



Marcher Apple Network

APPLES & PEARS

AFALAU A PÊR



Reviving the old varieties of apples and pears
in the marcher counties

www.marcherapple.net

At last – an orchard of our own!

November 21st 2008 saw 'Paramor Orchard', officially celebrated by a happy crowd of MAN members including our President, Sir Andrew Large and his wife Sue. We were joined by the children and staff of Cwmdru Church in Wales School and the Rector of Cwmdru, Rev. Barry Letson, who blessed the orchard situated above the church on what was once glebe land.



Chairman Peter Austerfeld, Rev. Barry Letson, Dr Margaret Gill and David Gill getting ready for the dedication ceremony

David Gill (Margaret's brother) recited 'Ode to Pomona' which he had written specially for the occasion. Then as a joyful peal rang across the valley from the church tower, Margaret Gill planted the first apple tree, Bridstow Wasp (see front cover).



David Gill in full cry declaiming the 'Ode to Pomona'

Next it was the turn of the school's pupils, who did a wonderful job of planting four more trees, ceremonially and courteously handing on the spade to each other until everyone in the long line of children had had a turn to



ensure the roots were properly covered and the new trees healthily planted.

We would like to thank all the local people including the bell-ringers and the staff and pupils of the school who rallied round to make this a splendid occasion; old and young, local and not-so-local, engaging so warmly together on what was otherwise a rather chilly November morning. Roger Williams, our local MP and kind supporter of MAN, also managed to fit in a brief visit. Lunch afterwards at the village hall was greatly appreciated.

Three months later, on 28th February 2009, MAN members and friends from the local community helped to plant the remaining 27 apple trees. These complete the collection of apples being illustrated and described in the 'Welsh Marches Pomona' which will be published later this year. All 31 have a distinctly local provenance and have been selected because they have previously never been fully described or illustrated. It seems quite appropriate that they should be the first trees planted on this lovely site for which Margaret Gill generously gave MAN the means, and that she should also be the artist who has painted the blossoms and fruit in the book.

We hope the trees will thrive and be the nucleus of a prosperous Heritage Orchard of the Welsh Marches.

Our thanks must be given to the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority for their support with the establishment and future management of the orchard.

Chris Porter

Young and old got stuck in to tree-planting, firstly at the opening (left) and again in the early spring



Ode to Pomona – by David Gill

I

O sumptuous Pomona, goddess of apple and pear,
Among the vernal orchards wander free,
Pink blossoms catching in your raven hair,
And call to mind the apple's pedigree,
For every pip in this fruit that we bite
Some myth there is, some anecdote or tale.
Remember Eve, Atlanta or Snow White:
All were tempted, fell (not one was male).
But there was Tell who with his crossbow split
The apple on his son's head to the core,
And didn't Isaac Newton cry: 'that's it!'
An apple fell and Gravity was law.

II

Welsh Lords of the Marches, English too,
Each other fought across their common border
For centuries, yet somehow fruit trees grew
Amid those bouts of turbulent disorder.
Towards the close of Queen Victoria's reign
Many were the novel apples planted there,
For instance Lane's Prince Albert, then again
A Prussian Bismark throve on British air.
And Mr Whiting of Credenhill I read
Catalogued all the fruit-trees that he grew:
Apples a hundred and seventy he bred!
That's umpteen more that I could name – or you.

III

So many apples listed in old books
Have vanished from the Marches, so it seems,
Yet some may yet live on in sheltered nooks
Where cottage lamplight through dark branches gleams.
But soon the WANTED posters will be brought
By Apple Network fold and pinned on sheds:
'Chiffey Seedling, Wormsley Pippin sought,
And there's a bounty on their outlaw heads.'
So when a gardener turns his fruit-tree in
The borderlands resound with mighty cheers.
In time the found one's gaoled with its kin
In orchards run by tender volunteers.

IV

Pomona, apple queen, of you I sing,
But now must leave you for another name,
This one not roman has a Gallic ring,
'Tis Paramor of Canterbury fame,
My mother's people fled the Continent.
We Gills have learnt the history of their kind.
For centuries they tilled the fields of Kent,
And doubtless ate what apples they could find.
Henceforward on this green Black Mountain slope
Their gentle name shall live in Margaret's grove
And those of you who with their French can cope
Will know that this bequest was made for love.

Notes from the Chairman

A year ago I wrote about welcoming two new members to the committee. This prompted me to think about putting some flesh on to what committee members do, mainly for the benefit of newer MAN members.

Sylvia O'Brien, our Project Officer, has been busy in the last year putting together grant applications for various schemes. As I know, this can be a frustrating and tortuous activity. Celia Kirby, our Editor, has made major improvements to our publicity material and we now have some very professional looking leaflets and brochures, not to mention this Newsletter. Sheila Leitch, our indefatigable Network Coordinator, seems to know everybody, which is useful if you are a network. Tom Froggatt, as well as keeping a careful eye on our finances, manages our successful book sales. Where would we be in today's world without a website, managed to professional standards by Webmaster, Richard Wheeler. Mike Porter brings formidable scholarship and knowledge to matters pomological, supported

by Chris, our Archivist. If it's cider fruit you go to Richard Cheshire. If it's knowledge about local authorities and organizations, Nicky Matcher has invaluable insights. Keeping tabs on our membership and managing our distribution network we have Diggory Kempton our Membership Secretary, while Ray Boddington, our first Chairman, keeps a watchful and benevolent eye over the lot of us. Finally, last but not least, we have our Secretary, Marie Ward, who manages to make sense out of our committee discussions for the minutes. Modesty does not allow me to mention the Chairman, but, as you can imagine, we have some lively meetings which are always constructive. This then is your committee.

A year on things have moved forward considerably. The Paramor Orchard has been a focus of activity over the year and was the site for a very special event in November 2008. On a fine but cold and windy day a good number of people gathered at the orchard for a planting ceremony which included a blessing

from the Rector of Cwmdru, the reciting of a specially written 'Ode to Pomona' by David Gill and the planting of the first tree by our benefactor, Margaret Gill. Four further trees were planted by children from Cwmdru Primary School, all to a quarter peal of bells by the Cwmdru bellringers. It really was a memorable day ending with a splendid reception and tea in the village hall.

Earlier this year we planted the remaining 26 trees at Paramor, all of which will feature in our forthcoming Welsh Marches Pomona. Also in connection with Paramor, we now have our 'Vision Statement' for the orchard, written by Nicky and a provisional plan for the coming year from Mike. These statements are important as, together with a lot of hard work from Sylvia, one of our grant applications has paid off. More of this later.

The publication of the Pomona is on track for release later this year and we are in forward discussions with a printer. We are now looking

for funding through awards or subscriptions. Suffice to say that we think that the book will be a worthy successor to previous Pomonas produced in the region (there have been three such) and, like these, it will combine a high degree of scholarship combined with artistic excellence.

We are now planning for the very busy autumn season. Details of the MAN Apple Day(s), again in conjunction with the Herefordshire Food Festival in late October, and the AGM, will follow. Demand for identification sessions at shows

and exhibitions is always high and this is in addition to our regular identification meetings for fruit sent or brought to us. These meetings can be a time-consuming (but rewarding) business. I have known a group of committee members take more than an hour to identify a single apple. Fortunately many can be dealt with more quickly. It's always a relief to pick a Bramley out of the bag!

Our members' events and pruning courses remain popular and we are keen to maintain these as it gives a good opportunity for

members to meet face to face. The autumn 2008 visit to the orchard of our President, Sir Andrew Large, was well attended and it was fascinating as well as instructive to be walked round this comprehensive collection of trees.

Our involvement with bodies national and international, sometimes through the website, continues and it is gratifying that MAN is a well respected organization ably supported by its membership.

Peter Austerfield.

News of MAN Orchards

We are fortunate in having several museum orchards in different parts of the Welsh Marches, all now well established. These are all on private land, and exist through the support of landowners sympathetic to the aims and aspirations of MAN. The locations were given in last year's newsletter and we do emphasise that because these orchards are private property, it is not possible to guarantee access at any particular time although of course we try and organise maintenance expeditions when appropriate, to which MAN members are warmly welcome.

Any members who have a particular interest in a specific location are asked to contact the MAN Secretary to discuss possible visits. Here we give some updates on progress in the orchards.

Tredomen Court

In March a small work party planted 6 young apple trees. Three of these replaced some which had died and the rest are 'control' trees – confirmed varieties against which suspects can be compared for identification purposes. Apart from any casualties providing possible spaces, this site is now full. There are 228 trees (194 on MM106 and 34 on the weaker but faster bearing M26 root stocks). Many at Tredomen have now been identified fairly positively and now serve as comparison trees; though there is still work to be done on a difficult 'hard-core' few.

Some tidying up and rechecking of labels, ties and stakes has also been carried out during the year and the MAN mower and Bryn, its operator, achieve good order. Some of the trees have received a mulch of old straw (recommended by Marc Richmond), to help keep the smaller trees free from competition.

Two further working parties were held in April. It was noticed that many of the blossom

buds were heavily infested with aphids and it is recommended that some nest boxes be erected in the autumn on the mature cider tree and the walnut to attract birds such as blue tits which should help to control the problem next year. The opportunity was taken to dispose of the large heap of old prunings dry enough to be burned and the new material was partially burned on the bonfire.

The older trees are beginning to provide good crops, so outlets will have to be found for the fruit left after exhibition and research needs have been met. In a new venture, Dr. John Savidge from Aberystwyth is using some of the trees for a research programme, which he has promised to write about at some stage.

John noted on a visit in early May that, since his visit a week earlier, an air frost had killed all the leaves on the old walnut tree below about 4 metres and damaged apple shoots and fruit blossom, which he was photographing. There were three air frosts in April, at the recording site at Felindre, five miles from Tredomen. (Temperatures at Tredomen may have differed

slightly from this site.) The severest was -3.5°C on 5th April, a second of -0.3°C on 13th and one of -0.5°C on 28th. This slight air frost, however, was the one which had done the damage as, by this date, the young shoots and leaves were growing quickly and were vulnerable.

During a visit at the end of June photographing leaves, John and his wife Pam thinned fruit on all the very young trees and suggest further work there in July when ladders will be needed to reach the high fruits on the older trees. John reports finding frass-filled webs amongst the leaves and shoots which he has identified as being the Apple Ermine Moth, *Yponomeuta malinellus*, of which few records exist for Wales, due to the fact that the adult moths are difficult to distinguish from *Y. padella*, the larvae of which feed on the leaves of hawthorn, blackthorn and cherry. These are very probably the same webs that Sheila was finding in early July at Lower Ffordd-fawr.

Dr Norman Lowe, the Entomological Recorder for the Brecknock Wildlife Trust, was very interested to hear of these webs. He intends to collect pupae from the Tredomen orchard and breed from the moths, which will be emerging from the pupae in late July and August. Records of these webs from MAN members will be appreciated and can be sent to Sheila for forwarding to John and Norman. John Savidge will write more fully on his findings for the Newsletter next year.

Records of the rare moth *Celypha woodiana* which feeds on mistletoe were requested by Dr Lowe in last year's newsletter and are still required. Ray Woods is also keen to receive records of the Golden Eye Lichen *Teloschistes*

chrysothymus and the Apple Tooth fungus *Sarcodontia crocea*, photographs of both of which were in last year's issue. If all our members are checking their fruit trees and orchards, some results should soon be coming in. Show your children and grandchildren the pictures and let them have fun using their sharp eyes.

Chris Porter and Sheila Leitch

Croft Pendarren

There were good crops last autumn from the older established trees like *Ashmead's Kernel*, *Blenheim*, *Ribston Pippin*, *King's Acre Pippin* and *Bridstow Wasp*. Marc Richmond came in and pruned the orchard in February 2009, so it is looking very well. Three poorly-doing trees were replaced this spring by *Afal Pren Glas*, *Bringewood Pippin* and *Yorkshire Beauty*.

Last year's specific targeting of the bracken seems to have been helpful and although the old pear tree looks dilapidated it certainly maintains its will to live with a beautiful show of blossom in April. We have seen good numbers of Speckled Wood and Orange Tip butterflies and the odd Painted Lady surging through the orchard on its way to - who knows where? One

hot afternoon recently there was a Slow Worm basking on the path.

The other great news is that the young Gipsy King has set some fruit; but of course autumn is still a while away!

Chris Porter

Westhope Orchard

This year, after several years of partial pruning, we had Marc Richmond to go through the orchard to bring back some shape and form to the 15 standard trees. Given the good crop last year and the pruning it is not surprising that the fruiting this year will be modest. The exception being *Domino*, which needed serious attention, yet is providing a fair amount of fruit.

Just before writing this report I went up to the orchard to make a last minute check. The enclosure was a sea of golden buttercups, far more than I have ever seen before. Wordsworth would have loved it. Sadly, I am not a poet and the orchard will need a serious strim before long, otherwise it is difficult to move from tree to tree and we are talking of more than knee high growth.

The deer still like to nibble the lower branches

but damage is relatively minor. So, this year, not much in the way of fruit but the trees are healthy and we look forward to better things.

Peter Austerfield

Lower Ffordd-fawr

In this small nursery orchard, the trees are all grafted onto dwarf rooting stocks. M9 was used for the earliest plantings but now Paul Davis uses M26. The rows and trees are spaced 1.5 metres apart. A visit at the beginning of July showed good growth on most, although new shoots on a number were affected by aphids causing leaf curl. Mildew was present also on a few. The abundant blossom this spring has been followed by fruit set on 36 out of the 56 trees. Several of the youngest trees, planted in the spring of 2007, were bearing fruit, and these were thinned to just a couple of fruits. Some of the older trees are bearing heavily and were thinned to avoid the risk of branches breaking later in the season and to improve the quality and size of the fruits. Mature fruits may enable us to identify some of the 'unknowns'. A work party to carry out summer pruning will be arranged.

Sheila Leitch

Marcher Apple Network Accounts for year ended 31.07.08

EXPENDITURE

Events	296.04
Library & equipment	610.18
Orchard maintenance & equipment	3242.87
Purchase of trees	304.30
Committee admin. + expenses	2858.63
Newsletters	1353.20
Misc. payments	1244.22
	9909.44

INCOME

Subscriptions	1654.00
Life members	400.00
Apple IDs	658.00
Bank interest	765.64
Donations & Gift Aid	2090.29
Pomona project	1844.42
Purchase/sale books	934.79
Speaker fees	50.00
Misc. receipts	181.78
Deficit for year	1330.62
	9909.44

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31.07.08

LIABILITIES

Accumulated fund	55726.96
------------------	----------

ASSETS

Sale items at cost	6485.00
Orchard equipment at cost less 20% p.a.	650.00
Planting and exhibition materials	830.00
Library & reference books	1510.00
Land at cost + improvements	36000.00
Bank balances	10251.96

55726.96

55726.96

Watery cider

I was told recently that a lady visitor on a tour round Bulmers some years ago was heard to ask the guide when they put the water in, "as we always did on our farm", she said. Needless to say, the Bulmer answer was "never - it's just apples, madam". So I was fascinated to come across this cider anecdote in Thomas Hardy's *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872) where there is a conversation between a couple of 'yokels', as follows:

"This in the cask here is a drop o' the right sort..... 'tis a real drop o' cordial from the best picked apples - Horner's and Cadbury's...and there's a sprinkling of they that grow down by the orchard-rails —streaked ones —rail apples we'd call 'em, as 'tis by the rails they grow, and not knowing the right name. The water-cider from 'em is as good as most people's best cider is."

"Ay, and of the same make too," said Bowman. "It rained when we wrung it out, and the water got into it, folk will say, but 'tis on'y an excuse. Watered cider is too common among us...Such poor liquor makes a man's throat feel very melancholy — and is a disgrace to the name of stimilent."

Celia Kirby

Growing Apples in the Scottish Highlands

Is the title an oxymoron? Certainly there are no orchards as such, nor any history of them in this area, although I have been told of productive apple and plum trees in well sheltered gardens in and around Inverness. The fertile agricultural coastal belt of Moray even gave its name to *Beauty of Moray* but what about the upland areas with a different soil type, topography and climate; could apple growing succeed in such conditions? After all, *Coul Blush* originated 15 miles north-west of Inverness and 60 metres above sea level, in the early 19th Century. The best way to find out was to try.

In the winter of 2004/5, I was able to purchase a 0.8 acre extension to my garden and begin to establish an orchard. It is nine miles south of Inverness, latitude 57 22'N, height 180 metres above sea level with an east-south-east aspect. Soil type is a coarse sandy loam, pH 6.4-6.8, with a site slope necessitating some terracing. Previous use for many years had been rough grazing for cattle and sheep; once these herbivores were fenced off the mixed flora became evident, including wood anemone, yarrow, pignut and even fragrant orchid. The area includes a natural windbreak of mature birch woodland at the southwest end.

Trees were sourced from nurseries in England, Wales and Scotland. Planting included a few 3-year old trees from the original garden, several Graft 'n' Go specimens, many 1-year old and some 2-year old trees and lately some of my own whip and tongue grafts, including a *Bulmer's Norman* cider apple from our former orchard in Wigmore, Herefordshire. Most rootstocks are M26, with M25 in the more exposed area and a few varieties on MM106 and MM111. The apples can be classified into four groups: old English, e.g. *Charles Ross*, *Golden Pippin*, *Ribston Pippin*; Scottish, e.g. *Bloody Ploughman*, *Coul Blush*, *Stirling Castle*; Marcher, e.g. *Downton Pippin*, *Stoke*



Testing soil pH: also showing site slope, tree guards and spacing

Edith Pippin, *Yellow Ingestrie* and Cider, e.g. *Broxwood Foxwhelp*, *Dymock Red*, *Yarlington Mill*.

There are several hazards to establishing an orchard, some common to wherever you are but some peculiar to this location. Of immediate concern here is the risk of late spring frosts, the worst recently being -5°C on 17th May 2005. By having over 50 apple varieties, I am hoping the different flowering times will help some of them avoid these isolated but damaging frosts. Notwithstanding our longer summer daylight hours, the maximum temperatures reached are lower than apple trees will experience elsewhere in Britain. From my own daily temperature records there have been only three years in the last ten when the monthly average maximum has been 20°C or above (July in 1999, 2003 and 2006). I expect such low summertime maxima to adversely affect growth rate and productivity. Autumn is early and varieties are much later in reaching maturity than, say, in Kent. We find that *Discovery* is best eaten 4-6 weeks later, into October, although a friend with that variety inside a polytunnel on the west coast but further north can eat his crop at the normal time. The wind exposure



Stirling Castle Harvest: a crop of 20 apples from one tree in 2008

could be a problem but the mature birch and natural topography lessen that factor. I have also planted additional windbreak material, including pine, hazel, broom and gorse. The good news on the physical side is that rainfall at about 40" per annum seems ideal and drainage is very good.

The main biological hazard is grazing by a range of herbivores, including rabbits, hares and roe deer. The local rabbit population fluctuates from the predation by stoats but is ever present, hares are in small number but have cut off young trees like hazel and pine, roe deer are fortunately smaller than the red

Bulmer's Norman showing two years' growth after w&t grafting, stockproof netting with hessian windbreak and silage wrap to suppress weeds



Yellow Ingestrie healthy crop of small but tasty fruit

deer but still capable of grazing at a reasonable height and the male has damaged other trees, especially aspen and pine, by rubbing off antler velvet. When the apple trees are first planted I stake and tie low down, add a plastic spiral guard and a smallish circle of chicken netting. In the second year that netting is removed and a one metre square area around the tree is staked out with 2" x 2" posts and stockproof netting fixed to a height of one metre. The gap at ground level facilitates the annual removal of weeds, mostly grass, buttercup and bracken. This weed control can be quite a chore so I have tried adding a bracken mulch, replaced every autumn, to suppress their growth but not with complete success. I have now tried adding a layer of recycled silage wrap over the mulch; I found this material worked well elsewhere in the plot to clear weeds, including dock and nettles, from neglected areas to be brought under cultivation. This weed control remedy seems to be successful.

Growth performance so far appears good, with healthy trees and only a small amount of scab in the wet summer of 2007. Black vine weevils appeared that spring and caused some bud and bark damage but the affected trees recovered and I know to look out for them in future. The number of different varieties to produce fruit is increasing, including the Marcher varieties *Yellow Ingestrie*, *Stoke Edith Pippin* and *King's Acre Pippin*. At blossom time there are plenty of wild bees and smaller insects visiting the flowers; I have sown or planted many poppies, foxgloves and comfrey to keep these pollinators in the orchard. There is an apiary about one mile away with over 15 hives and their honeybees can be seen working the blossom. From 2009 I shall be loaned a hive of their honeybees to be placed in the orchard during blossom time; it will be interesting to see



Wild flowers in orchard looking south, sown or planted for the insect population

any beneficial effect on pollination and fruit set. I have tried planting chives around some of the trees after I came across a reference to such action reducing scab incidence, but I think the trees benefit more from the open airy site and the lack of other orchards nearby providing infection sources.

Initial results have been encouraging in that we are able to eat and enjoy our own apples - in 2008 from 18 different varieties, albeit perhaps only one or two apples from some trees. I cannot compare the taste of a Highland



King's Acre Pippin first fruit on this Marcher variety

Adams' Pearmain with that of a sun kissed Herefordshire fruit but to us the apples look and taste good. Where once the cattle and sheep wandered through or took shelter we now have an orchard, productivity small at present but poised to increase. The answer to the article's opening question is therefore yes, apples can be grown in the Scottish Highlands. I thus felt justified in adding more Marcher varieties in Spring 2009, including *Golden Harvey*, *Monmouth Green*, *Onibury Pippin*, *William Crump* and of course *Tyler's Kernel*.

Peter Tyler

My favourite apple

This year it's our Treasurer, **Tom Froggatt**, who has kindly jumped in to offer his views of what makes a good apple.

As Prof. Joad used to say (on steam radio), it all depends..... Do you want an early eater, a frothy cooker, a good keeper and/or a good all-rounder?

Well for me, its got to be **Scotch Bridget**. Surprisingly, this lovely apple is not featured in either of the two usual reference books by Bultitude or Sanders. It was found in Scotland and described in 1851. It is grown in the Lancaster area and in the West Midlands and I have known and liked it for almost 80 years.

It is a largish apple, oblong/conical, with some pronounced ribs and is often coloured on one side with a thickish skin. The ripe flesh is quite rich, creamy and crisp, and it bakes well. Try it filled with dried fruit or mincemeat and then served hot with whipped cream and Calvados. People who make juices like it for its abundance of sharp fresh-flavoured juice. Picked carefully and stored in a cool place, it should last until March.



Look out for it at one of our tasting sessions or help pick some at Tredomen when we are working there.

Tom Froggatt

Miscellany

Graftwood Requests

A list of varieties which can be supplied will cost £1, and may be obtained from Chris Porter, Aberhoywe Farm, Cyffredin Lane, Llangynidr, Crickhowell, NP8 1LR. Graftwood costs £2.50 per stick (plus packing & postage). Orders by **15th Jan.2010**, please This service is available only to members of MAN.

Mike Porter

The Local Apple and Pear Registers

As was mentioned briefly last year in *Apples and Pears* No. 2 (Orchard Gleanings), the National Orchard Forum has proposed that a Register of Local Varieties of Apples and Pears should be established. MAN and the other Orchard Groups have contributed to the consultation phase, and the Northern Fruit Group (NFG) has been asked to prepare a pattern for the

organisation of this project. NFG has produced two attractive leaflets to publicise the scheme, which now has the support of Natural England, The National Trust and the National Fruit Collections at Brogdale.

Mike Porter

Spring News Sheet 2010

It's not too early to be thinking about this — items always welcome. We try and be as up to date as possible, including brief notices of spring and summer events. Details may be sent to the Editor at Three Stones, Kingswood Road, Kington, HR5 3HE or, preferably, by email to: celia.kirby@btinternet.com or — for those of you who already have Sheila on your system — to sileitch@hotmail.co.uk. Items should arrive by the end of January 2010.

What's on?

A list of regional apple events is included with this issue of the newsletter but note that

www.marcherapple.net/diary.htm

contains the most up to date information

A Micro Orchard



Many of us might aspire to own an orchard, but have to accept the limitations of a small garden. However that does not mean we can't still have an orchard: it is just that it has to be on a different scale. **Wade Muggleton** tells us how he beats the size limitation.

I live in a semi-detached, red brick ex-council house, the type of which there are thousands up and down the country. It has an 80 ft × 40 ft rear garden and a 40 ft × 20 ft front garden in which I have developed my own micro orchard, a collection of 23 varieties. So how, you might ask, do you fit an orchard in that space? The answer is to use a range of different forms so I have five varieties growing as free standing trees, the rest as cordons, step-overs and other trained forms.

Whilst to the purist these trained trees might not constitute a proper orchard, they are a great way of growing fresh fruit in even the smallest of spaces as well as being highly manageable in terms of pruning and maintenance.

For some reason, the whole subject of grafting, growing and pruning has an aura of almost black magic about it. There is a perception that fruit growing is tricky, problematic and requiring vast amounts of specialist knowledge whereas, in truth, training fruit trees is quite simple — you cut out the pieces that you don't want or that are going in the wrong direction and tie in those pieces that you do want to keep, persuading them to go in the desired direction.



Step-over trees

My orchard is only five years old and some of the trees are younger than that. I have a range of rootstocks including M25, M26 and MM106, yet already some of them are highly productive, although a couple of varieties seem to be exhibiting biennial cropping tendencies.

The varieties in my micro orchard are:

<i>Adams' Pearmain</i>	<i>King of the Pippins</i>
<i>Catshead</i>	<i>King Charles</i>
<i>Chatley's Kernal</i>	<i>Pearmain</i>
<i>Colwall Quoining</i>	<i>Lord Hindlip</i>
<i>Dr Harvey</i>	<i>Madresfield Court</i>
<i>Egremont Russet</i>	<i>May Queen</i>
<i>Falstaff</i>	<i>Newton Wonder</i>
<i>Gladstone</i>	<i>Pitmaston Pine Apple</i>
<i>Golden Noble</i>	<i>Pitmaston Russet</i>
<i>Greensleeves</i>	<i>Nonpareil</i>
<i>Green Purnell</i>	<i>Sheep's Nose</i>
<i>Hanwell Souring</i>	<i>Worcester Pearmain</i>
<i>Hope Cottage</i>	
<i>Seedling</i>	

It goes without saying that the benefits of home-grown fruit are enormous: we know what has happened to it; there are no road or air miles and thus no carbon foot print; no wasteful packaging; freshness is assured; and the taste is great.

My own particular favourites are *Adams' Pearmain*, possibly the perfect eater, *Pitmaston pineapple* as it represents everything the supermarkets hate, being small, yellow and spotty, but tastes

wonderful. *May Queen* is a beautiful apple that crops reliably every year and keeps well, and for me the *Queen of Cookers* has to be *Catshead*, such a wonderful looking apple that I would literally have a couple as ornaments if only they would keep!

By having such a range of varieties I accept that while in some years certain varieties will crop heavily and others won't, the diversity ensures that there will always be something doing well.

As well as all the environmental benefits, there is something wonderful about having beautiful organic apples growing within yards of the back door.

Wade Muggleton



Fine examples of Greensleeves



A handsome specimen of Chatley's Kernal

The Fruit Manual

Robert Hogg does not seem to have quite the status of Thomas Andrew Knight or Dr. Henry Graves Bull. Respected — yes, worthy — yes, but not the level of hero worship offered our local pomological heroes. And maybe that is the difference because Robert Hogg was an outsider. But what an outsider. From the mid to late 1800s he led the (British) field in pomology. To us he may be most noted as the co-author of *The Herefordshire Pomona* (1876-85) and *The Apple and Pear as Vintage Fruits* (1886). To the wider world he is probably better known through his authorship of *The Fruit Manual*.

The full title is "*The Fruit Manual Containing the Descriptions & Synonymes of the Fruits and Fruit Trees Commonly Met with in the Gardens & Orchards of Great Britain with Selected Lists of those Most Worthy of Cultivation*". Hogg produced five editions — the first appeared in 1860 with others in 1862, 1866, 1875 and 1884 — getting larger and more comprehensive as time went by. The fifth edition is the most sought after as it is the reference to older British varieties. Original copies of all editions are not common but may still be purchased from second-hand book dealers for a few hundred pounds. In 2002 Langford Press produced a hardback facsimile edition of the fifth edition (ISBN 9781904078036). The 1000 copies have now been sold but a copy may still be found at a bookseller or second hand. Expect to pay a more reasonable £40 to £50.

For those of you who are willing to look at books on your computer then there are free editions available. From the Internet Archive [1] there are two versions of the first edition — one scanned by Google Books and the other from the University of California's library. There is also a copy of the fifth edition, scanned by Microsoft from the University of California's library. Each of these is available in a variety of electronic formats. Probably the most useful is the 'pdf'. This format requires Adobe's Acrobat Reader, or equivalent, software to be readable. As this is installed on most computers (and is freely downloadable) having software to display the books is no problem. The file sizes vary from Google's 9.8 Megabytes to 468 Megabytes for the fifth edition. The latter takes a noticeable time to download, even with broadband. (Your webmaster will supply a CD of downloads of

Hogg's books for the modest fee of £2.50). Other electronic versions are available from Chest of Books [2, 3]. These are web (or HTML) versions of the first and fifth editions. The site owners appear to have made these editions available for free so they can earn money from the associated advertising displayed when you visit them.

Using *Bringewood Pippin* (Thomas Andrew Knight spelt it *Brindgewood Pippin*) as the obvious choice of search term, it is easy, with Google, to find its description from the fifth edition [4]. Two things struck me about the web version of the description. One was that the description appears disjointed and the other was that there are a lot of cross reference links set up in the text. Checking to the pdf version from the Internet Archive shows a problem with that version. It is just one long string of pages with no easy way of getting to the one you want. After some frustrating scrolling up and down I eventually found the right one. The description of *Bringewood Pippin* runs across two pages with a comma finishing the text on the first page. On the web page the comma has become a full stop and the text on the next page from the book now starts as a new paragraph. Although the first sentence in that paragraph begins with a lower case letter. That is one oddity explained. As for all the links, I followed the 'Andrew' in Thomas Andrew Knight. This took me to a description of the pear Andrews. The link there from 'hardy' (as in 'hardy variety') took me to a description of *Beurré Hardy*. Actually it was *Beurre Hardy* and that raises another little oddity. In the original the names of the pears are consistently set in small capitals and BEURRÉ ends with the acute accent on the "E". On the webpage there is a mishmash of cases and accents — but no small capitals. It looks very much as though the text from the Internet Archive versions has been put through an automated process to create the web versions. It is remarkably good for a free edition but there has been little or no proof reading, the time consuming and expensive part of the project.

Why didn't I use the index in the book to find the description? After all, pdfs are paged and software readers allow you to go to a specified page. It is not necessarily that easy. The first edition of *The Fruit Manual* has 280

numbered pages whilst Google's pdf has 305. The difference is made up of the end papers, covers and an additional page Google adds explaining their scanning project. Once you realise this, you just add 9 to a page number in the index to get to the correct page. The folks at the Internet Archive are a bit more clever: of their 304 pages, the first 8 are unnumbered so index page numbers do correspond to page numbers in the pdf.

As pdfs can be printed you can, if you have the time, print each copy, trim it and bind it. Or you can go online and have somebody do it for you with your copy "printed on demand". At an informal level you could try [5] or, more formally, Kessinger Publishing and BiblioLife in the United States appear to have this market wrapped up with internet booksellers acting as their re-sellers. They have ISBNs issued — for the first edition these are Kessinger Publishing, 2007, Paperback ISBN 9781432648039, Hardback ISBN 9780548245972 and BiblioLife, 2009, Paperback ISBNs 9781103417964/9781103417902/9781103417926, Hardback ISBN 9781103418015. Prices on Amazon [6] start from about £15 including delivery. I don't know which scanned version they use and the plethora of ISBNs is very confusing. I have only had experience with Kessinger and the quality was acceptable — you get what you pay for.

As far as I can tell there isn't, yet, a print on demand version of the fifth edition. Its size — 766 text pages plus 39 in the introduction — may make it beyond the scope of print on demand services.

So there you are, the most comprehensive treatise on traditional varieties of British fruit is readily available. You just need to make your mind up about the format you want and how much you are willing to pay. And if buying from Amazon, please go through the MAN website first — <http://www.marcherapple.net/books.htm>.

Richard Wheeler — MAN webmaster

The National Orchard Forum

This most useful site, at www.nat-orchard-forum.org.uk features many items of interest to keen orchardists, including a twice-yearly Newsletter.

1. (<http://www.archive.org/search.php?query=robert%20hogg%20fruit%20manual%20AND%20mediatype%3Atexts>)
2. <http://chestofbooks.com/gardening-horticulture/Robert-Hogg/The-Fruit-Manual-Descriptions-and-Synonymes/index.html>
3. <http://chestofbooks.com/gardening-horticulture/Robert-Hogg/The-Fruit-Manual-Great-Britain/index.html>
4. <http://chestofbooks.com/gardening-horticulture/Robert-Hogg/The-Fruit-Manual-Great-Britain/Apples-Part-22.html>
5. <http://www.publicdomainreprints.org/>
6. <http://www.amazon.co.uk>

Bees are our allies

Bees are very newsworthy creatures this spring. For several years beekeepers have reported difficult seasons for their honey bee colonies in the UK and further afield. The situation continues to deteriorate, yet no definite reason for the steep decline in honey bee populations has been found. It seems probable that not only the varroa mite, which can decimate domestic hive bee colonies but also other factors such as intensive farming, herbicides and pesticides may all contribute to the problem. This year sees the National Federation of Women's Institutes discussing at their AGM in London a motion asking that the government should give greater funding towards searching for a solution*.

Not only is the honey bee affected. There are 254 species of bee in Britain, most of which are solitary: like the leaf-cutter, mason, mining and cuckoo bees. Our honey bee and about 20 kinds of bumblebee live in colonies and are 'social' bees. Most have shown a horrific decline in numbers in the last 30 years and naturalists have been urging gardeners and farmers to consider what we can do to help these very beneficial insects. Indeed recently scientists have been telling us that unless help is given, human food supplies will be seriously straitened. Popular natural history and gardening programmes on both radio and TV have been reminding us that our survival could depend on a healthier countryside.

Bees are a symbol of our dependence upon our environment. Private gardens account

for 10% of land area in Britain, so it follows that we can all help bees even in small ways by planting pollen and nectar-rich flowers and trees on our patch. Goat willow catkins (pussy willow) provide pollen for over-wintering bees foraging in the lean part of the year; snowdrops and dandelions will attract early honey bees and bumblebee queens. In April and May, White and Red Dead-nettles and other similar hooded flowers attract the tawny-furred Carder bee; the yellow jasmine, together with old-fashioned Granny's Bonnets, provides buff-tailed and red-bottomed bumble bees with pollen and nectar. We might even consider buying a special 'Bee House' to encourage them to stay around and pollinate our fruit trees and food plants. It is amazing to watch the red and blue mason bees home-in on the bee-house tubes provided in some gardens. They seal their tiny grubs in individual compartments in autumn for these to emerge as adults next spring to continue the cycle, perhaps spreading to neighbouring areas.

By joining a larger organisation we can also combine with other members to conserve and plant wild flower meadows, woodlands and orchards: farmers and larger land-owners can provide 'bee banks' and leave headlands and rough ground for native wild flowers which will increase the yield of the cultivated areas by attracting helpful hoverflies and native bees as well as birds and mammals. We aim to manage MAN orchards in ways that are sensitive to wildlife, encouraging natural predators to

overcome problems: if these don't always work we must remember that harmful chemicals might not either, in the long-term!

Gardeners and allotment holders are able to play a vital role in all of this 'joined-up' awareness, since so much of the UK is urban and man-made. If we aim at achieving variety, the bee buzz-word 'biodiversity' could apply. It should make us all feel responsible and also empowered to help.

It would be lovely to hear other MAN members' ideas which attract bees and other wildlife to their area. Please join in and broadcast your success stories.

Chris Porter

*Defra has now announced that it will contribute £500,000 towards a wider research programme into problems affecting pollinators, including honeybees, each year for the next five years. Also, the Department is encouraging all beekeepers to register on the BeeBase database to help the National Bee Unit increase levels of surveillance and disease control (see beebase.csl.gov.uk / 01904 462510 for further information and help).

Editor

Wildlife news

Spotted flycatchers

All keen twitchers should know that John Clarke is carrying out a long-term study of these birds and would love to hear from members who are in a position to let him have more details on their habits. If you would like to help John, who is focusing his study on Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire, please contact Sheila Leitch (sileitch@hotmail.co.uk) to obtain a survey form to use next spring.

Invertebrate study

The Brockhampton Estate near Bromyard featured recently on the BBC radio wild life programme *Living World*, when the presenters were discussing the National Trust's 2-year study of their orchards. The aim is to learn more about orchard ecology because of the valuable habitats they provide for insects. Interestingly, in the view of the entomologists, orchards provide such good habitats for insects because they are stable, long-term tree communities, not necessarily because they are fruit trees.

Cider Apple and Perry Pear Group

The cider apple crop last year had biennial trees which would normally be on the rest year producing a fair amount of fruit. This was surprising and my orchard gave me a very good crop as the result.

At the various Shows attended by MAN a lot of time was expended identifying cider fruit brought in by individuals. This was, admittedly, with varying degrees of success. One particular success was identifying an example of Joeby Crab.

Several orchard visits were made at the invitation of their owners. One particularly interesting one was to an orchard controlled by Herefordshire Nature Trust. Sadly most of the trees had reverted to their crab rootstock. However there are some still left dating from WWII period which could be identified.

On the 14th May I represented MAN at the opening of the Hartpury Orchard Centre. The orchards round the Centre contain the recently planted National Collection of Perry Pears. Over 100 varieties have, so far, been collected. Quite an achievement.

It is our continuing task to try and find 'lost' varieties. In addition, it is vital to find as many as possible of the varieties introduced subsequent to the publication of the early Pomona, particularly those grown on the Welsh side of the Marches. Those of you who have ancient trees, the variety of which is unknown but was used for cider making, may have a variety that is of interest. We would like to hear from you. A brief description of the tree and fruit would help.

Richard Cheshire

An Orchard apprentice

Tom Adams has sent us this interesting account of his progress in learning the skills of an orchardist.

In January of this year I received £3100 from The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust (QUEST). Out of 160 applicants and 13 interviewees, I was one of eight people to receive a scholarship grant. These grants are awarded to craftsmen and women of all ages to help them further their careers and mine enables me to attend a one-year Master Class in Orcharding course with Tony Gentil (The Orchard Doctor).



Tom receives his scholarship from the Princess Royal

The course, devised by myself and Tony, will comprise ten one-day sessions at Tony's nursery and orchard site near Nantwich, Cheshire. So far, I have attended seven sessions. These have included winter pruning, apple and pear rootstock propagation, grafting apples and pears, nursery management, tree physiology, flower structure and pollination, plant nomenclature, orchard management (which includes pest and disease management, sward management), carrying out surveys and report writing, and soil analysis.

Having started out as a self-employed gardener nine years ago, I was soon being asked to prune fruit trees in people's gardens. With very little knowledge on the subject I set out on a quest to learn as much as I could about fruit trees and their management. This involved three processes.

- Having a go at pruning people's trees and learning from my mistakes (of which there were many!)
- Attending the many one day and half day enthusiastic amateur courses that are available.
- Reading many books on the subject.

I felt I had come a long way over the years but there was always the nagging feeling that I could know my subject a lot better. Having searched and searched in vain for courses that would take my skills to a higher level, I came upon QUEST and Tony agreed to take me on in

a belated 'apprenticeship'.

My work at the moment involves orchard restoration, planting/re-stocking, grafting apple trees and selling them from my small nursery, windbreak planting and teaching pruning and grafting to community orchards/gardens.

Now that I am halfway through the course I am even more determined to become a full time orchardist. I am looking into renting or buying some land to expand the nursery and have been approaching local schools to encourage them to plant up new orchard sites and even create their own nurseries. Meanwhile, I thought MAN members would be interested in some of my notes from the sessions.

14-03-09

Today's session was spent in the nursery grafting apple trees: *Holstein Pippin*, *Fiesta* (now known as *Red Pippin*) and *Gooseberry Pippin*. The scions, which had been selected and removed from their parent trees in December/January, had been heeled into the soil about 5 inches deep (see below)



The first job was to head back the rootstock... (right)

....then make cuts on the scion and



rootstock for a whip and tongue graft, followed by tying in the graft with grafting tape to hold the union in place. The pruned tips of the scions were waxed in

order to prevent moisture loss; the finished row was then clearly labelled (and recorded in the nursery log book) for clear identification (see below).



Here is a copy of another day's notes..

20-03-09

Again this session was spent in the nursery grafting pears (*Aston Town*, *Toadback*, *Hazel Pear* and *King Pear*) onto *Pyrodwarf* and *Seedling Pear* rootstock.



Pyrodwarf is an extremely thorny tree which is pretty uncomfortable to work around.

These rootstock are about five years old and would have been better grafted on a couple of years ago. Not only to make the grafting process easier but also heading them back



wouldn't have been such a dangerous job. (The thorns are about 10cm long!) It is a recently developed rootstock and unlike quince stock all varieties of pear are compatible with it.



Preparing the scion for a whip and tongue graft (above) and placing the scion onto the rootstock.(right)



We ran out of scions before we finished grafting the whole row so we took some cuttings off a *Hazel* pear that had already begun to open its buds . The grafts we did using these scions were labelled to see if there is any difference in take up of these compared to grafts done with scions cut in mid winter.(below).



We also experimented with grafting *Lord Combermere* (apple) onto Pyrodwarf (pear) rootstock!! And, as you can see, it is growing well!!



More course notes can be found by visiting my blog

<http://tomtheappleman.wordpress.com>

and at the top of the page clicking onto the 'My QEST Scholarship' tab.

Tom Adams

Available from the Marcher Apple Network

The Herefordshire Pomona CD contains copies of all the 77 coloured plates from *The Herefordshire Pomona*, originally published by the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club of Herefordshire in 1885. The corresponding sections and text descriptions of the 432 varieties of fruit illustrated on the plates are included, as are the lists of local cider apples and pears and the lists of varieties which the Woolhope Club recommended for planting.

The Vintage Fruit CD contains 290 separate descriptions of cider varieties and 107 descriptions of perry pears, all taken from hard to obtain reference works,

Prices £16.00 per copy, inc p and p in the UK.

Apples of the Welsh Marches describes 54 old varieties of apples cultivated in the traditional orchards of the region, plus 24 further varieties grown here extensively in the past and still found in local farm orchards.

Price £5.00 inc p and p in the UK.

Full Colour Postcard Reproductions Seven plates from *The Herefordshire Pomona*, in postcard format (6" x 4").

Price £2.00 per pack, plus 50p post and packing for up to two packs, thereafter PLUS 15p per pack.

Back Numbers of the MAN Newsletter

Many of the articles featured contain advice and ideas which have stood the test of time and still make an interesting read. Copies of

last year's issue of *Apples and Pears* (Vol 2. No. 2) are also available.

Prices Nos 1 to 6 (1995 to 2000) £4.00: Nos 7 to 12 (2001 to 2006) £7.00: All 12: £10.00, all including p and p in the UK. Vol. 2, Nos. 1 and 2, £2.00 ea. including p and p.

MAN Library List, managed by Sheila Leitch

Price £2.00 inc. p and p in the UK.

To Order: Preferably download an order form from www.marcherapple.net/books.htm or write to Diggory Kempton, the Membership Secretary, Marcher Apple Network, Brook House, Hopesay, CRAVEN ARMS, Shropshire, SY7 8HD. Cheques should be made payable to Marcher Apple Network. **Wholesale price list on request.**

APPLES AND PEARS

AFALAU A PÊR Autumn 2009

is the Newsletter of the Marcher Apple Network

Charity No 1095151

Company No 3787303

Regd Office: Ashford Mill, Ashford Carbonel, Ludlow, SY8 4BT

©Marcher Apple Network, Rhydwaith Afalau'r Gororau



Marcher Apple Network

Apple & Pears Autumn 2009