and celebrate her Golden Jubilee.

The apple trees, all from Thornhayes nursery in Cullompton, Mid Devon, will be planted in the Royal estate in honour of Her Majesty's half a century as Queen.

Kevin and Pat Croucher who have run the nursery for 11 years were asked to provide the trees by the Lord Lieutenant's office for Devon last year.

Mr Croucher said he was proud to have been asked to grow something which would be enjoyed for many years to come.

"We have supplied Buckingham Palace and the crown estates before now but this is a very special honour.

"We grow high-quality Westcountry apples and we are providing over an acre's worth of trees to the Sandringham Estate. The trees will be planted when they are about six feet tall and grow to well over 20 foot. They won't bare fruit for a few years but when they do they are sure to provide a delicious apple which I hope the Royal household will enjoy."

He added that the secret of growing delicious apples was "good husbandry".

"When we started this business we had one polytunnel and a shovel, now we grow over 300 varieties of apples including 76 from Devon. It takes hard work and lots of care and attention to grow a good quality tree. We are good at what we do and this is a nice way of giving something to the Queen which is unique to Devon."

Some of the varieties being donated include the Devonshire Quarrenden and Crimson Queen dessert apples, the Ponsford and Tom

## NATHAN PYNN

Putt cooking apples and the Northwood and Slack Ma Girdle cider apples.

To accompany the orchard will be a plaque which has the verse: "This orchard of trees was presented to Her Majesty the Queen by the people of Devon to commemorate Her Golden Jubilee".

A spokesman for the Sandringham Estate said last night: "It is always a pleasure for Her Majesty's grounds to be blessed with offerings from across the country. These trees are sure to make a beautiful addition and will be properly looked after."

Every town and parish council in the county was asked to contribute towards the funding of the project with most donating £10 each.

In addition to the trees, school children across the county were invited to illustrate a commemorative book of every variety of apple originating from Devon, with the best entries going forward to the final draft.

Major Page-Turner, deputy lieutenant for Devon, organised the apple tree donation illustrated book. He said he was delighted with the results. "I think it has been quite stunning. The imagination of some of the children has surpassed all expectations. It's fantastic when you consider the ages of some of the entrants."

Meanwhile in Cornwall, schools near St Austell were invited to take part in a Jubilee tree planting ceremony at Penrose Tip.

School children from Carclaze Infants and Juniors, Bugle County Primary and Treverbyn Primary Schools took part by donating £1 each with the money going to the Mayor's charities.

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