

MARCHER APPLE NETWORK

NEWSLETTER No 7

Non-Members £1.50

Summer 2001

CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR

Autumn of the Millennium Year proved at least as busy as in previous years with our display events for the public and identification challenges and puzzles which inevitably arise.

Then came the rains, with flooding with which we are now only too familiar and which eclipsed anything within our normal experience. Like many other planters of fruit trees, I imagine, we were forced to bow to the inevitable and postpone planting, since tree roots do not establish themselves readily in holes that have become buckets of water.

As the Spring neared and the water abated, a working party of volunteers was arranged to plant a pear orchard at Aylton, close to the Trumpet Inn, in a prime pomological area. All was ready for the following week – when Foot and Mouth erupted like a biblical plague, causing the slaughter of farm animals on a scale hitherto undreamt of, and affecting livelihoods in fields much wider than agriculture. Our planting activities had to be summarily curtailed, and our young trees previously planted have to a large extent had to be left unpruned and untended. As we sit in dry weather at midsummer there is little indication that normal, unhampered access to grazing land may be resumed by the Autumn. But resume we intend, when we can.

We are fortunate in that *MAN* has been awarded £1,000 by Hereford District Council under the Voluntary Sector Grant Awards 2001-2002. This will probably be used to provide us with some display material when attending apple events and shows.

It would be an unwarranted omission to fail to mention two events severely touching the lives of two key members of our group – without our key members we cease to be a viable entity. Sheila Leitch is bereaved by the loss of her husband, David, after a serious illness. David was always there for Sheila, leaving her free to devote her inspirational talents to our collective advantage, and assisting the group in any way that he could, not least in the humour imparted to our intake of lunch and liquid at "The Harp" on days of committee meetings, and we will never forget his dedicated precision with the 100 metre measuring tape – "worthy of Pythagoras", someone quipped (I wonder who?!). David's working life was spent as a pharmacist, firstly in hospitals and latterly as Chief Administrative Pharmaceutical Officer for both Powys and Dyfed, but he was a man of many parts. While his wife was climbing apple trees in search of rarities, a natural follow on from an early career as an outdoor activities instructor specialising in rock climbing and field studies, David was a keen amateur geologist (of distinction), with a particular interest in limestone and caves. Together, they were busily engaged in providing a research service to members of the Powys Family History Society in the wider

world. So it is hardly to be wondered at that his passing was marked by many people crowding into the large church – marked, too, by an arresting address by the assisting neighbouring vicar and a moving poem and translation in the Welsh language. He will be missed by many, many people beyond the parish of Glasbury, where we apple folk remember him in retirement, at home with his Sheltie dog, his cat, sheep and organic garden.

Tom Froggatt, our incalculably valuable Treasurer and Company Secretary, lost his nephew through a catastrophic roof fall during last year. I doubt whether any of us had actually met Peter Froggatt, but there went a man in the prime of life, bringing terrible personal loss, and damage to the business of a family farm.

Ray Boddington

CLIFFORD A.G.M. REPORT, OCT. 2000

Held in the spacious new hall at Clifford, the well attended A.G.M last October followed the usual pattern. The Chairman and Treasurer gave their reports on another successful year. In spite of a very poor apple crop last autumn on the Welsh side of the Marches, Mike Porter and his team came up with the usual colourful display of fruits and were able to identify, on the day, most of the specimens brought in by visitors. Sad to say, no new varieties of note appeared but 'Hope springs eternal'.

Christine Porter and Elizabeth Rowe headed a team of ladies providing welcome refreshments, both edible and thirst quenching.

Brian Draper, M.B.E., gave an illustrated talk on 'The Wye from Source to Hereford'. As an ex-river board official, Brian has an intimate knowledge of the Wye and neighbouring rivers and his slides confirmed his skill as a photographer who ventured where some others might fear to tread. The show aroused a good deal of interest, with some very knowledgeable members of the audience feeding information back to Brian concerning some of his slides.

A very good day, don't miss the event at Weobley on Oct. 6th. If possible, please offer to help setting up or assisting generally. A goodly amount of cheerful commonsense is the main qualification.

Tom Froggatt

THE YEAR'S EVENTS ON THE WELSH SIDE OF THE BORDER

Talgarth Festival, held over the August Bank Holiday weekend, was blessed with ideal weather and our MAN stall in the market was well attended, perhaps Tom's free apple tastings being the attraction. Some useful contacts were made.

The Smallholder Weekend, usually held in June at the Royal Welsh Showground, near Builth Wells, had to be postponed this year due to the Foot and Mouth epidemic and it is now scheduled for October so, for once, we will be able to have a fruit display there. As a result of one of our Radnorshire members holding an Open Apple Day in September, there may be some interesting local apples brought to our stand for identification.

Sheila Leitch

ORCHARD GLEANINGS

Last autumn Mr & Mrs Gane, from Craswall, took us to see an old Landore tree surviving in a farm orchard, at an altitude of 250m, near Michaelchurch Escley. Mrs Gane had grown up on the farm and her father told us that the tree had fallen before he came there in 1937. From the prostrate trunk, now almost rotted away, branches have grown up which regularly yield a good crop. Both the Michaelchurch and Ewyas Harold Landores cropped well in 2000, allowing a comparison of their fruit, which were found to match. With fine samples available to us for the first time, it was also apparent that Landore closely resembled the apple known as Monmouth Green in the Talgarth area. That variety also produced heavy crops last year and samples of fruit from Llyswen, Bronllys and Aberedw were checked carefully with the Landore apples. As well as conforming in appearance and internal anatomy, the flavour and storage qualities appeared to be identical. In a damp, cool cellar, both sorts kept in sound condition until January. From this comparison it seems clear that Landore and Monmouth Green are synonyms.

It is interesting to speculate how people living on opposite sides of the Black Mountains, in villages only about ten miles apart, came to know the same apple by different names. On both eastern and western sides of the hill we spoke to villagers who had known the apple for seventy years or more and praised its qualities as both cooker and eater. Which is the older name? Both were known in Victorian times. The earliest reference encountered is in the Diary of Rev. Francis Kilvert, Curate of Clyro; in an entry for 26th February 1872 he referred to Landore as "...an old-fashioned keeping apple..." (see Orchard Gleanings in Newsletter No. 6). The entry for Monmouth Green in The National Apple Register notes that the apple has been exhibited on only one occasion, in 1883. As far as we know, Landore (synonym Monmouth Green) is a local variety which has never been described or listed by commercial nurseries. Many regions have their own special local varieties; it is even possible that Landore may be found elsewhere, masquerading under a different name. One of the apples called Underleaf is very similar.

At Craswall we were shown three other mystery apple-trees. 'Kate Powell', with only one apple, was said to be a late-keeping greenish-yellow cooker; 'Gilbert's Kernel', probably another Landore, 'Broad-eyed Styler' another late cooker. None of these has been found listed in old handbooks or catalogues. 'Kate Powell' was a solitary tree growing on a steep bank near a stream and might be a chance seedling, but the other two had been deliberately planted in farm orchards. Both the Landores and the other unknown apples have been propagated.

On a calm sunny afternoon last October we revisited a lovely, old, derelict orchard, perhaps better described now as a wild-life haven, at Checkley. A small herd of fallow deer trotted off as we approached. We managed to re-find the Winter Queening photographed five years ago, which looks like the apple described and illustrated in 'The Herefordshire Pomona', not the one in the Brogdale Collection said to be synonymous with Winter Pearmain. The Winter Queening and nine other trees were tagged for the collection of graftwood. We were told to place the markers high in the trees so that they would escape the attention of the inquisitive deer. Most of these trees had defied attempts at their identification, but one very large, handsome cooker closely resembled the illustration of Kentish Fillbasket in

'The Herefordshire Pomona'. Another cooker may possibly turn out to be Bedfordshire Foundling.

Research into the history of this orchard might be illuminating. The several compartments now making up the orchard appear formerly to have been owned or leased by various smallholders. One of the compartments consists of a long, narrow strip of land occupied by a single row of standard apple trees, but almost all the trees are now dead - shaded out by the overgrown hedge enclosing the plot.

In January we returned to collect graftwood. The markers had escaped the nosy deer, but healthy scions were difficult to find on the old trees which are barely surviving the ravages of storms, fungi and woodpeckers. However, grafts of eight of them seem to have taken and young trees will eventually be planted in one of the MAN orchards.

Among many interesting apples brought in for identification last year was one known to its owner as Credenhill Pippin. This dessert apple, not unlike Cox's Orange Pippin in appearance, was raised by a Mr Whiting of Hereford and first exhibited in 1901. There seem to have been no official sightings of the apple since 1946 and it is a variety we have been hoping to find since the formation of MAN eight years ago. The apple shown to us appears to match the short descriptions in 'The Apple Register' and 'Apples of England', but further research is needed before we can be certain. In their searches for juicing apples Colin and Daphne Gardiner once again turned up a few 'puzzlers'! A putative Northern Spy was uncovered near Orcop and a very attractive reinette, somewhat resembling Braddick's Nonpareil, was discovered in an orchard at Madley.

Mike Porter

NEWS OF OUR ORCHARDS

TREDOMEN COURT, Llanfilo, Breconshire.

Foot and Mouth put paid to any winter planting at this site. A recent afternoon inspection visit in July revealed some further damage by sheep, and a few of the trees barked last year have now died. This is very disappointing. Replacements, even if obtainable, will be several years younger than their neighbours. Most of the trees are looking healthy and have made a good amount of growth. Of the 26 on dwarf M9 rootstocks, which were planted in February and December 1999, only 6 are bearing some fruit. 37 of 137 half standards, on MM106 are bearing and these are chiefly the older trees. Confirmation has come through that Roger Williams, owner of the site, has been accepted on the Tir Gofal Scheme, under which traditional orchards are eligible for grant aid. He has also successfully contested the Brecon and Radnor seat, following Richard Livsey's retirement, succeeding him as the Liberal Democrat MP for the area.

Sheila Leitch

CROFT PENDARREN, Llangynidr, Breconshire.

Another six standard trees were planted last winter. The first fruits from the orchard, borne on Dumelow's Seedling (TA 63), were on display during the autumn. Pest of the year (2001) has been the grey squirrel. In the orchard across the lane a young walnut tree has been devastated by the bark-stripping activities of the vermin

and they have systematically ravaged the early apples; *Lowland Raspberry*, *Irish Peach*, *Devonshire Quarrenden*, *Epicure*, *Oslin*, and *Exquisite* have been stripped of their fruit in chronological succession. In Croft Pendarren the local 'Glanheddwch' would have been the second tree to come into production but for the depredations of those wretched rodents.

Mike Porter

WESTHOPE, near Canon Pyon, Herefordshire.

The 15 trees continue to grow well in their deer-proof cages (see previous newsletters) and there will be some modest fruit this year. Being full standards they will obviously take some time to mature but one of these days they will make quite a sight on Westhope Hill.

In previous news I have mentioned the fine line between cutting the grass and waiting as long as possible to let any wild flowers seed. If this year is anything to go by the fine line may shift somewhat to cutting. The tougher grasses (cocksfoot is one I think) and cow parsley 'exploded' in June and this brought my garden tractor to a rapid halt in a haze of blue smoke. A power scythe will be needed to tackle the rest.

Strimming inside the cages remains an art and in spite of the plastic mulch, nature tries damned hard to assert itself. I keep muttering 'Roundup' as I pirouette inside the cage, avoiding toes (so far) and trees (I think so far). It would be easier to shoot the deer (in my in-cage imagination) but there are too many and they are very clever up here. Some residents have erected 6 foot high deer fences around their property, not elegant but it keeps them at bay.

Peter Austerfield

DONNINGTON, near Ledbury, Herefordshire.

We were fortunate in being able to carry out necessary trimming of the young trees before the incidence of Foot and Mouth descended like a blanket over the countryside, and it is only in the past weeks that we have been able to regain access to the site. We have now discovered a few trees - of varying provenance - which appear to be dead. This does not seem to be due to drought but, in fact, the opposite, following the exceptionally wet winter we have all suffered. It may be that the problem is due to a form of *Phytophthora* - related to potato blight - which, we are told, has affected some orchard plantings elsewhere in the area. All we can do is to monitor the situation and consider spraying, and to replace the casualties when we can.

Ray Boddington

Editor's Note: Work parties on our orchards are very enjoyable occasions, with a break for a pub lunch and a lively discussion and with positive results to be seen at the end of the day. We desperately need new volunteers and, with a larger pool to draw on, travelling expenses could be kept down. Please contact any of the officers, giving telephone number where you can be called if weather conditions are suddenly suitable for a work party. It may involve surveying new sites, banging in posts, planting, pruning, weeding the mulch mats, photography, or quietly writing labels. We'll find you a job and you'll have a lot of fun.

NEWS FROM OTHER GROUPS

We exchange Newsletters with various organisations which have similar aims. In this Newsletter, some items of interest have been included:-

THE IRISH SEED SAVER ASSOCIATION This is based in Capparoo, Scariff, Co. Clare. In 1996 an Apple Project was inaugurated, launching the Lamb/Clarke collection at University College Dublin which honoured the pioneering work in the 1940s and '50s of Drs Lamb and Clarke on the conservation of the native apples of Ireland. The collection was duplicated by planting at the Heritage Gardens in County Clare. The list of apples at that date contained some intriguing names: Clearheart, Eight Square, Summer John, Green Chisel, Blood of the Boyne and Widow's Friend. The Summer 2001 Issue has brief descriptions of these apples, with comments on their resistance to scab. The Spring Newsletter mentions a 200 year old tree in County Clare, which bears a metal plaque identifying the tree as a Custard Scarlet. Could this be a genuine Red Costard or Pope's Scarlet Costard? A booklet entitled 'The Irish Apple History and Myth' written by Dr Lamb and Anita Hayes makes interesting reading. Included with the Newsletter is a questionnaire, which says they now have 1,200 subscribers, and they want to know members' areas of expertise, eg legal, financial, horticultural, computing, fund raising, etc., also their needs, and how best to meet them. This sounds like a good idea. Please write and tell us if you think we should circulate something on these lines next year.

Sheila Leitch

NORTHERN FRUIT GROUP

Northern Horticultural Society voted overwhelmingly (95% to 5%) earlier in the spring to merge with the RHS. As far as we can tell at this stage, the amicable relationship between the Northern Fruit Group and the Northern Horticultural Society will be maintained and enhanced under the new regime.

Due to the Foot & Mouth problem in Settle (N. Yorks.) area, the Great Yorkshire Show at Harrogate was cancelled. NFG held an extremely successful "Strawberry Weekend" at Harlow Carr as a substitute for our stand at the Harrogate Show, when strawberries and strawberry plants were on sale. There was also a display of varieties and all aspects of strawberries were covered!

Heritage Lottery Fund Progress Report

NFG/University of Leeds HLF bid for locating and describing a representative sample of Yorkshire's orchards will be resubmitted by the end of August 2001 as NFG members have guaranteed the vital support in cash and hours needed to satisfy HLF. We will keep our fingers crossed! Hope rather than expectation describes our mood!

Apple Identification Key

The key appears, most excitingly, to work to a wholly acceptable level of error. University of Leeds Geography Department has been making it much more rapid and easier to use. *MAN* and around 20 other "guinea pigs", will be getting a copy of the key within the next few weeks for assessment/comment this coming apple season. If comments are favourable, we will be applying for an EU "cultural" grant to improve it further and to expand it to include Continental varieties. The main

snags currently are that it needs the data base "ACCESS" to run it and it needs to contain many more than the current 1,200 or so varieties to be satisfactorily comprehensive. Ironically, a final version would NOT need ACCESS I am told! To remedy the lack of varieties problem, I am visiting Wisley and Brogdale three times this season, to catch the early, mid season and late varieties. Hopefully I hope to put another 1,000 varieties on to the key this season (in practice, probably more like 500!).

Simon Clark.

CHESHIRE ORCHARD PROJECT

The Cheshire Orchard Project is led by Cheshire Landscape Trust in partnership with Cheshire County Council, Cheshire Federation of Women's Institutes, Cheshire Wildlife Trust, Howarth's Fruit Farm, Jodrell Bank, Manchester Metropolitan University, Mersey Basin Trust, Mersey Forest, Norton Priory Museum Trust, TLG Orchards, Vale Royal Borough Council. The Project's aims are:

- 1) To establish a network of community orchards throughout the county to keep the tradition alive and to help carry it forward.
- 2) To promote the importance of orchards and fruit growing.

The Cheshire Orchard Project organised a conference that was due to take place in May this year. The event was aimed at anyone with an interest and enthusiasm for orchards and old fruit varieties and featured topics such as: collecting anecdotal evidence of old varieties of Cheshire fruit; the history of the landscape with regard to orchards; the national *Malus* collection at Jodrell Bank; renovating an old pear orchard; and the state of orchards nationally.

Sadly this event was cancelled due to a lack of delegate numbers, as a consequence, we believe, of an unwillingness to travel due to the Foot & Mouth outbreak. The Cheshire Orchard Project is currently planning on running the conference next year and we hope that the Marcher Apple Network can be involved.

John Gittins

Common Ground's new address from September 1st 2001 will be:

Common Ground, Gold Hill House, 21 High Street, Shaftsbury, Dorset SP7 8JE

Spring 'Orchard News' and a Directory of their Orchards Advice Notes have been received, listing 22 leaflets. No. 17 is 'Basic Apple Tree Pruning', a very useful guide. These can be obtained by sending a SAE to Common Ground, with 50p for each, or stamps for four or fewer. There is also a list of publications.

POSITIVE POLLINATION, or LIFE AFTER VARROA

Pollination is a critical element in the fruit-growing mix, but one which to a surprising degree is often left to chance - or, rather, to nature. Think of managing pollination, and the image that comes to mind is more orchid house than orchard. The traditional means by which the orchardist sought to optimise the process has been to invite local beekeepers to site a few hives amongst the trees.

But now there's a problem, and its name is Varroa; an unpleasant little mite that has decimated bee stocks around the world, through reducing their resistance to viruses. Many small-scale bee-keepers (including this writer!) have taken a break from an absorbing hobby after losing their bees to infection or predator; many commercial keepers have suffered seriously reduced stocks and are careful about where they take them; and the number of non-domestic colonies too has been dramatically cut back.

Other factors, too, increasingly affect the willingness of bee-keepers to load their hives into a trailer and take them to a crop. Foot and mouth continues to be a factor this year (more concerning the travelling than the bees), and a reluctance to get too close to GM test sites.

But is this all bad news? Well, it needn't be. Take inspiration from the bee-keepers from North America, Italy and Germany, where Varroa became endemic earlier than in the UK. There they have found that living with Varroa - the expert view is that we can't eliminate it - can actually improve honey yields, because bee-keepers are having to manage their hives more actively, and more hygienically. So the bees will be back, driven by the commercial imperative of honey production.

It does mean, however, that the days are past when you could keep a hive in the orchard and virtually ignore the bees except for an annual removal of honey and maybe some winter feeding: bee-keeping now involves a comprehensive examination of the hive every two weeks or more, throughout the season.

The lesson for fruit growers, then, is to look at positive management of the pollination process, and for alternatives to the honey bee - and these can not only turn out to boost production, but also they can provide a new interest in their own right.

Looked at cynically, the honey bee (Apis mellifera) is not that efficient a pollinator anyway. It is constructed, physically and functionally, foremost as a nectar gatherer for its home colony, and it tends to work 'office hours' (I had a New Zealand colony which even used to come home for lunch!), and starting only when daytime temperatures reach about 60F (15C). There are however alternatives which start to fly a month or six weeks before the honey bees, fly much earlier and later in the day, worry less about the cold and wet, are immune to Varroa, and pollinate much more efficiently - and some don't even sting!

First, don't overlook the native Bombus family - the bumble bees. There are around 25 different bumbles in the UK, though most of these are getting low in numbers, principally through loss of habitat. What they look for in an ideal home is a nice overgrown grassy bank, a tangled old hedge, a heap of old logs or prunings - all the sort of things we have comparatively recently come to look at as untidy, even 'unprofessional'. It's worth keeping, or starting, a small 'wild' area for these insects; they'll work hard for you, and repay you more than the investment, as well as give you a warm glow about doing your bit for sustaining endangered species. You'll be surprised once you start looking just how early - in the year, as well as in the day -

the bumble bee flies; they make the honey bee look a real lie-abed, and their sheer size makes pollination virtually unavoidable.

Then there are scores of solitary bees - those which do not work to store food and sustain a colony like the honey bee. Orchardists in Washington State, U.S., are getting excited by the Blue Orchard Mason Bee (*Osmia lignaria*), and whilst that is a North American native (and other members of the family are native to Japan, and busy in their orchards), we have the Red Mason Bee (*Osmia rufa*) which similarly promises great things. These nest in beetle holes in old wood, in old reed or straw, hollow twigs, even garden canes, old nail holes, the roof or the (unused) lock of your orchard store. It's an assiduous worker: it has been suggested that 500 Red Mason bees will pollinate a hectare of apples planted at commercial densities, compared with three colonies of honey bees for the same area - with between 20,000 and 25,000 workers per colony!

If you don't clear and tidy your orchard and its environment too enthusiastically, the chances are *Osmia rufa* is there already - and once there, if the habitat and the food remain, so will they. They tend to work only within a 120 yard radius - unlike the honey bee which spends much time on the wing, working up to a six mile radius. You can encourage them by providing nesting sites - just drill holes (5/16th inch is the recommended diameter) in any suitable, dry, sheltered wood; fenceposts, dead trees, whatever; every inch or so in depth will provide space for a single larva which will hatch out early the following spring, just in time for your pollination. You can of course drill much deeper, and the bee will lay several larvae in the same nest.

Once you start trying to attract and sustain Bumble bees and the Mason bee, you'll find them absorbing in their own right, and fascinating to watch as they go about their business as very efficient pollinators. That's the good news. The bad news is that I'm still working on something to replace the honey my wife likes to add to her winter breakfast porridge. Maybe maple syrup? Now that's a different challenge altogether!

Chris Taylor

GERALD FINZI, 1901-1956

"It's disastrous the way old slow bearing varieties are gradually being shoved out of existence by the inevitable C O pippins and Laxtons Superb. Both are wonderful apples, but a single D'arcy Spice, Court Pendu Plat, Orleans Reinette, Margil, Wyken Pippin, Claygate Permain, Adams Permain, Sturmer, Ribston etc etc should be in every orchard, if they only give a few pounds in a year, just for the joy of variety." A comment which might have been made by someone writing to this Newsletter today, (except for the spellings!). What gives the show away is that there is no mention of the less wonderful and rather boring varieties which abound in present day commercial outlets. The comment was, in fact, made in a letter to a fellow-enthusiast almost 60 years ago, in the middle of World War 2 and Hitler's U-boats, by one of the more outstanding composers of the past century, quoted by Stephen Banfield, in his biography of Finzi, published by Faber and Faber Limited in 1997, whose narrative continues that the comment was written the day after he had given Vaughan Williams "the very largest apple ever seen" (Ursula Vaughan Williams, 1964) for the latter's 70th birthday.

Spurred on in his enthusiasm by the broadcast comments of Morton Shand, wine savant and champion of modern European architecture (!) who worked for the Admiralty at Bath, Finzi joined in the search for "lost" indigenous apple varieties with a fervour, it is said, which matched that of Vaughan Williams collecting folk-songs. His interest in matters pomological are described in greater detail in the biography, as well as by Dr. Joan Morgan, of Brogdale (*The Book of Apples: Morgan and Richards 1993 – Ebury Press Limited*). Perusal of the Index of the Apple Collection at the National Fruit Trials (Brogdale) reveals several entries of varieties attributable to Finzi, albeit categorised as "false". As a result of his research and re-propagation efforts, his own personal collection at the Ashmansworth (Hants) homestead numbered as many as 400 varieties, a very considerable collection for a private individual at that time – sadly now little in evidence, having been planted, according to his biographer, too close together "exposed at 700 feet on chalk capped with heavy clay and flint".

The centenary of his birth is celebrated by performances, inter alia, of his most significant choral work, a setting of 'Intimations of Immortality' by Wordsworth – a poet who drew inspiration from many scenically emotive parts of the British Isles, including the Wye Valley. It is included within a remarkable feast of 20th Century English music at this year's (Gloucester) Three Choirs Festival. The work made its debut in 1950 and glows with a rapt intensity. It is also worth mentioning that an important, earlier, vocal composition – *Dies Natalis* – is a setting of words by Thomas Traherne, the 17th Century poet and vicar of Credenhill, on Hereford's outskirts, (one of whose 19th Century successors, as rector, was the Revd. Charles Bulmer, a leading pomologist – no surprise). Thus was a remarkable musician of Italian/Jewish forbears drawn for a significant part of his inspiration towards "that sweet borderland" of Elgar's 'Introduction and Allegro' with its pastoral, Celtic leanings (a long way from 'Cockaigne' and Hyde Park). It is also noteworthy that, in the fullness of time, Finzi's ashes were scattered by his widow, Joy, on May Hill, that widely visible landmark and vantage point, close to the Forest of Dean and the land of Foxwhelp and Styre where, Banfield says, "Gerald had spent childhood holidays and first became familiar with the West Country apple varieties".

Ray Boddington

TREASURES AND PITFALLS: LOCATING OLD ORCHARDS USING OS MAPS

The Bromyard area of Herefordshire is strongly connected with fruit growing. A local apple variety, *Collington Bitter Sweet* (or *Collington Big Bitters*) was used for cider, cooking and mincemeat, fruit trees are dotted in and around the town, and a number of street names reflect lost orchards.

The excellent book 'Bromyard: Minster Manor and Town', by Phyllis Williams, includes a facsimile of the 1928 Ordnance Survey (OS) map and an aerial photograph, also by the OS, from 1971, as illustrations of the survival of burgage plots.

The juxtaposition of these two images suggested that many orchards were lost during this period, but also did seem to point to the location of a few old orchards that might still be present today.

The possibility was presented to use a series of OS maps to chart the fortunes of orchards in the area over a period of a century or more, and that these maps might provide a quick way to focus on the oldest surviving trees for identification and propagation.

There were good sources of information available. Bromyard has a very active local history society, which holds maps, books, photographs and other resources. The Ordnance Survey web site can provide segments of historic maps of any area, and their historic maps department was able to answer some difficult questions. Hereford Record Office was another source for maps of the area – particularly at the old 25 inch and 6 inch scales.

The first facts to emerge were in many ways disappointing. The 1928 25 inch series (all or parts of sheets 21/6, 21/7, 21/9 and 21/10) included a small footnote stating that they were based on a survey of 1885, with revisions, and were not therefore, the result of a full contemporary survey. The OS stated that this was often the case, and that typical notified revisions would be the extension of the railway during this period or major new building work. They thought that many changes of agricultural field use, such as the ploughing up of an orchard, were unlikely to be included until the next full survey.

A check of the 1928 maps against the previous 1904 and 1886 editions indicated that this was probably true. All fields marked as orchards in 1886 still seemed to be orchards in 1928 (although the symbols used had changed slightly), while no new orchards had appeared. The picture was suspiciously static. Perhaps the apparent great loss of trees between 1928 and 1971 was rather exaggerated, since it might be the aggregation of almost all losses between 1885 and 1971. It was subsequently confirmed that no new full survey was carried out until the 1970s, and that even the editions of the 1950s were based on the survey of 1885 – forming a distorted picture in which perhaps 90% of orchards losses over the whole 94 year period were apparently compressed into the final 18 years. While other sources have suggested an accelerated rate of loss during the C20th, using the OS maps to try and evaluate this would be very misleading indeed. Certainly, the use of OS maps to help identify patterns of orchard change has to be approached with considerable caution.

Maps from the 6 inch series for 1888, 1930 and 1952/3 were also compared, and these did underline the more accurate picture of changes to orchards as a result of revisions such as urban development. One of the changes ties in very well with reports from local residents that old orchard trees may be found in the gardens of some early C20th houses. Houses and allotments in the 1930 edition covered an orchard shown on the late C19th maps, but regular rows of trees were still shown between the houses. Trees absorbed into the protected environment of gardens in this way sometimes have better prospects of survival than their equivalents on farmland. If trees are there, they could now be well in excess of 100 years old, and these gardens will be on the list for collecting fruit samples this autumn.

The Foot and Mouth crisis has hindered any detailed investigation on the ground, and these will probably now be held over until next year. However, three example

fields, in reasonable view from public roads, were selected on the basis that they were marked as orchards on all of the maps from 1886, and also showed trees in the 1971 photograph. One of the fields now seems to be treeless, one may contain a single remnant, but the third contained a number of beautiful old trees. It is just possible that an ancient orchard was uprooted after 1885 and subsequently replanted - and we can now conclude that the OS maps are unlikely show evidence of such a change - but from brief observation it is equally likely that these are another example of C19th trees in the area.

One further individual tree that almost certainly dates from before 1885 was located as a result of the older OS maps. The 1886 edition included symbols to represent small groups of trees included in larger fields. One example was in a field that still borders the town today, and a battered and stag-headed perry pear was found there. These small-group symbols, together with individual trees in hedge boundaries, were left out of all future editions, starting from 1904, as part of a rationalisation, so the 1886 edition was the only map evidence to point to this tree. A photograph held by the local history society, and probably dating from the 1890s or early 1900s, was then found to show the group of trees, with the characteristic shape of the mature perry apparently discernible, and this further enhanced the credibility of the tree as a long-lived survivor. Perry pears are, of course, generally renowned for their longevity.

In conclusion, OS maps can be relied upon reasonably well to show the loss of orchard space over a long period to new homes or civil engineering projects. They are, however, unlikely to show a reliable picture of orchards lost to alternative agricultural use, except where they follow a full new survey. Nevertheless, some interesting results can emerge when maps are used to try and locate the oldest trees in an area, and when combined with alternative historical sources the exercise can be very enjoyable and worthwhile. Although some individual trees - especially those planted originally in gardens - might not be found this way, it can provide a quick method of homing in on possible examples of surviving trees from very old orchards.

John Powell

NEW ORCHARD FOR SOUTH SHROPSHIRE

Onny Meadows is a nature reserve managed by Shropshire Hills Countryside Unit, immediately to the south of Craven Arms, bordered along its length by the River Onny. A local group, the Friends of Onny Meadows, has raised funds to plant an orchard next to the Visitor Centre.

The site isn't perfect (what site is?), but it does have the benefit of good drainage, unimproved soil, and a sympathetic local council as landlord. Nearby is the remnant of a farm orchard, which may be incorporated in time. Renewal of hedgerows and a coppice plantation are part of the wider management of the Meadows, and both will provide increasing shelter from the prevailing wind as the fruit trees mature. This will be handy; in some seasons the wind seems to prevail from every direction.

The aim is for the orchard to be an amenity for local people, but to start with, no one was clear about what kind of amenity. To encourage a number of uses I suggested planting perry, cider apple and damson as well as culinary and desert apple. With some idea of how the fruit might be used in the future, varieties then had to be chosen with the location in mind. Suggestions came from the Friends, and Ray Boddington kindly supplied a *MAN* list of varieties for less favoured areas. We are favouring hardy old warriors like *Tom Putt*, as well as *Catshead*, *Winston* and *Newton Wonder*. For cider, *Brown Snout* (a very sweet juicer) and *Vilberie* have both been planted locally by Bulmers, and will be able to look after themselves, as should three perry pear varieties *Thorn*, *Brandy* and *Blakeney Red*, all on seedling pear stock. Each year seems to present us with very marked weather patterns, and a mix of early, medium and late desert apples should ensure some useful cropping each year, with *Discovery* at one end through to *American Mother*, *Ribston Pippin* and *Adams' Pearmain* at the other. Everyone wants local varieties these days, so *Onibury Pippin* had to be included as the closest we'll get to a 'local'. Onibury is a couple of miles downstream from the Meadows.

The site is about an acre, and the majority of the trees will be on vigorous stocks. However, a number will be grown as bush trees between the standards and the Centre, taking advantage of the extra protection, as well as enabling a person in a wheelchair, or children, the experience of picking fruit. Because we are dealing with a sloping site, it may help us to evade frost damage by adopting a planting plan I have seen in older farm orchards in Worcestershire, that of siting the early flowering damson, cherry and pear towards the top of the slope, with apple varieties lower down. Initially the Friends wanted to plant up the entire acre, but it was decided to set aside a third to allow for changing ideas. A possible future development is to take graftwood from mature traditional orchards in and around Craven Arms, making a link with the past, selecting varieties which grow well in the area, and gradually add them into the orchard.

Trees were ordered late last year, and Scott's Nurseries were able to offer good specimens of almost everything at very short notice, and they were delivered to my address for convenience. Everyone was contacted, and a planting day arranged. Two days later foot and mouth struck, and the Council closed the Meadows indefinitely. Thirty two vigorous standards raring to go had to be found nursery space, and my good neighbour set them in the ground between frosts, where they are still, and will be until our next scheduled planting date in November.

I always think that the work comes after trees have been planted; enthusiasm needs tempering with reality. Yes, we need to come up with tree protection, which will deal with wildlife and the public - both have 24 hour access to the site. And I am encouraging the Friends to seek a more formal agreement so that there shall be greater security for the orchard for its future.

Diggory Kempton

ORCHARD GROUPS

In Newsletter No. 4 Diggory wrote "There must be a huge fund of skills and experience amongst readers of this Newsletter; and a wide appreciation of apples too. People interested in pooling ideas about community orchards, or who would

like to look into the possibility of setting up such a scheme, may find it useful to contact me on 01588 660392, and I would act as co-ordinator to put people in touch with each other." Again, we ask, do please ring and have a chat with Diggory, to see what has happened on this front since the plea went out.

Sheila Leitch

UK NETWORK for *MALUS* MEETING

Brogdale, home of the National Fruit Collections, was the venue for a meeting in September 2000 of the 'UK Network for *Malus*' convened by Imperial College at Wye. The aim of this meeting, which marked the concluding phase of a three year project funded by MAFF, was to discuss the apple cultivars reckoned to be nationally "at risk" and how these can then be conserved. The RHS, Wisley, was represented at the meeting, together with organisations from Cornwall, Kent, Norfolk, Oxford and Yorkshire which, like *MAN*, are interested in the conservation of old varieties of apple. *MAN* sent three delegates. Those attending brought good regional knowledge and expertise built up over many years which was appreciated as being an extremely valuable resource for the UK Network for *Malus* programme.

A list of endangered cultivars was drawn up during the day and the provenance of some of these was discussed. Once located, the old and rare varieties can be grafted onto root stocks of varying strengths and grown to produce healthy young trees. Imperial College at Wye would then like to have 'copies' for their National Fruit Trial project. When the trees are grown together under similar conditions, the varieties can be more easily compared with others already in the National Collection and possible duplication can be checked. It may be that an apple regarded as a local phenomenon may in fact be known in another region by a different name. Excitingly one such apple sent from Cornwall under the name of 'Herefordshire Pippin' was recognised by John Aldridge and Mike Porter (two of *MAN*'s delegates at the meeting) as *Sam's Crab*, an old Herefordshire apple which has been one of *MAN*'s success stories (see Newsletter Nos. 1 & 3).

As *MAN* had previously suspected, a popular type of apple found in many of our old orchards, the *Catshead*, is being shown to have many different versions and is to receive further investigation. Various *Catshead* and *Lady's Finger* types have cropped up extensively at Marcher Apple events and have also posed problems to others in the UK Network: therefore the National Fruit Collections is proposing to establish Observation Plot Trials to compare examples of these groups. *Costard* (Newsletter No.4) is yet another ancient apple which it is difficult to define and identify with much certainty, but in Brogdale's observation trials the mystery may be helped to a satisfactory conclusion.

During a conducted tour of the National Apple Collections, we were able to check some of our puzzling specimens with varieties available there. In one part of the gardens we looked at several accessions of *Dr Harvey* an apple about which there has been much debate (Newsletter No. 2). These had been sent from many different parts of the country and it was most interesting to be able to compare the fruit so conveniently growing side-by-side.

In the report which followed the meeting, when the Brogdale experts had studied the samples, it was suggested that *Camation*, an apple which might be classed as a 'founder member' of MAN's collection, may be the same as one similarly named in Norfolk. It is also very similar to the *Glasbury* apple already growing in the National Fruit Collections.

Of course one day in the life of apple detectives is much too short for many questions to be answered, but the 13th. September 2000 meeting has made a good start in linking those with a common interest in the conservation of what could be termed "Heritage Fruits". We came away with a better idea of what is happening in other parts of Britain and how important is MAN's contribution to the UK Network for *Malus*. It is a pity that Brogdale is so far away from the Marches for quick checks to be feasible, but in building up our own local collection of endangered varieties, MAN's museum orchards should make a significant reservoir to feed the National Collection as well as to stimulate further research into this fascinating horticultural subject by local students.

The UK Network for *Malus* programme will continue to be monitored, it is hoped, as the next programme on a National Pear Register gets under way. We wish those working on the project from Imperial College at Wye every success with their proposal for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Christine Porter

SALE OF GRAFTWOOD AND BUDWOOD

MAN will continue this service of offering to supply propagation material and we hope to hear of successful results. As previously stated, in order to make the collection of material reasonably convenient and economical, there will have to be cut-off dates for receipt of orders. Those for graftwood have to be in by 10th January, and budwood by 20th July. Mike Porter, Tel: 01874-730354, Sheila Leitch and John Aldridge will have lists of varieties grown within the Network. Prices per stick (10-12") to members £1.25 (non-members, £2.50) plus £2.00 p&p. The scheme is geared primarily to personal, rather than commercial, quantities.

John Aldridge

MAN LIBRARY

A list of books is available for a second class stamp and a SAE. These can be consulted by arrangement at Wye View, or at an event, or some can be borrowed for short periods by members living locally, who are able to return them in person. Two additions to the list in Newsletter No. 6 are:-

Common Ground. The Common Ground Book of Orchards; community, conservation and culture. Compiled over the last decade of the 'Save Our Orchards Campaign',

Parkinson, John. 'A Garden of Pleasant Flowers; Paradisi in Sole Paradisus Terestris'. 1629. The third part, or Orchard.

Footnote. This fascinating treatise, donated to the library as a bound photocopy for research purposes by John Powell, now of Norton Canon, Herefordshire, provides much good advice on choice of orchard site, how to 'amend the defects of many grounds', how to graft and the 'well keeping of an Orchard'. It then goes on to

describe all the fruits extant in Britain at this early date. It covers grapes, figs, 'raspis berrie', red, white and black currant, gooseberries, barberries, 'filberds', medlars, service trees, cherries, plums including damsons and bullace', 'apricockes' peaches, nectarines, almonds, 'orenges' apples, quinces, pears, 'wallnuts' horse 'chesnut', mulberries (black, white and Virginia). Uses for all the fruits, quite apart from food, are also given. For instance, of the Service tree, Parkinson says, and I write it as given, to let you get your eye in on the period style where 'v' appears as 'u' and 's', unless at the end of a word, then appearing similar to 'f':-

'They are binding, fit to be taken of them that haue any fcouing or laske, to helpe to stay the fluxe; but take heed, lest if you binde too much, more paine and danger may come therof than of the fcouing'. So, anyone fancying a bit more variety in their orchard, might like to try some of these more unusual fruit trees.

Sheila Leitch

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENTS

We welcome correspondence from our members on their plans, orchards, comments on success or otherwise with variety recommendations and any experiences which are likely to be of interest to others. Please reply direct to the two requests below. A copy to me would also be welcome.

Sheila Leitch

Restoration of an old Orchard in South Gloucestershire

It is thought that Crowell Brook Mill at North Nibley was first established in the 1100s although sadly very little evidence of the original building remains today. The present structure was restored from a derelict ruin in 1990 and made to look as much like the mill looked in 1730 with the material resources still available.

The land, which extends to nearly eight acres, includes a field now under the ESA regime incorporating a new copse of local hedgerow and field species planted last spring and the few remaining Hawthorn and other dominant species self-seeded along the field boundary. It is hoped that this planting will provide much needed cover for the nesting sites of songbirds, plagued with increasing numbers of Magpies.

The original orchard covered an area of about two acres and is on a steep slope facing south. Sadly, only two of the original trees remain. The plan is to replant the orchard, not only with old apple varieties, but with pear and plum as well - much the same as it must have been in its heyday.

I wonder if there are any Network members who would be able and willing to give me advice on a suitable planting list for an historic orchard in this part of South Gloucestershire and also some idea of where I would be able to obtain the trees for a bare root planting programme in the autumn.

I am looking into the possibility of getting Ministry help with the costs of staking and fencing needed to protect the young trees from the cattle and sheep which necessarily graze the pasture.

Additional information on national and county financial assistance would also be welcome, bearing in mind that a footpath passes through the orchard which links up with the Cotswold Way less than a quarter of a mile away. The intention is that once the trees are established they will create a living museum of varieties for those using the footpath to sample and enjoy.

I can be contacted at Crowell Brook Mill, Forthay, North Nibley, Glos. GL11 6EA, and by phone on 01453 546680. I thank you in advance for any help you can give me.

Martin Keay

Wanted: Space to Fulfil a Dream...

As a brand-new, still-wet-behind-the-ears member, there's a great deal I don't know about the Marcher Apple Network, and even more I don't know about apples and orchards; but I'm keen to learn! Maybe there's a member out there who can help me - or then again, it could be I'm asking for the orchardist's equivalent of the holy grail. But better, surely, to ask and fail, than not to ask at all.

It may be helpful at the outset to explain a little background. My interest, initially, was as a beekeeper (though I had some very basic knowledge about apples gained through osmosis - my late mother wrote her Year Two Diploma in Agriculture thesis at Writtle in 1939 on Apple Rootstocks). As such, I viewed blossom as the crop, and apples as a by-product.

Varroa changed all that, and I am now looking at apple orchards as a form of personal quest; a wish to create or maintain something of real lasting value, whilst enjoying the peace and sense of 'real' work, after 30 years of newspapers, radio, public relations, writing, editing and publishing. So far as the bees are concerned, I will doubtless go back to Apis mellifera for the honey, but am tending towards Osmia rufa, the mason bee, for pollination duties!

My appetite for working with apples has been further whetted by visits to Ontario and the vast orchards around Georgian Bay, and by tasting their 'apple butter'; by the gift from my wife of the recent and excellent Common Ground book, and, from a different source, the equally splendid H. V. Taylor volume, and a variety of other reading.

But now the time has come to put the theory into practice, and I am looking for an old orchard in need of love and care, or a site where I can plant a new one - but preferably the former. My wife and I have been searching the Marches for some years now, and finding no help from the estate agents; now I turn to you.

Please, does any member or other reader have a small orchard that could be for sale, or for long-term rent, or which could be managed on some innovative partnership arrangement? (By small, I mean something that could at the outset be managed in a few days each month. We still have commitments in Lincolnshire which preclude a full-time move - yet.) In an ideal world, the existing trees will be local and/or interesting varieties, and my goal would be to fill in, as required, with similar to form a varied orchard of traditional trees.

I am principally interested in apples, but acknowledge the importance of pears and other fruits (and nuts) and would welcome these - but look for a predominance of apples.

In that same ideal world, there would be a cottage nearby which could also be rented or maybe even bought, but which would offer a watertight, secure, base suitable for occasional accommodation and more frequent weekend visits, and eventual improvement. Alternatively, close access to a B&B or similar, or even space for a caravan, would be a plus.

To many of you, your response quite reasonably may well be to say: 'Dream on', or similar. Perhaps in this case the above may have entertained you with my naivety. But if just one of you is minded to make contact with some proposal, I would be thrilled. Write to me at The Old Farmhouse, Church Road, Branston, Lincoln LN4 1LZ, or contact me in these new technological days by email at ct@clara.net I look forward to hearing from you.....

Chris Taylor

IDENTIFICATIONS

John Norman

To confuse the issue, my father called this apple 'John Normington', but John Norman seems correct although only one apple book in our current collection, Taylor, refers to it at all and then only briefly.

Two years ago, some were sent by Dr. Ingham of Eardisland for identification. These seemed to be the same as those on my nephew's farm. Some were displayed at the Malvern Autumn Garden Show in 2000, with a ??? by the name. A visitor confirmed the name saying that his grandfather grew them at Wichenford, Worcester, many years ago. John Edgeley of Pershore College and Jim Arbury of RHS Wisley did not know it.

A chance referral in a Hereford Market led us to Mr. Gibbs of Lugwardine from whom we obtained graftwood. Nurseryman member, Paul Davis of Llandeilo has used graftwood from two sources in the hope that fruit from young wood will prove that another 'lost' apple has been found. Next stop 'BROGDALE'!!

It is this sort of research that makes membership of *MAN* even more rewarding. Why not give it a try? Come to an identification session.

Tom Froggatt

Finding the 'Chatley apple'.

This is the tale of the difficult process of trying to rediscover a lost apple. It has led me to an interest in old varieties and old orchards in general. In my case the apple is the 'Chatley apple'; but I'm sure the twists and turns I have experienced must be true of many similar hunts for forgotten apples.

I live and work as a farmer at Chatley, a hamlet of 14 houses in the parish of Ombersley. This area, just to the north of Worcester, was once thick with orchards. Only relics now remain, with no commercial production. On our family farm we

have the remnants of two small orchards. These were favourite haunts for me when young. The trees were easy to climb and full of holes for nesting jackdaws and tree sparrows. I never took much interest in the fruit, although my father used to tell me about some of the varieties as we picked a few for our own use. One of these he called the 'Chatley apple'.

Then in 1995 I went to a lecture by Joan Morgan of Brogdale at Pershore. Her enthusiasm for the vast range of different cultivars inspired me, and got me to thinking about that Chatley apple, and a quest to track down the living specimen. My father said in fact there had been two Chatley apples: a red and a green. Both were kept until May, by which time they were acceptable as dessert apples, as well as their culinary uses. Other locals confirmed this keeping ability as their virtue – probably the only virtue relative to other, better varieties!

Searching the literature in Worcester City Library revealed the *Chatley's Kernel*, to which I found three printed descriptions. But no illustrations were to be found. Bunyard described it as "hardly worth growing", which did nothing to encourage me in my dream of rediscovering a wonderful old apple! Although Brogdale do not have *Chatley's Kernel* amongst their collection, they do have several varieties bred in the 1940s by a Colonel Wastie. One of these is 'Red Army', the result of a cross with *Chatley's Kernel*. But Brogdale could give no further information on this colonel, nor any documentation which might have told me more about Chatley's Kernel.

The Chatley apple trees on our farm had long since fallen and been removed, but I hoped there might be an old tree in an obscure corner of my local area. An appeal in the parish magazine produced several replies from older readers who remembered the apple and said they would recognise it if they were shown one. One cottage owner had bought the cottage years ago with mention of a 'Chatley Pippin' tree in the sale particulars. But it was soon clear that neither of the two remaining trees was what we were looking for. Another cottage owner had a tree, which an old man who was born and died in Chatley, had told him was a 'Chatley'. These apples were more like the apple we were after; but being very old the tree only produced 'scrubby' little apples, which made identification for my 'living witnesses' difficult. However, one notable feature of this tree was its very late, very white, blossom, and its grey undulating leaves. Using these features I was able to spot another likely candidate not far away. The fruit from this second tree also appeared to fit the printed descriptions, as well as meeting with approval from those who remembered the Chatley apple. Furthermore they were not identified as anything else when I took some to various apple naming events. Since then I have spotted two more trees, all within one mile of each other. All four trees are old. It was noticeable that the fruit from the second tree found was noticeably greener than that on the first, but the trees' situations were very different.

John Aldridge of MAN and Chris Bray of Worcs. County Council were later looking at an orchard at Himbleton, six miles to the east of Chatley. The owner claimed two trees were 'Chatleys', without any prompting from John, who had already thought the apples looked very like the ones I had shown him. This was further supporting evidence. Meanwhile John Aldridge, using material from the first two trees discovered, has propagated some young trees. I now have a young tree

on M25 planted in one of the old orchards on our farm, which I have been restocking with old varieties, (a direct consequence of this new hobby I have discovered!) This year for the first time it bears fruit. I have also given a tree to Ombersley Community Orchard, which we have planted locally as a Millennium project. John has been growing trees propagated from two different parent trees alongside each other. He now tells me that the young trees from the two sources appear to be exhibiting difference in vigour, and in apple colouration. What had seemed to be a successful hunt with all the loose ends comfortably tied up, now suddenly seems uncertain once again! Could there be two Chatley apples after all as my father originally claimed? It seems I must carry on researching after all.

Finally, as a sobering footnote, this year Worcs. County Council are offering Chatley Kernel as one of their fruit tree packs. The budwood came, via me, from the second tree with the greener apples. I'm now wondering if falsely-named Chatley Kernel is being spread throughout the county, and it's my fault! Incidentally, it seems to me that the name should be 'Chatley Kernel' as it is named after a place, rather than 'Chatley's Kernel', which implies it was named after a person. Bunyard says the name's origin is unknown. But with local knowledge of the variety still surviving around Chatley, it clearly came from this area; although its breeding or discovery does indeed remain a complete mystery.

Peter Weeks

Follow Up:-

Propagation material from the two sources of the "Chatley Apple" was budded onto M9 root stocks in one of our trial areas. The young growth had dull mid-green leaves which gradually assumed a rather bluish-grey hue. The two maidens could be distinguished at a distance from the other varieties in the row as their leaves had a silvery sheen in bright light (not apparent so far this year). One plant was certainly more vigorous (I thought just a better 'take') but the botanical leaf details seemed very similar.

Peter wanted some trees propagated onto M25 rootstocks so obviously I took wood from the plant that had most growth. When we went to press last year, the first fruits were in the early stage of development. By the time they ripened, it was clear that from their size, shape and colour we had two distinct varieties.

The less vigorous of the two produced good fruits, mainly green but some with a dull red flush, which matched written descriptions of Chatley Kernel, the "spangles" being particularly prominent. They also matched fruits found at Himbleton where the owner was confident of the authenticity of her trees; other witness statements also support the apple as being true. Despite his doubts, it seems that Peter arranged for the correct apple to be distributed in the Worcestershire County Council tree kits.

It now seems apparent that he has received from me maidens of the "red Chatley Apple", thought to be a seedling of Chatley Kernel. This apple is not flat like its alleged parent but looks like a large, well-coloured, rounder Claygate Pearmain with conspicuous jagged russet around many of the lenticels. Red Army can probably be ruled out but other varieties raised by Col. Wastie should be compared. The 'red Chatley Apple' has been given the provisional name of "Chatley Pippin".

Chatley Kernel is rather small by present day standards for a culinary apple and its flavour is not in the same class as our best cookers. But the old trees I saw were still healthy and cropped well with scab-free fruits. Owing to lack of space the fruits from the young tree were relegated to a poor storage area – they kept better than almost all of my late cookers.

John Aldridge

National Fruit Collection.

The DEFRA, formerly MAFF, National Fruit Collection forms a reference library and invaluable genetic resource for pomologists all over the world and most especially for British fruit enthusiasts. That each accession is 'true to type' is fundamental to the Collection's worth and an immense amount of meticulous verification was carried out by J.M.S. Potter, the 'father' of the Collection, and his staff at the former National Fruit Trials at Brogdale. The work on apples culminated in Muriel Smith's 'Apple Register' of 1972, which details approximately 1,500 cultivars growing in the Collection which are 'true' and agree with published descriptions. The 'Register' also raises queries for a further, approximately, 100 accessions and the status of these is given as 'if true'. Other accessions are marked as false in the National Fruit Collection Catalogue and Muriel Smith did not list them as being present at Brogdale. These are also marked in 'The Book of Apples' as 'false' or flagged with a question mark.

Last season we began to try to resolve these queries. In each case we have made as detailed an investigation as possible and included in our examination blossom and tree habit as well as fruit. We have also looked carefully at the provenance of the accession. We are continuing this work in the coming season. The observations and our notes will be lodged with the records of the National Apple Collection and available for reference. The conclusions will also be included in the next issue of the 'Catalogue of the National Fruit Collection' and in the revised edition of 'The Book of Apples' to be published in Autumn 2002.

The following early observations may be of interest to members of *MAN*:-
In the National Fruit Collection:-

Bridgewater Pippin is not the cultivar described by Hogg, but was received from Cheal's Nursery in 1943 and will be named Bridgewater Pippin of Cheal

Broad-Eyed Pippin is not the cultivar of Hogg. It was described in Bultitude and will be named Broad-Eyed Pippin of Bultitude

Costard, all accessions up to now have been found to be false and not agree with the description in Hogg

Old Pearmain is probably not the old Pearmain of Hogg and most unlikely to be the Mediaeval Pearmain. It was received from Mr Kelsey of Chessington in 1924 and will be named Old Pearmain of Kelsey to avoid confusion.

Springrove Codlin is false and not the Summer Codlin of Thomas Andrew Knight. The accession is American Mother and probably resulted from a propagation error.

Waltham Abbey Pippin is not the cultivar of Hogg or Waltham Abbey of Bunyard.

Cobham, Double d'Ente, Screveton Golden Pippin, Twinings Pippin, Woodstock Pippin are all false and all are identical to Blenheim Orange.

Joan Morgan, Alison Lean, Emma-Jane Lamont

Dr Joan Morgan is the author of 'The Book Of Apples'

Drs Emma-Jane Lamont and Alison Lean are members of staff of the Imperial College at Wye, who are, respectively, responsible for the curatorship of the Collection and the administration of Plant Variety Rights.

PROGRESS ON WANTED APPLES

A list of varieties which we wanted to obtain from local/regional sources was published in Newsletter No. 2. Our survey work has revealed some successes and in other cases has sometimes clarified the situation a little, even if not actually resolving it.

Superb fruits of Dr Harvey were obtained from Himbleton and this particular old tree has been used for propagation by MAN. The confusion over the Brogdale accession has been cleared up. When some of us were there last Autumn, we saw a row of this variety in the trial ground, many bearing unmistakably authentic fruits. The question has shifted somewhat and it is now the similar Waltham Abbey Seedling which presents us with the problem of authenticity.

Young trees of Onibury Pippin are growing on various sites and we are reasonably confident about our Whiting Pippin and White Paradise (syns. Egg and, most confusingly, Lady's Finger). Members John and Anne Wright of Yarpole should be thanked for showing us the mystery apple which a neighbour called 'Mince Pie'. Ray Boddington and I actually went there to look at a different tree but found 'Mince Pie' by far the most intriguing, especially as we were at the time trying to make some sense of the Lady's Finger types (and still are!). It was three more years before we saw fruits on our own young tree and realised that the apple, which had always been cooked young, was not a cooker at all. It closely resembles the internal and external details in Hogg of the October dessert apple, White Paradise, considered to be a Scottish variety.

Although we found a wonderful ancient tree of Sam's Crab at Elton Hall, we have drawn a blank on Longville's Kernel. Hogg describes the latter as a separate variety and this is perhaps supported by an entry in the Woolhope Club's notes about the "Two types of Sam's Crab, one superior to the other". At this stage we can add no more. Brogdale received wood of Sam's Crab and Onibury Pippin and will be sent the other two to compare with the queried accessions in the National Collection.

We are disappointed in not having found, so far, a local old tree of Wormsley Pippin, since an independent source is desirable to compare with the Brogdale accession, which we do have in our collection. We also have the 'rogue' Wormsley Pippin a striped dessert apple, which was unfortunately distributed locally. We think this was propagated originally from one of the pair of trees at Berrington Hall, which proved to be an error, and has since been removed. The putative Wormsley Pippin at Berrington has been very shy in bearing and we await fruits with interest. However, we are not certain of its provenance. If it is ex-Brogdale, we shall be no further forward.

Last Autumn at the Big Apple in Much Marcle, we were shown what were claimed to be fruits of Credenhill Pippin, also on the 'Wanted' list! Its external features are briefly described in Taylor's 'Apples of England'. The National Apple Register also

has a listing for it and, although it is a useful book, *MAN* does not use the descriptions it contains for definitive identifications. (It does allow one to judge the type and to rule out a specimen if not in the appropriate group). *MAN* has propagated the candidate from the 80 year old or so parent tree growing at Swainshill, adjacent to Credenhill, and believes the apple to be of the right type. You can be sure the fruits will be very closely examined and compared with all the recorded details that we can find. An important, perhaps clinching, aspect will be local familiarity and memory.

John Aldridge

Has anyone come across an August codlin type apple called *Sugarloaf Pippin*? Oblong in shape, it has a refreshing flavour when eaten as a dessert and can also be cooked. It is a very poor keeper. We think we may have located an old tree of this variety, which is described in 'The Herefordshire Pomona', but have no other fruit with which to compare it. We shall be sending some fruit to Brogdale and Simon Clark will be collecting samples on his visit to Leominster in August, to see if it matches any variety in his descriptions.

Sheila Leitch

TROUBLE IN THE ORCHARDS

Following the exceptionally wet winter, reports are coming in of young apple trees dying in the Marches area. In some cases the cause appears to be the fungal disease, Crown Rot, caused by *Phytophthora cactorum* and *P. syringae*. Stella Knight, a Fruit Research Officer who works for the organic Henry Doubleday Research Association and is also engaged on a project at East Malling Research Station, has kindly sent information on the Symptoms, Lifecycle and Spread, Assessment, Prevention and Control, taken from the book 'Pest and Disease Handbook' (Rohm and Haas UK Ltd). We would be interested to hear if members elsewhere are losing trees.

Sheila Leitch

'WELSH COURTING CUSTOMS' Catrin Stevens, Gomer 1993

"Apple scoops, to help those with poor teeth to eat raw apples and to pull out apple cores, were also presented as love tokens. The custom can be traced back to Roman times, although most of the ones that have been preserved in the Welsh Folk Museum's collection date from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Apple scoops would be carved from a sheep's leg bone and were often crudely decorated with initials, hearts, dates and other motifs. Ivory and silver examples have also survived."

A 'calenig' usually consisted of an apple or an orange with some holly inserted in the top, wheat grains pressed in all over and a tripod of sticks attached in order for it to stand up along with a stick with which to carry it. People would go around the houses carrying this and singing on All-Hallows Eve.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday/Sunday, 25th/26th August. Talgarth Festival. *MAN* will have a small display of early season apples, with some for tasting, in the Market, on the Sunday only, from 12.00am - 5.00pm.

Tuesday, 11th September. 7.30pm. Cider Supper evening. Talk on 'Cider Lore' by Fiona Mac. Further details from The Cider Museum. Tel. 01432-354207.

Sunday, 16th September. Open Day at Penlanole, near Rhayader, Radnorshire. From 12.00am - 4.00pm. A fully converted Organic smallholding, managed by Philip Bowen, a member of MAN. The orchard has been regenerated under the Countryside Council for Wales 'Parklands and Orchard' scheme. There will be a barbecue and a bar and the local ceilidh band, Crabapple, will be providing musical entertainment. Visitors can walk around the 100 year old orchard and try and identify some of the fruits and see the new planting of juicing apples. MAN will have a small display and other members will be there, including Paul Davis who supplied the new trees, and, hopefully, Rob Stevenson, the tree surgeon. Members of CCW will also be coming. The farm is on the A470, 5 miles north of Newbridge on Wye and 4 miles south of Rhayader, NGR 987630. There will be signs on the road, and parking in a field at the farm. No dogs please. This should be a very pleasant opportunity for members from Mid Wales and the Marches to meet each other and exchange ideas with Philip. For further details Tel. 01597-811487.

Saturday, 22nd September. The 6th 'Apple Fair' will be held at Croft Castle, Leominster, opening at 1.30pm. MAN will have a display and be doing identifications. There will be tastings of dessert and cooked apples and various producers will have samples of juices and ciders for tasting and sale. The orchards will be open to visitors. Some of the trees are of varieties bred by Thomas Andrew Knight. It is hoped that Weston's horse and dray will be available to give rides around the Castle grounds. The National Trust property will be open at the usual charge and the tea rooms will also be open. There will be a competition for an apple pie or tart, so come prepared. For details, phone 01568-780246.

Saturday/Sunday, 22nd/23rd September. The 3rd Abergavenny Food Festival to be held in the Market Hall, the adjacent Borough Theatre and other venues. Regional Speciality Food Market, chef demonstrations, talks, debates and other events. Because of a late notification of change of date, MAN will not be able to attend this year. Our member, Colin Gardiner, will be there with his stand of single variety apple juices. Members with interesting apples requiring identification may leave labelled bag with three good typical specimens, accompanying notes and £1 per variety with Colin, for later identification. There will be a ceilidh on the preceding Thursday, with Rig-a-Jig, 7.30-11.00pm. Tickets at door. Further details from The Festival Office. Tel. 01873-851643.

Tuesday, 25th September. 7.30pm. Meeting of the Three Counties Cider and Perry Association at H. P. Bulmer's. Talk on Juice Production. Further details from the Secretary, Jean Nowell, Tel. 01531-660691 or from the Chairman, Jonathan Blair, Tel. 01432-345815.

Saturday/Sunday, 29th/30th September. Malvern Autumn Show at the Three Counties Showground, Malvern. The RHS mount a magnificent fruit display and offer an identification service. MAN will also have a display, including some apples from Berrington Hall. Paul Davis will have a stand and be demonstrating grafting and budding and will have apple trees for sale.

Saturday, 6th October. Marcher Apple Network's annual event to celebrate Apple Day. This year we will be at Weobley Village Hall, Herefordshire, NGR 405516. To find it, turn off the A4112 Leominster - Brecon road at the sign for Weobley, along the B4230 and turn left through the village, passing The Unicorn Inn on the left. Keep straight on, along road leading to Alton Cross. The Hall, called Hopelands, is the last building on the right and has parking. Doors open 2.00pm. Our third A.G.M. at 2.15pm, will be followed, about 3.00pm, by the opportunity to enjoy all the usual events associated with Apple Day, including a display of old apple and pear varieties, some of which you will be able to taste. An identification panel will try to name your unknown fruit. (Bring at least 3 specimens of each variety please). There will be apple juice tastings, and bottles of single variety apple juice will be on sale, which make most acceptable Christmas presents. Paul Davis will bring some old varieties of apple trees for sale. Tea and home-made refreshments with an apple theme will be on sale. Offers to provide some food will be much appreciated and advance bookings help us to estimate the food requirements. Free admission to members attending the AGM. Admission, £3 at the door. Children £1. We expect to finish about 6.00pm. Details from *MAN* officers.

Saturday/Sunday, 13th/14th October. 'The Big Apple'. A harvest-time celebration of English apples and cider in the Herefordshire parishes of the Marcle Ridge. The venue will again be Much Marcle, where there will be one joint weekend combining interest in dessert and culinary fruit with cider fruit. There will be fruit displays, tastings, identifications and apples and apple juices on sale at The Royal Oak. *MAN* will be there. Apple teas will be available at Much Marcle Memorial Hall, where there will be a display of cider fruits and perry pears.

On Saturday there will be a Gourmet Evening at The Scrumpy House, Much Marcle. On Sunday 3.00pm. 'Perry Pears Lost and Found'. Charles Martell will lead a short walk from Much Marcle Memorial Hall to the perry pear avenue at Hellens, an Elizabethan/Jacobean Manor House. *MAN* has been asked for advice on old apple varieties suitable for planting in the grounds.

At Hellens, at 5.15pm, 'Tracing the Origins of the Apple - Tien Shan to Much Marcle'. Talk by Dr Barrie Juniper. £4.

For details of talks, demonstrations and other events, phone Jackie Denman, Secretary of the 'Big Apple Association', on 01531-670544.

Saturday/Sunday, 13th/14th October. Smallholders Weekend. Royal Welsh Showground, Llanelwedd, Builth Wells. Paul Davis and *MAN* will be there.

Monday, 15th-Sunday, 21st October. Apple Week at Berrington Hall, near Ludlow. (Closed Thursday and Friday). Details from Nick Winney, Tel. 01568-610593 or the Office, 01568-615721.

Saturday, 20th October. Apple Day. Events countrywide. Programme available from Common Ground. Send SAE to PO Box 25309, London, NW5 1ZA. From 1st September, address will be Common Ground, Gold Hill House, 21, High Street, Shaftsbury, Dorset, SP7 8JE. Tel. 01747-850820.

Saturday, 20th October. Herefordshire Nature Trust - Apple Day and Coffee morning at Lower House Farm, Tupsley. Details from Heather Mead, Tel. 01432-356872.

Saturday/Sunday, 20th/21st October. Cidermaking Festival at the Cider Museum, Hereford. Fun day out for all the family and an opportunity for cider lovers and apple growers to get together, discuss their interests and try out samples of ciders and apple juices. There will be a comprehensive display of cider apple varieties, a demonstration of traditional cider making and children can try pressing apple juice. On the Saturday, a cooper will be demonstrating the art of barrel making. At the same venue, over the weekend, there will also be the Herefordshire Beekeepers Honey Competition. The exhibition will continue for a further week or so. Normal Museum entrance charges apply. (£2.50 adults, £2.00 concessions, with special rates for parties of 15 or more). Contact the Cider Museum on 01432-354207.

Saturday, 27th October. Leominster Apple Fair.

At Lion Building, Broad Street. From 10.00am - 4.00pm. Details from Felicity Norman, Tel. 01568-780886.

Saturday/Sunday, 27th/28th October. Celebration of the Apple at Llancaiach Fawr Manor, Treharris, Mid Glam. Apple juice and cider producers will be selling their products in the Long Barn. MAN will be there, with a display including some Welsh apples. For details Tel. 01443-412248.

Tuesday, 29th November. 7.30pm. Friends of the Cider Museum. Demonstration 'Pickles, Punches and Puddings for the Festive Season' by Rita Farnborough.

HEREFORDSHIRE'S ORCHARDS

Herefordshire's orchards are an important landscape feature, a valuable wildlife habitat and the basis of many local traditions and the culture of the county. In fact during the late 17th and 18th centuries the character of the Herefordshire landscape was portrayed as a "forest of fruit trees". Few orchards today contain the rich collection of local varieties that were once an integral part of our commercial and domestic fruit markets, as well as our social heritage.

The Fruit Tree Kit Scheme

To stem this loss the Herefordshire Council Parks & Countryside Service has developed the 'Fruit Tree Kit' scheme. The scheme aims to help people source old apple varieties that were once traditionally grown in Herefordshire, but are now rarely planted and difficult to obtain commercially and in turn restore or replant traditional standard orchards. The scheme now also offers traditional varieties of fruit trees that are budded on to semi-dwarf rootstock, resulting in a smaller tree that is suitable for planting in an urban garden – ensuring that this budstock will be available for future generations to use for propagation.

With advice from groups like the Marcher Apple Network the apple varieties have been selected as being traditionally grown in Herefordshire's orchards. The trees are grown by Frank Matthews Ltd. of Berrington Court, Tenbury Wells and are supplied at an age that should show good growth within two years of planting.

Fruit Tree Kits for Orchards

The aim of these kits is to help the restoration or replanting of traditional standard orchards. Each Orchard kit consists of one young tree supplied as a bare root

maiden, together with a 6' post, soft-tie, mulch mat and rabbit guard. The apple varieties are budded on to M25 vigorous rootstock. With formative pruning this will lead to a traditional standard apple tree around 10 metres tall. It is advisable to have a minimum space of 8–10 metres between trees. For best pollination two or three different varieties of similar flowering times should be present in the orchard or surrounding area (essential for the two *triploid* varieties in this year's kits). Crab apples around an orchard can also improve apple pollination. If the orchard is to be grazed the trees will need additional stockproof fencing.

The Varieties for Orchards

Colwall Quoining

Gennet Moyle

Golden Harvey

King's Acre Bountiful

King's Acre Pippin

Lord Hindlip

May Queen

Shropshire Prune

Glou Morceau

Jargonelle

Parks & Countryside Service, Herefordshire Council

COUNTRYSIDE TRAINING EVENTS WINTER 2001 – SPRING 2002

Saturday 29th September 2001: Creating, restoring & managing ponds for wildlife.

Sunday 14th October 2001: Trees – identification, surveying, seed gathering & propagation.

Saturday 27th October 2001: Hedge management & laying for beginners.

Saturday 10th November 2001: Wonderful Woodlands.

Saturday 17th November 2001: Intermediate hedgelaying.

Saturday 24th, repeated Sunday 25th November 2001: Pruning Apple Trees. 10.00am – 12.30pm and 1.30pm – 4.00pm. There will be two sessions each day. The morning session will look at the pruning of young standard apple trees during their formative years (2-8 years old). The afternoon sessions will look at old standard apple trees and the pruning they require to restore them to good health and encourage good cropping.

Leader: Paul Davis, a Marcher Apple Network member.

Venue: Further details will be given on application.

Cost: FULL DAY £40 or £20 (subsidised rate only for Herefordshire residents).

HALF A DAY: £25 or £12 (Herefordshire residents).

Saturday 1st December 2001: Planning and Planting an Orchard. 9.30am – 12 noon or 1.00pm – 3.30pm. A half day course looking at Why, Where and How to Plant an Orchard. You will receive professional advice on all aspects of creating an orchard including issues such as rootstocks, local varieties and sourcing trees as well as a "hands on" opportunity to plant and protect some trees. Tools, tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided.

Venue: to be confirmed, probably Bodenham Lake nature Reserve.

Cost: for a half-day session Herefordshire residents: £10, other: £20.

Saturday 16th February 2002: Grafting Apple Varieties. 10.00am – 12.30pm and 1.30pm–4.00pm. A half-day course, running as both a morning and an afternoon session, introducing participants to the theory and practice of grafting apple varieties. Following an introductory talk about rootstocks and apple varieties you will get the chance to practice on hazel and willow branches before having a go at the 'real thing'. One rootstock grown on in a pot so that you can take it away with you at the end of the session is included in the cost of the training. There will be

graftwood from a range of apple varieties available for you to choose from or you can bring your own from trees in your garden or orchard. Extra rootstocks will be available to purchase on the day if you wish to graft more than one tree/variety.

Venue: This course will hopefully be held at Mansell Lacy Community Hall .

Cost: Herefordshire residents: £10. Other: £20.

Saturday 9th March 2002: Living Willow.

James Bisset, Partnership Project Officer,
Herefordshire Council Parks & Countryside Service.

ORCHARD TRAINING COURSES

Herefordshire Council Parks & Countryside Service is again running a number of half-day or full day courses on subjects of interest:-

To book: send details of the courses along with your name, address, daytime telephone number and preferred date/session with a separate cheque, for each course, made payable to Herefordshire Council.

For further details contact James Bisset, Partnership Project Officer,

Tel: 01568 798341 or email: jbisset@herefordshire.gov.uk

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The financial year for *MAN* begins 1st August, to coincide with the beginning of the apple season. We send out the Newsletter to all those on our address list for the previous year, trusting they will wish to continue supporting *MAN*. PLEASE SEND YOUR MINIMUM SUB. of £5 NOW, for the current year, while you read your Newsletter No. 7, unless you are a Life Member or pay by Standing Order. Slips are inserted in this Newsletter, reminding members who pay by cheque that subscriptions are now due.

Material for Newsletter No. 8, preferably typed or on IBM compatible disc, will be welcomed throughout the year, but please send articles, or at least an indication of length, to the Editor, Sheila Leitch, by the beginning of July 2002 at the latest. Dates of events and small news items and 'fillers' can be accepted until the end of July. Grateful thanks to Elizabeth Rowe for typing some of the handwritten articles on her new and daunting computer, with Windows Millennium Edition, for relaying on disc to me. Also to those committee members who have been keen eyed proof readers. We should point out that the views expressed in the Newsletter are those of individual contributors, not necessarily those of *MAN*.

MAN OFFICERS:-

Chairman

Mr.R.B.Boddington

Westwyn

20 Walney Lane

Aylestone Hill

HEREFORD HR1 1JD

☎ 01432-273394

Membership Secretary

Mr.J.Aldridge

Orchard Barn

Ocle Pychard

HEREFORD HR1 3RB

☎ 01432-820304

Network Co-ordinator

Mrs.Sheila Leitch

Wye View

Glasbury-on-Wye

Powys via

HEREFORD HR3 5NU

☎ 01497-847354

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