

# MARCHER APPLE NETWORK

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NEWSLETTER N° 2

Non-Members 50p

Summer 1996

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It is time for a review of the activities of the Network since autumn 1995, when the first Newsletter was produced, which included a list of forthcoming events. Members may be interested to hear what was involved, and the outcome:-

**Farm Open Day at Capel Tydist**, Bethlehem, near Llandeilo. Held in August, run jointly by Tir Cymer and the Brecon Beacons National Park, with the theme of "Farming and the environment working together". Tir Cymer is currently providing grants to local farmers in three pilot districts in Wales, one of which is Dinefwr, Carmarthenshire, to replant their traditional orchards, and, in 1994, had asked members of *MAN* to carry out a survey of 12 orchards in the area, in order to find out which varieties were grown there in the past. Some apples new to the survey team were found. Fortunately, names of some of these were provided by the farmers and they have proved to be native to the area, and not included in the Apple Register of the British Isles, and are therefore of particular interest. They included *Marged Nicolas*, *Pig yr Wÿydd* (Goose's Beak) and *Twll Tin Gŵydd*. The farmers were coy about providing a translation of this name, but it apparently referred to the resemblance of the apex of the fruit to the other end of the goose's anatomy! Although very early in the apple season, *MAN* put on a display of these local varieties, together with other apples which have been found growing in the area. The manned display aroused considerable interest, with a few new members being recruited. *MAN* has more than enough survey work to do in the Welsh Borders, but it is hoped that the initial effort in this part of the Principality may lead to members there beginning to collect information from other orchards. Who knows what other exciting finds are lurking in old neglected orchards?

**Workshop on Apple Identification**, by John Edgeley, Senior Fruit Lecturer at Pershore College of Horticulture. Held in September, as part of the Big Apple celebrations at Putley, Hereford, this proved to be a popular session and a valuable introduction to all the features of the fruit which need to be examined during the process leading to the naming of a variety. The twenty pupils learned how to use a key, and more or less successfully identified specimens provided by John to test their skills. The difficulties really commenced when they produced, at the end of the session, various problem apples from their own gardens or orchards, in the hope that the new experts in the class would provide names. As always, this exercise proved difficult, but a few were identified.

**The Malvern Autumn Show**, at the Three Counties Showground, in September. *MAN* put on a display of 18 unknown varieties from local orchards, inviting identification from the visitors to the stand, and relays of members manned the stand for the whole of the two days. A few additional helpers would have been ideal, to allow time away from the *MAN* table to tour the other displays. A steady stream of people came with specimens for identification, perhaps as there was no charge, unlike the R.H.S. team who were situated nearby, alongside their magnificent fruit display in the centre of the hall. A number of our visitors filled in Membership Forms, or, if not actually joining, purchased the Newsletter, and useful information was exchanged. We pinned up a list of varieties we were interested in locating, and this caught the eye of a passing journalist, who joined our ranks and gave us a useful write-up which included the list, in the November issue of Country Garden & Smallholding. Whiting Pippin was one which brought a welcome response from a reader. (See From our Correspondents, below). The list is repeated, under WANTED, near the end of this Newsletter.

**'The Big Apple' weekends** at Putley and Much Marcle, in October. At Putley, there was a good display of fruit, and *MAN* members again helped with identification of apples brought in by the public. Many had to be taken away for further work on them. Some of the more unusual varieties identified included Yorkshire Greening, Severn Bank, American Mother, Gascoyne's Scarlet, Emperor Alexander, Bismark and Norfolk Beauty. Much Marcle was the venue for a display of cider fruits, in which there is also a growing interest amongst orchard owners.

**Apple Day celebration** by *MAN* in October. Held in the large Clarence Hall, in Crickhowell, a variety of displays and entertainment brought in a large attendance. The evening opened with an audio-visual display by Mr. Paul Tomkins of Hay-on-Wye, portraying some delightful scenes. After a break for refreshments with an apple theme, the impressive display of plates of over 100 named varieties of old apples stretched the length of the hall, and was a reflection of a wonderfully productive season and the increasing success of the *MAN* members in locating these fruits. (At the 1994 display at Llanigon there were 63 varieties). Apple juicing was in progress, apple tasting proved popular, and apple juice made from individual varieties could be sampled, following which the commercially bottled juice made by one of our members, Keith Goverd, from near Bath, was snapped up by a number of discerning customers, with Christmas presents in mind. A few young apple trees were on sale, grafted by member, Paul Davis, who has a nursery in Capel Isaac, Carm., and the usual demand for apple identification was met. It was pleasant to meet up again with friends made during the preceding year, whose orchards we had visited, or we had met at Putley or Malvern. Some had come from as far afield as Shropshire, Newcastle Emlyn in West Wales, (with the Lady's Finger of Lancaster), and Radnorshire. The event again raised funds for the ongoing work in progress.

Sheila Leitch

- So, what else has been happening since Newsletter No.1?

#### **APPLE DISPLAY, GREEN DRAGON HOTEL, HEREFORD.**

We were approached by Caroline Hands, Organiser of the Hereford Three Choirs Festival 'Fringe' planned for 1997, to provide a display of apples at a promotional event organised by her on Saturday, 23rd March this year, as a forerunner for next year's activities. This consisted of an evening of poetry reading and songs on the theme of apples, presented by Roy Palmer and his wife, Pat, followed by cider and apple sampling. (Incidentally, Roy has compiled an anthology of prose, poems and songs, called *Ripest Apples*, which will be published to coincide with Apple Day on October 21st, price £5.95. Copies can be ordered in advance. Cheques should be made payable to the Big Apple Association and sent to Woodcroft, Putley, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2RD).

Providing specimens of the 1995 season, not yet consigned to the compost heap, was likely to prove something of a tall order, but our display material amounted to some 30 varieties, most of the credit for which must go to Mike and Chris Porter - from their splendid and valuable resource at Llangynidr - and to John Aldridge for manning the exhibition. In the end, it was a very presentable effort.

Ray Boddington

#### **NEWS OF OUR ORCHARDS**

##### **TREDOMEN COURT, Llanfילו, Breconshire.**

In December, eight MM106 stocks, which were budded in August 1994, were planted out in the fenced area. They are growing well, and some initial pruning will be carried out next winter. The varieties are Lord Suffield, Barnack Orange, Waltham Abbey Seedling (possibly Dr Harvey), Syke House Russet, Tyler's Kernel, and three costard-type apples, which we have provisionally called Downway, Arrow, and Herefordshire Costard. Many more varieties will be planted out this autumn and winter. The 20 young MM106 stocks in the nursery area survived the serious drought of summer '95, possibly aided by the permeable mulch matting laid along the row, which helped retain the moisture in the soil and also prevented competitive grass growth. Scions were collected last winter from some of the interesting finds from recent orchard surveys, and have been grafted on these stocks.

Sheila Leitch

##### **WESTHOPE, near Canon Pyon, Herefordshire.**

Another 7 varieties have been added to the small orchard at this site and are growing strongly at the time of going to press. The varieties are the Butter Apple, Lady's Finger of Hereford, Duke of Devonshire, Summer Golden Pippin, Prince Alfred, Winter Quoining and Severn Bank. It is intended to bud the rest of the rootstocks in August.

Ray Boddington

### **CROFT PENDARREN, Llangynidr, Breconshire.**

On the top of the steep wooded bank of the river Usk, near Llangynidr, is a narrow field of about one acre, called Croft Pendarren on the parish tithe map of 1842. From vantage points among the oak trees on the northern side one can look across the river to the Forest of Myarth, or down towards the remains of an old corn mill beside the Glaisfer brook. The southern boundary along the lane to the former common is marked by a hedge which appears, from a count of the constituent shrubs, to be at least nine hundred years old.

The family which own the field and the surrounding farmland have offered Croft Pendarren to *MAN* for the creation of a traditional orchard. Until recently the field has been grazed by sheep, but there is now encroachment by bracken which will need to be controlled. The sward contains many wildflowers such as bluebells, lady's slipper, pignut, betony and sorrel, and these attract butterflies like common blue, small copper and meadow brown. The venerable oak trees along the top of the river bank provide a home for a colony of purple hairstreak and a congenial habitat for many birds. All three of our native woodpeckers have been heard there this spring, and the yaffle is often seen feeding on ants in a neighbouring orchard. Mistle thrushes sing from the oaks, and mistletoe grows on hawthorns beneath. Four years ago, the only golden oriole to be recorded in Breconshire this century was calling from the oaks.

It is intended to plant about thirty standard trees of old varieties of apple traditionally grown in Wales and the Marches. A start was made last winter when the first three trees, *Marged Nicolas*, *Pig yr Wÿdd* and *Dumelow's Seedling* (syn. *Wellington*), from Llanwrda stock, were planted. When the trees are larger, grazing of the field by sheep will be an option.

We hope that planting the orchard will enhance the rich ecosystem of the site, and that the insectivorous birds present, like the wood warblers and pied flycatchers, will contribute to the biological control of aphids and codling moth, just as, over three hundred years ago, the nightingale brood in William Lawson's orchard\* helped to cleanse his trees of "Caterpillars and all noysome worms and flies". *MAN* is extremely grateful to the Gibbs family for their generous help with this venture.

Mike & Chris Porter

### **ORCHARD GLEANINGS**

During the past two winters, the Botanical Society of the British Isles, in conjunction with Plantlife, has carried out a survey of the current state of the mistletoe population in Britain. There has been speculation lately about a decline in the mistletoe population, linked with the clearance of traditional apple orchards. In Powys we are on the western edge of the range of mistletoe in Britain, but the bright green bunches of the parasite are still quite a feature of

\**A New Orchard and Garden*, William Lawson, First Edition, 1618.

old orchards in Herefordshire. Heavy infestations could eventually kill both the host apple tree and the parasite, but this can be avoided by harvesting the mistletoe as a cash crop at Christmas. Three of the orchards with mistletoe that we visited last autumn are mentioned below.

A farm orchard on a south-facing hillside near Llangynidr, in the Usk valley, was mainly composed of cider fruit, heavily laden with bright red-streaked apples glinting in the autumn sunshine. Odd trees of cookers or eaters were interspersed. Cox's Pomona and Tom Putt were identified, and a Worcester Pearmain and Bramley's Seedling with mistletoe, but several trees were unrecognised and will need further investigation.

At Llyswen in the Wye valley we recorded an orchard planted in 1900, which is notable for its wide range of fine dessert and culinary apples; Emperor Alexander, Lord Hindlip and Charles Ross intermingle with Blenheim Orange and Allington Pippin. In an adjacent orchard on the same property, with King of the Pippins and Norfolk Royal, there was a cooker, provisionally identified as King's Acre Bountiful, which has cropped up in several places and puzzled us. As in most traditional orchards we have looked at, there are problematical Codlins - conical, ribbed, green apples, grown as early cookers. Back in 1883 in a report on the "Great Apple and Pear Exhibition" at Hereford, Keswick Codlin is described as "the best early in Herefordshire as an orchard tree". Soon after this date it was overtaken by Lord Grosvenor, which is similar in appearance; then both were superseded by Emneth Early, a cross between the two earlier Codlins. Distinguishing these Codlins can be a bit of a headache!

An orchard belonging to a former smithy on the edge of the ancient Forest of Haywood, just outside Hereford, fairly bristles with mistletoe. Fine old trees of Golden Noble, Blenheim Orange, Tom Putt and King of the Pippins, all heavy with fruit last autumn, are accompanied by trees of Court Pendu Plat, a late keeper which is reputed to have been around for centuries before this area became a royal forest. Also present was a tree tentatively identified as Herefordshire Pearmain, bearing fairly large conical apples with a lightly russeted yellow and red skin and a vinous flavour. Another puzzler was a round yellow apple with exceptionally downy sepals and a distinctive sweet lemony taste. So far this apple has defied identification, but it might possibly be the long-lost Knight's Lemon Pippin.

The precarious state of our local orchards, with many trees dying of old age and neglect, was highlighted by a return visit to a mixed orchard at Checkley Common. This was where we had been shown Pitmaston Pine Apple, Herefordshire Pomeroy (locally called Sugar Apple) and King's Acre Pippin in 1994. We were saddened to see that several trees had been ring-barked by livestock during the previous winter. We have taken grafts of some of the rarer varieties, including one tentatively identified as Rymer by a visitor to our stand at

the Malvern Autumn Show. John Sewell has drawn up a plan recording the names and positions of the 170 fruit trees, which include eating, cooking and cider apples, pears, plums and cherries in this fine old orchard.

We also revisited the Llanwrda orchard surveyed for Tir Cymen in 1994, where we had been shown the old Welsh apples Marged Nicholas and Twil Tin Gŵydd. The former is a medium-sized dual purpose fruit similar to Pitmaston Pine Apple in skin colour and texture; the latter yet another Codlin! In 1994 we managed to identify about ten varieties of apple including Gascoyne's Scarlet. Last year, with more trees bearing fruit, we were able to add another five to the list including Allington Pippin and Rival. A few mysteries still remain, in particular a large yellow-green angular apple rather like Catshead or Lord Derby in appearance but sweet and tasty. Any ideas?

Mike Porter

- We would welcome ideas for the next newsletter. We need a mix which will be of interest to a wide range of apple enthusiasts, amateurs and experts. A series of articles covering the basics of fruit growing begins, in this issue, with rootstocks and grafting.

#### KNOW YOUR ROOTSTOCKS

I love that look of amazement most people have when they're told that if you plant a seed from a Cox's Orange Pippin you won't get a Cox's Orange Pippin tree. "A rootstock, what's that?" normally follows.

Although many of our finest apple varieties originated as chance seedlings, they themselves cannot be increased in the same way. Seeds normally produce inferior throwbacks but some varieties, notably Blenheim Orange and King of the Pippins, have a higher tendency than most to produce offspring somewhat similar to themselves. In order to obtain a variety true-to-type, it must be propagated vegetatively by grafting or budding onto a rootstock. What about cuttings? The Ancient Greeks and Romans wrote of the difficulty of rooting apples from cuttings, and things have changed little since then, except that recent research on this aspect is showing some progress. The exceptions known as 'pitchers' don't need help from researchers, as farmers and cottagers in the last century knew that these would root from cuttings, particularly from 'burrs'. According to Brogdale pomologist, Dr. Joan Morgan, Ben's Red was propagated by this method in Cornwall, and, similarly, Burr Knot in South Wales, where it was also used as a rootstock.

Rootstocks help determine the ultimate size of the tree and, for apples, we are fortunate in having a choice wider than for other top fruit, the effect ranging from extremely dwarfing to full orchard standard. Gone is the confusion that once surrounded rootstocks, but so have the old names like Paradise, Jaune de Metz, Doucin, Broad-leafed English and Nonsuch. Gone, too, are the Free

stocks - suckers or seedlings from crab apples and seeds from cider pomace - usually vigorous, but variable in quality and slow to come into bearing. Instead, we have letters and numbers to denote the different stocks, whose vigour can now be fairly accurately predicted.

We know that the new M27 will restrict growth to what is described by some as a 'patio novelty'. For others, it is seen in more useful terms, enabling them to grow a large number of varieties in a small space. It requires the very best soil and attention. At the other end of the scale we have the very vigorous M25, followed closely by MM111, both suitable for full and half-standards. The M series had largely been classified by 1917, at East Malling, with the Malling-Merton series beginning trials in 1945, but further improvements became necessary, as some stocks were discovered to be carrying plant virus diseases. The clean-up involved the collaboration of East Malling and Long Ashton research stations, resulting in EMLA stocks, free from known viruses. We tend to continue to use the old prefixes, but some nurserymen state, for example, EMLA9 instead of M9.

So what of M9, the next size up from M27? This stock is popular with commercial growers and is used for the National Collection at Brogdale. It can be managed from ground level, or, at most, from a low step-ladder. It has been suggested it has the effect of enhancing fruit colour, but this could be accounted for by greater exposure of the fruit to light and sun, due to M9's frequent training as a small, centre-leader tree. In gardens, I've seen varieties on this stock in a sorry state, as they are often left unstaked and competing with robust growth around them. M9 requires permanent staking, good soil and clean cultivation.

Mentioned so far have been the two most vigorous rootstocks and the two weakest. We are left with the two in the middle of the range, M26 and MM106. *MAN* favours the latter, which is about 20% stronger than M26, and is very versatile, as it can be used for all trained shapes, from cordon to half-standard. The NCCPG\* orchard of historic and local apples at Berrington Hall, a National Trust property, and our new 'museum' orchard at Tredomen Court, have both been propagated on MM106. M26 is much favoured by some nurseries and is suitable for cordons, small espaliers, pyramids and bush trees. When grown as a bush/short half-standard, it might need staking for 4 or 5 years, or even permanently in some of the more exposed parts of our region.

There is nothing to stop you from mixing the rootstocks to suit your requirements, or to make allowances for the vigour possessed by an individual variety. To take an extreme example: *Bramley's Seedling* would totally dwarf that intriguing Worcestershire variety *May Queen*, even if both were grown on the same type of rootstock, were of the same age, and given identical growing

\* National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens

conditions. At Girton College, Cambridge, the old orchard is being rejuvenated, with most varieties being grown on MM106 and the weaker varieties on MM111, allowing the same spacing between trees, thus giving a fairly even appearance. The quality and depth of soil will also affect the ultimate size of the tree. With traditional standards on M25 (also MM111 for varieties of above average vigour), a minimum spacing of 25ft should be allowed. Trees in old Bramley orchards can still be seen, spaced at 40ft. apart. Allow 15ft. to 18ft. between bush trees or half-standards on MM106.

The detectives amongst you might be wondering why many of the numbers in the rootstock series are missing. Some failed in the field trials, but others were used for a time, then superseded; for instance MM106 replaced M7. There is probably a tree near you, growing on the once popular M2; and M4 can still be found in other parts of Northern Europe.

Rootstocks can be purchased from specialist growers. Our nearest supplier with a complete range is Frank P. Matthews Ltd., Berrington Court, Tenbury Wells, Worcs., WR15 8TH. Tel. 01584-810214. Or you could try growing them yourselves by stooling or layering.

John Aldridge

#### **TAKING THE GRAFT OUT OF GRAFTING**

Collect healthy, pencil-thick shoots of last year's extension growth (scion wood) when dormant, in January and early February, and place in polythene bags, exclude air, seal, and put in fridge. Start grafting as soon as buds on the rootstock start to swell, probably late March to early April.

The usual method is 'whip and tongue'. Make a flat slanting cut at the base of the scion and at a suitable place on the rootstock. Cut corresponding nicks on these flat surfaces to create a pair of matching tongues. Place the cut surfaces together so that the tongues interlock and the cambial regions just beneath the bark are in near perfect contact. Finally, bind the union tightly with grafting tape. For more detail, see *The Grafter's Handbook* by R.J.Gardner.

Graft rootstocks for standard and half-standard trees 12-15" above ground; bush, cordons etc 4-9", but above all, try hard to match exactly the size of the scion and the rootstock at the grafting point. Grafting high is an advantage. If the graft fails, you can easily bud in late July/August, or re-graft the following spring.

Remember, you are conducting an operation. Cleanliness is very important. Brush all wood with a standard mixture of Dithane (obtainable from garden centres) with water containing a single drop of washing-up liquid, to kill any fungal spores. Allow to dry before grafting. Wash the knife frequently in methylated spirit to prevent spread of infection. Make sure your hands are clean.



Use a special grafting knife which is honed on one side only. They are very sharp and give a straighter cut. Make cuts opposite a bud. The increased meristematic activity helps heal the wound quickly. Cut the scion back to 3-5 buds, with a straight cut just above the top bud.

Freezer bags, cut into 1" strips, make good grafting tape. Loosely tie polythene bags over the completed grafts to act as greenhouses until new shoots are growing strongly. Cut the grafting tape when the wood starts to swell (late July/early Aug). If the union looks weak, re-tie with a splint.

Remove young shoots as they appear on the rootstock with a sideways motion. Pulling them downwards can damage the bark. Most scions will start to sprout quickly - don't be deceived - some will shrivel and die! On the other hand, don't be over-hasty. Some buds may take many weeks to sprout and can still result in excellent grafts. Be happy with 60-70% success. A final word of advice. Put a fabric sticky plaster on your thumb before starting to work to avoid cutting yourself - not after.

Paul Davis

#### FROM OUR CORRESPONDENTS

As a result of our presence at various events, and also publicity in the press, membership has trebled. Some fascinating information is coming in from the Network, and a few items are given, 'pour encourager les autres' as they say:-

Roderick Pomeroy, a forester with the National Trust in Shropshire, is keen to obtain graftwood of rare varieties grown in North Herefordshire and Shropshire. As you can guess, pomeroys are of particular interest, so the Herefordshire Pomeroy, found last year in Glasbury, will be heading his way.

A phone call from Swadlincote, Derbyshire, turned out to be from the great grandson of the innkeeper, Mr Taylor, who, about 1870, found a good apple growing on the thatch of the Hardinge Arms, King's Newton, Melbourne, in the same county. He transplanted it and it became known as the Newton Wonder. Orchard growers in Australia were keen to have this useful dual purpose apple, and several attempts were made to send graftwood. Success finally came when the scions were inserted in potatoes, where they survived the long journey in the old clippers without drying out, and were duly grafted 'down under'. When the fridge is so full of scions that there is no room for the perishable groceries, yet the mice or rabbits might play havoc with the overflow heeled in in the garden, could this be a novel answer? Great grandfather's orchard still remains, and it is hoped to obtain graftwood from some of the other varieties still surviving there, such as Molester (probably a local synonym for Maltster), and Whiting Pippin, and to look at some others, names unknown.

One of our members, Bob Kennard, of Graig Farm, near Penybont, Radnorshire, who supplies organically reared meat, produced a collection of old apples for identification. The most intriguing was a tall, almost columnar apple, said to be a late cooker, with a blob like a paint run on the shoulder of some, and a long slender stalk. There were two trees at his farm, and I later found the same variety at another nearby farm, on a very venerable tree. We all puzzled over it, and took it to the RHS identification at Malvern Show. A Lady's Finger was suggested, but now Mike Porter wonders if it might be the variety called Stoup Leadington, a Scottish apple which has numerous synonyms, one of which is Tankard. Growing to quite a size, the Radnorshire apple would fit nicely into a half pint tankard, but apparently the name refers to the protrusion just below the stalk of some of the fruits, resembling the spout of a jug, as a stoup is a pitcher. Some supporting evidence for it being this variety comes from an old letter, dated 1808, sent to Messrs Bigg of Worcester, by the Gibson-Watt family of Doldowlod, near Rhayader, not too far from Penybont. Stoup Leadington and some other Scottish varieties are part of the fruit tree order listed on it. Was this a hardy, late keeping apple which could survive at high altitudes, and therefore popular in the last century with the Radnorshire farmers? The orchards at the adjacent property of Ystrad, owned by Mr Julian Gibson-Watt, were visited in the autumn of 1994, but it was a poor season, and few of the trees bore any fruit. Certainly, we did not find anything resembling the tall apples from Penybont. Another visit there this autumn is planned. In the meantime, does anyone know the site of a local Stoup Leadington, so that fruits can be compared?

Another member, Anthony Brooks, wrote to tell us he is currently working at Elton Hall, near Leominster, which was owned in the 18th century by Thomas Andrew Knight, the pioneer plant breeder. There he raised a number of fruit varieties, including apples and pears, giving them the prefix 'Elton'. Anthony is reintroducing Knight's varieties back to Elton, but is still endeavouring to locate some of the apples, and the cherries Elton Heart, Black Eagle and Waterloo. He tells us there is an old Sam's Crab growing there, and a newly planted Wormsley Pippin, obtained from Deacon's Nursery, in the Isle of Wight, two of the apples we were seeking last year, so a visit is called for to this orchard.

An interesting letter arrived from County Clare, enclosing a Newsletter compiled by the Irish Seed Savers Association, As well as operating a seed exchange amongst members, of those flower and vegetable seeds no longer commercially available under EU regulation, we were delighted to learn that they have an Apple Project. The aim is to find and conserve the native apples of Southern Ireland. Similar work is being done in Northern Ireland, and the two groups are co-operating to gather and graft all the material, already numbering over 50 varieties, which will form the basis of a National Collection of the Native Irish Apple at University College, Dublin. The field work carried out last autumn rediscovered several varieties as single ageing trees. They have also completed the necessary legal requirements with the Department of Agriculture, to import

30 native Irish Apple varieties held at the National Fruit Collection at Brogdale. In Ireland, as in the Welsh Marches country where we are operating, the need for urgent survey work is all too obvious.

Whilst in Scotland recently, Andrew Large, a keen member living in the Usk valley, came across a small booklet entitled 'Historic Apples of Scotland', compiled by Craig Pillans, and sent us a photocopy, with the suggestion that perhaps something similar could be put together, covering the native Welsh apples. Sounds a good idea! Listed there is Stoup Leadington, and a phone call to Craig confirmed that he hopes he may have this variety in his orchard collection in Lincolnshire. He is going to send fruit later this season, to compare with the unusual apple found at the two farms in Radnorshire.

Contact has also been made in the South West, where Kevin Croucher has saved some local varieties. Another success story from that area is the Dorset apple, Warrior, a sample of which was brought to us at Putley, last autumn, by Mrs Gwen Rogers of Sturminster Newton, who, while on a visit to Herefordshire, came to the show to let us see this unusual apple. She has recently sent budwood from three slightly differing variations of this apple.

#### HONEST DOUBT

Last year's list of wants brought some results, so below are listed a few more. Locations for some of these are required where doubt exists as to whether the correct apple is held in the collections. Some of the accessions at Brogdale, such as the Herefordshire Costard, are listed as false. We would like to hear of old trees, which are reputed to be of the varieties listed below, which have not come from Brogdale. We hope to study some of them and, to borrow the word used in the Antiques Roadshow, we want their provenance. Others are listed for another reason. For instance, there has long been confusion as to whether Dr Harvey and Waltham Abbey Seedling are distinct varieties or are one and the same. John Scott's catalogue lists both, with the taste of Dr Harvey described as acid, and Waltham Abbey as sweet and cooking to an amber tint. Both are also featured in the Herefordshire Pomona. Bunyard lists them as one and the same. It was interesting to see, in Common Ground's April Issue, 'Apple Day News', that this subject has now been under discussion on Radio Norfolk, in the county where the Dr. Harvey apple was well known, following a display of trees and fruit. The original stock had come from Brogdale. We hope to pay an autumn visit there, taking with us some problem apples, for comparison with named varieties there. There is an old tree in an orchard at Bronllys, Breconshire, known to the owner as Waltham Abbey, the name passed down to her from her parents. The same variety exists in other gardens nearby, including my own. Yet the fruit appears to match closely the description and illustration of Harvey in Rosanne Sanders' 'The English Apple'. The leaves are fairly small, the blossom is particularly well-coloured, and the fruit is far from being acidic, in fact can be cooked without any sweetening, or eaten as a dessert. So, which have we here?

Incidentally, to complicate matters further, the plates on that page of the book have been transposed, so that the left hand apple is actually *George Neal* and not *Harvey*. The question is, was the fruit, which is described and illustrated in the book, from Brogdale?

#### WANTED

*Dr Harvey*

*Stoup Leadington*

*Egg, (syns. Long May or White Paradise)*

*Chiffey Seedling*

*Onibury Pippin*

*Hereford Costard*

*Longville's Kernel (syn. Sam's Crab)*

*Lady Derby*

*Credenhill Pippin*

*Grey Leadington*

*Herefordshire Spice*

*Stoke Park Pippin*

*Wormsley Pippin*

*Whiting Pippin*

Sheila Leitch

#### APPLE IDENTIFICATION PROGRAMME

With apple identification one of our foremost problems, the lack of the pomological equivalent of a botanical flora is becoming increasingly apparent. If only there were numerous volumes of Rosanne Sanders' excellent book, '*The English Apple*'. The detailed description of the 122 apples in this book, together with the beautiful paintings of blossom, fruit and leaf, enable accurate identifications to be made. Between us, at our identification sessions, we have access to the books listed below, all of which cover a range of varieties. If all this information could be made more readily available in a composite form, a short list for further consideration could be produced.

Taylor, H.V., *The Apples of England* (London, Crosby Lockwood & Son. Ltd., 3rd Edition, 1948).

Sanders, Rosanne, *The English Apple* (Phaidon, Oxford, 1988).

Bultitude, John, *Apples - A Guide to the Identification of International Varieties* (London, Macmillan Press Ltd, 1983).

Bunyard, Edward A., *A Handbook of Hardy Fruits, Vol.1; Apples & Pears* (London, John Murray, 1920).

Morgan, Joan & Richards, Alison, *The Book of Apples*, (Ebury Press, 1993).

Hogg, Robert, *The Fruit Manual*, 5th Edition (London, Journal of Horticulture Office, 1884).

Hogg, Robert & Bull, Henry G., *Herefordshire Pomona (Hereford & London, 1877-85)*

A computer programme was suggested, into which, eventually, the information on all known varieties could be fed, (input, I believe, is the correct word). As a start, Paul Davis has written a pilot programme in BASIC based on the information in Taylor, and this seems to work quite well as far as it goes. Data from other books needs to be added. MAN has purchased a small notebook computer, suitable for use at identification meetings, or even in the orchards. The prospect of having, to hand, some descriptive details of all the apples of the

Herefordshire Pomona, is exciting, even for those of us who only grudgingly accept that there is something to be said for computers, (such as easier production of Newsletters). Paul is currently working on an expanded version in TURBO PASCAL but is becoming bogged down. Are there any programmers out there who can help? The final identification will always be arrived at by general consensus, but a short list of all the probables would be a great help.

Sheila Leitch

## COOKERY CORNER

As the apple based refreshments were so popular at our Apple Event in 1995, we thought you might like to have some of the recipes, and our bumper, 16 page Newsletter No. 2, allows some space for these. Please send us your own favourites for the next issue.

Everyone appreciates how versatile apples are in cooking. Sometimes, in a good year, the trees yield a surfeit of fruit which can be embarrassing - even after loading family, friends and neighbours with as much as they can comfortably use. (How welcome then is a juicing machine!) However, using the surplus presents, even then, quite a challenge - so we thought a few recipes in the Newsletter might be interesting. There are lots of apple-recipe books readily available, so the following ideas are just a start.

**Homemade soups** seem to acquire an extra freshness if a few apples (either cookers or eaters, whichever you think will tone with the other ingredients) are added. They can be sliced and partially cooked in butter with onions, or just used without any prior cooking straight into the stock or as a purée. In hot weather, chilled Apple Vichyssoise or Apples and Courgette soup, with cream and spring onions added at the end, make a delicious, truly summer dish. A simple fish paté will go further if a little apple purée is added, and gives an extra tangy flavour too.

**Adding an apple to poultry stuffings** seems to make the bird more succulent, especially pheasant, and the flavour complements those of rabbit and guinea fowl.

**Apple cakes** are a good way of using the excess. Different countries, and our own British counties, have devised their own. Perhaps it's really down to individual cooks own inspirations!

**German Apple Cake.** (adapted from a 1970's sugar packet)

**Base.** 4 oz. S.R.flour, 2 oz. ground almonds, 3 oz. butter, 1½ beaten egg, 1 teasp. lemon juice.

Butter and line deep 8" cake tin with loose bottom.

Sift together flour, sugar and 1 oz. ground almonds, rub in butter until mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Mix to a stiff dough with egg & lemon juice. Press over base of prepared tin. Sprinkle with remaining almonds and set aside to chill.

**Filling.** 1 lb. cooking apples, 3 oz. soft brown sugar, 1 teasp. lemon juice.

Peel, core and thinly slice apples into bowl. Mix with sugar and lemon juice, then arrange over cake base.

Topping. Mix together 2 oz. S.R. flour (sifted), 5 oz. soft brown sugar, 1 teasp. ground cinnamon. Rub in 2 oz. Butter. Sprinkle this crumbly mixture onto the apples.

Bake in mod. oven 180C. (170C fan assisted) for 60-75 mins., or until golden brown. Cool in tin.

#### **Scandinavian Apple Cake.** (a friend's recipe)

Cake base. 8 oz. sugar, 3 oz. marg., 3 oz. butter, 8 oz. S.R. flour, 2 eggs.

Brush Swiss Roll tin with melted fat. Melt butter and marg. in saucepan. Do not get too hot. Stir in sugar. Add beaten eggs alternately with sifted flour. Pour half mixture into tin. Cover with overlapping slices of approx. 12 oz. cooking apples (peeled). Pour remaining cake mixture over these.

Topping. 3 oz. sultanas, 2 level tablesp. soft brown sugar, 2 tablesp. clear honey, 2 tablesp. lemon juice, 1 level teasp. ginger and 1 of cinnamon.

Mix these ingredients together.

Arrange 4 rows of sliced apples across width of cake (approx. 4 oz. of peeled apples). Sprinkle topping mixture in between apple rows.

Bake at 160C for 40 mins., then at 150C for 20 mins.- possibly temperature may need adjusting according to type of oven.

#### **Hereford Cider Cake.** (from Usk College of Agriculture.)

4 oz. butter or marg., 4 oz. soft brown sugar, 2 eggs size 3, 4 oz. S.R. flour, 1 oz. ground almonds, 2 tablesp. dry or sweet cider.

Put all these ingredients into a bowl and beat well together for 2-3 mins. until smooth. Spoon into prepared 8" cake tin. Refrigerate while making topping.

Topping. 2 large Bramley type apples, 1 oz. butter, 3 oz. glacé cherries (quartered), 4 oz. jumbo oats, 3 tablesp. golden syrup, 4 tablesp. mincemeat.

Peel, core and coarsely grate one of the apples but roughly chop the other after preparing it similarly. Put butter and syrup into a saucepan. Stir over a low heat until butter is melted. Remove from heat and stir in cherries, oats, mincemeat and apples. Spread on top of the cake mixture in tin.

Bake in centre of oven for 2 hours at Gas Mark 3, 160C. Cool in tin for 30 mins., then put out carefully onto wire rack. Eat within 10 days or so.

Chris Porter

#### **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

Saturday/Sunday, 21st/22nd September. The Malvern Autumn Show, at the Three Counties Showground, Malvern. Various fruit displays and identifications.

October 4/5th. Possible trip to National Apple Collection at Brogdale, Faversham, Kent. Minibus/coach, or more probably train, leaving Hereford Friday evening. Overnight accommodation at Faversham, and full day at

Brogdale, returning to Hereford late evening. Please phone Sheila Leitch if interested in this outing. Tel. 01497-847354.

Friday, 11th October. Croft Castle, which has connections with the fruit breeder Thomas Andrew Knight. It is a National Trust property, north of Leominster. Apple displays, juicing, ciders and tasting of old varieties. Tel. 01568-780246.

Saturday & Sunday, 12/13th October. Erddig Apple Festival, Erddig Hall, Wrexham. 11.0am - 5.0pm. Walled garden dating from the 18th century, with rare fruit trees. The Head Gardener will be there to identify your apples, and there is an apple book display and cider tasting. Fruit packs, baskets and fruit liqueurs on sale. Group bookings can be arranged at reduced rates. Tel.01978-355314 for further details.

Saturday, 19th - Sat 26th October. Week of events at Cider Museum, Hereford. Display of cider fruits, and on Sunday 20th, Apple Identification Workshop by John Edgeley, Senior Fruit Lecturer of Pershore College of Horticulture. Advance bookings essential. For details, ring Estelle Jakeman 01432 - 354207. On Saturday, 26th, 11.0am-4.0pm, identification of non-cider varieties by *MAN*.

Saturday, 19th October. The first Big Apple weekend, held at Putley. Demonstration of planting and after care of young trees. Advice on choice of varieties for a small collection. Fruit displays. Tastings. Identifications of apples by *MAN*. Phone Jackie Denman for details of all Putley events. Tel: 01531 - 670544.

Sunday, 20th October. Guided walk with Roy and Pat Palmer, with readings from book, *Ripest Apples*, which is being launched. Fruit displays and identifications.

Monday, 21st October. Apple Day. Events countrywide. Programme available from Common Ground. SAE to Seven Dials Warehouse, 44, Earlham Street, London, WC2H 9LA.

In Breconshire, at the Mountain Centre, Mynydd Illtyd, near Brecon, a morning event for children from a local school, with an introductory talk by *MAN*, a small display of interesting looking old apples, plus apple games and pie making .

Saturday, 26th October. The second Big Apple weekend. Ploughman's Lunch with Ray Williams - Talk on cider fruit, followed by identifications. Booking essential. Tel. As below.

Sunday, 27th October. Introduction to Perry-making. Much Marcle, nr. Ledbury. 10.30am - 4.0pm. Perry from orchard to barrel - spend a day meeting the trees, collecting the pears and making the perry. (If no perry pears are available, then cider will be made instead). £15.00 to include a cold lunch. For more details, or to book a place, telephone 01531 - 670544. Early booking advised as places are limited.

Friday, 1st November. Marcher Apple Network's Celebration of Apple Day at Orleton Village Hall, near Leominster at 7.0 pm. Display of old apples, identification panel, juicing demonstration and Apple Brains Trust. The Network's new laptop computer will be put through its paces, showing the apple identification programme. Apple-based refreshments will be available. Our two previous events, have been at Llanigon, in the Wye Valley and Crickhowell, in the Usk Valley. This year, we hope to meet many of our Hereford and Shropshire based members and friends. Admission £2 at door.

Saturdays, 2nd & 9th November. Practical pruning at Berrington Hall, near Leominster, at 9.30am. Bring secateurs and wellingtons. £4. Advance booking essential. Tel. 01568-615721.

Thursday, 7th November. Llandeilo & District Gardening Club are holding an Apple Evening at the Civic Hall, (Opp. main car park), Llandeilo, at 7.30pm. Talk and display. *MAN* committee members will talk about the work of their group, and give advice about growing apples in a wet climate. There will be grafting and identification demonstrations, and, hopefully, a large display of old apple varieties. The group's laptop computer will be showing the apple identification programme, which is being put through its trials. Advice and help from computer buffs, experienced in programme making, will be much appreciated. All are welcome, and as this is a large hall, no tickets are necessary.

## **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

As mentioned in Newsletter No. 1, the financial year for *MAN* begins 1st August, to coincide with the beginning of the Apple Season. We are pleased to be able to report a large increase in membership, over the last 12 months, with numbers approaching 100. Support is coming from a wider area than the Marches, and very useful contacts with other groups working towards similar aims are being made. As our first Membership Application form did not suggest retaining the informative part, we feel a number of people may not now have the address of John Aldridge, our Membership Secretary, to whom subs. for 1996/7 should be sent, at Orchard Barn, Ocle Pychard, Hereford, HR1 3RB. In the firm belief that all members will wish to continue their support, we have decided to send out this second Newsletter to all those on our address list, and trust we shall recoup the cost of this by receiving renewals, without the need for reminders. The basic subscription is only £2, which barely covers postage and cost of the Newsletter, but donations in addition will be very welcome, and put to good use. PLEASE SEND OFF YOUR SUBS NOW, while you have it in mind, and keep our Treasurer happy. On the subject of cash, we are delighted to be able to report that we have received a further grant from the Prince of Wales' Committee, which is going towards the cost of the orchard planting schemes.

*MAN is grateful to Mr Richard Booth, of Booth Books, Ltd., Hay-on-Wye, another of our members, for again kindly printing this Newsletter.*