

MARCHER APPLE NETWORK

RHWYDWAITH AFALAU' R GORORAU

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Non-Members £2

Summer 2005

CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR

Taking over from Ray Boddington is something of a daunting task. Ray has steered *MAN* for a decade to its present state of a Limited Company and Registered Charity, with a committee of a dozen and a membership of some 334. In recognition of this Ray became our honorary Vice-President for life at the 2004 AGM. Thank you Ray for all you have done.

As part of this Review I thought I would try and give a picture of what goes on behind the scenes. The Marcher Apple Network works through an executive committee which meets regularly, always with a full agenda, and it is the collective efforts and expertise of the committee members that have made *MAN's* development possible. Matters are discussed either in full committee or through a series of sub-committees ('Pomona', 'Membership', 'Cider') who report to the full committee for final decision making.

An important initiative, thanks to Richard Wheeler, was the setting up of a series of 'Forward Planning' seminars. After more than ten years, *MAN* now needs to look forward another ten years into the future. The brain-storming sessions and examination of our strengths and weaknesses produced many good ideas and we hope to be able to incorporate some of these in the future.

The mention of the 'Pomona' above brings me to the most significant event of the year, the launch of the CD of 'The Herefordshire Pomona'. The Marcher Apple Network has been working on this project for several years through its 'Pomona' sub-committee. A combination of computer expertise, detailed knowledge of the Pomona and some external funding, finally made this event possible. The launch took place at the Big Apple celebrations at Much Marcle over the Bank Holiday weekend, May 2005, and we were able to raise a glass of cider, appropriately, to a significant achievement. All the feedback I have received has been highly favourable, sales are good and even international. We have other 'Pomona' endeavours in hand, so watch this space.

The idea of engaging more with the wider membership was a theme at 'Forward Planning' and two very successful events have taken place. The first was the 'Private View and Cider Reception' at the Cider Museum, Hereford, on 12th December 2004, to see a preview of the exhibition of the original watercolours from which the 'Pomona' colour plates were made. This was the first time these pictures had been on public display. They now form part of a permanent exhibition at the Museum and are well worth a visit.

The second event, on the 7th July, saw members at Frank P. Matthews, Tenbury Wells, major growers of fruit trees (and ornamentals), and producers of root stocks. This proved to be a very informative and enjoyable afternoon hosted by director Nick Dunn, to whom we are very grateful.

The committee engages with many groups, organizations and individuals each year, indeed, networking is an essential part of our work. Some of these connections will be apparent in the following pages. Since taking over as Chairman, I have been made even more aware of the

diversity of interest in the apple and pear world. This is an encouraging sign of the determination of groups and others to maintain and enhance our orchards and variety of fruit. Long may it continue.

As always we are keen to make contact with members who can offer help in some form. This might range from tree planting, pruning, secretarial services or helping at one of our many Autumn exhibitions, to writing an article for the Newsletter. The value of face-to-face meetings with the wider membership was shown at the Frank P Matthews event. Several people volunteered to assist in one way or another and we will, no doubt, contact them in the near future. We are grateful for their offers. At any of our events, including the AGM on 23rd October, please make contact with any member of the committee if you can help.

MAN members may like to see who is who within the Network at the present time.

Marcher Apple Network Ltd

President

Sir Andrew Large

Directors and Trustees (ex officio officers and committee members)

Dr P J Austerfield – Chairman

Mr R B Boddington – Hon Vice President

Mr T W Froggatt – Treasurer and Company Secretary

Mr M Porter

Other Officers and Committee Members

Mr R Cheshire

Mr D Kempton – Membership Secretary

Mrs S Leitch – Network Co-ordinator and Newsletter Editor

Mr A J Malpas – Vice Chairman and Project Officer

Mrs N Matcher

Mrs C Porter – Archivist

Mr R Wheeler – Webmaster

Secretary to the Committee – Miss B Travers

Sub-committee members

'Pomona'

Peter Austerfield

Ray Boddington

Sheila Leitch

Tony Malpas

Mike Porter

Richard Wheeler

'Membership'

Peter Austerfield

Richard Cheshire

Diggory Kempton

Sheila Leitch

Tony Malpas

Mike Porter

'Cider apple & perry pear'

Richard Cheshire

Tony Malpas

Mike Porter

Peter Austerfield

AGM AND APPLE DAY

This event was held, for the first time, at the spacious Baskerville Hall Hotel (Clyro Court), on Sunday, 17th October, 2004. There was ample car parking space and setting up the displays and other stalls was much easier than at other venues. We have decided, therefore, to hold the event at the same venue this year. Can we please have offers of help, from 9.00am onwards?

Last year there were about 200 apple varieties on display, including a separate cider collection. Each variety of apple, together with its name, was photographed before the public came in, by a local photographer, David Bevan, whom we had met taking the official photos at the Black Mountains Festival. These he put on a CD for use by *MAN* members. Later, the Committee members, including the two new recruits, were also lined up and photographed for posterity! Bryn Davies did sterling work on the Vigo press, using some of the prodigious crop harvested from Tredomen Court to make apple juice for tasting. Other fruit from this Nursery Collection was on show for tasting and sale. After setting out the display in the morning, Mike and Chris Porter manned the ID stand, where they were kept very busy. The side shows attracted a good crowd and well over 100 people attended. Book the date now – Sunday, 23rd October, and see under Forthcoming Events Page 31.

Tom Froggatt

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

2005 Royal Welsh Smallholder & Garden Festival

Once again, *MAN* had a stand at the Smallholder Show held at Llanelwedd on the weekend May 21st/22nd. Our plea for more help at this show yielded some new helpers which meant each of us had time to have a break to browse around. As usual, we shared a stand with Paul Davis and his fruit trees for sale were all gone by the end of the second day. Any helpers at this small show get a free ticket, so please come forward and offer for next year.

Abergavenny Food Festival

MAN has been lucky, each year, to have a stand in a spacious marquee in the grounds of the old castle and this is a very pleasant event where the queue for identification of apples does not get too long and, provided there are several helpers, there is time to visit the other activities on the site. Again, we had several new volunteers who all enjoyed their stint very much. You do not have to be able to identify the fruit presented to you, merely show interest, obtain full details on the identification forms, and bag the specimens which will be examined later by the ID team.

We have already attended some of the Autumn 2005 Apple Events, including this Food Festival. Our stand this year was in the ruins of the Banqueting Hall, where, in 1175, one of the Welsh chieftains, Seisyll ap Dyfnwal (Cecil), and company were invited as guests for the reading of a Royal proclamation, with weapons laid aside, then, at a signal, they were foully murdered by the Normans. The story of the massacre has been incorporated into the beautiful millennium tapestry embroidered at St Mary's Church, where it can now be seen. Jeff Davis, who lives in Abergavenny, helped set up the stand early each morning and had said he could bring some fine specimens of the dual purpose apple, *Lane's Prince Albert*, to add to our display. These were on the kitchen window sill when I phoned him. On Saturday morning he could not find them. Enquiries yielded the information, from a visiting daughter, that she had used them to make the apple crumble which the family had enjoyed the previous evening. When Jeff told the tale, he said it was the best crumble he had ever eaten. His daughter called at the stall later and, giggling ruefully, said she had offered to pack the remains up for him to bring to the stall. I add this little story of a minor massacre to indicate that this variety is a very flavoursome fruit when cooked early in the season, and we all know these things happen too often in pomologists' kitchens when specimens are left around unlabelled!

The National Botanic Gardens of Wales, Llanarthne, Carmarthen

This was the first time an apple event has been held at this venue. The weekend clashed with our Open Day at The Baskerville Hall Hotel, but several of us went on the Saturday and saw the large display of apples. Photographs were taken for comparison with some of our specimens.

Sheila Leitch

ORCHARD DOCTOR APPOINTMENT

The press release below, which went out to some newspapers on 25th August, was made available by Glasu for inclusion in this Newsletter.

ORCHARD DOCTOR

No doubt you have heard of general practitioners, brain surgeons and even tree surgeons, but have you ever heard of an 'orchard doctor'? Glasu, the dynamic organisation which covers the whole of Powys and funds innovative and experimental ideas, has just appointed one.

TLG Orchards, an orchard consultancy with many years experience, will bring their knowledge and enthusiasm to help make this project another of Glasu's success stories.

This exciting new post is part of the Perllannau Powys (Orchards in Powys) project.

The Orchard Doctors' role will be as follows:

- To help orchard owners in Powys to find the best ways of managing their orchards for productivity and sustainability
- To carry out a survey of 30 selected orchards spread throughout the whole of the project area
- To help produce information leaflets which will explain most of the technical issues important to orchard owners
- To draw up a list of people who have expertise in orchard skills
- To attend apple days and events and raise awareness of the project
- To develop a forum for Powys orchard owners and people who use their products, bringing together everyone with an interest in orchard fruit

Those of our members who live in Powys, or, as many of us still like to think of the area, Breconshire, Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire, may be keen to contact Glasu if they need advice. TLG Orchards is the husband and wife team, Tony and Liz Gentil, based in Nantwich, Cheshire, who are long-time members of our Network. This appointment will relieve local *MAN* committee members of much of the practical advice and orchard survey work for which there has been less and less time as the years go by. Autumn apple events and Food Fairs are now so numerous and are followed by a huge workload of apple identification, that the field work we all enjoy has, of necessity, been reduced. You will be able to meet Tony and Liz at our AGM and Apple Day event on Sunday, 23rd October.

Sheila Leitch

BRITISH BEEKEEPERS ANNUAL CONVENTION 2005

This year, the event was held on April 16th at Stoneleigh, somewhat earlier than in previous years. Whereas in the past I have taken sprigs of apple blossom mounted in oasis to show the long time scale of pollination readiness, this year I had to resort to finding specimens of apples which had survived normal cool storage conditions. Sheila and I put together some 15 varieties, but they were not in a very good marketable condition. Nevertheless, quite a bit of interest was shown and a good number of books were sold.

Once again, *MAN* member and beekeeper David Barker helped to man the stand during the day and our only expense was mileage. Volunteers are always needed to help man our stands at the various locations. Please see the diary for one that is near to you or one that interests you. We meet many interesting and interested people and the learning curve is ever upwards, for your scribe at least.

Tom Froggatt

ORCHARD GLEANINGS

Last Autumn we were invited, as representatives of *MAN*, to attend Acton Scott Farm Museum in Shropshire, to identify fruit brought in on their Apple Day. Accordingly, Chris and I spent a very wet Saturday in the old schoolroom, chatting with visitors and trying to identify their apples. We had chosen that particular weekend because the Church Stretton Apple Fair, organised by John Lloyd, was scheduled for the following day. It was an opportunity we had eagerly anticipated. One visitor to Acton Scott, who had brought some colourful *Gascoyne's Scarlet* apples for identification, promised he would bring further puzzles to Church Stretton. Next day, at the Apple Fair, we were kept very busy! The exhibition occupied the centre of a crowded hall thronged with helpers, stallholders and visitors, enthusiastically discussing the exhibits. We were allocated a table in the 'Refreshments Area' and a short queue of folk gathered, clutching baskets or bags of fruit for identification. True to his word, our friend from the previous day, Tom Adams, was there, accompanied by his wife and young son. My eyes lit up as from his rucksack he fished out three very small apples. An illustration from 'The Herefordshire Pomona' flashed into mind. Tom's miniatures seemed to match the distinctive little apple called *Gipsy King*. By the time we had sectioned an apple, carefully checked it against the detailed description in 'The Fruit Manual' (Robert Hogg) and confirmed the diagnosis, the apple queue extended around the hall, and was causing so much disruption that we all had to be moved to another room.

Gipsy King is an attractive, small dessert apple which Robert Hogg describes as follows:- "Skin, dull brownish red on the side next the sun, greenish yellow, with a few pale red streaks, on the shaded side, the surface covered with patches and freckles of ashy grey russet. Eye, like that of the *Blenheim Pippin*, open, with divergent segments...." The fruit, in season from October to December, is "tender, juicy, and sweet, with pleasant acidity and aroma." The description of *Gipsy King* in 'The Herefordshire Pomona' includes some additional details. "The tree has the *Nonpareil* form of growth, with small foliage. It is compact, rather upright, and bears profusely in bunches." The Pomona also records that "The exact origin of this apple is not known. It first appeared in Mr. Rivers' Catalogue in 1876". In fact the *Gipsy King* is listed in John Scott's catalogue 'The Orchardist' in 1872, but no details of the apple are included.

Rather surprisingly, the apple seems to have fallen out of favour before the middle of the twentieth century. H.V. Taylor in 'Apples of England' (3rd edition 1946) notes that the variety was not listed in the catalogues of any nursery firms. Probably the *Gipsy King* was considered too small, and, as Hogg pointed out, the apples tend to shrivel in store. Taylor describes the *Gipsy King* briefly as "Similar to a small unripe *Court Pendu Plat* in appearance, but with a deep flush and prominent white spots." However, he may not have been describing the true variety. At the Fruit Conference in the Crystal Palace organised by the R.H.S. in 1934, *Gipsy King* apples were exhibited from East Malling Research Station. The *Gipsy King* in the National Fruit Collections at Brogdale also came from EMRS (1948), and Joan Morgan now considers that it does not match the apple described by Hogg and Bunyard. ('The New Book of Apples' Morgan & Richards). The *Gipsy King* in Shropshire may be the only surviving tree of that variety. It was certainly the highlight of our Shropshire excursion.

But there were further surprises lurking in "those blue remembered hills". A week after the Apple Fair we returned to look at the orchard that was home to the *Gipsy King*. About twenty ancient standard trees, some in a very decrepit state, formed the remains of a large traditional orchard in a sheltered spot near a farmhouse. The *Gipsy King* lived up to its description – a tall tree, heavily laden with small apples which hung in clusters.

A neighbouring tree we looked at next was badly decayed but with a fine crop of small, yellow apples, which at first glance appeared similar to Golden Pippin. Examples of this variety in the National Fruit Collections match the nineteenth century illustrations and descriptions but, as Hogg pointed out, these apples probably do not correspond to the Golden Pippin praised by John Parkinson in 1629 as "the greatest and best of all sorts of pippins". It is possible that this Shropshire apple is a variant of the Golden Pippin but, alternatively, it might be the long-lost Bringewood Pippin, raised by Thomas Andrew Knight by cross-pollinating Golden Pippin with Golden Harvey. Bringewood Pippin, as described in 'The Fruit Manual' and illustrated in 'The Herefordshire Pomona', is very similar in appearance to its female parent. It will be difficult to distinguish between the two varieties, but on balance the Shropshire apple seems to be closer to Bringewood Pippin. The 'Bringewood Pippin' in the National Collections until recently, was probably another 'lost' Shropshire variety Sweeney Nonpareil (see Orchard Gleanings in *MAN* Newsletter No. 10).

Continuing our progress around the orchard we came upon a tree which bore round, shiny, red apples said to be late-keeping cookers. The large closed eye, which appeared to be raised on swollen bosses on some of the apples, provided the clue to its identification as Round Winter Nonesuch. This was another apple we had not previously encountered. It is not in the National Collections and was only identified later with the aid of 'The Herefordshire Pomona' and 'The Fruit Manual'. Two trees of russets – still unidentified – provided our next puzzle. These were followed by a Yorkshire Beauty and there were sighs of relief when we came across old orchard favourites Blenheim Orange and Keswick Codlin. But then the head-scratching began again over the remaining trees which included an 'odd' Quoining and Rymer. Clues to the identity of the latter came from the very short fruit stalk and a feature noted in the account of Rymer in 'The Gardener's Assistant' by Robert Thompson (1853), who described the base of the apples as being "marked with pearly specks as if in or beneath the skin". This was quite noticeable when the apples were freshly picked.

It was a wonderful surprise that this farm orchard should contain such an unusual assemblage of apples, including at least four not represented in the National Fruit Collections. The family, who have farmed the land for over seventy years, say that this orchard was already well-grown when their grandfather moved there. It would be illuminating to discover more about its history. In the meantime we are very grateful to the owners for showing us around, and also to the 'Blue Remembered Hills Project' for sponsoring our visit to Shropshire.

Mike Porter

THE STORY OF A WANTED APPLE

We have been searching for another tree of Sugar Loaf Pippin for several years. One of its better known synonyms is Hutchin's Seedling. A photo of the fruit features on our display board among the 'WANTEDS' but has aroused no flicker of recognition.

To go back to the beginning, some years ago an old tree was found in a cottage garden in Glasbury which puzzled us. It was a very early variety, pleasant to eat from early August, and of distinctive tall conical shape. It also cooked well. After we failed to identify it among the various codlins, Mike Porter finally came to the conclusion that it was this variety and he visited the Lindley Library of the Royal Horticultural Society, in London, to obtain copies of the description and illustration in their Journal. These proved to be a very good match and we are satisfied that we have found it. The apple is illustrated and described in 'The Herefordshire Pomona' and also

in Hogg, where it was said to have an inch long stalk. Our specimens had a medium length rather thin, stalk.

The old tree cropped well this year and some good windfalls and a couple of late-picked specimens were on display at Kington Show, in September. At the end of a long, very wet day, chatting to the public who had sought shelter in the Leisure Centre where we were based, Tom Froggatt and I were about to start packing up when I was greatly cheered to hear a lady exclaim with delight when she saw the basket of Sugar Loaf Pippins. She said she knew the apple as a child, in Cardiff, when it was planted, by her father, with other varieties, immediately after the War, so was fruiting in the early 1950s. Was it still there? Sadly, no. Her father had been the head gardener at the Heath Training College, and the site is now under the Heath Hospital. I gave her the best specimen, only picked the night before the show, and she recalled the taste with great pleasure. Her mother had used them to make Apple Charlotte as, with sugar still rationed until 1953, this apple was sweet enough without sugar when cooked.

The family had formerly lived in Abergavenny and she was sure her father, when he planted the young fruit trees at the Training College, had obtained them from his great friend and fellow gardener back in Abergavenny, only known to my informant, then about seven years old, as Cyril or Cecil. The 'apple detectives' went to work on this. A phone call to Colin Gardiner, who is used to historical enquiries from me on his area of the Usk valley, soon yielded some results and he produced Cyril's probable surname. There was a well respected gardener named Cyril Meadows, who worked at various big gardens in the area and at a market garden called Fraser's. I spoke to Mrs Fraser, whose late husband had been a nephew of Frank Fraser, the market gardener, who ran it. She remembered Cyril and said the full name of the Nursery was Fraser and Brown. She was aware that all the old records and papers from the other nearby Nursery, Pitts, had been destroyed.

Telephone enquiries to all the Meadows with Abergavenny addresses finally struck lucky. Joe Meadows had known Cyril, who was a Londoner, and not related to any of the other Meadows in the town, nor did he have any family. Joe even knew the old house with a walled garden where Cyril had worked at one time, as well as at Frasers. More phone calls were made (it is as well that I am now on BT's Option 3) and the interesting news came that there are still two or three old apple trees behind the house. We should check this site next year.

Another call to Mrs Elsie Garland, whose late husband had worked for Fraser and Brown for 30 years, brought very useful information. She had known Cyril well and was familiar with the name of Sugar Loaf Pippin. She was certain that the nursery did not stock or sell fruit trees but she knew Cyril grafted trees himself. So, no chance of finding a catalogue. The next enquiry will be the local Horticultural Society, where long memories may recall obtaining this variety direct from Cyril Meadows, and perhaps finding another tree.

Although the origin of Sugar Loaf Pippin is elsewhere, one can see why a nurseryman may have stocked it, or a landowner grown it, in Abergavenny, where one of the neighbouring hills is the Sugar Loaf. This name is often given to cone-shaped hills and Mike told me it derives from the cone shape in which sugar was sold. The hot juice derived from sugar cane or sugar beet was poured into metal cones which stood about 2ft high, and when crystalized, was emptied from the cone. Pieces were then chipped off with big tongs, and sold.

Brogdale do not have this variety. MWG Smith in 'The National Register of the United Kingdom', gives its Status as in existence 1924, Provenance Russia and Recorded 1831. The

description given is: 'Size large 70:76mm; shape tall, conic to rectangular, convex to straight, sometimes concave; skin clear pale yellow becoming nearly white; flesh firm, crisp, white; flavour subacid; season early.' From our observations, of the apple in Glasbury, the fruit is falling from early August and does not keep. It is pleasant to eat with a nice tang and also cooks well.

An old friend in the town, had asked her WI about the name, *Sugar Loaf Pippin*, to no avail as yet. In the meantime, she tried the Library and they looked it up on the WEB, finding it listed now by Bernwode Plants and kindly printed out their details for me. (I really must find out how to use this world-wide source of information.) I had an earlier copy of the Tolmans' beautiful catalogue in the MAN Library, dated 2001/2. A call to Derek Tolman, in Buckinghamshire, to establish the source of his recently acquired graftwood, was interesting. He had received some from Hilary Wilson of the Northern Fruit Group, from a source in Cumberland. I spoke to Hilary and she said it was from Jim Armstrong, a retired agriculturalist now living in Reading, whose family had a very old orchard in Cumberland. Supplied with his telephone number, I hoped to hear his description of the fruit before I described our local tree. During the course of a long and most interesting chat with him, I learned that the remnant orchard at his old home in Scotby in the parish of Wetheral, had been planted by his g.g.grandfather, a market gardener, in the 1840/50s. Jim described how his grandparents took over the site in 1911 and, as a small boy, just before World War 2, he used to go to the weekly market with his grandmother, where she took each variety of apple, as it came into season, for sale. The earliest of all was known as 'Summer Jellyflower', which he thinks was the *Summer Gilliflower*. The next one taken was the fruit he knew as *Sugar Loaf*, another synonym for this once popular apple, which he said was an early cooking apple, also pleasant to eat, but only good for a few days after picking. This fits our knowledge of the Glasbury fruit, which we have as young grafted trees at Tredomen Court and in the Porters' own large collection of traditional apple varieties. I will be sending Jim fruit samples next year, and if the old tree on his brother's farm is still alive and bearing, he will arrange for some to be sent to me. By next year, Hilary's young tree from Scotby graftwood may be bearing.

The Tolmans have also recently added this variety to their stocks from an Australian Heritage collection, based in Tasmania, which includes about a dozen trees once grown in Britain. Derek awaits photos and more information on this fruit from the Grove Research Station, and will send me copies. As he said in his note accompanying this year's catalogue, kindly sent for our Library, *Sugar Loaf Pippin* "is obviously like the buses – three come along at once." We look forward to comparing the fruits of the trees from the three different sources. We can add some additional information in that the Glasbury tree is spur, not tip-bearing; also the seeds are unusually small and round, rather like grape seeds, and chestnut coloured.

A further recognition of this apple has just come via Tom Froggatt, who was recently at the Trumpet Ploughing Match and Fruit Show, where an elderly visitor spotted it on the WANTED display and said he had known it in Clifford, at a place he remembered as Mill Farm, which would have been Hardwick Mill. The present owner told me there were no old trees when he came to live there, sixteen years ago, but the pasture field nearby, belonging to Priory Farm, is called The Orchard. So, that tree has gone, but its former presence suggests a local source.

This story is given at some length to indicate the complicated trail which may be followed before we are satisfied that we have the correct variety, as descriptions can vary in the early books and not be very detailed. Members of the public are very keen to help and asking around may lead to tracing the whereabouts of another survivor of a 'lost' variety. It also, I hope, shows the challenge of the search and the satisfaction we all feel when 'mission is accomplished'.

Sheila Leitch

NEWS OF OUR ORCHARDS

TREDOMEN COURT, Llanfilo, Breconshire.

There is a new gate at the lower entrance to the orchard and a strong fence of heavy posts and pig netting has been erected round the perimeter which should prevent entry by stray sheep from the road. Many of the trees are taking a rest after the enormous crop of fruit they bore last year. It became obvious that work parties should have been there last year after the 'June drop', to thin the crop on the overladen branches, but manpower was short and by the time the problem was seen, some branches had broken. However, apart from a few deaths of the more recent plantings, the trees look healthy and some which have not fruited before are now coming into bearing and may allow us to identify some planted as what I call 'wait and see' specimens. On a recent visit it was good to see some fruit on one of the M9 rootstocks grafted from scions of Belle Bonne sent to us by Gerald Fayers of the East of England Apples and Orchards Project, who keeps in touch with interesting varieties he comes across in his native Norfolk.

Next year we plan to have regular working parties at Tredomen and, as Chris Porter says in her article on Pages 18/19, these can be good fun and very satisfying and let members develop a personal interest in the 'museum orchard' nearest to them where they can carry out volunteer work. If next year there is a good crop, once we have collected specimens for display at apple events, we may be able to offer a 'pick your own' visit, with surplus also picked for sale to members at our Open Day.

Sheila Leitch

CROFT PENDARREN, Llangynidr, Breconshire.

Although the blossom was beautiful in the orchard this Spring, we had several nights of frost quite late in May so a significant number of trees have not set any fruit. The early fruiting varieties which did have fruit have again been plundered by the wretched grey squirrels. These marauders have been joined in their nefarious pursuits by a family of Carrion Crows and a Jay or two. Otherwise the orchard looks well, with Common Blue butterflies visiting the Bird's-foot Trefoil. The tractor, called in earlier this year to top the encroaching bramble and bracken has done a good job, apart from unfortunately demolishing one of the trees: manoeuvring a big tractor is not easy! On a happier note, Pig yr wydd has a splendid crop, so we hope there will be some to show at the AGM exhibition.

Chris Porter

DONNINGTON, near Ledbury, Herefordshire.

It is always cheering to look up to the skyline as you approach the Donnington estate from Ledbury, and see slender branches of young apple trees spreading outward from their trunks. So the site is a bit exposed to the north and east, but hardly in a frost pocket! The trees survived one very wet, waterlogged winter when we, like Bulmers, lost a few to root rot. They have survived modest dry spells since and the depredations of the odd electric cable-laying juggernaut – they would choose to come then, wouldn't they, after an undisturbed half-century! We have managed to keep the rabbits at bay. So the trees are growing steadily into their pre-ordained individual profiles, like characteristic Adams' Pearmain – NOT all the way from the Garden of Eden (so far as we know!) The grass around them has been well maintained over this time by the owner, for which we are grateful.

So what about the fruit, then? A bit sparse, so far, and limited to a few varieties which have turned up several years running. May Queen and Kidd's Orange Red, Stirling Castle, Sam's Crab and one that purports to be Schoolmaster. This year they are joined by dependable Tom Putt, also Nine Square and Northern Greening and a King of the Pippins that looks all fruit and not much tree. There was a flurry of excitement last year over Syke House Russet (NOT Sick House – medicinal apple – as reportedly suggested in past time by a German writer who must

have become confused over his schnapps) plus the odd Wagener – as late as Court Pendu Plat which has just, now, graced us with its presence. We must be patient – large rootstocks take longer to bear, so jam, or rather, apple jelly, tomorrow.

Ray Boddington

LOWER FFORDDFAWR, nr Hay-on-Wye, Breconshire.

We will need to do some replanting at this nursery orchard to replace last year's casualties. Paul Davis has some of the required trees in stock but in other cases graftwood will have to be obtained this winter. The very dry summer of 2003 did not help our newly grafted young trees on M9. However, the trees are looking healthier than last year, when lack of rain and aphid damage seriously stunted growth. David Goodwin is keeping the site mown and this year watering has not been necessary. A number of trees have made strong leaders but others show browning of leaf tips and edges of leaves which looks like mildew damage and some of these have made little growth.

Sheila Leitch

WESTHOPE, near Canon Pyon, Herefordshire.

A local farmer once gave me this piece of country lore about thistles:-

Cut them in May, they're here to stay.
Cut them in June, it's far too soon.
Cut them in July, they're sure to die.

I hope this is true, as by July the Westhope thistles were seriously big and approaching seeding. It was too much for my strimmer and it took a powerful hedge trimmer to cut through them.

Fruiting this year is varied and generally poor. Only Duke of Devonshire is cropping well. The rest have a few or no fruit. Newland Sack, budded about three years ago, is doing well and there is some healthy growth on top of what was thought to be Butter Apple.

Peter Austerfield.

A FRUIT TREE COLLECTION FROM TIMES PAST

After a lapse of a couple of years, I was pleased to be able to attend the Penlanole Apple Event, near Rhayader, Radnorshire, where I met numerous friends. While chatting to Dave Burrige, an organic gardener formerly living in Brecon, I learned of his finding old lead punched fruit tree tags along the inside of the walled garden at Doldowlod, the home of the Gibson Watt family, where he is now carrying out a project to restore the gardens to their former state. We already have fruit tree orders dating from 1808 from this estate. I asked if I could have the names. They have duly arrived and it was clear that some were written out phonetically on the tags and I hope I have found their correct names. A few tags were on the outside of the south-facing wall and so far, a total of 24 names have been found. The walls are built of brick about 12ft high. Many of the names were unfamiliar to me so I began checking our library. Some were in 'The Fruit Garden' by George Bunyard and Owen Thomas (1904) and others, particularly the plums, were listed in 'The Fruit Manual' by Robert Hogg (1884). Some were synonyms but eventually all were found, but one. The names are given in alphabetical order below and some of the comments of Bunyard or Hogg are appended, the source given by initials. None of original planted trees remain, but four old pears, higher up the garden and, as yet inaccessible, until clearance work has been completed, await identification. An asterisk by the names below indicates a position on the outside of the wall.

I hope our readers find this sortie into other fruits interesting. What is apparent is the care with which the varieties were chosen, hardiness, flavour and provision of fruit over a long period all having obviously been considered. I can picture the owner, or possibly the head gardener of the time, reading the books or nursery catalogues, and anticipating the time when the young fruit trees would provide this wonderful range of luscious fruit. Doesn't it make your mouth water to read the descriptions? It is hoped to replant with as many of these original varieties as can still be obtained, and readers may be able to help source some of them.

APRICOTS

Shipley's (syn. Blenheim)* – Very productive and early, but not so rich as the Moorpark. (RH) An excellent variety, large and handsome. Fruit of first class flavour. (GB)

CHERRIES

Napoleon Bigarreau – One of the finest for orchard or garden culture, being hardy and a free bearer. Season late. (GB)

Morello – Best of all cherries for culinary purposes. Very old variety, being mentioned by Parkinson in 1629. (RH) Fruit large. Usually grown on north walls. Season late. When netted, the fruit will hang into October if the autumn is dry. (GB)

NECTARINES

Hardwicke* – A most delicious fruit. (RH)

Huntsman* – This name I could not find in either book, but perhaps it is there, lurking under a synonym. A Hunt's Tawny and a Hunt's Large Tawny are listed in Hogg. There are no indexes, which makes searching a slow business.

Red Roman* (Syn. Roman) – This is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, nectarine in cultivation. It is mentioned by Parkinson in 1629 and by all subsequent writers. (RH)

PEACHES.

Bellegarde – Altogether first-rate. Flavour delicious. Growth vigorous, cropping freely. (GB)

Grosse Mignonne* – This is one of the very best mid-season peaches. (RH)

Noblesse – One of the best-flavoured peaches. Tree grows well but it does not bear freely. (GB)

Royal George – An old and justly esteemed variety. It is grand under glass. Bears freely, forces readily and seldom fails. (GB)

Walberton Admirable* – A valuable late variety. (GB) This is one of the best late peaches. The tree is very hardy and a good bearer. (RH)

PEARS

Glou Morceau – First class in warm seasons, or in the West of England. Bears freely and succeeds by the sea. (GB)

Jargonelle – A fine old early pear. Bears well on the Quince stock. (GB)

PLUMS

Cloth of Gold* – (syn. Drap d'Or; Mirabelle grosse) An excellent little dessert plum. Flesh, yellow, melting, with a rich, sugary, and delicious flavour. (RH)

Coe's Late Red – With a sweet and sprightly flavour. As a late plum, ripening in the end of October, and hanging for a month or six weeks later, this is a valuable variety. (RH)

Coe's Golden Drop – Valuable plum for all purposes. Of compact growth. (GB)

Gisborne's – A cooking plum, ripe in the middle of August. An early and abundant bearer (RH)

Ickworth Impératrice – An excellent late dessert plum; ripe in October. It will hang till it shrivels; and after being gathered, if wrapped in silk paper will, if kept in a dry place, last for many weeks.

It is also an excellent drying plum.

Kirke's – Flavour very rich. The finest dessert plum for garden culture. (GB)

Large Green Drying (syn. Knight's Green Drying) – A dessert plum; ripe September and succeeds best against a wall....sugary and richly flavoured when highly ripened. (RH)

Reine Claude Violette (syn. Purple Gage) – A dessert plum of the greatest excellence, and particularly richly flavoured if allowed to hang until it shrivels. Less liable to crack in wet seasons than the Green Gage. (RH)

Washington – One of the best of plums. Of a rich, sugary, and luscious flavour. A vigorous grower and an abundant bearer. (RH)

Sheila Leitch, with thanks to Dave Burridge

NEWS FROM OTHER GROUPS

[Editors Note] We continue to exchange Newsletters with other groups with similar aims to our own. We think it is a good idea to feature a different group each Newsletter and are starting with a newly formed one, albeit with some very experienced founder members. Other groups, please send your contributions. If you only feel like sending a short account, we may put in several together. We can all learn so much from each other.

The East of England Apples and Orchards Project

The East of England Apples and Orchards Project (EEAOP) began life in February 2003, with its main aim being to inspire, inform and support the public in the conservation of the 250 or so apple, pear, cherry and plum varieties associated with the seven counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire.

It owes its origins to the steering group of the Norfolk Apples and Orchards Project who decided, in response to public interest, to expand their work into neighbouring counties, where similar projects (besides the Hertfordshire Orchards Initiative) didn't exist.

Operating in an area stretching from the River Thames in the south to the River Humber in the north, it is not surprising that the region is rich in orchard fruit varieties, history and traditions, attributable in part to the many renowned fruit breeding nurseries once based here. These included Rivers Nursery of Sawbridgeworth in Hertfordshire, Laxton Bros. of Bedford and Seabrook and Sons of Boreham in Essex.

The last twenty-five years have seen dramatic changes in the region's orchard acreage, with more than seventy-five per cent lost in Essex alone. All of the major fruit tree nurseries and many smaller ones have closed down. Most of the old half standard trees in surviving orchards have been replaced with densely planted short-lived 'spindle' trees and there are far fewer varieties of fruit being grown. The region's smaller orchards, where local varieties can still occasionally be found, are now largely dependent on farm gate sales or farmers markets to sell their bottled juices, cyders and fresh fruit (which they also often offer as PYO), whilst the larger operations concentrate on just a few varieties of common UK fruits and supply national supermarket chains and local food processing industries with their produce.

In September 2003 the EEAOP launched a membership scheme that has grown quickly to nearly three hundred. On joining, new members receive copies of our information leaflets covering all aspects of fruit growing, from planting trees and formative pruning, to fruit pests and diseases and storing picked fruits. They also receive the latest copy of our biennial newsletter and our own fruit tree catalogue which, this year, contains around one hundred and seventy varieties of local apples and pears. In time we hope to be able to include local plums and

cherries too, all grown specially for us by a supportive local nurseryman, with some very helpful propagation funding from several of our county councils.

We realised early on that our membership is our greatest resource, capable of taking part in the Project in all sorts of ways, including creating our web-site, completing questionnaires on their own garden orchards, volunteering at Apple Days or, as most recently, helping us to gather information about all the remaining orchards in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk, both old and new. That is in addition to planting local varieties in their gardens, on community sites and in new orchards.

Throughout the year members, as well as the public, can also take part in our workshops to learn more about practical orchard skills like pruning and grafting, as well as topics like apple identification and even how to create an orchard.

Our Apple Day season lasts from late September until the end of October and it is by far our busiest time of the year. This Autumn we will be visiting twelve venues across our region, including the RHS Gardens at Hyde Hall, with our displays of local fruits and around one hundred and fifty other apple varieties, our *aide memoire* for the identification service we offer.

Last year's events were visited by over seven thousand people, many of them bringing fruit for identification. These great public events are the best opportunity we have to rediscover recorded and unrecorded 'lost' varieties, and last year was no exception, with the two 'lost' dessert varieties Hunthouse Pippin (Lincs) and Jolly Miller (Cambs) being brought to our attention. At Apple Days we invariably find unusual and unidentifiable varieties which prompt the collection of graft wood for further study on our evaluation site in Norfolk.

Looking back we've already achieved far more than we would have thought possible at the outset of the Project two and half years ago. One important point on our current agenda, and one with which *MAN* has been helping us out, is becoming a limited company, as the first step towards eventually becoming a registered charity.

Martin Skipper
EEAOP Chairman
www.applesandorchards.org.uk

CORRESPONDENCE

MAN FINDS 'LOST' APPLE!

Vera, a lady in my village, asked me to help her to find an apple variety that she had not heard of since her childhood. It grew in her Grandmother's garden in the village and was known as 'The Summer Apple' because she and her sisters ate fruit from there during the school holidays. She wanted to plant three trees to remind her of this – and of her late husband of 61 years.

I tried my usual (limited) routes and failed, then thought of *MAN* and contacted Richard Wheeler, who promised to raise the matter at the next *MAN* committee meeting.

Richard duly came back with a couple of possibilities – Summer Apple and Summer Golden Pippin (whose local name was 'Summer Apple'). He recommended that I check the National Fruit Collection so I found the Brogdale website and asked for a search.

Summer Apple originated from 1931, whilst the other possibility – Summer Golden Pippin – was known before 1800. It also ripened in late August – earlier than Summer Apple. The website also contains descriptions of the fruit – shape, colour, taste etc.

Meanwhile, Kevin O'Neill of Walcot Nurseries had also been 'digging' and found some possibilities in a very old book called 'The Fruit Manual'. From there it also seemed likely that the variety we were looking for was Summer Golden Pippin.

Time to call in the expert! We got Vera to come round and sat her and her sister in front of the computer screen. I explained what we had found and she was slightly uncertain – they did call it 'Summer Apple' but dating from 1931 it was too young. But when the full colour picture and description of Summer Golden Pippin appeared on the screen she recognised it at once. They both confirmed that they ate it in late August, that the skin was more yellowish-green than pink or red – and that it had very sweet, crisp, yellowish flesh. After more than seventy years she saw the apple again!

I found that Brogdale could supply scions for grafting and so Kevin O'Neill is now growing two trees for us – one on a smaller rootstock to plant back in Vera's grandmother's garden (where a relative now lives), and one on a vigorous rootstock to add to the collection at Kemerton – her husband will get his memorial tree.

So, MAN members and friends, please forgive the 'tabloid' type headline, but doesn't the story deserve to be celebrated loudly? Grateful thanks from Vera and her sisters for finding their childhood apple.

John Clarke

POLLINATING THE APPLE

This is a summary of travelling in the Tien Shan (The Heavenly Mountains) that stretch from Uzbekistan eastwards over the border of China. On the northern slopes of this mountain range the sweet apple Malus pumila evolved over a period of up to twelve million years. It then took some 7000 years to travel to the west and finish up on the supermarket shelves. The whole complicated journey will emerge in the author's text – THE STORY OF THE APPLE – to be published shortly by TIMBER PRESS, Portland, Oregon.

Apples are hermaphrodite i.e. they carry both sexes within the same flower. They are usually 'self-incompatible' i.e. unable to pollinate their own flowers, at least to a considerable extent, and the pollen tube growth of the 'incorrect' pollen is stopped in the style. Just a few cultivars (varieties) of apple will set a small amount of fruit by self-pollination and generally many of the more modern varieties will set some crop, but current commercial apple production is inconceivable without adopting some cross-pollination strategy. In the UK only the varieties Allington Pippin, Lord Grosvenor and Stirling Castle will give any significant crop as a result of self-pollination.

In general commercial terms the identity of the pollen parent, provided that it remains within the genus Malus, are of no significance. Thus ornamentals like John Downie and Profusion may be perfectly effective. There is, however, some evidence of cross-incompatibility between, for example, the varieties Cox's Orange Pippin and its seedlings e.g. St. Everard, Ellison's Orange and Laxton's Superb.

Apple flowers, like most other Rosaceae, are not specialized for one group of insect pollinators – the simple, usually gently-fragrant (to humans) and readily-accessible flowers attract a range of pollinators seeking both nectar and pollen. In their ancestral home – the Tien Shan – with its vast range of fruiting trees, mostly Rosaceae, and meadow herbs in due season over 1000 miles of east-west mountains have now become a huge honey factory. One seems there in places almost to breathe bees. But these industrial workers are honey-bees (Apis mellifera). It

is possible that *Apis mellifera* may indeed have originated in this area, but because of its rare ability to store honey is now the most widespread species in the whole world.

There is, however, plenty of evidence that other species of bee, including the solitary bee species such as the mason bees (*Osmia*), in the past played a much greater role in the origin of the apple. *Apis mellifera* is not well-adapted to the apple flower and frequently, because of the impedance of the stamens, will bite through the base of the calyx in its search for nectar, thus negating the pollination process. Whereas the mason bees, being more interested in the pollen – they store only pollen and not nectar – will come in direct contact with the sexual parts of the flower. Honeybees and bumble bees have their pollen baskets (scopa), concave surface with stiff bristles, on the outer faces of the hind legs. Leaf-cutter bees and mason bees (including *Osmia*) have their scopa in the form of stiff hairs on the underside of the abdomen, thus much better evolved for the transfer of pollen in an apple flower.

Osmia starts work earlier in the season, gets up earlier, does not take lunch-breaks (vide Taylor, 2001) and, it is estimated, one red mason bee (*Osmia rufa* – a native) can do the work of 120 honey-bee workers.

Find out more about the mason bees in Chris O'Toole's *THE RED MASON BEE: TAKING THE STING OUT OF BEE-KEEPING*. 2000. (*Osmia Publications*, Banbury). You can buy ready-made *Osmia* nests from many retail outlets, including the University Museum of Natural History in Oxford (otherwise go to the web for your local supplier). Or you can make your own out of bundles of hollow canes or reed stems – the ideal length and diameter seems to be about 15 cm. long with an internal diameter of about 7mm. But whether the proprietary job or home-made version they must all be mounted at right-angles to, or 'normal to' as the geometers would say, a wall or other vertical surface. If you mount them, as would seem most convenient, parallel to the fence, the bees won't use them.

Barrie Juniper
Oxford, June 2005

LITERARY CORNER

The Best Apples to Buy and Grow, a Brooklyn Botanic Garden All-Region Guide. Editor Beth Hanson, 2005, \$9.95

I came across this booklet one day whilst searching through the internet auction site eBay. An American lady was auctioning a copy at a deep, deep discount to the list price so it seemed a good buy. But before committing myself on eBay there was the postage to consider (which can make a cheap US purchase less of a bargain). Once I knew the postage I could then do some comparative shopping to set my bid limit on eBay. The Brooklyn Botanic Garden was not doing deep discounts on its recently published books - or shipping to England for that matter. Strand Books (in New York) could not help and American discount booksellers could offer a good price for the book but horrendous postage costs (and I know that sea mail is cheaper but takes so, so long). So it was onto *amazon.co.uk* for pricing, in pounds rather than dollars, from a UK supplier. It was not too difficult to bring up a list of sellers, at surprisingly low prices. After taking into account postage, the seller with the second cheapest book price worked out cheapest overall. I used eBay's currency converter to set my US dollar limit and then bid for this book, waiting the three days for the auction to end.

I was outbid. But I was not disappointed. I went back onto the internet to the books page on *MAN's* website - <http://www.marcherapple.net/books.htm> - and followed one of the many links to *amazon.co.uk*. (This simple step means that *MAN* will get commission on my purchase). I then

bought this book from The Book Depository Ltd for £6.67 - £3.92 plus £2.75 postage. The postman popped it through my door two days later. So what did I get? First impressions are of a booklet a bit taller than A5 size (which is the size of *MAN's* newsletter). The card cover is attractively illustrated and quickly flicking through the 120 pages justifies the description "profusely illustrated". The standard subject matter is all there – a History of American Apple Growing; Cooking and Cider Making (note that in American English 'cider' means 'apple juice,'); Apple Descriptions; a Growing Guide; Nurseries; Further Reading.

At a more leisurely pace I found the History of American Apple Growing intriguing. The early settlers' desire to establish large orchards quickly meant that they habitually grew seedling trees. No wonder their variety list contains over 17,000 entries! (After synonyms are removed, perhaps 14,000 distinct varieties). The problems of identifying and conserving that number make the 432 varieties from The Herefordshire Pomona a drop in the ocean. Also interesting to read was how the extremes of weather in America can devastate commercial orchards there. A bad winter literally wipes out orchards in a whole region and farmers replant with a new, hardier variety. (So after the winter of 1934/35, ***Macintosh*** orchards replaced ***Baldwin***). One explanation for sudden changes in the apples commercially available in shops.

Richard Wheeler

NURSERY NOTES – VIRUSES

Plant viruses are very simple structures consisting of a single strand of genetic material (RNA) within a protein coat. They can only replicate themselves within the host plant's cell and some even need a 'helper' virus to do this, so to call them 'living' is probably stretching a point and is certainly likely to lead me into a theological argument.

They are natural pathogens of fruit trees but were not considered worthy of research until the end of the Second World War when the introduction and widespread propagation of the popular, but susceptible, apple variety *Lord Lambourne* first showed that viral diseases were widespread in this country. Long Ashton Research Station, Bristol conducted much of the research work and they coined the names 'mosaic', 'rubbery wood', 'chat wood' and 'flat limb' because of the different symptoms the viruses induced in this variety. It was soon discovered that most apple varieties and rootstocks contained additional latent viruses that only showed symptoms on sensitive indicator species and that transmission was mainly by grafting infected material and by using infected rootstocks. As a consequence a programme was started in the late 1950s to produce virus-free propagating material. Young trees were grown at 38°C for 30 days to inactivate the virus and the virus-free tips grafted onto fresh, clean rootstocks. All commercial varieties of apples, pears, cider apples, perry pears and ornamental crabs were treated in this way and by the end of the 1960s, over 10,000 virus-free buds were being distributed each year to nurserymen and growers for propagation. In parallel, new virus-tested cloned rootstocks were sent from Long Ashton to East Malling for multiplication, assessment and distribution and this led to the EMLA scheme to provide healthy mother trees and rootstocks for growers through the Nuclear Stock Association.

As a result of their work, most popular apple and pear varieties planted during the last 30 years will almost certainly be free of viruses but older orchards and uncommon varieties will not. Unfortunately it is these old orchards and the rare varieties that they contain, in which *MAN* is most interested. Viruses are sure to be present in the graftwood that I am sent for propagation.

Each season, I notice one or two examples of mosaic on apples, usually grafted onto the dwarf M26 or M27 rootstocks. This virus, properly called *apple chlorotic leafspot trichovirus*,

produces an obvious yellow mosaic pattern on the leaves of the apples and less clear but equally distinctive wavy lines and circles on pear leaves. The presence of this virus in a susceptible apple is very obvious but in pears grafted onto seedling pear stock, the symptoms are very often mild and seem to have little long-term effect. When pears are grafted onto Quince A, however, the situation becomes much more serious. Most perry pears need an interscion to allow them to 'take' on Quince and *Beurré Hardy* is the variety of choice because it is vigorous and very compatible. This pear variety seems particularly susceptible to mosaic virus and shows severe foliar symptoms on the interscion and in the top variety. The effect appears to be synergistic and some of the stocks died.

There is little harm in supplying trees containing latent infections as they are unlikely to suffer and because the virus is only transmitted by grafting, the disease cannot easily spread. However, where symptoms are severe and the trees are likely to suffer, it is irresponsible to propagate such trees for wide-scale use without taking steps to eradicate the pathogen. I therefore hope to set up a virus-cleaning programme next year to clean up perry pears, in particular, and any unusual apple trees which appear to be infected. Meanwhile all the infected Quince stocks will have to be destroyed.

Paul Davis

[Editor's Note] 'MIND THAT MISTLETOE', the title of Diggory Kempton's interesting article in last year's Newsletter, now seems like a warning. This year, we are being asked, literally, to mind that mistletoe and take a good look at any in our area. Ray Woods, one of our members, has contributed the article below. Author of 'Flora of Radnorshire' and 'Lichen Flora of Brecknock', he specializes in some of the lesser known sections of the flora, such as mosses, liverworts and fungi. Most people's interest in fungi lean towards particular knowledge of the edible ones and how to distinguish those from the poisonous ones. Ray's interests include the more obscure groups such as the soil mycorrhizas and the rusts. We do not need to be specialists, however, to spot this particular fungus as the mistletoe turns a khaki yellow colour before disintegrating. Our observations could be useful on the spread of this problem.

MISTLETOE AND THE CASE OF LITTLE FLEAS HAVING LESSER FLEAS AND SO AD INFINITUM

Whilst browsing the very interesting Herefordshire Fungus Group's web site earlier this year I came across an interesting piece by Ray Bray on fungi that attack mistletoe. That a partial parasite like mistletoe should itself be parasitized I found fascinating. Close to his home in Durlow, in an ancient orchard well festooned in mistletoe, he had observed a bunch clearly ailing. Its brown fragmented remains, brought down by a gale, were peppered by swollen black spots. Ted Blackwell identified these spore producing papillae as that of the little recorded fungus called *Sphaeropsis visci*. The British Mycological Society had on its database only two records of this species – both from Surrey. Keen to find this scarce fungus for myself, a small diversion on a shopping trip to Hereford found me in the mistletoe-festooned orchards of the Cooperative Society near Burghill. On the third row of trees examined, there, just out of reach was a rather sick looking bunch. A search on the ground beneath found fragments of stems and leaves covered in the small black pimples of this fungus. Despite the huge abundance of mistletoe in this orchard I could find only another couple of possibly infected bunches. Just as well for the mistletoe, and possibly the fungus, as it seemed to kill its host outright.

Did it occur in Wales where we have few sites with any great quantity of mistletoe? One of the coldest dawns of the late winter saw me, somewhat unwillingly, counting goosander ducks on the Wye between Glasbury and Boughrood. As the first rays of the red-gold morning sun were

striking the trees I came across masses of mistletoe on river bank hawthorns. There also was the now familiar wizened brown bunch plastered with the Sphaeropsis. It was now a Welsh species.

How long has this battle of the parasites raged? Sphaeropsis is the name given to the non-sexual stage of this fungus. Its sexually reproducing stage (probably according to Ray Bray a sack fungus called *Botryosphaeria visci*) does not appear to have been recorded from Britain. Indeed Grove in his book of leaf fungi published in 1937 considers Sphaeropsis to have been introduced with the host from the continent. So the fungus has very little scope for easily evolving more pathogenic strains. This is just as well. Mistletoe, despite having separate male and female plants thus ensuring outbreeding always occurs, hedges its bets by producing many embryos from a single seed – some being female and some male. So siblings from the same egg often grow tightly together and must end up fertilizing one another.

It would be interesting to have a better understanding of the impact this fungus has on mistletoe. I would be pleased to receive any specimens of mistletoe that appear to be ailing or showing signs of fungus attack. There are at least 4 other fungi that could possibly be found living on mistletoe in the Welsh Marches with, to date, only a single record of one of them.

Ray Woods,
Countryside Council for Wales,
Eden House,
Ithon Road,
Llandrindod Wells,
Powys.

TAKING STOCK

In financial terms *MAN* is not a rich organisation. After ten years of life this group still does not possess its own orchard and is totally dependent on the generosity and co-operation of sympathetic landowners who allow apple trees grafted with rare and unusual varieties to be planted on their land. In these gene pools, three in Herefordshire and three in Breconshire, are conserved over five hundred varieties of apple. They are our investment for the future, a vision of treasure, planted with the hope and determination that apples like *Peasgood's Nonsuch*, *Crimson Quoining*, *Pitmaston Pineapple*, *Sugar Loaf Pippin*, *Sweeney Nonpareil*, *Wyken Pippin*, *Adams' Pearmain* and *Golden Noble* shall not be lost but will be enjoyed by the discriminating, apple-savouring public of the 21st. Century and, hopefully, beyond.

One of the keys to *MAN's* success (and we must allow that much, since *MAN's* help and advice is frequently being sought by County Councils, the Blue Remembered Hills Project in Shropshire and GLASU, in Powys, as well as government bodies such as the Countryside Council for Wales) lies in the expertise of its members who volunteer their time to further the aims of the group. Being prepared to work together is perhaps the most important quality for success in any organisation, but members also donate their skills in organisation, husbanding resources, public relations, grant application (for we do need money!), abilities in IT, orchard maintenance, and knowledge built up over many years of being able to identify the apples and pears we are trying to save.

The third word of our name, 'Network', gives a clue to another quality built up over the last ten years. Much of our progress is due to developing partnerships with organisations which have similar aims. Links have been forged between groups like the RHS, Northern Fruit Group, and Cheshire, Gloucestershire and Norfolk orchard groups. Graftwood from some of our newly

discovered rare apple varieties has been sent to the National Fruit Collection at Brogdale in Kent and for the last seven or eight years Herefordshire Council has used our material (via Messrs F. Matthews) to promote Herefordshire apple varieties in their fruit collection offers which have been selling well to the public each Autumn. Local Authorities Powys County Council, Brecon Beacons National Park and organisations like Wildlife Trusts have sought our advice and used our specialist knowledge to help their projects. I think our group is rather like the yeast of the fermenting apples and pears which results in delicious cider and perry. The latest 'fruitful' link is to the Countryside Restoration Trust (CRS) at their newly acquired working farm at Turnastone Court. We were called in by Robin Page's group in Herefordshire's Golden Valley to plant two orchards with fruit trees having local provenance. Twenty five traditional varieties of apple associated with this area of Herefordshire were planted with the help of volunteers from the CRS and *MAN* in February 2005. This co-operative venture fits in well with the CRS aim of traditional farming. On the one acre field near the farmhouse, apples, well-known and loved in this area like *Sam's Crab, Herefordshire Beefing, Genet Moyle, Stoke Edith Pippin, Herefordshire Pomeroy, Landore* and *Forester*, were planted together with *King's Acre Bountiful* and *King's Acre Pippin* (developed at the end of the 19th. Century by King's Acre Nursery, now Wyevale, in Hereford) and some 18th. Century apples, *Downton Pippin, Golden Harvey* and *Yellow Ingestrie*, associated with Thomas Andrew Knight, the renowned Herefordshire pomologist. The trees have been grafted on M25 rootstocks from graft wood collected by *MAN* members from local orchards. Over the next couple of years planting will start in the four acre field nearby, with cider apple and perry pear varieties, chosen from a list based on members' local knowledge of old standard trees grown in the area and considered suitable for growing in the Golden Valley by the local cider and perry maker Denis Gwatkin and Chris Fairs of the Hereford Cider Group. It is hoped that in time this second heritage orchard will produce good brews of Turnastone Court's own-label cider and perry.

However, if *MAN* is to be able to build on these achievements we need to involve more members more actively. Too much of the work is being done by too few people. Out of a membership of nearly four hundred, less than one tenth has been actively involved this year. Compare the turnout for planting at Turnastone, with the Countryside Restoration Trust mustering twice as many members as *MAN*, ready and willing to get stuck in to the planting of *MAN*'s trees, and you will get the picture! So where are we going wrong? We still have much to learn. A more active membership will bring in fresh ideas and help to redistribute the workload. At the moment the same tiny workforce runs *MAN*'s stand at Shows and Exhibitions, turns up to committee meetings, identifies fruit and maintains the *MAN* orchards and tries to stretch itself to meet all sorts of tasks which need to be done when, for example, we are asked for advice and help by those other previously mentioned organizations. There must be lots of members who would enjoy meeting people at Malvern Show or Abergavenny Food Fest and love to come along to man the stall at an apple event. With the tempting offer of free admission and the chance to look round the show surely we could make a long list of interested people prepared to give a few spare hours to help? We urge all members, from cooks and juice-makers and secretaries with an apple attitude and a computer aptitude, to pruners, grafters, planters and fruit pickers, to get involved. It can be great fun planting the new fruit trees and pruning them to a good shape in an orchard that will hopefully thrive for the next generation of *MAN* supporters. You won't need to visit the gym that week! Are you an enthusiastic, able-bodied person who would be willing to organize work parties in the orchards? *MAN* really needs you and it could make your membership of *MAN* truly worthwhile!

Please get in touch with any *MAN* officer if you can spare some of your time and share your expertise. If you can turn up to give your views in person at the AGM in October it would be much appreciated and would help to focus *MAN*'s future development at this crucial moment.

Chris Porter

MORE COUNTRY LORE

A Countryman told me that in Radnorshire and Breconshire, pear trees were planted by or near the house to bring fertility to a newly married couple and that miscarriages would be buried among the roots to help with the fertility of the next conception.

An apple a day keeps the doctor away. How old is this belief? 'The Little Book of Celtic Wisdom' compiled by Giulietta Wood, contains this extract from 'The Voyage of the O'Corras' from PW Joyce, 'Old Celtic Romances':-

There was shown them a wonderful island, and in it a great grove of marvellous beauty laden with apples...A sparkling rivulet of wine flowed through the middle of the grove; and where the wind blew through the trees, sweeter than any music was the rustling it made. The O'Corras ate some of the apples and drank from the rivulet of wine and were immediately satisfied. And from that time forth they were never troubled by either wounds or sickness.

Sheila Leitch

GRANTS RECEIVED SINCE THE FORMATION OF MAN AND HOW THEY HAVE BEEN USED

1994	August	Prince of Wales Trust	200.00	Powys Orchard Surveys
1995	May	Hfd. & W'ter Council	167.00	Tree Planting
1996	March	Hfd. & W'ter Council	442.00	Trees and Computer
1998	October	Prince's Trust and S. Smith Hort. Trust	3,655.00 1,218.00	Devt. of a Computerised Identification System)
1999	April	Hfd. & W'ter Council	324.00	Trees at Donnington
2000	March	Hfd. & W'ter Council	384.65	Trees at Donnington
2001	August	Hfd. & W'ter Council	750.00	Display Boards & Posters
2002	January	Hfd. & W'ter Council	317.70	Trees at Aylton
2003	January	Hfd. & W'ter Council	750.00	Pruning Courses
	March	Hfd. & W'ter Council	187.50	Pomona Project
	May	Hfd. & W'ter Council	375.00	Scanning Pomona
	July	Hfd. & W'ter Council	562.50	Website Expenses
		Awards for All	4987.00	Computer and Pomona Project
2004	March	Countryside Council for Wales	4,200.00	Mowing & Orchard Maintenance Equipment
	April	Brecon Beacons National Park	999.00	Orchard Maintenance, Ladder & Equipment
	July	Hfd. & W'ter Council	225.00	Pomona Project
2005	March	Countryside Council For Wales	1,807.00	Cost of Orchard Maintenance
	April	Brecon Beacons National Park	264.13	Cost of Pruning Equipment
	April	Hfd. & W'ter Council	75.00	Balance of Pomona Project

We are very much appreciative of this continued support.

Tom Froggatt

[Editors Note] Our thanks to our member, Colin Henderson, who is moving from Aylton and has donated mulch matting, copper labels and spiral rabbit guards for use in our Museum Orchards.

CIDER APPLE AND PERRY PEAR SUBGROUP

The variety called *Cadwalader*, discovered last year in the Golden Valley has now been identified as a Welsh cider variety. The name does not appear on any available listings, but two independent sources have confirmed its existence. Following the disappointment regarding the mis-identification of *Handsome Hereford* (Norman), as reported in the News Sheet, a new possibility has arisen. Denis Gwatkin believes that he has a Handsome Hereford tree in his orchard. It is hoped that a positive identification can be made this autumn. If anyone else knows of a positively identified tree of this variety please contact me and give me details of its location and owner so that a comparison can be made.

The Tidnor Wood Orchard Trust collection of cider related varieties is growing rapidly. Further plantings were done last winter and some failed grafts were redone where possible. It is the policy of MAN to support this project where we can. To this end the Committee members accepted an invitation from the founder, Henry May, to tour the orchard at Lugwardine and discuss the whole project with him.

Experimental grafts of several varieties onto wild crab rootstocks have been tried with limited success. The lack of success may be due more to poor grafting technique than incompatibility of the variety and the stock. It will be interesting to see how the trees develop in time.

We are still trying to find Welsh cider apple varieties, so if those of you who live on the Welsh side of the Marches have ancient trees the variety of which is unknown but was used for cider making we would be interested to hear from you. A brief description including the following details would help:

- Tree size, shape and growth characteristics (upright, spreading, drooping.)
- Fruit maturing season.
- Colouring, shape and size of apple.
- Taste of fruit (e.g. sweet, bitter sweet, mild sharp, etc.)

Send the details to me at Apple Mead, Kinnersley, Hereford. HR3 6QB

Richard Cheshire

A poetic couplet which seems more apt here than in Literary Corner. Supplied by someone who said, 'from bitter' experience, it was very true, so, drink your cider first!

Beer after cider makes a good rider.
Cider after beer makes you feel queer.

Sheila Leitch

WASSAILING WITH LEOMINSTER MORRIS.

I didn't count but perhaps approaching a hundred brave souls, of all ages, accompanied Leominster Morris on their Twelfth Night Wassail. This was a new experience for although I knew something about Wassailing and had seen a number of Morris dancing sessions, I'd never seen the two put together.

A torch lit procession took us from the Lamb Inn, Stoke Prior, on a cold but fine evening, to a nearby orchard. And here the involved proceedings began. The word Wassail, I am informed, comes from the Anglo-Saxon 'wes hal', meaning 'to be whole', 'to be of good health' and it is this that is the key to what goes on. In effect the 'Wassailers' are thanking or appeasing the deity of apple trees (the good goddess Pomona) to ensure a successful crop the following year.

Much is involved in this invocation. A particular tree is chosen to represent all the others and it is offered cider-soaked toast (to attract birds - spirits of the trees), the branches and roots are sprinkled with cider and the tree is toasted with cider accompanied by a Wassail song. But this isn't all. Noisily, to drive away the evil spirits, the tree is struck (to waken all the trees up), a general commotion made and then off goes the shotgun! Thirteen fires are lit. The one in the centre, the 'Judas Fire', is lit and immediately put out, followed by the lighting of the twelve others in a circle around it.

By this time most people were glad to stand near a fire as it was a chilly night. Oh! I forgot to mention, that during the course of all this action, a fair amount of cider was offered and consumed. Now warmed outside and inside, the assembly wound its way back to the Lamb Inn for the performance of the Leominster Morris.

This, in part, took the form of a Mummers Play, also of Saxon origin, involving St George, (I think), another 'goodie', who is killed and resurrected by the doctor, and a 'baddie'. There are other characters but by now I was losing some of the plot. Needless to say much Morris dancing followed, with our own Webmaster, Richard Wheeler, in the thick of it. Do they ever miss with those sticks? It could be painful!

A very different way to spend Twelfth Night and a change from taking down the Christmas decorations. I recommend it.

(The details of the Leominster Morris 2006 Wassail, when known, will be found in the Events Diary on the MAN website. <http://www.marcherapple.net/diary.htm>).

Peter Austerfield

A HOME OF OUR OWN

We have a dream that one day MAN will own its own orchard where the rare varieties of apples and pears will have as secure a future as can reasonably be predicted. At the moment all our trees are planted on land belonging to other people. It was then the only way of saving the five hundred or so varieties and we are very grateful to our landowner friends for enabling us to get these established. However, no agreement can give absolute assurance of tenure and we propose to try to purchase a suitable area of ground, possibly between five and ten acres, where MAN can have a base for operations, plant a "back-up" nursery of rare apple and pear varieties and make the dream a reality. The land would need to be sited on the borders of Herefordshire/Shropshire/gBreconshire/Radnorshire in order to be convenient for most of the active members of the group. The soil must be well-drained, fertile and at a low altitude but preferably not in a 'frost pocket'. If any MAN member knows of a likely piece of ground which may possibly be for sale shortly, please let us know.

Chris Porter

COOKERY CORNER

At the recent Kington Show, where Tom Froggatt and I were on the MAN stand, we were close to Suzanne Davies, who was giving a cooking demonstration of recipes using seasonal and local produce. Some of us had first sampled her variation of Welsh cakes at the Blossom Day event put on by Glasu and found them very 'moreish'. We then met Suzanne again at Knighton Farmer's Market where we had been asked by Glasu to provide a supply of varieties suitable for different recipes. By Kington Show she was an old friend and, having been dispatched by Tom to join the queue and fetch him a cake, I asked her if we could include the recipe in the Newsletter. She was happy for it to be printed, so here you have a quick way of using up your apples.

TINKER CAKES

1 med. apple
3oz / 75g soft brown sugar
8oz / 225g plain flour
4oz / 110g butter
1 egg yolk
Half teaspoon cinnamon
A pinch of salt
Milk to mix and caster sugar to finish

Sieve flour and rub in cold butter until mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.
Add cinnamon and sugar. Grate peeled apple into the mixture.
Stir in egg yolk and make into stiff dough, add extra milk if needed.
On a floured surface roll out until quarter inch / 5 cm thick, cut to size with pastry cutter.
Heat griddle or heavy frying pan, (Base very slightly oiled)
Cook on a moderate heat for 3 minutes on one side and turn, cook until golden.
Sprinkle with caster sugar and serve.

Another one to try:-

BEETROOT AND APPLE PUREE

2 med. size beetroots, cooked & peeled.
2oz / 50g butter
4oz / 100g finely chopped onions
2 cooking apples peeled, cored and sliced
1 dessert spoon soft brown sugar
A pinch of salt
2 tblsp / 25ml red wine vinegar
Fresh herbs to garnish

Melt butter and gently saute onions until lightly coloured. Add apples, sugar, vinegar and salt to onions and simmer uncovered for 15-20 minutes until mixture is soft and tender.
Place apple mixture and cooked beetroot in blender and whiz until smooth.
Return to pan, heat and season as required.
Serve hot or cold with pork, sausages, ham or game.
Recipes compiled by Suzanne Davies of Cuisine a la Carte. Tel. 01544 267171

DELTIOLOGY AND APPLES

Webmasters are reputedly strange beings who get up to many strange activities. Your (*MAN's*) webmaster is a deltiologist. No, this is not an unusual technical relationship with computers but a more mundane activity, that of collecting postcards. What makes me admit to this hobby is that recently I was able to combine the two interests - apples and postcards. Berrington Hall (the National Trust property just North of Leominster on the A49) has published an oversized postcard showing six varieties of apples from their orchard of traditional varieties. The varieties are *Court of Wick*, *Crimson Queening*, *Ashmead's Kernel*, *Doctor Hares*, *Downton Pippin* and *Cats Head*. It is a very nice postcard although the size means it will not fit easily into my album. Postcards showing specific varieties are not that easy to come by, in fact postcards showing apples (or pears) are not that easy to come by [so I have an inexpensive hobby].

Postcards of the uses of apples are a bit more common especially postcards relating to cider making. Over the years many cider makers have issued postcards to advertise their wares. In the 1920s/ '30s Bulmers issued a series of 12 postcards showing the production process from

orchard through to bottled product. I have only just completed this set, finding number 6 at a postcard fair near Birmingham in June. I also have postcards from other cider makers such as Froggatts Cider and Perry Makers of Middleton, Tenbury (is our Treasurer, Tom Froggatt, related?), Gaymers, Henleys, Symonds and Whiteways. And just as the Woolhope Club went to Normandy to investigate and introduce French cider apples to Herefordshire I also have a few French cidre *cartes postale*.

So, if anybody could help me out with my collection...And next year, perhaps, an explanation of tegerology and apples (and pears).

Richard Wheeler

PRIVATE VISIT TO FRANK MATTHEWS' NURSERIES

The weather on July 7th was ideal for this long awaited visit to Berrington Court at Tenbury Wells. After a brief talk by Nick Dunn, a *MAN* member whose family still run this enterprise, we were transported to an orchard which was at the highest part of the 400 acre site. Here were trees of varieties being assessed and also 'mother trees' providing much of the budding material. We were then taken to other areas where trees were being prepared for budding, others were growing as 'maidens', some being grown on and others being trained as espaliers, cordons etc. One interesting sight was the production of the entire pear collection for Brogdale as the original trees were having to be removed. We were very interested in the root stock propagation area; hundreds, if not thousands, of stocks were growing in a mixture of soil and special sawdust.

On returning to the buildings complex, we were greeted with wonderful refreshments and our Chairman, Dr Peter Austerfield, thanked Mr Dunn and his staff for making the afternoon so enjoyable. A cheque for £65, part of the 'entrance money', was given to Mr Dunn for a charity donation. Will you organize another event?

Tom Froggatt

IDENTIFICATIONS

May we again remind members who wish to have apples identified that we require some information on season (early, mid or late), whether eater or cooker, approximate age of tree, under/over 50 years, and the address. We ask for three typical specimens of a variety, which must be in good condition. Identification sessions involve our 'team' members travelling up to 50 miles to gather round the table, so a charge of £1 per variety for members, and £3 for non-members is made. You may, of course, bring specimens to any of the apple events which we will be attending and so save high postage costs.

Last Autumn, a large collection of fruit was brought to us on a very busy Identification session we were running at Leominster Apple Fair. We did what we could, while the queue lengthened, and eventually took back a large number in an old wooden drawer which had to be carried through the town to the car park some distance away. Brian Stephens kindly offered to do this and explained that it was all part of a survey of some old orchards in the Wyre Forest in Worcestershire. Eventually, we worked our way through the bags and sent off the results. Brian then kindly presented us with a copy of the whole survey for the Library and gave permission for part of it to be put into the Newsletter. The work of shortening it was daunting, but a plea for assistance on this brought a floppy disc with the article below on it, for which we are most grateful. Graftwood has been sent on to Paul Davis from the tree which may be *Belle de Pontoise*. Unfortunately it has not borne any fruit this season for us to look at again.

Sheila Leitch

A SURVEY OF OLD CHERRY ORCHARDS

INTRODUCTION

English Nature has set up an important project to investigate the history, condition and wildlife of traditional orchards in England. Since the war most such orchards have gone. In the Bewdley area almost every dwelling was a smallholding with orchards making a distinct landscape. Most of these have gone. A DEFRA census suggests only 7,000 ha (17,298 acres) of traditional orchard habitat remain in England so it is important to rescue old fruit varieties and conserve habitats while some survive, more so since few of the survivors will be cherries. The objectives of the National survey are presented below.

- "To review existing information on the extent, distribution, biodiversity and management of traditional orchards in England, including their biodiversity value as related to individual orchards and to their role in the landscape.
- To review the current conservation status of orchards and the available mechanisms that could achieve their conservation, including an examination of the relationship between conservation of orchard biodiversity and other potential public benefits such as genetic conservation, resource protection and landscape character.
- To sample a number of representative orchards to assess their biodiversity interest, with particular reference to invertebrates, lower plants and fungi.
- From the information gained in the study produce recommendations for criteria which can be used to assess orchard quality and condition in relation to biodiversity and recommendations for management to conserve and enhance biodiversity, with, where appropriate, especial reference to modifications of current practices. "

As part of this nation-wide survey English Nature commissioned the "Wyre Forest Study Group" to make an intensive study of three old orchards near Bewdley and on the edge of Wyre Forest. The study group comprises about thirty amateur naturalists, each with a specialist interest in particular groups of plants or animals. The work continued throughout 2004 and a full report was completed by February 2005, a copy of which has been presented to the *MAN* library. The report addressed the third of the above objectives in particular. As regards the fourth objective, an inventory of each of the 260 trees was completed. A "Scale of Vitality" was suggested as a quick and simple means of describing and comparing orchards and this method is outlined below.

THE STUDY AREA

The site is a private farm within the Wyre Forest SSSI, with the three orchards in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.

The **Cherry Orchard** (4.7 acres) has 77 cherry trees mostly from the early 1930's with some surviving from an even earlier planting and a single Charles Ross and a Worcester Permain. (?1930's) **Old Orchard** (3.5 acres) has 28 large pear trees of at least four varieties (Perry?) which were already old in 1929, but planted after the farm was bought at the Crown Sale of 1870, since the area first appears as orchard on the first Ordnance Survey map of 1883. Of unknown age are 9 dying and mature apple trees, including; Lady's Finger of Hereford, Newton Wonder, King of the Pippins and Worcester Pearmain. **Far Orchard** (4.9 acres) was cleared from ancient Oak forest after the Crown Sale of 1870, but, although not part of the original farm, it appears included as orchard on the 1883 OS map. The present stand is believed to be of a mid-1930's planting, with, at present, 18 Damson trees (Shropshire Prune), 82 large cherry trees (varieties still to be determined) and 44 apples, Annie Elizabeth and Bramley. There are three Rival and one which was thought to be Belle de Pontoise.

The names of cherry varieties are tentative and identification notoriously difficult. The following are suggested for the Cherry Orchard; Bradbourne Black, Black Eagle, Black Elton, Black Oliver, Eagle, Early Rivers, Elton, Napoleon, Roundel, Smokey Dun.

THE SPECIES COLLECTIONS

The data below, extracted from the report, will suffice to summarise the mass of specialised detail and give some impression of the richness of this orchard habitat. The Far Orchard received most attention and the data reflect the extent and methods of sampling .

The report includes 1459 species, and identification is still continuing.

GROUP	No. OF SPECIES			TOTAL No. OF DIFFERENT SPECIES		
	CHERRY	OLD	FAR			
Higher plants	71	54	90	111		
Mosses and Liverworts	27	5	23	38		
Fungi	25	7	25	43		
Lichens	12	21	20	27		
Amphibia	0	0	2	2		
Birds	16	11	24	33		
Mammals	6	2	12	13		
Insects; Beetles	136	36	136	211		
True Flies	270	18	311	441		
True Bugs	38	5	45	57		
Bees Wasps Ants	54	4	70	100		
Butterflies and Moths	102	160	242	Butterfly 16	Moth	300
Earwigs	1	1	1	1		
Lacewings	1	0	4	4		
Dragonflies and Damselflies	1	1	2	3		
Spiders	28	3	20	37		
Others	13	0	15	22		
TOTALS	801	328	1042	1459 *		

* Note; Some species occur in one, two or three orchards.

A SCALE OF VITALITY

At the outset, each of the 260 trees was labelled in its row and column so that all records could be matched to the detailed inventory. Systematically describing large numbers of fruit trees raises a number of issues. There is a National scheme for describing and recording veteran trees such as single specimens of ancient oak or yew, but this method does not work so well with orchard trees for the purpose of this work, even though in terms of fruit trees those in the present study are ancient. One aspect of the "Veteran Tree Record" is that there is little concern with dead trees, also in contrast to the circumstances of wild native trees, those of cultivated orchard trees are markedly different and the purpose of the record is different.

A simple **Vitality Scale** has been introduced with '10' for healthy mature trees and '1' for final decay. Thus death comes in the middle of the scale, and the long continuous process of decline from maturity to death, breakdown and eventually final decay is included on a continuous scale.

The stages of the scale are as follows. In practice it was helpful to consider the trunk, branches and canopy with separate criteria, but common sense applied under the ten headings

is often sufficient to make a decision. Full leaf is needed, but the scale takes no account of blossom or fruit.

10	More or less healthy	5	Dead
9	Signs of decline	4	Breakdown
8	Definitely declining	3	Skeleton
7	Obviously dying	2	Rotten
6	More than half dead	1	Final remains

One can easily walk the orchard and allocate one of the scores to each tree. If the numbers in each category are added up, the number of trees which occur on each of the points of the scale immediately give an overall view of the orchard and reveals the health and stages of decay. For some surveys this may be sufficient, and permits comparison with other sites.

AN INVENTORY OF ALL TREES

However, for this study a single number does not give a complete picture of a tree. Several other details were recorded from each tree which could be useful in various contexts and these were coded and tabulated. Girth, height and spread reflect growth rates and response to planting distances; leaning, uprooted or propped trunks reflect wind and exposure; rotten, hollow or fissured trunks result from broken branches, water ingress and fungal attack, but afford insect habitats and nest sites; broken, cut and dead branches indicate health and damage perhaps from pruning or heavy crops. Bark is often detached following infestation of sapwood by insects or fungi. Later in the decay process, breakdown of heart-wood commences, but in other cases the heart rots first, leaving a living hollow tree. There is some evidence for a succession of insects and fungi using cell contents, cellulose or lignin as food, during the rotting process. Additionally notes on fungi, nests and epiphytes were included to complete the descriptions. Identifying fruit varieties, and determining blossoming and ripening times is ongoing.

CONCLUSIONS

A large number of insects and species of other groups depend upon dead wood for habitat and food supply, a few significant species it would seem, prefer fruit wood in particular. Of more importance is the species-rich habitat afforded by the semi-woodland of an old orchard. For the site described above, extensive oak woodland is nearby, but it can be seen that further away the traditional orchard would be an important refuge especially if the sward is managed appropriately.

Brian M Stephens,
Bewdley, Worcs.

WEBMASTER'S REPORT - www.marcherapple.net

MAN Email Addresses

As part of the *MAN*'s overall web presence it is possible to send emails to *MAN* addresses. For example, those of you with The Herefordshire Pomona CD will have seen that on every page there is the support address of *PomonaCDEditor@marcherapple.net*. Generally speaking the number of emails to all *MAN* addresses is low - and I have to deal with almost all of them. As well as genuine emails I get bothered both by computer viruses and by SPAM emails. To reduce the number that I have to deal with I have 'blackholed' a number of common email addresses. "Blackholed" means that emails to the specific addresses are automatically deleted and never get seen by anybody. The addresses currently 'blackholed' are *enquiries*, *info* and *sales*. (Which may explain why an email you sent has never been answered). I may add to this list if other generic email addresses receive too much junk mail.

The published *MAN* email addresses (for myself as Webmaster and for the Membership Secretary) are now also receiving an annoying amount of computer viruses as well as 'spam' email. Dealing with these is wasting of my time so I intend to stop this happening. In the not too distant future I will set up new email addresses and 'blackhole' the current addresses. Please use the email addresses published on the *MAN* website as these will always be kept current. Sending to an old email address will mean that the email is automatically deleted without being read. I will notify people who have sent me emails of the changes as well as having a changeover period when both the old and new addresses can be used.

Website Statistics

There was insufficient space in the Spring News Sheet for a Webmaster's report so the statistics in this report are in two parts. The first, held over from the News Sheet, is a summary of all of 2004 and the second covers the first six months of 2005.

Over all of 2004 26,098 pages were successfully requested from the website. That is an average of 71 a day with the peak day being September 20th with 211 requests. October was the peak month with 3,421 requests. Another statistic is that 7,340 'distinct hosts' were served. Whilst a smaller number, this is a better indicator of the actual number of visitors to the website (as we hope that visitors will look at more than one page during a visit). The most popular pages were the home page, the list of nurseries selling traditional varieties, the links list and the events diary. 28 pages were translated into other languages (of which 12 were translations into French). One picture has been 'hijacked' by an Irish graphic designer's bulletin board showing that we are now famous enough to suffer 'web piracy'. On a brighter note, at the end of the year we received our first commission payment from amazon.co.uk – for £33.99. This gave our treasurer, Tom Froggatt, a headache as it was an unreconciled credit to the Bank Account. Thanks to everybody who has bought from amazon and supported *MAN*.

By comparison, 21,374 pages were successfully requested from the website for the first six months of 2005. That is an average of 118 a day with the peak day being April 26 with 277 requests. April was also the busiest month with 4,604 requests. 6,163 'distinct hosts' were served. Some of the increased volumes must be due to the publicity about The Herefordshire Pomona CD – the new Herefordshire Pomona page received 1031 requests – but it is still only the fifth most popular page on the website. 62 pages were translated into foreign languages and this increase may also relate to CD. We now receive visitors from links on a number of additional sites including The Hereford Cider Museum and www.brownsnout.com (who have yet to learn how to break up their website into manageable sized portions, so be wary if visiting them). The Irish web pirates have gone away but I think we are now suffering from 'logo piracy' instead. If it does not become too time consuming I will do further investigations.

Richard Wheeler *MAN* Webmaster

LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT GRANTS – HEREFORDSHIRE

If you would like to restore an old orchard, or have a hedgerow in serious need of some management, then the Parks & Countryside Service may be able to help you. They now offer grants for projects that will provide significant improvements to the county's landscape. All applications for projects in the countryside that will benefit local distinctiveness, landscape or wildlife will be considered. The grants are aimed at small landowners, parish councils, community groups and other individuals as long as their land is in Herefordshire, the Herefordshire section of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or the whole of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Landscape

Enhancement Grants are non-statutory and are funded by Herefordshire Council, the Countryside Agency and Worcestershire County Council.

More information/the application form is available here to download.

Early application is recommended as funding is limited and all grant offers made must be claimed by 14th February 2006.

For further details or to request an electronic copy of the application form please contact: **James Bisset, Principal Countryside Officer**

email: countryside@herefordshire.gov.uk Or telephone the Parks & Countryside Service administration team on: 01568-798320 for a paper copy of the application-info pack.

FRUIT TREE KITS

If you live in Herefordshire and want to restore old standard orchards or are trying to trace traditional local varieties of apples, then the Herefordshire Council Parks, Countryside and Leisure Development Service's latest *Fruit Tree Kit Scheme* could be just what you were looking for. The aim of the scheme is to encourage people to plant old apple varieties, either to restore an old orchard, or in gardens to keep the budstock alive for propagation in the future.

Fruit trees are now available budded on to two different types of rootstock:

M25 vigorous rootstock which results in a standard orchard tree that could reach a height of approximately 20ft.

Varieties for 2005 are: *Edward VII*, *Gladstone*, *Lady Sudeley* and *Wyken Pippin*.

Semi-dwarf rootstock results in a smaller tree (approximately 6-10ft tall) suitable for planting in an urban garden – ensuring that this bud-stock will be available for future generations to use for propagation.

Varieties for 2005: *Beauty of Bath*, *Ellison's Orange*, *Herefordshire Russet* (Kept on from last year due to demand), *Lodgemore Nonpareil* and *Tydeman's Early Worcester*.

The closing date for the scheme and the tree collection weekend is the 26th/27th of November. Order forms should be available mid September - An electronic version of the form can be obtained by emailing countryside@herefordshire.gov.uk or call the Parks & Countryside Service administration team on: 01568 798320 for a paper copy

SALE OF GRAFTWOOD AND BUDWOOD

A few members take advantage of the offer to supply propagation material, and we hope to hear of successful results. MAN will continue this service. As stated last year, 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, to Mike Porter, Tel: 01874-730354, and budwood by 10th July to John Aldridge, Tel. 01432-820304. Prices per stick (10 - 12") to members, £1.25 (non-members, £2.50). Postage at cost, minimum £2.00. The scheme is geared to personal, not commercial, quantities. Apologies to members waiting for a list of varieties grown within the Network. This is taking longer to prepare than anticipated.

Sheila Leitch

MAN LIBRARY ADDITIONS

Perry Pears Published for The National Fruit and Cider Institute, Long Ashton by the University of Bristol, 1963. Influences on Apple Cultivar Diversification in 17th and 18th Century England. David Wides.

Wyre Forest Orchard Survey. Report commissioned by English Nature as part of an orchard study project. Editors Rosemary A Winnall, B.Ed. & Malcolm J Smart, BSc PhD FRES. A Somerset Pomona. The Cider Apples of Somerset. Liz Copas. Grenadier Publishing Ltd.

TRAINING COURSES

MAN is not organizing any training courses this year, but, as you will see from the events listed below, our members will be instructing at three courses run by the Blue Remembered Hills Project, in Shropshire, on Restorative pruning, Identification and Grafting.

Glasu, who have run similar courses in Powys, have nothing planned at present. Sally Shiels has just taken up the post of New Harvest Project Officer. Those who attended previous courses will be notified of any future ones, and adverts will also appear in the press. (County Times, Brecon & Radnor Express and possibly the Cambrian News.)

STOP PRESS. Her many friends, will be pleased to know that Becky Webb, who, until very recently was Programme Manager, and Cliff, her husband, are now the proud parents of a baby girl, Lydia, who finally put in her appearance late on Saturday, 24th September. A congratulatory card has been sent from *MAN*.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS FROM MID-OCTOBER, 2005

Saturday/Sunday, 15th/16th October. 'The Big Apple'. From 2.00pm–5.00pm. A harvest-time celebration of English apples and cider in the Herefordshire parishes of the Marcle Ridge. The venue will be Hellens Manor House, Much Marcle *MAN* will be there with a display of traditional varieties of apples and pears and will be identifying your samples.

MAN members might be particularly interested in the following events within the programme.

Hellens Great Barn (GR661333) A Feast of Apples – Displays of apples, including cider fruit, and perry pears. Tastings of dessert and culinary fruit. 'Jus' apple juice; perrymaking. Entry £1 (children free). 2.00pm to 4.45pm.

Tour of the house at 3.00pm (£5, or concessions)

The Wildlife Value of Orchards – a talk by James Marsden of English Nature.

Much Marcle Memorial Hall. 5.30pm. £3. Proceeds to Marcher Apple Network.

Think you know Herefordshire? Enjoy an evening of comedy as the Wye Theatre Company reveals some startlingly bizarre aspects of the life, language and lore of Herefordshire. In the Music Room at Hellens. 7.30pm. Tickets £5, from the Curator 01531-660504, or on the door. Proceeds to Marcher Apple Network.

The full programme is available on www.marcherapple.net/bigapple. For additional information, please phone Jackie Denman on 01531 670544

Saturday/Sunday, 15th/16th October. Cidermaking Festival at the Cider Museum, Ryelands Street, Hereford. For more details, contact the Cider Museum on 01432-354207.

Friday, 21st October. Apple Day. Events countrywide. Programme available from Common Ground. Send SAE to Common Ground, Gold Hill House, 21, High Street, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 8JE. Tel. 01747-850820. Or use the Web Site: www.commonground.org.uk

Saturday, 22nd October. Leominster Apple Fair. At Lion Ballroom, Broad Street. From 10.00am–4.00pm. *MAN* will be holding an identification session. For details, Tel. 01568-780886.

Saturday/Sunday, 22nd/23rd October. Apple Event at National Botanic Gardens of Wales, Llanarthne, Camarthenshire. Large display of apples, culinary, dessert and cider. For more details, Tel. 01588-674092.

Sunday, 23rd October. Marcher Apple Network's annual event to celebrate Apple Day. This year we will again be at the Baskerville Hall, Clyro. We hope members will make a day of it and the general public will come too and learn something of our aims. If you are able to come, try and bring some friends with you. There is plenty car parking space. The drive entrance is well signed, on the A438 Hereford to Brecon road, on the west side of the River Wye at NGR SO 208428.

The AGM, for members only, will be held from 11.30am–1.00pm. This should give time for discussion. It would be helpful, if you have points you wish to raise, or ideas for discussion, if you could drop a line in advance to one of the addresses at the end of the Newsletter. There will be no charge for members who attend the AGM. Lunches and bar snacks will be available for those who require them. Please book lunch in advance if possible. Tel. 01497-820033. The venue, which used to be known as Clyro Court, has beautiful grounds with a view of the Black Mountains. A lovely place to picnic.

The event rooms will then be open to the general public from 2.00pm–5.00 pm, to enjoy all the usual attractions associated with Apple Day, including a display of old apple and pear varieties and also a small informative display of cider apples. There will be apple and apple juice tastings, and bottles of single variety apple juice will be on sale, which make most acceptable Christmas presents. You are invited to contribute to, as well as purchase from, a produce stall. An identification panel will try to name your unknown fruit if you have failed to spot it on display. £1 per variety on the day. If it has to be taken away and done later, the charge is £3. (Bring at least 3 specimens of each variety please.) The Powys Orchard Doctors will be on hand to give advice about orchard fruit, tree management and any other issues you may wish to raise. The Powys Orchard Map needs more pins! Come and record your orchard on the map and tell them all about it or contact them on theorcharddoctor@tiscali.co.uk

Paul Davis will be there, too, giving advice on matters pomological and will be bringing some unusual varieties for sale, in pots. (See the list at end of Newsletter.) If you want to reserve any of these, or order other varieties, please contact him in advance and he can send you a list of what he has available, and on which rootstocks. You can then order in advance and collect at this event. Tel. 01558-668744. applewise@tiscali.co.uk

Tea and home-made refreshments with an apple theme will be on sale at Baskerville Hall. Again, offers of some help at the event, to give a break to our helpers on duty all day, would be much appreciated. Admission at the door, Single, £3, Family, £6.

Wednesday, 2nd November. Restorative Pruning Course to be held near Bishops Castle, Shropshire, from 10.30am–1.30pm and 2.00pm–4.30 pm with Paul Davis, arranged by The Blue Remembered Hill Project. A few places still available. Details from John Tucker. Tel. 01588-674092.

Tuesday, 8th November. Two Identification courses, morning and afternoon at The Secret Hills Discovery Centre, near Craven Arms, with Mike & Chris Porter. Now fully booked.

Tuesday, 21st February, 2006. Two grafting courses, morning and afternoon, with Paul Davis at The Secret Hills Discovery Centre, near Craven Arms. Limited numbers. Lunches can be bought

there. Bookings through John Tucker, Blue Remembered Hills Project. Tel.01588-674092.

Paul Davis will try to bring the following trees to *MAN's* Apple Event at Baskerville Hall Hotel on Sunday, 23rd October. They are unusual varieties he has grafted for our nursery orchards, some from Brogdale graftwood, and of which he now has a few spares.

M26

Dwarfing
8-10ft (2.4–3 m)

Arthur Turner
Downton Pippin
Forester
Glasbury
Herefordshire Pomeroy
Hoary Morning
Hope Cottage Seedling
Lady's Finger of Hereford
May Queen
Pitmaston Russet Nonpareil

MM106

Semi-dwarfing
9 -11ft (2.7–3.5m)

Baker's Delicious
Bardsey
Brith Mawr
Burrknot
Cissy
Edward VII
Glasbury
Gloria Mundi
Morgan Sweet
Newland Sack
Puckrupp Pippin
Rev. W Wilks
Tillington Court

MM111

Vigorous
10-12ft (3–3.7m)

Dr Hare's
Duchess's Favourite
Green Purnell
Herefordshire Pomeroy
Hope Cottage Seedling
Hunt's Duke of Gloucester
Lodgemore Nonpareil
Monmouth Green
Stoke Edith Pippin
Wormsley Pippin

SPRING NEWS SHEET & NEWSLETTER NO 12

Any items for the Spring News Sheet would be welcome, to arrive before March. Brief updates and advance notice of summer events etc can be included on this double-sided A4 sheet. Material for Newsletter No.12, preferably typed, as opposed to hand-written, or on IBM compatible floppy disc, (suitable for Word), will be welcomed throughout the year, but please send articles, or at least an indication of length, to the Editor, Sheila Leitch, by the 1st of June, 2006, at the latest. Dates of events and small news items and 'fillers' can be accepted until the end of July. If you have access to email, please send your article as a Word attachment with the letters *MAN* in the title to my neighbour: travers_b@hotmail.co.uk Apologies for the lateness of this issue, due to various reasons. We hope that next year's issue will be early enough to list all the events before they take place, so PLEASE send in event details and articles in time.

Grateful thanks to the team of keen-eyed proofreaders. We should point out that the views expressed in the Newsletter are those of individual contributors, not necessarily those of *MAN*.

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MAN is grateful to Mr. James Bailey, of 'Compuprint', Kilpeck, another of our members, for printing this Newsletter.

The Editor has been called upon to publish the following article.

PROTECTING OUR ORCHARDS AND APPLES, ROMAN STYLE.

Following his new translation of Virgil's 'Georgics' (see Newsletter No 8, 2002) my good friend and classics enthusiast Jonathan Trench has sent me a version of some of the verses of the Priapea and the Appendix Vergiliana. The former, an ancient collection of about eighty anonymous pieces, is concerned, among other things, with protecting orchards. The latter, often attributed to Virgil, though the attribution is now doubted, also involves Priapus and contains some wonderful descriptions of rural life and the seasons seen through his eyes. For this issue I will touch on the Priapea and some verses from the Catalepton contained in the 'Appendix'

Priapus is the Greek and Roman god of procreation. The manifestation of him that is celebrated in the following verses is that of the custodian god of gardens and orchards. Crude images of him were set up to deter people who might be tempted to steal fruit or other produce, but he was also there to promote fertility. His conspicuous erect phallus was a fertility symbol as well as a weapon. In his hand he held a sickle or a pruning-hook. He wore a garland and received offerings from his owner/priest. Women would make an invocation to Priapus, leaving gifts and notes to ensure conception.

It is very likely that warning notices to scrumpers were actually displayed next to images of the god. And no doubt they would be in some kind of verse. They were often bawdy, smutty, graphic and funny but some were of a more romantic nature. The verses below are a selection of the more gentle kind.

Some elegiacs from the Priapea.

(A verse form consisting of a couplet, the first member being a hexameter, the second a pentameter).

Typically smutty.

This is the deal Priapus proposed to the boy come ascrumping.
More than one couplet is not needed to state it in full.

You can have my harvest of apples, the lot of them, dear boy.
Just let me have those
two that your garden has grown.

More romantic.

Write on an apple "I love you", whoever takes it and bites in
's bound to live up to those words,
finds she's engaged to be yours

This example, in hendecasyllables (verses of eleven syllables), has an apple tree defending itself, blaming wretched poets!

Not fair, farmer, complaining, after years of
first class crops, that the last two haven't matched up!
No, I'm not getting old: you've got it wrong there.
Hail-storms aren't to be blamed for losses, either.
Late frosts haven't been nipping tender fruit buds.

Wind, rain, drought — though I grumble — haven't harmed me.
Nor have starlings, the thieving daws, the old crow.
Geese keep close to the pond, and thirsty ravens,
they're not going to cause an apple headaches.

No, my problem's the weight of awful poems
pinned where fruit should be hanging on my branches.

Some verses from the Catalepton (literally meaning 'small change' or 'petty cash').

In this selection of verses from three poems, Priapus is speaking and sometimes indicating what his job is.

A verse in hexameters.

Spring brings roses, in summer it's corn. In autumn I'm given apples.
Winter's a worry, though, a beast of a season.
Frankly I hate the cold, and I'm scared. I'm a god, but I'm timber.
Can't be sure that no-good farmer won't have me for firewood!

Two verses, this time in pure iambic trimeters (a rare meter).

Hello! I'm here, this dried-out chunk of poplar-wood.
It's me, Sir Passer-by, the countryman has carved
to guard the little croft, in front and to your left,
my humble master's cottage with his garden plot,
and keep them safe from harm and wicked thieving hands.....

Accordingly, Sir Traveller, you'll be in awe
of my divinity, and keep your hands to yourself.
You'd better, or you'll get impaled on my great *****!
"Not likely", did you say? But look, my master's here.
He'll tear with his strong arm my phallus off
To make a club for his right hand to beat you with.

Finally some verses in Priapics, also a pretty rare metre.

Seasoned oak, I became a god,
 crudely carved with a bill-hook.
Now I'm guarding a little farm
 tucked away in the marshes.
See its thatching of reed and sedge
 Withy-clamped into bundles.
Year on year, like a foster nurse,
 I've been building their wealth up,
my return for the owners' care.

Both the man and his grown son
call me god as they're duty-bound,

cutting back — it's the young one's job -
grass and bramble, to clean the shrine,
while the dad in his ham hand
offers regular dainties up..

Honoured thus, I'm obliged to be
guard of all of my master's
vines and all of this garden-ground.

So then, boys, keep your hands off.
Next-door's god is as rich as he's
lazy. Look at this path here.
Where it leads you can scrump for free!

Verses and notes on the Priapea and Appendix Vergiliana reproduced by kind permission
of Jonathan Trench from his translation dedicated to the Marcher Apple Network, 2003.

Selected with some additional commentary by Peter Austerfield.

with thanks to Dave Burrige.

Sunday , 28th August. Black Mountains festival, Talgarth. *MAN* will have a small display of early season apples with some to taste and buy. We shall be in the Market from 12.00am – 5.00pm.

Saturday, 10th September. Kington Show. *MAN* will have a small display of early season apples and will be running an identification service from 12.00am –5.00pm.

Sunday, 11th September. Entertainment under the Apples at Penlanole. From 2.00pm-6.00pm. On the A470 between Newbridge-on-Wye and Rhayader, just south of the Vulcan Arms. For further details Tel. 01597-811487.

Saturday/Sunday,17th /18th September. Abergavenny Food Festival to be held in the Market Hall and the Castle. A celebration of food of the Marches. Farmers' Market with local specialist food producers selling delicacies. *MAN* will be at the Castle on both days where there will be a display of fruit, an identification service and book sales. Our member, Colin Gardiner, will be in the Market Hall where he will be selling a selection of his certified organic Gellirhyd Apple Juice. Further details from Julia French. Tel. 01873-851643.

Saturday/Sunday, 24th/25th September. Malvern Autumn Show at the Three Counties Showground, Malvern. *MAN* will have a fruit display, including some apples from Berrington Hall and will be offering an identification service.

Saturday/Sunday, 24th/25th September. Apple weekend at Berrington Hall, near Leominster. Details from the Office, Tel. 01568-615721.

NATIONAL ORCHARD FORUM

Linda Blenkinship, Secretary of The National Orchard Forum, has produced a useful list of Orchard Groups and this will be constantly updated. If you know of a local group which is not listed, please let Linda know.

GAZETTEER OF GROUPS 2005.

No.	NAME OF GROUP
1	CENTRAL CORE NETWORK, SCOTLAND
2	CHESHIRE ORCHARD PROJECT
3	CHICHESTER DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMUNITY ORCHARDS
4	CORNWALL COUNTY COUNCIL ORCHARD GROUP
5	EAST OF ENGLAND APPLES & ORCHARDS PROJECT
6	GLOUCESTER ORCHARD GROUP
7	KENTISH COBNUTS ASSOCIATION
8	MARCHER APPLE NETWORK
9	NORTHERN FRUIT GROUP
10	ORCHARD LINK – TOTNES, DEVON
11	ORCHARDS LIVE – NORTH DEVON
12	SHROPSHIRE APPLE TRUST
13	SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL COUNTRYSIDE GROUP
14	STAFFORDSHIRE WILD LIFE TRUST
15	SYMONDSBURY APPLE PROJECT – DORSET
16	TIDNOR WOOD ORCHARD TRUST
17	WESTMORLAND DAMSON ASSOCIATION
18	WORCESTER ORCHARD WORKERS

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