

MARCHER APPLE NETWORK

NEWSLETTER N° 3

Non-Members 50p

Summer 1997

THE ORIGIN OF MAN

With so many new members, it may be helpful to review the background to the formation of *MAN* and explain why we are so pleased to learn of the exciting new grant scheme recently launched in Wales.

In the autumn of 1993, the Brecknockshire Wildlife Trust was contacted by a firm of Environmental Consultants who had been commissioned by the Countryside Council for Wales to undertake a study on the extent and distribution of traditional orchards in three trial areas in Wales, and to assess their conservation value. Two Trust members, with a few like-minded apple enthusiasts from Herefordshire, had been surveying the old orchards of the Welsh Marches for three years, and were able to assist with the project. The Consultancy firm, after meeting them, recommended that a formally constituted group should be set up which could then apply for funding, and act as a pioneer group in Wales. So began the Marcher Apple Network, with 7 founder members. The area we planned to cover was the six counties of the southern Marches comprising Breconshire, Radnorshire, Monmouthshire, Herefordshire, Shropshire and Gloucestershire. Aided by a grant from the Prince of Wales' Committee, *MAN*'s local survey and identification work continued. Following the completion of the Consultants' survey, CCW published, in 1995, an information booklet, "*Traditional Orchards*", which confirmed the serious decline in orchards which has occurred this century. The same year, *MAN* was again approached by CCW, and asked to survey 12 orchards in the Dinefwr area near Llandeilo, and identify the apples local to that area. This was one of three pilot areas where a countryside stewardship scheme, called Tir Cymen, was launched, with grant aid to farmers to replant local varieties in their orchards, and combine good farming practice with conservation. An attractive loose translation of Tir Cymen is 'a well crafted countryside'. Some interesting, very local, Welsh apples were found during the course of the survey, and a few still await identification.

Resulting from these earlier trials and surveys, CCW launched a new scheme at the Royal Welsh Show this year. Accompanied by an explanatory booklet, "*Orchards and Parkland Scheme Handbook*" this Welsh Orchard Initiative scheme aims to protect and enhance traditional orchards and parklands, which are rapidly declining features of the Welsh landscape. 50% grants are being made available for the first time, throughout Wales, to landowners who carry out work to protect and enhance the landscape and wildlife features of their traditional orchards or parklands, whilst providing opportunities for local communities to enjoy these facilities. This timely orchard initiative, with provision of grant aid, will surely encourage interest in safeguarding the genetic diversity of the old fruit trees which have survived the destruction of so many of the traditional orchards of the area.

Prior to the discovery of the very local Welsh apples found in the Llandeilo area, *MAN* had already located several other interesting apples. In Breconshire, many of the older generation fondly remember going scrumping for *Monmouthshire Green*. Only exhibited once, in 1883, and not in the National Collection at Brogdale, two old

trees (one fallen) were finally located in a remnant orchard near Aberedw, Radnorshire, since when, a few more have been found locally. This apple is a triple purpose one, used for cider, cooking and, by late autumn, is a pleasant dessert apple. It may turn out to be a synonym for Underleaf and is one of the apples we shall take to Brogdale for comparison. The Pomeroy of Hereford, an ancient variety, ready to eat and enjoy in the early autumn, was identified in a Glasbury orchard, as was Carnation, a big early cooker, ready by August to make the first apple pies of the season and possibly bred and named by Rev. John Hughes, curate of Glasbury towards the end of the 1700s. He was a pomologist, and was recorded as having planted up many of the orchards of the 'gentlemen's residences' in the parish. It is not known outside the area, and is not listed in the National Apple Register. It does well on the Old Red Sandstone soil. The old Glasbury orchards still display a range of dessert and culinary apples designed to provide a succession of fruit over a long season, and the trees may be the grafted replacements of the original varieties.

What fascinating names some of these old apples bear. The codlins were those which cooked to a froth and baked like a soufflé, and the medieval costards, imported from France from at least the 13th century, gave their name to the costermongers. The pearmain was shaped like an inverted pear. The quoinings had sharply angled ribs, like quins, and the beefings or biffens were late season cookers which were slowly baked in the bread oven, after the loaves were removed. They were then made into dried apple rings for winter storage. Many apples are known by different names in various localities. These synonyms can cause difficulties in identification. One variety of this latter type has been found in an old cider orchard in Glasbury, where it was known as Glasbury Red, but appears to be the Norfolk Beefing.

Our forefathers were very observant, and apples were sometimes named after their supposed resemblance to parts of certain animals. The likenesses can still be seen; for instance, Catshead, often with one of its five ribs pronounced like the pointed chin of a feline, Sheep's Nose, with its pointed apex, Pig's Snout, with a flattened apex, Goose's Bill, (a translation of one of the Welsh apples found in Dinefwr), and another Welsh one, which the farmer had to be coaxed to translate, and was apparently named after the other end of a goose! Apart from the Herefordshire Costard, not yet found for certain, all these types and varieties have been located in the Marches and further west. To date, three small museum orchards (see below) have been planted up, with young trees grafted from collected material, and many more young trees are now grafted from venerable trees near the end of their lives and are ready to be planted, mostly at Tredomen Court. Extinction is for ever, and the need to save this genetic diversity is paramount.

Copies of both of the CCW booklets can be obtained from the Marcher Apple Network at their autumn events, or by post. (Large SAE envelope, 20p, at least 20x21cm. If both booklets required, postage 38p).

Sheila Leitch

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

Talking about apples - many of which have largely disappeared from people's recollection, or are simply unknown - is a rewarding experience. Even if a 'three apple nation' is but an extreme characterisation of present-day consumer taste, the realisation that something of value from our past is no longer there - evoking happy childhood memories perhaps - strikes a chord with many people, plus the surprise

and delight at finding displays of different varieties still extant, that are more extensive than the average visitor expected.

The Malvern Autumn Show, at the Three Counties Showground. We were invited again to take a stand at this prestigious show, held at the end of September. Over two days, our display attracted a constant stream of visitors, notwithstanding what might be described as a keynote *RHS* display nearby, and a comprehensive collection by Herefordshire *NCCPG** of what may now be viewed in the walled garden at Berrington Hall National Trust, including some of the highly interesting pear varieties of Holme Lacy provenance, grown there as cordons. *MAN* had mustered some thirty varieties, with second earlies well represented. Tastings of *Norfolk Royal* - courtesy of Tom Froggatt - proved very popular, as did Sheila's early dessert apples from her Victorian garden. One, provisionally identified as *Melba*, was disputed by a visitor who had *Melba* in his orchard. Further investigation by Sheila suggests that hers may be another early season dessert called *Duchess of Oldenburg*, (synonyms *Borovitsky* and *Summer Peach*), which also has a lovely bloom like *Melba*, but, in addition, cooks well. Sheila has since found that her apple makes a lovely puree and a delicious juice, and she would appreciate hearing from any reader who knows of a location of *Duchess of Oldenburg*, for comparison. This is how we are learning. *Charles Ross* also aroused plenty of interest: (Some well-polished, well-rounded, highly coloured, standard-sized specimens of this apple appeared briefly on Marks & Spencer's shelves at about the same time). People were asking where propagating material could be obtained for the varieties on display: - not easy for us to provide customer satisfaction at the moment, but things will improve as we develop our home-grown resources. (See p.14 for sales lists).

October is, of course, the month of peak activity, which began for me, with a talk to Herefordshire Friends of the Earth, who were regaled with some slides and a representative sample of varieties spanning the whole season, and it ended with a similar presentation at Broadheath, Worcester, the two speakers having to battle with some flood and tempest in order to get there! At Croft Castle a reasonable number of apples were deployed in the space available. Opportunity was given for a quick look at the Croft family's local and long-established collection. Both here and at Putley (near Ledbury), where the annual 'Big Apple' events have made this village a sort of Mecca for apple enthusiasts, our services were much in demand for identifications. Similarly, the Hereford Cider Museum enlisted our help with pot fruit identification during their display of cider varieties.

Apple Day celebration at Orleton. This village, on the Herefordshire/Shropshire border, was chosen for our main display evening in October, where close on 100 varieties were on show. The ladies had also produced some splendid refreshments. One member had generously provided a demi-john of very more-ish apple ale, made to a recipe from 'the Poor Man's Cookbook'. With the simple recipe there, to back up the tastings, there will probably be numerous bottles of similar ale being made this season. See Cookery Corner, p. 13 for recipe. The opportunity was taken to put a carrier bag of windfall *Monmouthshire Green* apples through the Viga apple press. The resulting copious juice was handed out for comments to several onlookers, and was very favourably received, and found to have an interesting depth of flavour. Opportunity was taken to empanel a 'Brains Trust', and a stimulating question-and-

* National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens

answer session ensued, with plenty of audience participation by our visiting patrons. The event has helped the spread of membership in Shropshire, and heightened interest in local apples such as the Onibury Pippin.

Apple Evening at the Civic Hall Llandeilo. Llandeilo might be thought of as being well to the west of our supposed constituency. However, there have been several forays into the Towy Valley during the past couple of years, and the fact that the town has become something of a 'bastion' of the Marcher movement owes a great deal to the drive and energy of Paul Davis, but also serves to illustrate the point that our organisation does not seek to confine itself within defined boundaries, but operates more like a spider's web, reaching out where opportunities arise. The evening was arranged by the Llandeilo & District Gardening Club, and a large audience turned out to listen to Paul's talk in the spacious Civic Hall and, again, we managed a good display to round off the season. This included the Welsh apples found on the orchard survey done by Mike & Chris Porter and Sheila Leitch in the Llandeilo area, together with another local one, Glory of the West, a very beautiful dessert apple. We were, regrettably, less successful in identifying other samples that were brought to us, which failed to bear much resemblance to any varieties encountered by the Network previously. This emphasises the need for the spider, eventually, to produce many offspring in the form of local groups, all of whom can send their local finds of Welsh apples to add to the list being compiled, by Andrew Dixey, at the National Folk Museum at St. Fagans.

Hereford Town Hall. When Christmas had come and gone, and our ponderings over last season's conundrums had ground to a conclusion, and the last mouldering specimens been put out for the birds, we were surprised to receive an invitation to participate, at Hereford Town Hall on the 31st January, in an exhibition whose aim was to draw attention to what gives Hereford its particular character. Hereford is planning programmes in sympathy with the Rio Summit Agenda 21. We took along what we could find which, to our surprise, amounted to about 50 varieties, including an apple we asked people to identify, if they could. Known to its owner by the name her father had called it, which was 'Snout', it was identified by a visitor from Devon to the stand, as Pig's Snout, a mid-season variety used there for cider, and only found in a couple of old orchards in the west country. It was regarded as a good, late-keeping cooker by its Welsh owner. Are there several variants? The display excited quite a lot of interest among officials, and the rather small number of members of the public free to attend: a pity that the show was limited virtually to office hours. We had to clear up soon after 5.00pm. Sue Clifford, one of the founders of Common Ground, was one of three speakers for the evening event, and gave a most inspiring illustrated talk on the need for preserving local individuality, in which Herefordshire abounds.

Ray Boddington

Inaugural Croft Castle Fair. Over 50 varieties of apples were displayed at this Fair, held in October. Eight varieties had been cooked and many others were available for tasting. Some local manufacturers had given ciders and perry for tasting, and other producers were there in person with their juices and ciders, and several good trading contacts were made.

Several hundred people attended the hastily arranged event. This year, it will be held on October 11th, at 11.0 am, with an enlarged programme, and members living

in the area are asked to help. The date unfortunately clashes with the first day of the Putley 'Big Apple' weekend. Please contact Tom Froggatt at Ashford Mill, Ludlow, Tel. 01584-831650, with offers of apples for tastings or displays, or assistance on the day.

Tom Froggatt

NEWS OF OUR ORCHARDS

TREDOMEN COURT, Llanfilo, Breconshire.

In addition to the eight young trees which were planted here in December, 1995, a further eight varieties were put in this spring. The list for this site now comprises Barnack Orange, Devonshire Buckland, Carnation, Hunt's Duke of Gloucester, Lord Suffield, Syke House Russet, Tyler's Kernel, and Waltham Abbey Seedling, plus three different Costard type apples, also an early dessert (possibly a seedling) from Ffordd las, and a fine Calville-type late dual purpose apple from Glanheddwch, Glasbury; also three as yet unidentified apples from Tir Allen orchard, near Llanwrda, Carm. Of these, one died during the summer, and another is looking poor, suffering from downy mildew. These will be replaced with the same varieties. A further 50 'maidens' of interesting varieties will be planted this autumn.

Sheila Leitch

WESTHOPE, near Canon Pyon, Herefordshire.

This small orchard has now been planted up with 15 young trees, propagated on M25 stock, to make full standards. Varieties are:- Annie Elizabeth, Butter Apple, Duke of Devonshire, Gascoyne's Scarlet, Golden Harvey, Lady's Finger of Hereford (not the same as the Brogdale accession), Pig's Nose Pippin, Pomeroy of Hereford, (syn. Early Pomeroy in the Herefordshire Pomona), Prince Alfred, Sam's Crab, Scotch Bridget, Severn Bank (culinary, not the cider variety of the same name), Stoke Edith Pippin, Summer Golden Pippin and Winter Quoining. As the orchard planting space has now been filled, we are considering adding to this interesting collection by grafting an extra one or two varieties on each of the above trees, once they have branched at standard height. (Clearly labelled, we trust).

John Aldridge

CROFT PENDARREN, Llangynidr, Breconshire.

During last winter, planting continued in this new one acre orchard in the Usk valley and a further 12 varieties, grafted by Paul Davis, have been added to the Welsh trio planted in the 1995/6 winter. Pleaching of the boundary hedge along the lane on the south side of the orchard was completed in March. The following varieties are now growing there:- Carnation, Catshead, Crimson Quoining, Herefordshire Pomeroy, King's Acre Pippin, Marged Nicolas, Morrimouthshire Green, Pig yr Wyydd and Twill Tin Gwyydd plus five unidentified apples from Tir Allen.

Mike Porter

ORCHARD GLEANINGS

A visit to a small orchard in the lee of a seventeenth century farmhouse, on a terrace above the Usk in the neighbouring parish of Llangatwg, less than a mile from Croft Pendarren as the crow flies, was a reminder of the former self-sufficiency of these holdings. Just over the hedge from the garden with its rows of black-currents and gooseberries was about an acre of orchard containing apples (cider, cookers and eaters), pears, plums and damsons. Tom Putt, Warner's King, Bramley's Seedling (with mistletoe), Blenheim Orange and an unknown early cooker made up the apple contingent. Such a range is fairly typical of local farm orchards. The standard trees were well past their prime - several had gone to fuel farmhouse fires.

One of our priorities should be to find ways to encourage the proper management and replanting of these relict orchards to make them useful features again.

The apple variety Monarch seems to have been a popular cooker in this area, grown particularly in cottage gardens. In Cusop, where the Dulas brook marks the boundary between England and Wales, we found the largest specimens of Monarch I have seen - at least Henry VIII size! It is said to have been raised from a cross between Peasgood's Nonsuch and Dumelow's Seedling (syn. Wellington), evidently inheriting its size genes from the former.

On a wet evening last October we were shown around an orchard at Elton Hall, in the north of Herefordshire, by one of our members, Anthony Brooks. Around 1800, Elton Hall was the home of the famous pomologist, Thomas Andrew Knight. Spurred on by his theory that all varieties had a limited life span and gradually became debilitated by disease, he was one of the pioneers in breeding new varieties of fruit from seeds produced from the controlled cross-pollination of selected parents. In this way Knight raised many new varieties of apples such as Wormsley Pippin, Breinton Seedling and Yellow Ingestrie, and also pears, cherries, strawberries and other fruit and vegetables. A cherry and a strawberry that he bred were named after his home at Elton. In the orchard there are several old fruit trees, though none would date back to 1800, I think. Anthony Brooks is re-stocking it with traditional varieties, including several that Knight produced, pears such as Monarch and Broom Park, apples like Bringewood Pippin and Yellow Ingestrie and the cherry Elton Heart. After we had worked our way across the orchard identifying as many as possible, we reached an ancient tree of Sam's Crab near the hedge. It is always surprising how evocative a scent or taste can be. The flavour of that apple took me back fifty years to an apple which grew in the hedge between two orchards behind the house where I grew up in another village in Herefordshire. It was one of the specially prized apples when we were children, and I suspect we ate it far too early for it had quite a tang. It came in sequence after Yellow Transparent, or the August Apple, which we found far too sharp! Nuthatches, redstarts and little owls nested in holes in the old trees in that orchard and at night, in May, three nightingales could be heard singing in the surrounding countryside. There was a fine Blenheim Orange and a Quoining which my father always called Ten Commandments. But that is another story!

Mike Porter

"SITTING WITH NELLY"

Sheila Leitch asked me to write a short article for the next Newsletter, following the grafting demonstration given by Paul Davis on 24th March at Sheila's house.

About 10-12 members gathered at 11 am, and, after a welcome coffee and introductions, we all went outside. After Paul had given us a very clear introduction to grafting, covering the various root stocks, scions size etc, he proceeded to demonstrate the 'whip and tongue' graft and the 'church window' graft. What impressed me was his dexterity and his radical approach, in that he told us to forget grafting wax, forget raffia, and forget most of what we had read and been told in the past. Soon we were on Sheila's lawn, sticking whips of willow into it, as practice stocks and using spare scions which Paul had brought along. After about an hour or so of trial and error, with no blood drawn from all the sharp knives around, and in my case, a Stanley knife, we all moved on to the favourite local watering and feeding hole. Not only was the food and ambience first class, the

conversation that ensued was most agreeable and stimulating. What an enjoyable day.

I had planned to bring a friend with me from Shropshire, but at the last minute I had to change plans and come on my own. This friend also had six stocks to be grafted in April, and the responsibility for success now rested with me. In due course, having grafted my six, we got down to doing his. We did three each, and I'm glad to say that the one failure was the last one my friend did, having seen me do three and having done two under guidance, I said "You're on your own now", - a little unfair perhaps - but between us we can claim 90.9 success. According to Paul's article in the 1996 Newsletter, "Be happy with 60-70% success". What I haven't said is that in 1995 I had had ZERO success on three grafts using raffia, grafting wax and the information from books and articles!

Training modules etc. may have their place, but one cannot, in my view, beat "Sitting with Nelly", i.e., sitting in with an expert. What a worthwhile exercise by the Network. What about a budding exercise next?

David M. Jones

This training day was arranged as a response to a request by David, from Telford, for some such demonstration. A phone round to local members produced the small group needed to make it worth while putting on. Ideas like this are welcomed from members, and their feedback on success or otherwise is very helpful. We try to provide what you want, but it helps to know what that is. If suggestions can reach us each year, by August, in time to go out with the Newsletter, they can be made known to all members without an expensive extra postal note being required. A telephone call by those interested could then confirm a date and venue. Assistance with production of next year's Newsletter would also be greatly appreciated. I would be glad to hear from anyone with a PC computer who could type manuscript contributions on to 3½ or 5¼ disks, in Word for Windows/Write/Amipro, or similar program. The finishing touches and layout could then be done here.

Sheila Leitch

MANAGEMENT OF OLD ORCHARDS

The Worcester Office of the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers arranged a very instructive weekend course which was held in mid February at Whitbourne, near Bromyard, Herefordshire. The Saturday combined practical pruning demonstrations in an old orchard, with theories of orchard restoration and training in preparation of a management plan suitable for a Countryside Stewardship application. A glorious sunny day provided the group of about nine (of which four were MAN members) with the opportunity to gain 'hands on' pruning experience, under expert tuition from John Edgeley, Senior Fruit Lecturer of Pershore College of Horticulture. On Sunday, Chris Fairs from HP Bulmer Ltd., talked about the selection, planting and aftercare of young apple trees, and the group learned the correct way to plant and stake some sizable standard cider trees. After heavy overnight rain, the session proceeded until lunch time in reasonable weather, by which time the planting was fortunately completed, before a deluge of heavy rain returned. News of the planned course had reached some of our members at the Hereford Town Hall display, and members thought likely to be able to attend at short notice were notified. The cost was £10 per day, with individuals arranging their own B&B, or travelling there each day. It is hoped that a similar course will be held again, but details are not available at this time. Anyone interested, please contact BCTV on 01905-610289, or Sheila Leitch, before February.

Each year, we plan to cover in depth, an aspect of fruit tree care. Newsletter No.2 had very informative articles on Tree Stocks, by John Aldridge, and Grafting, by Paul Davis. Back numbers of Newsletters can be purchased at our autumn displays, or by post from the officers listed at the end of this Newsletter. No.1 costs 30p and No. 2, 50p, with SAE please. Stamps are acceptable in payment. This year John has contributed the following article, and Paul's follows on p.9.

Sheila Leitch

TO BUD OR NOT TO BUD

Given the choice, I prefer to propagate apple varieties by budding rather than grafting (although budding is really a form of grafting), because, basically, it's a simpler, quicker and cleaner technique. Once mastered, its success rate is extremely high, which even the best grafters can't seem to match. Its limitations are that it can only be used on relatively young wood and cannot be employed to re-work old trees.

Obtain 2 year old rootstocks; planted in autumn/winter, they should be just right for budding by the following summer. Keep the stocks well-watered throughout the growing season and be particularly assiduous in this if you intend to bud stocks grown in pots.

Budding is economical of material since a single bud of your chosen variety will eventually make a tree, but how do you choose a bud? In late July/early August, cut off a ripened shoot of the current season's growth, ideally a well-developed lateral. In the angle between leaf stalk and stem will be found a dormant growth bud, generally more pointed than a fruit bud. Some old trees make very little growth, and you might have to be content with a thin, short piece, with buds close together. Most likely you will be collecting budwood to take home for propagation. Cut off all the leaves, as these will draw and pass out moisture from bark and bud, being careful to retain the leaf stalks. Wrap in damp tissue, seal in a polythene bag and, if collecting more than one variety, don't forget to label each one.

When it comes to the critical stage of removing the bud from the shoot, (ie , preparing the scion), and joining it to the rootstock, I tend to be rather old-fashioned. Chip budding now seems to be the standard method - and works well with the perfect-size budwood so readily available in commercial operations - but I usually employ shield budding. Using a sharp knife, cut the shoot about 1/2" above the bud and draw the knife down behind the bud in a shallow curve, coming out below the bud by about the same length - it might taper a little longer. You will have a piece of bark the shape of a long shield, with a portion of wood behind the bud. It has long been the practice to remove the wood, but after experimenting with and without this sliver of wood, I find this is not necessary.

Find a clean smooth spot on the stem of the stock, say 6"-10" above ground level, and make a vertical cut about 1 1/2" long (less if the shield is small). Use enough pressure to pierce the bark without going into the wood. Similarly, make a cross-cut 1/2" long across the top of the first cut, thus making a T-shaped incision. With the blade, or the special thin handle of the budding knife, gently raise the flaps of bark both sides of the down-cut and slide the shield down, holding it by the leaf stalk. The top of the scion should be level with the top of the T. Trim if necessary. Completely tape the incised area to prevent drying out and promote healing. As

described in Paul Davis' article on grafting last year, freezer bags cut into inch strips make an excellent tape.

With some of the very small budwood that *MAN* has to utilise, I feel more confident that the cambium layers of stock and scion are kept in close contact when the bud is snugly tucked inside the flaps of this incision. But shield budding relies on the bark lifting easily from the wood, which therefore restricts the length of time that this method can be employed. However, the propagation season can be extended by chip budding. This involves cutting a scion patch and bringing it together with the area on a stock which has had a corresponding patch removed.: a few trees at our Westhope orchard were started this way.

After 2 or 3 weeks, the bud should be examined. The leaf stalk usually falls away easily if the bud has taken, although this is not a guarantee of success. If the stalk is stiff and will not pull away, then it's best to bud again while there is still time. I re-tape and let the healing process continue. The tape allows for some expansion, but watch for restriction during growth. With older methods of tying, using raffia or rubber strips, these were often left on through the winter, but I've found that the use of polythene tape seems to promote rapid healing and allows earlier removal without harmful effect.

The inserted bud will remain dormant until the following spring, so, in February, cut back the stock to just above the bud, as you would correctly prune a rose-bush. This concentrates the plant's energy into the inserted bud now at the top, but rub out any stock buds which might try to grow out at the expense of the scion. By the end of the growing season, the bud will have grown into a shoot of anything from two to six feet, depending on type of stock and variety. This is known as a "maiden", and can subsequently be grown on and trained into whatever form of tree is required.

John Aldridge

PRUNING STANDARD AND HALF-STANDARD TREES

Pruning is a combination of science, art and common sense. The general aim is to create a tree of pleasing appearance, with a balance of older fruiting wood and young healthy replacement branches.

Although pruning can be done at any time of year, it is better to prune in November, when most of the leaves have fallen, or in spring, when the sap is rising. Pruning in November will result in more vigorous regrowth than pruning in the spring. Try to avoid the cold winter months, as frosts may enter the cut ends of the branches and cause them to split, allowing scab and canker to gain a footing.

Leave a stub of about ½" when cutting small branches and up to 2" for very large limbs, which will allow the scar to heal cleanly at the natural point of abscission. You can paint the the cuts with Arbrex or household emulsion paint if you like, but it makes little difference. When pruning anything but the smallest branches, cut off about 12" from the trunk, making a cut under the branch first, to prevent it splitting. Then trim back to the trunk. Wherever possible, cut back to a main branch. Don't cut a branch off halfway along, as tree surgeons often do (known as de-horning). This results in a forest of new growth at the tip, which looks untidy and requires further thinning.

Pruning should be done on an annual basis, but this is not always possible with large trees because of their sheer size, and they are often neglected. If this is the case, in the first year:

1. Remove and burn all dead and diseased wood.
2. Remove all or part of any low branches if they are likely to be grazed by stock or interfere with mowing.
3. Reduce congestion at the centre of the tree by cutting out crossing branches, and any which are rubbing.

Once this major work has been carried out, more delicate pruning can be undertaken in subsequent years.

The easiest and most suitable form of pruning for tall trees is called 'regulated' pruning and simply involves removing a few congested branches, as necessary, each year. This method is particularly suitable for tip-bearers and countryside stewardship schemes.

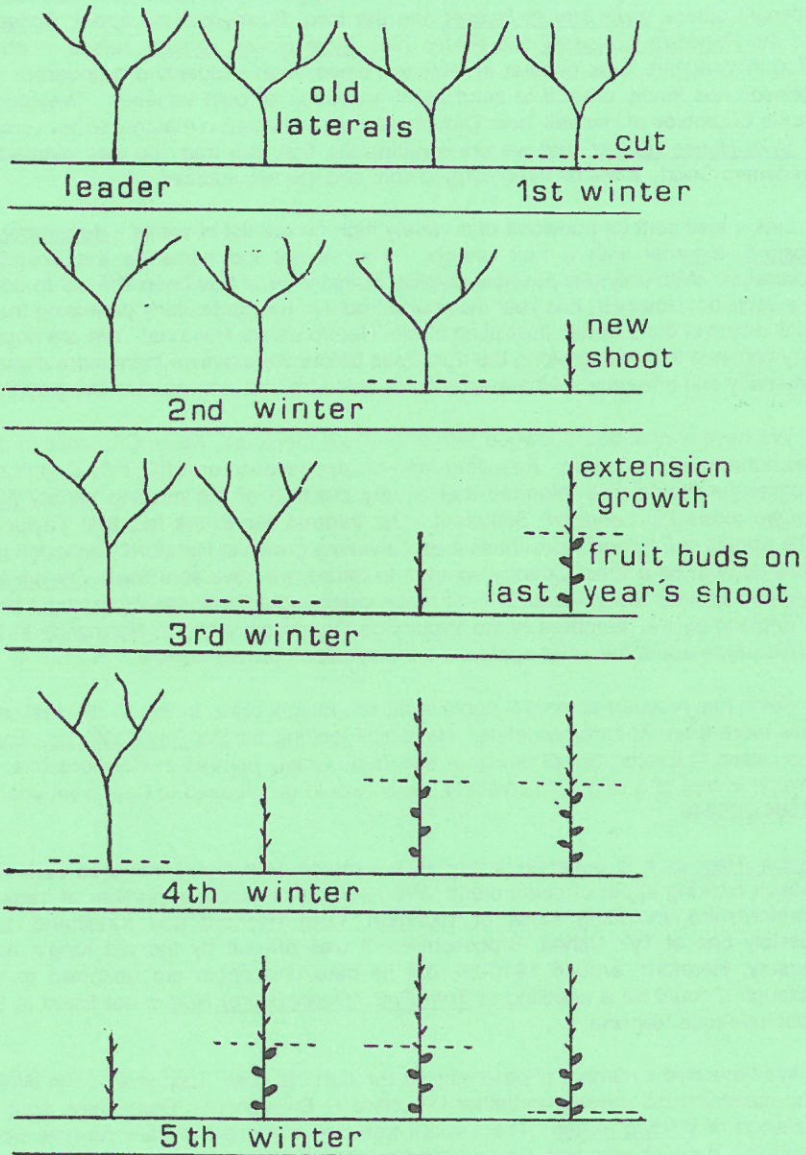
A more productive method, however, is 'renewal' pruning, but this is very intensive and only suitable for spur-bearing bush and half-standards. Here the fruiting laterals are renewed on a four-year cycle.

1. Identify 5-12 main branches (leaders) that radiate out from the trunk, and remove all the others to produce an effect like an umbrella that has been turned inside-out by the wind.
2. In the first winter, remove one quarter of the fruiting laterals that are growing from these leaders, to stimulate the formation of new shoots. Leave about a ½" stub.
3. During the second winter, remove another quarter of the mature laterals. Twist and bend down any new shoots that are growing upwards by more than 45°. This sounds awful, but it works! Thin out these new shoots to an average of one for every double hand-width.
4. During the third winter, remove another one quarter of the old laterals. Cut back the extension growth from the new shoots to the point of origin, or to a fruit bud, to leave a long spur of fruit buds. Thin and bend down any first year shoots as before.
5. During the fourth winter, remove the last of the old laterals, and prune back any extension growth to a fruit bud or point of origin, as before. Thin and bend down any first year shoots.
6. The following winter, start again by removing the oldest laterals.
7. Finally, if a new shoot arises from the trunk, encourage it to grow as a replacement leader.

The following illustration may make this method clearer. Have fun!

Paul Davis

renewal pruning



APPLES THROUGH THE POST

The Rev. Donald Johnson of Funtington, near Chichester, has a knack of finding lost varieties. Using the Church network of colleagues and records, he has found, amongst others, Syke House Russet and the local Surrey/Sussex apple, Bossom, but the Petworth Nonpareil still eludes him. Syke House Russet, raised in about 1780 in Yorkshire, was popular in Victorian times, then suddenly disappeared. Mr Johnson has kindly offered to send MAN graftwood of both varieties. Previously, Laurie Chumbley of Harwell, near Didcot, sent us propagation material of his version of Syke House Russet, and we are awaiting the first fruit from the tree planted at Tredomen Court. It will be interesting to compare the two sources.

Laurie also sent us budwood of a variety high on our list of wants - Herefordshire Costard, together with a fruit sample. This is not the same as the Brogdale accession. With only two possibly atypical fruits so far, it has been difficult to come to a decision. However, this year the young tree has two particularly promising fruits, reminiscent of the painted illustration in the 'Herefordshire Pomona'. We are hoping they continue to develop along the right lines before we examine them more closely, externally and internally. Whatever it turns out to be, it is a most interesting apple.

We have exchanged budwood with one of our members, Kevin Croucher, a fruit tree nurseryman in Devon. Resulting from his appearance on BBC TV's Countryfile programme, Kevin was informed that a very old tree of the missing variety Nine Square existed in Langport, Somerset. Our interest lies in the fact that Taylor, in 'The Apples of England', describes it as "a variety grown in Hereford", although it is more likely to be a West Country variety. In return, we have sent Kevin Devonshire Red and another which could be the French cider apple De Bouteville, brought back to England by the members of the Woolhope Club, from a trip to Normandy in the 1870s: more about the latter apple if the identification proves correct.

Kevin has rescued at least 8 apple varieties, mainly cider, in the south-west, and sells more than 70 cider varieties. He is still looking for the Royal Wilding, which was raised in Exeter, but at one time was fairly widely planted in Herefordshire. If anyone knows of a tree of this variety, Kevin would be pleased to hear from you on 01884-266746.

Devon Red, as it is generally known in our region, is a highly coloured early-mid season cooking apple of some merit. We have come across a number of trees in Herefordshire, including those at Tillington, Ocle Pychard and Kingsland, and possibly one at Ty'r Uched, Breconshire. It was offered by the old King's Acre Nursery, Hereford, around 1910-20, but its date and origin are unknown to us, although it could be a seedling of Tom Putt. Devon(shire) Red is not listed in the National Apple Register.

We have had a number of other apples through the post. Last year, John White, who maintains his great-grandfather's orchard at Swadlincote, Derbyshire, sent us budwood of Whiting Pippin. The ancient tree had produced virtually no new wood for years, but luck was with us and the tiniest buds from very short growths have resulted in two healthy maiden trees. Our find is especially important as the only point that various descriptions agree about, is that the variety was raised in Worcestershire.

Three variations of an unlisted Dorset variety, *The Warrior*, will be planted side by side at Tredomen this autumn. Propagation material was sent to us by MAN member, Gwen Rogers, of Sturminster Newton, who first told us of this apple, and showed us a specimen, at Putley, last year. She later sent newspaper cuttings about it. *Hanwell Souring* and a possible *Chatley's Kernel* arrived recently. The former is described and illustrated in the 'Herefordshire Pomona' and the latter is a lost local variety. The locations of the senders seemed particularly appropriate: *Hanwell Souring* arrived from a Victorian orchard in Warwickshire, the county where it was once popularly grown, and *Chatley's Kernel* from Chatley in Worcestershire!

John Aldridge

Whereas John tends to receive budwood of interesting apples, any mention in the press of MAN's search and rescue activities in the apple world tends to result in fascinating telephone calls to me. (As Network Co-ordinator, it is usually my phone number that the journalists provide). Thereafter, little boxes of specimen apples begin to arrive from all quarters of the country. The postman used to think it must be a birthday at Wye View, but now knows it is just the autumn influx of apples for confirmation or identification. A recent article by Tom Montgomery, in 'Amateur Gardening', resulted in one particularly interesting call, from Mrs Stickland, from Berkshire, about an apple identified by Wisley as the *Black Prince*. Muriel Smith lists it (syn. *Violette*). Samples were kindly sent with the promise of some graftwood if we wished to try growing it in one of our orchards. Another caller, ringing from Norway, commented on the mention in the article of the story we told in last year's Newsletter of scions of Newton Wonder being sent to Australia with their cut ends in potatoes. He recommends sending budwood through the post, in the same way.

Sheila Leitch

COOKERY CORNER

Apple Ale. From The Poor Man's Cookbook.

1 gal. cold water, 2lbs. apples, 1½ lb. sugar, 1oz. root ginger, ½ tsp. cloves, pinch of cinnamon.

Wash apples and grate coarsely. Add pulp to water, with cores. Stir water mixture daily for one week, then strain. Add sugar and spices. Stir till sugar has dissolved. Leave overnight.

Strain through muslin. Pour into bottles and cork lightly. Leave for a week before drinking.

SALE OF SURPLUS TREES

Marcher Apple Network has an on-going propagation programme involving grafting in March, and summer budding. Resulting from our orchard survey work and information received from various sources, scarce varieties are propagated from old trees on to rootstock MM106, with a few on M25. In addition, any interesting unidentified varieties are propagated on to the precocious M9 stock to provide fairly quick fruit for further investigation. It is likely that each year a limited number of maidens will be surplus to requirements and be offered to members.

Trees available as maidens this autumn are listed below. Send your order and payment to John Aldridge (Cheques payable to Marcher Apple Network please). Scale of charges to MAN members: £4 (for bare rooted), regardless of type of rootstock, £3 for varieties as yet un-named and a special rate of £3 to owners who have provided propagation material of varieties which MAN requested. Non-members will be charged an additional £1.

Please note that we cannot provide a postal service. Collect from Widemarsh Workshop, Widemarsh Common, Hereford. For details contact John Aldridge.

	MM106	M25
Gascoyne's Scarlet	+	
Lady's Finger of Hereford - (not the same as Brogdale)	+	+
Norfolk Beefing	+	
Pomeroy of Hereford	+	+
D'Arcy Spice	+	+
Glanheddwhc No 1 (large, well flavoured dual purpose)	+	
Lord Hindlip	+	
Glasbury Farm No1 (possibly Orleans Reinette)	+	
Glasbury Farm No2 (possibly Lord Hindlip)	+	
Glasbury Farm No3 & 4 (red dessert)	+	
William Crump	+	+
Sam's Crab	+	+
Golden Noble	+	
"Pig-Faced Apple" (conical quoining-type good dessert)	+	
Scotch Bridget	+	+
Stoke Edith Pippin	+	+
Pig's Nose Pippin	+	+
Ty'r Uched No17 (large culinary)	+	
Sheep's Nose (Ty'r Uched)	+	
Golden Harvey (not the same as Dr Harvey)	+	
Warrior (we have 3 variations of this old Dorset apple)	+	
Bowling Green No1 (red dessert)	+	
Bowling Green No2 (possibly Lord Derby)	+	
Ecklinville Seedling	+	
Belle de Boskoop	+	
Graig No1(hardy, late-keeping cooker)	+	
Pitmaston Pine Apple	+	

We also have a few pears on Quince "A", viz. Louise Bonne of Jersey and an unidentified variety that might be Santa Claus.

John Aldridge

Paul Davis has also been asked by *MAN* to propagate some of the more unusual varieties and has the following extra young trees available:-

	M25	MM111	MM106
Catshead (Llyswen)	2		1
Carnation (Penmaes)		1	1
Carnation (Treble Hill)	2		1
King's Acre Pippin (Llyswen)	5		
Allington Pippin	5	1	1
Mère de Ménage	2	2	1
Ecklinville Seedling	1	1	
Beauty of Kent	5		1
American Mother	2		
Marged Nicholas	4	3	5

	M25	MM111	MM106
Pig yr Wÿdd	6		4
Royal Jubilee	5		1
Winston	+		+
Greensleeves	+		+
Fiesta (Red Pippin)	+		+
George Cave	+		+
Charles Ross	+		+
Northern Greening	+		+
Sunset	+		+
Lord Derby	+		+

Also Jargonelle Pear, 3 on seedling pear and 3 on Quince "A"

A range is also stocked of the usual popular varieties.

Prices: Members £5 for container-grown trees, £4 for bare-rooted. Non-members, £6 & £5 respectively. Cheques payable to MAN with order to Dr. Paul Davis, Dolauhirion, Capel Isaac, Llandeilo, Carms., SA19 7TG. Orders can be brought to some autumn events, by prior arrangement with Paul. Tel. 01558-668744. Space in this year's Newsletter does not permit lists of unusual varieties stocked by other members, but we can supply their names and telephone numbers if requested.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday/Sunday, 27th/28th September. The Malvern Autumn Show, at the Three Counties Showground, Malvern. Various Fruit Displays and identifications.

Sunday 28th September. Leominster Regeneration. A Fruity Affair. Town Square, from noon. Details from Patrick Broadhurst, Tel. 01568-616348.

Friday, October 3rd. Marcher Apple Network's annual event to celebrate (early this year) Apple Day. To be held at Kilpeck Village Hall, 6 miles south west of Hereford, just off the A465 road to Abergavenny. Doors will open at 7.00 pm, and at 7.30 there will be a showing of "Hereford, The Beauty and the Bounty", an audio-visual presentation compiled by the late G. Kenneth Seed, on Hereford and its surroundings. There will be a display of old apple varieties, the opportunity to taste some, a juice-making demonstration, apple identifications (please bring three typical specimens of your apple) and refreshments with an apple theme will be on sale. Tickets £3, schoolchildren under 16, £1. Tickets on sale at Forge Garage Wormbridge and the Outback Record Shop, 19A, Church Street, Hereford. Bookings can be made through Ray Boddington, or Sheila Leitch. There will be some tickets available at the door, but advance bookings will help us estimate food requirements. This venue, in South Herefordshire, was chosen as a new area in which to meet some of our widely spread members. Our first annual event was in Llanigon, in the Wye Valley, the second at Crickhowell, in the Usk Valley, while last year we met at Orleton, in South Shropshire.

Saturday 11th October. For the ninth year, a harvestime celebration of English apples and cider is being held in the parishes of the Marcle Ridge area of Herefordshire. The first of the two weekends, held at Putley, includes apple displays, tastings and apple teas in the Village Hall. Demonstration of fruit tree pruning. Also, at 5.15pm, at Putley Church, talk "Orchards - Fields or Woods?", by

Sue Clifford, Common Ground's National Co-ordinator. For further details, phone Jackie Denman, secretary of the Big Apple Association, on 01531-670544.

Sunday, 12th October. Walk led by Roy Palmer around the orchards of Putley, with autumn readings from his anthology, "Ripest Apples".

Displays as Saturday, followed by talk at 5.15pm, in the Village Hall, "Apples, Cider and Thomas Andrew Knight,(1759-1838)", by Dr M. Mylechreest.

Saturday, 11th October. Croft Castle will be holding an apple event again this year. A National Trust property, north of Leominster, with connections with the fruit breeder, Thomas Andrew Knight. Apple displays, fruit and cider tastings, plus sales. For details, Tel 01568-780246.

Wednesday, 15th, Thursday 16th October. Proposed trip to National Apple Collection at Brogdale Kent. Leaving Hereford Wed. evening 4.43pm arriving Faversham 9.43pm. Overnight stay in Faversham. Full day at Brogdale, returning 5.07pm to arrive Hereford 10.19pm. A party of 10 will allow for a party booking, tickets £30 return. If interested, please phone Sheila Leitch as soon as possible.

Saturday, 18th October. Second Big Apple weekend, concentrating on cider. Displays of cider fruit and perry pears at Much Marcle Memorial Hall. Apple teas. Talk, at 5.15pm "Cider Tales from Europe" by Dr B. Jarvis, consultant to the cider industry.

Sunday, 19th October. Displays as Saturday, at Much Marcle. Orchard visit, Upton Bishop. Also, Enthusiasts Day. Practical Introduction to perrymaking, Book for whole day, £16, including ploughmans lunch.

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

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The financial year for *MAN* begins 1st August, to coincide with the beginning of the apple season. We are pleased to report that there has been a further large increase in membership over the last year, with numbers now approaching 200. We welcome members from outside the southern Marches area. Last year, we decided to send out the Newsletter to all those on our address list for the previous year, trusting they would wish to continue supporting *MAN*. This worked well, and we are doing the same this year. PLEASE SEND OFF YOUR SUBS NOW, while you read your Newsletter No. 3, unless you pay by Bankers Order. We are most grateful to the many members who have sent donations in addition to the basic subscription of £2, which barely covers the cost of the Newsletter and postage.

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