

MARCHER APPLE NETWORK

RHWYDWAITH AFALAU' R GORORAU

Newsletter No 12

Non-Members £2

Summer 2006

CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR

As I survey the *MAN* year I begin to realise that I could fill most of the Newsletter with just the Chairman's Report. I will, however, spare members. Fortunately other contributors lighten the burden and I will try to summarise just some of our activities.

Between the Committee and its sub-committees and our many contacts, much happens over the course of a year and it is this that makes *MAN* a successful and much respected group. Also the support we receive from members, from 'hands-on' to a few words of encouragement, is much appreciated.

The series of Forward Planning seminars continue. One outcome this year was the realisation of the need for a secretary/events organiser to support the ever widening work of the Committee. I am delighted to announce that we have appointed Mrs Marie Ward to the post and she attended her first meeting in May. Marie will be working part-time with the Committee and its officers and she has computer-based skills that will be much used in the future.

We continue to develop our research and publication activities. Members will be aware of our first CD, 'The Herefordshire Pomona' which has received considerable praise and is now available (thanks to our Webmaster) on e-Bay! The CD was followed by a pack of postcards based on the Pomona.

The production of CD2, as it is referred to, or 'Vintage Fruit', is now well under way thanks to Richard Wheeler. The CD brings together some of the classic illustrations and text of cider apples and perry pears including Thomas Andrew Knight's 'Pomona Herefordiensis'. We have been fortunate to receive, mainly through the efforts of Tony Malpas, our Vice-Chairman, Lottery funding of £5,000 as well as a personal donation from Keith Knight of Knight's Cider and a donation from Bulmers PLC. We are very grateful to them all.

As well as a second CD, a major new venture is the production of 'A Welsh Marches Pomona'. This is designed to be in book form and we believe that it will not only be a contribution to pomology but continue a tradition of Pomonas published in the area. It is a three year project and Dr Margaret Gill, the artist, has already produced some fine watercolours of blossom. This autumn she will paint a selection of fruit from the thirty or so chosen. Mike Porter has had the responsibility of selecting the fruit and of ferrying blossom to Dr Gill in peak condition – no easy task.

One issue that has caused considerable debate and some polarity of opinion is that of the future of the National Fruit Collection at Brogdale. Two discussion papers from DEFRA outlined a possible future including reducing the living and very visible collection and relying in part on cryopreservation. At worst one has a vision of rows of flasks of liquid nitrogen containing

dormant vegetative buds in a laboratory. Most people did not think that this was a fair swap. I wrote to DEFRA with the support of the committee outlining our reservations. I was told that these would be considered in due course. Some things in the document were worthy of support including the development of a molecular/DNA-based reference collection with which unknown fruit could be compared.

The involvement of members is something we encourage and following last years successful events at the Cider Museum and Frank P Matthews Ltd, we are planning others for the coming autumn. These could include a cider event, an orchard visit and a cookery class. Members will receive details later.

We are also publishing the dates of orchard pruning sessions well in advance this year. Given our climate this might be problematical but we are keen to let members local to the orchards have advance notice and encourage them to join us. We are grateful for all the help we received last year.

Through the efforts of Richard Wheeler, our Webmaster, we are about to move further into the information technology age. An IT company with Government funding is able to provide computers and training for small organisations such as MAN. This will allow committee members to communicate more readily electronically as well as use laptop computers in the field. Training will take place in the summer 2006.

We have mentioned before *MAN's* vision of owning its own orchard. Our Treasurer has done a lot of work here looking at suitable plots and even attending auctions. As is usually the case, small plots, say up to four acres, always fetch more than large ones on a per acre basis and so far prices have been beyond our resources. We have, however, set up a modest fund for land purchase in the hope that this will grow over time. An alternative might be a long lease agreement or land donated under some arrangement by a benefactor. We live in hope.

Again we have maintained our national and international links through the National Orchard Forum and our website. Of more local concerns we maintain our connection with the orchard project at Turnastone Court farm, Herefordshire, and with the Blue Remembered Hills project in Shropshire where we have been involved in setting up a 'Reference Orchard Collection' of local apples at the Discovery Centre, Craven Arms. We also have close connections with GLASU, the Leader + project for Powys and with the Countryside Commission for Wales. Two committee members sit on the Advisory Committee of the 'Apples and Pears Past' project based at the Cider Museum, Hereford. This project has received a major Lottery award and is now under way following the appointment of an experienced team to see it through. We wish them well and give our support.

Peter Austerfield.

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

Black Mountains Festival, Talgarth, Breconshire, on Sunday, 28th August. Our stand in the cattle market at this very enjoyable festival attracted a number of visitors and old friends, with the children enjoying 'tasters' of some early apple varieties.

Penlanole, near Rhayader. Apple Event on Sunday, 11th September. Paul Davis had a stand and the Orchard Doctors were there, on their first official event, with a display of unusual apple varieties, and were kept busy answering many questions and adding more Powys orchards to

their map. The theme for this event was Trafalgar Day and, during the lovely sunny afternoon, the local children did a re-enactment of the battle, each one wearing a cardboard ship and firing 'cannon balls' at the enemy. Nelson, in his tricorne hat, died dramatically. The vicar then read a moving tribute to the fallen, together with all the names of the men from Breconshire, Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire who had taken part in the battle which led to victory but also the death of Admiral Nelson. All the proceeds of the event went to local charities.

Sheila Leitch

2006 Royal Welsh Smallholder & Garden Festival.

Once again, *MAN* had a stand at the Smallholder Show held at Llanelwedd on May 20th/21st. The weather was changeable on the Saturday and dreadful on Sunday, with lower sales reflecting the fact that many people went home early. *MAN* shared a stand with Paul Davis who had brought several eye-catching container-grown trees, in blossom, demonstrating different growth on various rootstocks, which aroused considerable interest. We had the text of some of the Orchard Doctors' new advisory leaflets available as handouts and these proved to be very popular. Over the two days many questions were asked and some books were sold. On the Saturday, Tom was asked if we knew of the Dolafallan apple from the Elan Valley area. We will chase this up and hope it may still be found on the farm of that name adjacent to Afon Elan, the tributary of the River Wye which flows from the dam of the Caban Coch reservoir. Do any of our Breconshire or Radnorshire members know of this variety?

Tom Froggatt and Sheila Leitch

'Walk Your Talk' Tour

Since our committee enlarged beyond the size of the dining room table at Wye View, we have been holding our meetings at the nearby Hollybush Inn. At a recent meeting we learned that a musical event was coming up soon, celebrating Johnnie Appleseed's work in America, planting and tending appletrees along the Ohio River. Four folk musicians known as Nimomastic were undertaking a 600 mile walk, starting at Brighton and lasting two months, and playing a gig each evening. To quote from their website, 'the aim is to highlight environmental issues and inspire individuals to make little adjustments to their lifestyles that can help reduce the potential of an overwhelming environmental crisis.' Taking their lead from the old American folk hero, Johnnie Appleseed, wild flower seeds and appleseeds would be distributed to bring home the message of conservation. Their route included part of Offa's Dyke, The Peak District and The Pennine Way. We decided to donate an apple tree for planting in the garden there and Mike Porter obtained a Landore, known in the Wye Valley area, as Monmouth Green, from Paul Davis. I went along to the evening and met the musicians, by this time reduced to two. They had walked over the Black Mountains from Pandy, following the Offa's Dyke path. It had been a very wet and windy day but, after a rest and a good meal, they played and sang very entertainingly, to a supportive audience, impressed by their dedication to their cause. The lightweight instruments they played were a traveller's guitar, popular in Australia and with a very narrow body, a rectangular wooden box, which apparently was an Italian drum, which served as a seat and was used as a percussion instrument, and a mandolin.

The tree has now been planted alongside a large stone and will be a feature of the redesigned garden. I was asked to say a few words about the Marcher Apple Network, and explained that, in Britain, apples were nearly always perpetuated by grafting, not grown from seed! We hope we will not be faced with trying to identify fruit from any of these 'wildings' which may result from the tour.

Sheila Leitch

ORCHARDS AND DOCTORS IN POWYS - Update From Glasu

Glasu is the LEADER+ Programme in Powys. Since 2004, we have run a project to raise awareness of the orchards in Powys in order to support their economic regeneration. This project is called Perllanau Powys (Orchards in Powys). Members from the Marcher Apple Network sit on the steering group, as do private orchard owners and biodiversity officers from Powys County Council and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

Glasu has appointed consultants to act as Orchard Doctors to provide support to orchard owners in Powys. The work of the Orchard Doctors, Liz and Tony Gentil, has been underway since the summer of 2005. They are receiving, on average, two or three emails or telephone calls a week from people wanting technical help and advice. Clear patterns are starting emerge in terms of the help that people need. There is obviously great interest in orchards and fruit growing and a tremendous desire for clear information. Most people seem to find text book information complicated, confusing and conflicting. This has come out strongly on the two 'Introduction to Orchards' training days held so far, one at Penpont in the south of the county and the other at Powis Castle in the north. Due to popular demand, Glasu is planning to hold further training days this year, probably on pruning.



Tony and Liz Gentil, the Orchard Doctors, inspect an old unidentified apple tree at Powis Castle with Head Gardener, Peter Hall.

Tony and Liz have started their programme of thirty orchard surveys in Powys and these are throwing up some fascinating information. The surveys focus on issues of orchard management and replanting, but each site is different and reveals unexpected delights. At one site, an historic walled garden, although the wall fruit was no longer there, most of the original lead labels were still in place. Liz says, "This gives a fascinating insight into what the walled garden might have looked like a hundred and fifty years ago. It is very unusual to find original labels still in place. Normally the best you can hope for is to invite a group of metal detecting enthusiasts to survey the bottom of the walls in the hope of turning up old metal labels." Another orchard survey revealed a wild flower meadow of superb quality with green-winged orchids and yellow rattle, the ground flora perhaps undisturbed since mediaeval times.

Another consultant is currently undertaking a study on behalf of Glasu to look into the economic potential of Local Orchard Fruits in Powys. The work is investigating two things:

1. The likely demand from local box schemes, school tuck shops and independent greengrocers.
2. The capacity of growers within Powys to meet any demand identified.

The work is being carried out on behalf of Glasu by Richard Pitts, a *MAN* member, who said that, "Whilst the work is still ongoing it seems clear that there is high demand for local orchard products with a number of clear opportunities emerging that will be well worth exploring. The challenge will lie in finding ways to help the small scale growers to make the most of these opportunities". It is hoped that the report will be completed by the end of August 2006.

Orchard owners in Powys are eligible for free technical advice by telephone (01270 780828) or email (theorcharddoctor@tiscali.co.uk) from the Orchard Doctor. Some growers might also be interested in a new Glasu 'doctor' – the Veg Doctor, Mike Westrip. Mike has been appointed to another project to undertake a similar role to the Orchard Doctor. The Veg Doctor can give expert advice to people growing vegetables in Powys for sale to the public – whether through a farm shop, farmers' market or box scheme. The Veg Doctor can be contacted by email (vegdoctor@hotmail.co.uk) or by telephone (01874 636101). Glasu would also be interested in hearing from you if you have an innovative idea to add value to local orchard fruit produce in Powys. For more information on the Perllanau Powys Project, please contact Sally Shiels, New Harvest Project Officer for Glasu, on 01982 552224 or email sally.shiels@powys.gov.uk

NATIONAL BEEKEEPERS' CONVENTION

At the kind invitation of the organisers I attended this convention at Stoneleigh on April 16th. Helped by a *MAN* Life Member, John Narramore, a beekeeper from Birmingham, the stall was set up by 9am. There were the display boards, a large selection of books, cards and prints and a few blossoms from pears, damsons and plums. I was not able to repeat the display of 2 years ago, when blossoms of 18 different apple varieties were mounted in oasis to illustrate the different flowering periods. Will Spring be earlier next year or will the convention be later? Watch the Spring News Sheet.

As always, we had a lot of interest in what *MAN* was doing, considerable verbal support, but no new members on the day. Our sales were just over £350. Thank you, John, for your help.

Tom Froggatt

ORCHARD GLEANINGS 2006 THE LOST APPLES OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE POMONA

This time the gleanings are from archives not orchards. As we begin assembling material for our Welsh Marches Pomona, it seemed appropriate to look at some aspects of a similar enterprise undertaken in Victorian times.

Those of you who have a copy of The Herefordshire Pomona CD will have read the scholarly account by Tony Malpas, outlining the events leading to the publication of The Herefordshire Pomona by the Woolhope Field Naturalists' Club. Originally it was intended to include only the apples and pears of Herefordshire, but by the time Part 3 was issued in 1880, the project had been extended to embrace "The principal Apples and Pears which are grown in various parts of the country." This was an incredibly ambitious undertaking. After seven parts had been issued, they were bound, together with a large amount of introductory material, to form the two volumes of The Herefordshire Pomona published in 1885. Dr. Robert Hogg, pre-eminent pomologist of that era, and author of The Fruit Manual, and Dr. Henry Graves Bull, a leading light of the Woolhope Club, were appointed editors. The illustrations, which are an outstanding feature of this magnificent work, were reproduced by chromolithography from watercolour paintings by Alice Blanche Ellis and Edith Elizabeth Bull, daughter of Dr. Bull.

The original paintings are now on exhibition in the Cider Museum in Hereford. About 260 varieties of apples are described and illustrated in The Herefordshire Pomona, but the criteria for their selection appear somewhat obscure, and there is some inconsistency in the process. Why were certain well known varieties such as Scotch Bridget, Downton Pippin, Duke of Devonshire, Flower of Kent, Forester and Plum Apple left out? These varieties all featured in the 5th edition of Hogg's Fruit Manual (1884). Furthermore Scotch Bridget, Downton Pippin and Forester are said to have been widely planted in the Welsh Marches. In Volume 1, Downton Pippin is mentioned in a list of cider apples that were entitled to the premium offered by the Agricultural Society of Herefordshire, but a detailed, illustrated account of the variety is not provided. A sister seedling, the small yellow Grange Apple, also raised by Thomas Andrew Knight in 1792 from a cross between Orange Pippin and Golden Pippin, is given the full treatment.

However, what intrigued me much more on a recent visit to the exhibition, was the comparatively large number of varieties which, although illustrated by paintings, were not featured in the published Pomona. This group of about 70 apples includes both local and widespread varieties and, as before, the majority are described in The Fruit Manual. Some possible reasons for their apparent omission from the Pomona are considered here.

Synonyms

Several of the illustrated varieties are present, but masquerading under alternative names. King of Pippins, which probably has more synonyms than any other variety, is shown as Golden Winter Pearmain, Nelson's Glory is present as Warner's King, Kentish Pippin is shown as Colonel Vaughan. There is still confusion over the identification of some of the Quoinings, an ancient group of intensely fragrant, highly coloured, angular apples. During preparations for publication the editors of the Pomona decided to submerge Summer Quoining under Crimson Quoining, with Red, Scarlet and Herefordshire as additional epithets. The Summer Quoining illustrated in the exhibition looks like the quoining that we encounter most frequently in traditional farm orchards in the Welsh Marches. It is morphologically similar to Crimson Quoining, but skin-colour, scent and taste are distinctly different. In his Fruit Manual Hogg describes a Gloucester Quoining which, in most ways, appears to offer a better match.

Changes in editorial policy

At some stage during the project it appears to have been decided to treat some of the local cider apples differently. Although illustrations had been prepared, several cider apples, such as Black Wilding, Bloody Turk, Chaxhill Red and Woodcock, were relegated to a "List of Other Cider Apples", with short notes but no illustrations. These were varieties which had been exhibited at the Hereford Apple Shows between 1878 and 1883. Ultimately the list extended to 135 sorts, and included pot fruit as well as cider apples. It was admitted that comparatively little was known about some of them: "Their merits for the most part have not been accurately ascertained, though some of them are of excellent quality."

Dubious Representations

Some exclusions from the published pomona may have occurred because it was considered that certain illustrations were not accurate representations of those particular varieties. The apple selected for painting may not have been typical, or characteristic features had not been clearly depicted. In the case of Downton Nonpareil, the wrong apple had been supplied to the artist: "Another of Knight's seedlings" is pencilled beside the illustration! The painting of Onisbury Pippin (another of Knight's seedlings) does not give a very accurate impression of the variety to which we now give that name. Having formed part of a prize-winning display by Tillington Nurseries, at

the 1883 Apple and Pear Exhibition, Onibury Pippin was commended in the Woolhope Club report as “a perfect model for a dessert apple from its handsome neat looks, golden colour, and lasting properties.” Unfortunately The Fruit Manual does not include it.

Difficulty in authenticating names

Experiences at countless fruit shows and identification sessions have demonstrated how difficult it can be to put names to some specimens. There are trees growing in our museum orchards which we have been trying to identify for almost a decade; their fruit has defied the best efforts of the experts at Brogdale and the RHS. Doubts over the authentication of some of the varieties figured in the paintings such as Bijou, Chenango Strawberry, Jacques Lebel, and Tewkesbury Baron might have resulted in their omission. As none of these are recorded in the Fruit Manual, Hogg may have been unfamiliar with their characteristics. Some fascinating local names crop up among the paintings. Searches for varieties like Cherry Chock and Powys Castle Seedling have been unproductive. Lily Apple might be a synonym for Devonshire Buckland, but the latter is not included in the Pomona. Red Dick and Five Fingers are old varieties mentioned in a footnote to the Costard entry in The Herefordshire Pomona. “Scattered through the farmhouses of Herefordshire several varieties of apples are to be found, which seem to owe their origin to the old Costard.” Five Fingers, as John Aldridge enthusiastically pointed out at the CD Launch, looks very like a variety which still survives in John Tedstone’s orchard at Kingsland. John Tedstone’s ‘Big Red’, as it has been nicknamed, may indeed correspond to Five Fingers, but it is also very similar to another old variety called The Friar, formerly grown in the north-west of Herefordshire. According to Pomona Herefordiensis (1811), “The Friar probably derives its name from some imagined resemblance between its colour, and that of the countenance of a well fed ecclesiastic.” Provoking more confusion, Knight adds in a delicate footnote “It (The Friar) is sometimes erroneously called the “Red Richard”, with which variety it agrees in colour only.”

By this stage the reasons for relegating 135 varieties to an appendix will be apparent! These problems underline the enormous value of fully detailed descriptions, such as those achieved in ‘The Herefordshire Pomona’. No doubt most, if not all, of the problems encountered by the Woolhope Club will be lying in ambush for *MAN* as we proceed with our new venture.

Mike Porter

NEWS OF OUR ORCHARDS

CROFT PENDARREN, Llangynidr, Breconshire. See Chris Porter’s article on Page 15.

DONNINGTON, near Ledbury, Herefordshire.

Our collection of standard cultivars continues to progress. I thought it would be informative to describe those varieties, which are sporting a little fruit this season; all are documented in the literature. I hope those readers to whom they are already familiar will bear with me.

Adam’s Pearmain. Planted and fruiting on several local sites. Although introduced as ‘Norfolk Pippin’ by one Robert Adams in 1828, Dr.Hogg’s 1884 Fruit Manual classes it as a Herefordshire apple where he had evidently seen it exhibited as ‘Hanging Pearmain’. It is characterised by the dry, nutty flavour of the russets and keeps until March, a naturally shaped spreading tree.

Pomona Plate XIV (BHNT)

Improved Ashmead’s Kernel. Its origin is obscure but it provides us with a good reason never to place the word ‘improved’ before the name of an extant variety. Our tree was propagated from

Brogdale material and the fruits obtained so far have been distinct from Ashmead's Kernel, a variety which was raised by a Gloucester physician in about 1700. Although the Ashmead's Kernel at Donnington has fruited poorly, we should still have the opportunity to make further comparison as many of us in *MAN* grow this very fine English variety.

Pomona Plate XIV (BHNT)

Betty Geeson. Betty Geeson is said to have been an elderly lady who raised this variety near Belvoir, Yorkshire (although some say Worcestershire) in the 19th Century. The tree is said to fruit well and keep well and is compact enough for bush culture. The recently planted tree on the site already bears some fruit but this looks too near the base to make it this season.

Pomona Plate LXVII

Court of Wick. Originated in Somerset, with a richness in flavour comparable to the (historic) Golden Pippin from which it is probably descended. In season from November to March.

Pomona Plate III (BHNT)

Epicure. Raised early in the 20th Century by Laxtons of Bedford, cross-pollinated between 'Wealthy' and 'Cox'. A second early dessert apple of good quality having, however, a tendency to over crop.

Golden Noble. Rated as a fine, dependable and well flavoured culinary apple, discovered growing in an old orchard by the Gardener to Sir Thomas Hare of Stowe Hall, Bownham, Norfolk and introduced in 1820. Keeps until Christmas.

Pomona Plate XXIII (BHNT)

Hambledon Deux Ans. An old dual purpose, Hampshire apple dating from about 1750, its name denoting an exceptional keeping quality.

Pomona Plate LXXI

Hanwell Souring. A culinary apple of strong acidity, hence retentive of flavour until the spring. Hanwell is near Banbury, which locates the variety firmly in Middle England. The propagating material came to us via a member, Mr. Wilkins of Ilmington.

Pomona Plate XVII

Hawthornden. This variety was raised at the "romantic spot" near Edinburgh where Drummond the poet was born. It has been a popular autumn culinary apple in the past. We took wood from an old tree at Norton Canon, but now we are having second thoughts that it may, in fact, be King's Acre Bountiful. We are pleased that it is cropping well this year, which should enable us to make a decision.

Pomona Plate VI

Kidd's Orange Red. Raised in 1924 at Greytown, New Zealand, from 'Cox' and 'Delicious'. Highly rated as a dessert apple, although prone to heavy russetting. Keeps until January.

May Queen Raised in Worcester in the late 19th Century, a late season dessert apple and so far, the most consistently fruiting variety on our site.

(BHNT)

Reinette de Canada. In season from November to April, possibly the parent of the 'Ribston Pippin'.

Pomona Plate LXV

Ribston Pippin. A high quality autumn dessert apple which is said to have been raised from seed brought from Rouen at Knaresborough, Yorkshire at the end of the 17th Century.

Pomona Plate XXV (BHNT)

Sam's Crab. Well known in Herefordshire as an early dessert apple which Dr.Hogg's (Fruit Manual 1884) described as a favourite among local schoolchildren, but also used for cider and culinary purposes, hence pre-eminent as a cottager's apple. **Pomona Plate VIII (BHNT)**

Stirling Castle. First recorded in 1831 in Stirling. A culinary apple, suitable for colder areas, which keeps until the year-end. **Pomona Plate V**

Tom Putt. Raised in the late 1700's by the Revd Tom Putt, Rector of Trent in Somerset, which is now part of Dorset –a matter clearly overlooked by the planners when county boundaries were re-drawn! Popular all over the West Country and West Midlands as, primarily, an Autumn Culinary apple which was also eaten as a dessert and used for cider. Typically ribbed and angular, present in many a cottage garden in former years. **Pomona Plate VI**

Wagener. A variety, which originated in New York State at the end of the 18th Century, but did not appear in the UK until more than a century later. The trees are reputed to be hardier than most and the fruit keeps until April.

Yellow Ingestrie. One of the more successful varieties raised by the pioneer geneticist Thomas Andrew Knight, at Elton, by hybridisation from the Golden Pippin and Orange Pippin. In season in the autumn, a quality dessert apple, and a tree which can look good in your lawn!
Pomona Plate LXIX (BHNT)

The Herefordshire Pomona plate numbers are a guide to the coloured plates accessible on our CD. The varieties marked 'BHNT' may also be visited at Berrington Hall, National Trust nr. Leominster.

Ray Boddington

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

We have replanted some of the varieties which had failed to grow on this site, probably due to the very dry Spring last year. Chris Porter, in her article on managing *MAN* orchards, hopes that biodiversity will increase on this site as the trees become established. The signs are promising. When I called to check that the newly planted trees were thriving and not drying out, I was delighted to see a colourful sward which included numerous Cowslips and the pretty mauve Cuckooflower, because the usual Spring cut had not yet taken place this year. I returned a few days later, when the sun was shining, and took some photographs to add to our final claim from the Countryside Council for Wales. This flower, known to many as Lady's-smock, is the food plant for the larvae of the Orange Tip butterfly and several were fluttering about, but would not oblige and settle for a moment.

Sheila Leitch

TREDOMEN COURT, Llanfilo, Breconshire.

Two work parties have been held at this orchard, when planting and pruning were carried out. We had a good number of helpers on both occasions and we all enjoyed the work and felt we had caught up on some of the backlog of work there, though there is more pruning to be done. See Chris Porter's article on Page 15.

Sheila Leitch

WESTHOPE, near Canon Pyon, Herefordshire.

The cropping in 2005 was better than the previous year although not particularly heavy. There

was virtually no fruit on Gascoyne's Scarlet, Pig Nose Pippin, Pomeroy of Hereford, Prince Alfred and Ladies Finger of Hereford. Fruiting on Severn Bank, Winter Quoining, Golden Harvey and Annie Elizabeth was light while Duke of Devonshire, Domino, Scotch Bridget, Sam's Crab and Stoke Edith Pippin fared better with Sam's Crab being the overall winner. Newland Sack continues to flourish but is some way off fruiting.

The deer cages do their job, if making life more difficult for humans. As some of the trees are now getting quite large, any such as Domino, with its drooping habit, gets nibbled at the ends. It doesn't seem to be too serious a problem at the moment.

Peter Austerfield

OUR OWN ORCHARD

Members are no doubt aware that the five Museum Orchards that we currently operate are sited on various plots of land by kind permission of the owners. In the event of a change of ownership, a situation could arise where our trees did not fit in with the new owner's plans and it has been suggested that perhaps we should acquire some land ourselves to be sure of suitability for our purposes. Several have been found but the auction sale price has always exceeded what we thought was fair and reasonable. Do you have, or know of, some land, 4 or 5 acres in Powys Herefordshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire or Gloucestershire which we could purchase, or take on long lease, to ensure that the work we have already done in preserving some 500 varieties can be assured?

Tom Froggatt

A WELSH MARCHES POMONA

Compilation of "A Welsh Marches Pomona", one of the new projects of MAN, started in Spring 2006. It is hoped that the project will be completed by the end of 2008.

The Pomona will feature about 25 local apples, which have never been fully described. Many of these have come to light through orchard visits or identification activities at shows. All are closely associated with our region; e.g. King's Acre Bountiful and Byford Wonder were introduced by a local nursery, Onibury Pippin was raised by the pioneering local pomologist Thomas Andrew Knight.

It is intended that the written accounts will include sufficient detail to aid identification, as well as providing information about the history and uses of each variety. Illustrations will include both watercolour paintings of blossom and fruit, and line drawings showing the internal structure of the fruit. Other diagnostic characters will also be represented. Dr. Margaret Gill, the illustrator, has already completed beautiful watercolour paintings of the blossom of 18 culinary or dessert apples.

Varieties such as Landore, alternatively known as Monmouth Green, have been grown in our farm orchards for many years, but sometimes little is known of their history. This is especially true of the Welsh apples like Marged Nicolas and Pig yr wydd. We would welcome further information from our members about any of our local varieties, particularly Bridstow Wasp (Wasp Apple) and March Pippin, both formerly cultivated in the area around Ross-on Wye. Please contact Mike Porter if you can help.

Mike Porter

NATIONAL ORCHARD FORUM. - NEWS FROM OTHER GROUPS

We continue to exchange Newsletters with other groups with similar aims. Last year we featured the newly formed East of England Apples & Orchard Project and asked for news of any other newly formed area groups. Nothing has come in, but I have learned, with the arrival of the National Orchard Forum Newsletter Issue 8, Summer 2006, that a new group called the Tree Fruit Society of Wales has recently formed. I am most grateful to Ann Smith, the Editor, of the Gloucestershire Orchard Group and Linda Blenkinship of the Northern Fruit Group for their permission to pass on these extracts of news from groups and other interesting articles to our readers. (Pages 11-15) National Orchard Forum newsletters are available by email directly from Ann Smith. smithcovell@btinternet.com

An **electronic version** of each NOF newsletter is available, should groups or individuals wish to receive them. This can greatly assist with feedback within the groups.

The latest **tree fruit literature**, researched by Simon Clark, is available on the NOF website www.nat-orchard-forum.org.uk

TREE FRUIT SOCIETY OF WALES

This new group is to be based at **Scolton Manor, Pembrokeshire**. The site, owned by the County Council, is open 360 days each year. There is a really good partnership with all the staff based on site and full support of the council's Museum Officer. We are aiming to restore some of the grounds back to the 1950s when over 70 varieties of fruit trees were grown. More information will be available in future newsletters.

Secretary: Ruth Webb, Furzy Park, Tavernspite, Whitland, Carmarthenshire SA34 0NU 01834 831452 ruth@webbs32.freemove.co.uk

Also, committee member, **Mike Garlic** 01646 636576

Gerald White, also of the Fruit Society of Wales, sent us this piece:

In 2002 I felt a need after spending an enjoyable lifetime in horticulture to try and get children really interested in gardening and after much thought came up with the theme "**Spade to Fork**". My idea was the spade in the soil and the eating fork in the mouth. This idea was taken up with Pembrokeshire Horticultural Society and we arranged the event in the following sections:-

Sowing seeds

Planting Fruit Trees

How mankind foraged for food.

Wartime Gardening

Food Standards and Hygiene

Preparing Food

Cooking Food

Tasting the food

All children to sow a small pot of seeds to take home.

All children to plant a plug plant in a small pot to take home

All schools to be given an apple tree to plant in school grounds

We enlisted help from The Food Standard Agency, the local Park Rangers, Museum staff at Scolton Manor and the Food Officer from the local council. The event took place during the second week of September 2003 and over 500 schoolchildren attended. We repeated the event

in 2004 and more than 700 young people attend and for 2005 the figure went over 1000. The funding was obtained both nationally and from local sources. With hindsight it would have been better to get the help of the county W.I. for the cookery section. Many schools now have a named variety of apple growing in the school ground.

If anyone would like more information, contact me and I will try to help.

Gerald J White M.I. Hort 01437 563667 gardengerald1@btinternet.com

Links for this group:

- Marcher Apple Network www.marcherapple.net member John Lyle of Carmarthenshire 01994-484750 has set up The Welsh Museum of Fruit
- Orchard Doctor (Consultancy) Tony & Elizabeth Gentil 01270 780828
- Welsh Cider Society www.welshcider.co.uk
- Paul Davis Dolau-Hirion Nursery 01558 668744
- NE Wales Initiative (NOF newsletter issue 7) - Simon & Rachel Farr 01352 740022
- Bardsey Island Apple (NOF newsletter issue 3) - Ian Sturrock 01248 371573 iansturr@clara.co.uk www.bardseyapple.co.uk
- Greengrocer Campaigner (Apple Day in Clwyd) Christine Fisher at 38 Green Lane, Sunbury, Middlesex TW16 7PF 01932 780273 christine.fisher@care4free.net

NORTHERN FRUIT GROUP.

Pear News: The fungal disease “brown spot” (*Stemphylium vesicarium*) has become a major problem in pear orchards across Europe. First recognised in Italy in 1975, it has spread through France, Spain and Portugal and was recognised in Holland and Belgium around 1999 - 2001 (though it could have been present, unrecognised much earlier). It is only a matter of time before it appears in the UK.

(Fruit Grower, Nov. 05)

Root Pruning: An experimental study and growers’ trials with root pruning are showing that it is as effective as chemical growth regulators in controlling the size of apple and pear trees (and possibly cherries too). The Dutch have developed tractor-mounted root pruners; the blade is inserted into the soil, either vertically or at an angle (thus slightly undercutting) and slices through the roots along the row. A number of variables are being tested: timing; distance from the tree; on one side or both sides of the row. If pruned in Spring/Summer, trickle irrigation and feeding are necessary; even so, fruit size tends to be reduced (this can be an advantage with some varieties). Full results and analysis are not yet available.

(Fruit Grower, Jan 06)

Codling Moth Control: Researchers at Warwick University HRI have devised codling moth pheromone traps baited with a virus. The male moths are attracted to the traps, expecting to encounter a female. They leave frustrated but covered in virus particles. When they do later meet a female, the eggs and the egg-laying sites are contaminated and the caterpillars are infected and killed. This removes the need for blanket spraying of the orchards with virus (which has to be repeated several times because the organisms are sensitive to the elements, particularly sunlight, and quickly become ineffective). Getting the moths to spread the virus means it is specifically targeted; also insecticides are not needed and beneficial insects are spared.

Fruit Grower Oct. 05)

A further comment in the March 06 Fruit Grower -

Trials of mating disruption by pheromone traps in 2005 (including some at Wisley) were very successful. The 'Exosex CM' system (developed by Exosect) has been registered for organic orchards.

TRADITIONAL ORCHARD PROJECT

We have received funding from English Nature (Natural England)/Defra's Countdown 2010 grant to begin a Traditional Orchard Project. The major part of this project is a survey of traditional orchards in eight counties, including Gloucestershire. We aim to conduct a survey of orchards to support the noble chafer Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for which we are the lead partner, to offer information of relevance to other BAP species including birds, bats, lichens and fungi, and to support the establishment of a new Habitat Action Plan for Traditional Orchards recently proposed by English Nature.

We would like to work with the Gloucestershire Orchard Group and other orchard groups on this project, as well as with The Wildlife Trusts so as to contribute to any local action plans, etc. and join up the knowledge base rather than duplicate existing work. We're looking for traditional orchard owners/managers to come forward if they are willing to have a survey carried out. We are also looking for volunteers to help survey orchards. Training will be provided. If your orchard group would like further information please let me know.

Laura Hurt, Conservation Project Officer, People's Trust for Endangered Species & Mammals Trust UK, 15 Cloisters House, 8 Battersea Park Road, London SW8 4BG. Tel. 02074-984533
www.ptes.org www.mtuk.org

THE NATIONAL FRUIT COLLECTIONS AT BROGDALE

The Defra National Fruit Collections at Brogdale safeguard a valuable part of our agricultural heritage. The Collections include varieties of apple, pear, plum, cherry, quince, medlar, hazelnut, currant, gooseberry and vine. Two objectives are fulfilled by maintaining the Collections; firstly, conservation of genetic diversity present in cultivated temperate fruit and secondly supply of fruit germplasm samples to scientific researchers, commercial interests and the public. In total, the collections contain around 4000 varieties, by far the largest of the collections is the apples with more than 2000 accessions. In fact, the apple collection is the largest collection of *Malus* varieties on a single site in the world.

The Collections are maintained as field genebanks containing two trees of each top and stone fruit accession, and three bushes of each soft fruit variety. An advantage of conserving the material as plants is that they are constantly available for observation and use.

A UK National Fruit Collection was first established in Chiswick, London in the early 1800s by the Horticultural Society (now the Royal Horticultural Society) under the guidance of Thomas Andrew Knight. In the early 20th Century, the collections were moved to the RHS gardens at Wisley, Surrey. They were transferred to their current site between 1952 and 1954, when the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food assumed complete funding. Initially the site was a government-run experimental horticulture station, but Brogdale EHS was closed in 1990. Defra continues to own the collection and contracts Imperial College to curate them, while horticultural care is the responsibility of Brogdale Horticultural Trust.

Originally the Collections were established because of a need to establish correct nomenclature and accurate cultivar descriptions of temperate fruits grown in the United Kingdom. Initially, the

nomenclature of varieties held in the Collections was confused. This was due to free exchange of propagating material both nationally and internationally, and to the readiness of nursery owners to give new names to varieties for commercial reasons. Several books have been published that document and describe varieties contained in the apple collection, the most comprehensive being the National Apple Register of the United Kingdom (Smith, 1971).

Maintenance of correctly named varieties is still an important function of the collections but these days material is also selected for conservation with the aim of maximising the genetic diversity present. Until recently it was presumed that the genetic diversity in existence would be adequately represented by including accessions from a wide variety of locations and accessions with interesting or unusual morphological and phenological characteristics. We are now also beginning to use molecular characterisation of the material to investigate diversity.

As the United Kingdom National Fruit Collections, there is a concentration on varieties that have been grown in or originated in the UK. Slightly less than half of the apple varieties for which a country of origin is known arose in the UK. Large numbers of apple varieties in the collection arose in France, the USA, Germany, the Netherlands and Canada. The collection also includes smaller numbers of varieties from many countries including almost all European countries, some Asian countries, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

In the past few years work by Imperial College has concentrated on verification of recently propagated collections including the plums, cherries and soft fruit. Accessions are compared with published descriptions from a wide range of sources and information from grey literature such as trials reports. A detailed cherry catalogue is in preparation as a result of this work. We have also nearly completed a project to characterise the apple collection in a standard format, building on the National Apple Register of the United Kingdom.

Emma-Jane Lamont (now Emma-Jane Allen), Scientific Curator
Requests for grafts from scientific users should be addressed to:
The Scientific Curator
Imperial College National Fruit Collections
Brogdale Road
Faversham
Kent ME13 8XZ

Requests for grafts from private individuals and commercial interests should be addressed to:
The Horticultural Curator
Brogdale Horticultural Trust
Brogdale Road
Faversham
Kent ME13 8XZ

www.brogdale.org www.nfc.u-net.com

THE LIGHTNING WORM [From the Gloucestershire Orchard Group]

Members may have seen some cut branches of pear at the last two AGMs bearing deep zigzag markings. They came from a green olive pear tree from an orchard in Ashleworth. Eventually they were identified by Keith Alexander, the county beetle recorder, as the larval galleries of the hawthorn jewel beetle (*Agrilus sinuatus*). The German name for this larva is der Blitzwurm – ie

the lightning worm. This is a nationally notable species, and more remarkable still, pear has only just been recognised as one of its larval foodplants in Britain.

Clearly this is a very interesting observation, and if any further galleries of the lightning worm are found on any tree, please let me know. Some sources have it down as a pest of fruit trees, which seems a bit unlikely given that it is so rarely reported, but I would welcome your views.



Juliet Bailey orchard@potsherd.demon.co.uk 01452 722310
[END OF EXTRACTS FROM THE NOF]

MANAGING MAN ORCHARDS IN POWYS

In January 2004, the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) gave *MAN* a grant for buying equipment to help us manage our orchards. One of the conditions specified the recording of wildlife in the orchards, therefore reflecting any changes in biodiversity due to the maintenance regime. For the three orchards in Powys we have to try to make an annual assessment. Since we do not own any of these orchards we are dependent upon the goodwill of the owners, who have allowed us to plant apple trees on their ground. The way the surrounding land is managed will affect the orchards' wildlife, but the orchard maintenance (grass-cutting, scrub clearance and boundary hedging) is up to us. This is costly in time and man/woman-power so good tools are essential. By keeping records we may interpret the effect that our work is having: fulfilling the guidelines from CCW can be to the advantage of *MAN* and the surrounding environment. All our orchards are managed 'organically': we avoid the use of pesticides and artificial fertilisers. Each of the three orchards is different, so we need to evaluate each orchard's individuality, its strengths and weaknesses, in order to improve the natural biodiversity.

The largest site, Tredomen, formerly an orchard, is about 3 acres which had been grazed before *MAN*'s young apple trees were planted there. Several old cider trees survive to provide extra pollination potential and two old pear trees and a mature walnut add character and

perching posts for birds as well as possible 'host' sites for insects and lichens. The soil is fertile heavy loam, which is rather damp in places. Planting started in 1997 and the trees are doing well in spite of a few setbacks from stray sheep and odd casualties from stem rot aggravated by spiral guards. The mulch mower, which was bought with the CCW grant, maintains much the same regime as before: the grass controlled by mowing instead of grazing animals which of course would have enriched the ground. Biodiversity is greatly increased just by planting an orchard. The 215 apple trees, nearly all different varieties, will attract more insects than could have been supported previously, when the sward alone was the basis of the food chain. This spring we have noticed good populations of 7-spot and 2-spot ladybirds actively working their way along the branches to eat the lurking aphids. There were bumble bees and lots of the black flies with long black dangly legs, *Dilophus febrilis*, which were visiting the flowers but few hive bees on the days we were there. The blossom this year was tremendous, so we hope these pollinating insects will have done a good job and that there will be lots of apples for MAN and for the autumn-visiting thrushes. Celandines grow in the damper places of the orchard and patches of nettle, the host plant of several colourful species of butterfly. It is doubtful whether we shall achieve a greater diversity of plant life with our mulch mower which chops everything up so finely, but the grass is managed so the trees don't have too much competition.

Down one side of the field remains a partial hedge of blackthorn and hawthorn. There is scope here to increase the biodiversity of the site by encouraging the well-established brambles which will help to provide much-needed cover for birds, insects and mammals (not rabbits, we hope!). Their flowers attract butterflies and other insects and the fruit goes well with apples! Here other plants too may creep in, like dog-roses, cowslips and primroses, milkmaids and buttercups, because this area will not be mown. Obviously the degree of infiltration will have to be watched.

Lower Ffordd fawr is a much smaller plot where we are planting apples on dwarf root-stocks. These should bear fruit earlier than those on a more robust stock, allowing earlier identification. As at Tredomen, this was an improved pasture. There are some ash and sycamore trees close to the planting area, but the grass ley has to be kept short to give these small, precious grafts every chance to grow successfully. Several of these are 'unknowns' and may be the last survivors of their kind. The new mower is too large to be useful at Lower Ffordd fawr and the trimmer (again bought thanks to CCW) at present seems the only option for management. As the trees become established, we hope there will be some increase in the biodiverse nature of the site.

The third orchard on the Welsh side of the Border is again quite different. Croft Pendarren is a field of about 1 acre which, as its Welsh name implies, is situated at the top (head) of a precipice. On one side is a well-grown species-rich hedge along a lane and some fine oaks, ash and beech trees bound the wooded descent to the river Usk below. In some ways it is a more difficult to manage a site which already has a diverse flora and fauna. Maintenance now has to consider the needs of the young apple trees, whilst also making sure the plants and animals already associated with the existing grassland and woodland (defined as 'coed cae' or woodland-field) are not prejudiced. It is important to keep the rich variety of grass and woodland plant species like bird's-foot trefoil, violet, bluebell, sorrel, pig-nut, greater stitchwort, ground ivy, germander speedwell, betony and knapweed. The ground has neither been ploughed nor dosed with artificial fertilisers for at least 50 years. The site would have received light grazing in the past which would have maintained this interesting habitat. There is an old perry pear tree which produced exquisite blossom this year in spite of its hollow lichen-encrusted trunk; mistletoe

grows on hawthorn bushes along the edge. The oaks support a colony of purple hairstreak butterflies and common blues visit the bird's-foot trefoil most years. Orange-tips flit around the milkmaids in spring and in July and August there are usually meadow browns flopping over the grasses and peacocks, small tortoiseshells and red admirals in good quantities on sunny days attracted by the bramble flowers and knapweed. Hoverflies and bees (hive, various bumbles, carder and mason) have had a wonderful source of nectar and pollen from the apple blossom, because the trees have surpassed themselves this spring. *Bombilius* hoverflies pay occasional visits and the long-legged *Dilophus febrilis*, 'fever flies', have been abundant too, hopping over the lane from our orchard, during blossom-time, so we hope the fruit will benefit.

So far, 40 standard apple trees, all different varieties, have been planted. These have been selected for their association with Wales and the Marches. Some are local varieties which have never been described in apple literature, something we hope to remedy in the forthcoming 'Welsh Marches Pomona'. In order to maintain this diversity, the scrub and bracken, always awaiting their chance to infiltrate, have to be whacked back frequently with a good deal of energy, and help from a local gardening outfit once a year. It is most difficult to strike a balance, especially when the apple trees are just getting established. Brambles are great for wildlife, but can become far too invasive, as can the hedge which cuts out valuable light if allowed to get out-of-hand. Mowing has to be limited to allow the 'good' species that we want to encourage to seed, so we cannot use a mulch-type mower.

It is difficult to find the time and the experts to identify the various aspects of wildlife in these orchards. Recording can be intermittent and subjective, but it is something which needs attention if we wish to receive conservation / 'green' grants. *MAN* is quite dependent on grant aid, yet it seems important to work with grant agencies which have similar aims, rather than altering our policies. We are very grateful to CCW for their support.

It would be very interesting to have *MAN* members' views and experiences with wildlife in their orchards. What lives in your orchard, courtesy of your fruit trees and your stewardship? What plant-life thrives in your orchard, what lichens and fungi and what insect, bird and mammal visitors do you see? Perhaps together we could build a useful picture by exchanging ideas and information about the diversity of orchard life in the different regions.

Chris Porter

NURSERY NOTES

An Ill Wind

It may not have been especially windy during the first 2 months of this year but it was certainly colder than usual. I started grafting 3 weeks later than last year and did so in the relatively mild conditions of the smaller of my two polytunnels.

There is a window of about two months through which I find dormant grafting successful. Stocks grafted after the first week in April usually die or fail to thrive. As a result I was in a hurry to get my 1500 finished before the deadline.

To save time, I potted up the grafted stocks temporarily in bunches of 10 or so, put them in the tunnel, watered them well and covered them polythene bags to raise the temperature. By the time I came to pot them up individually in April, the first-grafted had shoots and roots two inches long. Surprisingly, there was no transplantation shock and grafting success was almost 100%. It

remains to be seen if all the stocks thrive but I shall definitely be repeating this technique next year.

I usually tackle the failed grafts from last year in early April when I have finished the new stocks. This is a big mistake. Grafting these established stocks late usually leads to failure: the grafts bleed and the whole plant dies. I must remember to do these first before they break dormancy or bud them in the summer. Hopefully, I won't have as many as in previous years.

More On Viruses

I tried to make a controlled temperature cabinet in which to grow my infected plants (see 2005 Newsletter) but I couldn't keep a stable temperature of 38°C. As soon as the sun came out, the temperature would shoot up – 45°C is lethal!

Paul Davis

A TRADITION REVIVED

Apart from being one of the "quietest places under the sun" Clunton must be similar to most small South Shropshire villages. Its history was dominated by the thirsty work of farming so beer and cider-making were regarded as vital activities. Old maps show that there were many small orchards primarily for cider-making but today very few old apple trees remain.

Enthusiasm for locally-grown fruit grew steadily in the nineties and as the millennium approached a few villagers decided to mark the event by planting new orchards or replanting old ones. An initiative by 'Blue Remembered Hills' helped us research the tradition we were in danger of losing. They also offered us grants to help with our planting. More villagers became involved, and to date over two hundred trees have been planted, with more being planned.

Although the Clun valley is renowned for its beauty, it is too high and cold to be ideal for fruit-growing. We have mainly planted hardier varieties and we hope we have made a contribution to restoring the fortunes of older Shropshire and Welsh names.

2004 produced perfect growing conditions, and our young trees bent with the weight of fruit. How were we going to use it all? Producing good quality juice was our answer and '*Clunton Scrumpers*' emerged. We returned to 'Blue Remembered Hills' for advice and discovered that they would provide half the funding we needed to set up a communal juicing plant, and that the South Shropshire 'Sprout' initiative would pay for most of the remainder.

We organised a coach-trip to Peter King-Turners' Mahorall Farm to learn what we would need to buy for our new enterprise. His help and advice has proved invaluable both in choosing sensible equipment and in guiding us through our first juicing event.

This took place in the autumn of 2005, we missed the 'glut' year but still produced enough juice to satisfy the needs of over 60 participants. About a third of the juice has been used to make cider, and the remainder kept in our freezers until use. We have since bought a pasteuriser to increase our options.

'*Clunton Scrumpers*' has added a new strand to the social life of the village. We will shortly be holding a 'Wassail' and are planning blossom and fruit-tasting walks and at least two juicing days this year. Perhaps one aspect of our village's past can come to life again.

Mrs A. Shepherdson

CIDER APPLE AND PERRY PEAR SUBGROUP

When the Cider group started, one of the objects was to try and find as many as possible of the 46 cider varieties listed in The Herefordshire Pomona. Twenty of the 46 were known to be growing in various orchards in the county. Since then, advent of the *MAN* produced Pomona CD has made the task of identifying odd unknown trees easier. The previously mentioned *Handsome Hereford* is a good example in that the Pomona gives its synonym as *Belle Norman*, which is grown in several orchards. The latest discovery is *Styre Wilding*. Two trees have been found and have been positively identified from a 1918 planting plan. Grafts have been taken and I am waiting to see if they are successful.

Two of the missing varieties having been found, the continuing task is to discover if any positively identifiable examples of the remaining 24 exist. A list of these varieties is available from me. In addition, it is vital to find as many as possible of the varieties introduced subsequent to the publication of the Pomona, particularly those grown on the Welsh side of the Marches. Those of you who have ancient trees, the variety of which is unknown but was used for cider making, may have a variety of interest. We would like to hear from you. A brief description of the tree and fruit would help:

In an orchard in the Golden Valley there is an old tree which has an unusual growth pattern. The ends of the main branches grow into a shape best described as a witch's broom. I have been told that a disease may cause this feature. However the orchard owner, who is over 80 years old, assured me that all the trees in the row that once existed grew in exactly the same way as long as he can remember. I would be very interested to know if this distinctive growth characteristic has been observed anywhere else. Regrettably I was too late in the season to find anything but half rotted fruit. This appeared to be similar to the variety called Cadbury.

The Countryside Restoration Trust has asked *MAN* to advise on the planting of a cider apple and Perry pear orchard at Turnaston in the Golden Valley. The idea is to recreate the original orchard that existed on site with varieties that are known to grow well in that part of the county. This is considered a worthwhile project that will create a legacy for future generations to enjoy. So far the C.R.T. has planted a selection of Perry pear trees and it is hoped that planting of cider fruit trees will begin at the end of this year.

In my search for "lost" cider apple varieties I have been in contact with several cider makers in Somerset and Herefordshire in the hope that another of these lost varieties will be found. No luck so far, but if any one reading this has contacts with owners of orchards of old trees, please investigate if they are aware of the varieties planted and let me know.

Richard Cheshire

CORRESPONDENCE

Herefordshire Orchards Community Evaluation project

This year sees the start of an exciting two year project which aims to investigate the *value* of orchards in Herefordshire. New accounting methodologies are being used to help to demonstrate the importance of orchards, in all their forms, in the County, providing a framework that could have national significance. Members of the Marcher Apple Network are invited to become involved.

The project has been developed by the Bulmer Foundation on behalf of the Herefordshire Orchard Topic Group, which represents a wide range of interests in orchards. Current funders are Herefordshire Rivers Leader+ Programme, the National Association of Cider Makers, Bulmers, English Nature, Herefordshire Council and the Bulmer Foundation.

Background to the project

Apples and cider making have been a prominent part of the local economy for the last four hundred years. 30% of all the UK's orchards are in Herefordshire, ranging from large scale modern bush orchards to small standard orchards on mixed farms, in varying states of upkeep. Some two thirds of all remaining UK standard orchards are in the County. Orchards form part of the national heritage and the distinctive local landscape, inextricably linked with local traditions, culture and biodiversity.

Over the years, development and commercial pressure have dramatically reduced the extent of orchards in the County – which was once described as a “forest of fruit trees”. We know the emotional reaction that we have when we see an orchard being grubbed up, but not enough is really understood about the true value of different types of orchard. An orchard impacts on the local economy, on those living near it or who see it or use it, and it has a role in the environment, enhancing both the landscape and natural biodiversity. These are the three constituents of sustainable development; economics, society and environment. Referred to as the *triple bottom line*, these factors will be considered by the project, and a financial value will be attributed to each of them.

What the project will do

This project aims to explore in detail the value of six orchards across the County, all with very different characteristics. With the involvement of interested parties and local people the project will collect valuable data about the orchards and present this using triple bottom line accounting. Work on the first, at Backbury Hill, is already underway.

The project has funded the completion of the digitisation of the Millennium Map for the orchards in the County which now forms a key record of the pattern of Herefordshire's existing orchards. With the help of English Nature and Herefordshire Council, we have developed a framework of the defining characteristics of an orchard, such as the way it is managed and proximity to population. This forms the basis upon which we will select orchards for evaluation.

The process will incorporate detailed natural species audits and economic impact assessments, as well as seeking the involvement of farmers, local communities, organisations and tourists, in structured review and dialogue about the value of each orchard. The intention is to use innovative triple bottom line accounting methodologies to focus and distil the debate into a financial picture of the value of each orchard studied.

From this understanding, and in consultation with all those interested in an orchard, the project will then support the development of a number of value-enhancing changes identified for each orchard.

We hope that what we find through the project will inform the national debate specifically on the protection of orchards in all their forms but also, more generally, the evaluation of agriculture at a local level. We have linked with the appropriate academic research institutions and are being helped at a national level by English Nature and Forum for the Future.

Interested?

As well as keeping members of the Marcher Apple Network informed about what is happening locally, we would like to invite you to participate. There are a number of ways that members might like to be involved: The project will be running various workshops for each of the orchards; for example we soon hope to involve members of the public in the natural species audits as they happen. Any orchard owners might want to put their orchard forward for consideration as one of the future evaluation sites.

NEWS FROM MEMBERS' ORCHARDS

As mentioned in Newsletter 11, I thought we ought to start a new section for news of all these recently planted orchards, as we now have more members with their own trees to report on. I asked members to send in their news, of what the year has been like, weather-wise, pests, harvests, wildlife observations, how you keep the grass down, the rabbits at bay or anything else good, bad or indifferent. News of old orchards will also be welcome, with ideas of how to keep geriatric trees going for a few more years. Very little has arrived in time for this Newsletter, but please bear it in mind for the next one. We can all learn so much from each other.

Sheila Leitch

Pant-Rhedyn, Gellywen, Carmarthen

John Lyle has written to say that, due to a late frost this year on 31st May, his wonderful show of blossom did not set fruit. Disappointing, as he has numerous interesting Welsh varieties planted and is waiting for them to become productive.

Wye View, Glasbury-on-Wye, Breconshire

The late frost caught some of my trees, but the pears have all set well. The *Black Pear of Worcester* is laden and needs thinning. I find this variety good to eat by December and it does not keep beyond March. Descriptions of this old Warden-type pear indicate that it used to be still rock hard in April and was a cooking pear, needing long, slow stewing. Do any readers with this variety now eat it as a dessert pear? Is this a result of climate change?

Sheila Leitch

Tidnor Wood Orchard Trust, Herefordshire.

Do you remember that extremely cold spell at the beginning of March? Every morning for a week I lay in a shivering cold caravan in Tidnor Wood Orchards listening to 'Today' on Radio 4. One morning I heard Menzies Campbell referred to as "an old man in a hurry". At that I experienced a different form of freezing of the blood.

Tidnor Wood Orchard Trust was founded in 2002 with five acres of commercial orchard hard by Hereford City in the parish of Lugwardine. I gave the selling agent a price and said that I would walk away and find another orchard if I was refused. "No you won't, Sir" he said importantly, "orchards come on the market very rarely." He was correct. But I was able to look over the fence three times and we now, through private treaty, one at a time, have a useful block of four orchards and 26 acres.

The initial orchard is Museum Orchard; in commercial half-standard format, where we are replacing existing trees with diverse varieties of cider apple trees. We have nearly 260 different varieties in Museum Orchard and another 100 in nurseries awaiting passage. We have just added to our letterhead "The UK's largest collection of cider apple varieties". They are all listed on the back in whispery grey.

Old Orchard is old and made up of standards in nearly 3 acres. We have had some fun filling the gaps with some perry and dessert pears, some mixed apples and even a walnut and a mulberry. Bottom Orchard of 13 acres is hard-nosed commercial but we are filling the gaps there with duplicate trees from Museum Orchard to sustain the collection. The future of 4-acre Third Orchard is being reviewed; a French orchard is an option.

Our definition of 'cider and cider related varieties' is eclectic; not one for the purists. If there is good evidence that a variety was used for cider in some measure, then that is good enough for us. We have a sponsorship scheme set at £50 a tree but our two Bramley trees have been sponsored for £1,000 and £100 respectively. Who is going to argue with that?

We have just given up the idea of charitable grants and subsidies. Only this week I wrote a "Dear John" letter to the RPA (Rural Payments Agency). We are settling for the status of a private Trust because we sell our cider apples to Bulmers and Westons and are self sufficient. We are in organic conversion and have a new fruit contract to 2017. This year we despatched over 300 tonnes to the cider mills.

We do have a Member's register at £15 per head per annum, but we do not cajole people into being volunteers (we have more friends than members). The work in the orchards is done by contractors all of whom, I can say with alacrity, are skilful and willing. Come and see our gates and fences and tell me you have seen better.

There are a number of peripheral initiatives in hand ranging from Tidnor Wood honey produced by our bees, to single varietal cider and juice from our own tree variety, Tidnor Star. We have received planning permission for a secure store which is in being and even confuses environmentalists as to its provenance, it being built from old bricks and pantiles and ironwork. In the same mode the part completed second building will become a cider house. We have the stone mill and just need the press and the rest of the gubbins. Bulmers, eat your heart out.....

We took the risk of commissioning the famous and local transport artist, Eric Bottomley, to produce a painting entitled "Tidnor Wood Orchard", set in the 1950s with a Landrover and a grey Fergie tractor, and then to extend to signed limited edition prints. Amazingly, a couple of semi-professional film-makers approached Eric at that time to record him composing a painting from start to finish – and ours just happened to be the one on the easel. So there is a DVD for sale as well. For the future, orchard artist Jonathan Latimer is currently working on an exciting cider apple poster at our behest.

This is Tidnor Wood Orchard Trust – in a hurry, of course.

Henry May

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

Members of your committee are often called upon to talk to various groups, or speak on radio or TV. Groups such as Women's Institutes, Gardening Clubs and Horticultural Societies, Townswomen's Guild, Nature Trusts, and Probus, are all interested to hear an informal talk. Would you like to join the Speakers Pane? We have numerous slides available and a projector and screen and a vast library is available for research and past Newsletters give the history and objectives of *MAN*. Interesting information on old varieties or orchards unknown to us can emerge at these talks. Please let Sheila Leitch know if you can help.

Tom Froggatt

TEGESTOLOGY AND APPLES (AND PEARS)

Last year I wrote an article in the newsletter titled “Deltiology and Apples”. Deltiology is the hobby of postcard collecting - the sort of harmless activity that Webmasters get up to in their (little) spare time. I included a request for help with my collection but nothing has arrived in the mail. I suppose that it is natural to send emails to a webmaster - how do you send a postcard by email?

I also whet your appetite for this newsletter by offering to explain the relationship between tegestology and apples (and pears). But until I get a postcard from at least one of you – no dice! I will leave you wondering what tegestology is all about. (Although a small hint – Morcombe and Wise were tegestologists).

Richard Wheeler
Marcher Apple Network webmaster

WEBMASTER’S REPORT

Whilst called “Webmaster”, where I fit into Marcher Apple Network’s committee is actually in a wider role. I feel it is more that of IT overlord so in the Webmaster’s report this year I will say very little about the web but look into other aspects of how *MAN* uses IT.

Free Computers, Software and Training

The big thing for *MAN* this year is free computers, free software and free training (and maybe a bit of free IT consultancy thrown in for good measure). And “free” really does mean “no cost”. To be absolutely accurate, “free software” really means “Open Source software”. And as Open Source software is given away then it is “free software”.

So how has this come about? Well, back at the end of January I learnt that there was going to be a series of seminars for charitable and voluntary organisations on using Open Source software. It was too late to change my diary to go the seminar in Hereford so instead I went to a later seminar in Worcester. It was there that I received the offer of free computers, software and training. *MAN*’s committee was enthusiastic, if a bit nervous at what Open Source entails, and gave me the go ahead to make an application. It was a very simple process and I requested a new computer for each and every member of the *MAN* committee. Most committee members wanted laptops although a couple of committee members opted for desktop machines. Some committee members are also to get a printer to go along with their computer. All the computers are “internet ready” although *MAN* has bought some networking equipment for committee members who want to share their internet connection with an existing computer.

As I write this there has been a hiatus on the delivery of the computers so the free training day has had to be postponed. However, the committee are looking forward to all receiving their own new computer and learning to make use of it. For the more technically minded these computers will be using the *linux* operating system – not the *Windows* which most people are familiar with. Likewise it will not be *Microsoft Office* that we will use for word processing, spreadsheets etc but *Open Office*. (*Open Office* can read *Microsoft Office* files so you can still send articles for the Newsletter to the Editor as *Word* documents). There will also be desk top publishing software which we expect to use in next year’s proposed revamp of the newsletter.

I expect that the committee will start by using the computers for simple things – regular email contact will allow reports to be circulated more easily and so make committee meetings more efficient. I anticipate that later on we will move into computerised record keeping, in particular for our orchard records. *MAN's* membership records are currently held on a very old computer. Whilst the actual software meets our needs the age of the computer is a concern. The software will not transfer to the free computers so there is some thinking to be done.

Other IT

Each year *MAN*, as a registered company, must make a return and pay a fee to Companies House. This year the return and fee were all done electronically, saving 50% on the annual registration fee. (In reality, *MAN* avoided the 100% price hike that Companies House had introduced).

After considerable investigation into the options for e-selling, copies of The Herefordshire Pomona CD are periodically offered for sale on eBay. A number of sales have been made this way and I am now considering extending sales to the Apples of the Welsh Marches booklet and to the Herefordshire Pomona postcards. Our Treasurer, Tom Froggatt, was quite surprised to be receiving money instead of paying it out on my expense claim.

Last year I warned that the published email addresses for Marcher Apple Network officials would be changing. Well, the amount of spam I received dropped so I postponed the changes. However, spam is now increasing again so the change is back under consideration again. So if you intend to email me or the membership secretary please use the current address from the website and not a stored address.

Richard Wheeler
Marcher Apple Network webmaster – www.marcherapple.net

LITERARY CORNER

PROTECTING OUR ORCHARDS AND APPLES, ROMAN STYLE

Following his 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. 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 scumpers 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 descriptive kind about rural life and even romantic in nature. The verses below are a selection of these last two kinds. For those like me who didn't have a classical education, there is a short grammar lesson included.

An elegiac from the Priapea.

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

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 headache.

No, my problem's the weight of awful poems
pinned where the 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!

A verse 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.

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

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.

Selected with some additional commentary by Peter Austerfield.

TREE KITS



HEREFORDSHIRE
COUNCIL

NEWS RELEASE

12th June 2006

MAKE ONE OF YOUR 'FIVE-A-DAY' A HOMEGROWN HEREFORDSHIRE APPLE

Herefordshire Council Parks & Countryside Service is set to help you meet one of your 'five-a-day' healthy eating targets and celebrate your local heritage, by giving you the opportunity to source and grow one of the County's old varieties of apple trees as part of this year's Fruit Tree Kit Scheme.

The scheme aims to help people source old apple and fruit varieties that were once grown in many of the County's orchards, but that are now quite rare and difficult to obtain commercially.

It has been developed in recognition of the importance of traditional standard orchards planted with locally distinctive fruit as both a feature of the Herefordshire landscape and a valuable habitat for wildlife, as well as the basis of many local customs and the 'culture' of the county. Orchard varieties are now included nationally as "Biodiversity" in their own right and are a recognised target in Herefordshire's latest Biodiversity Action Plan.

You can either purchase a tree suitable for planting in an orchard or, if you only have a small plot then why not buy a tree on a smaller rootstock - perfect for your back garden?

This year the scheme features Orchard varieties (on M25 rootstock) from across the West Midlands region including: **Bloody Ploughman**, **Sandlin Duchess**, **Bakers Delicious**, **King Coffee** (Raised in Worcester 1930s and does actually have a mild coffee flavour without the caffeine!) and **Winter Banana** (USA1890/UK1920 - needs a warm, sunny location to achieve a rich banana flavour).

For gardens (on an M26 semi-dwarf rootstock) the varieties include **Winter Banana**, **Gladstone** and **Lady Sudeley**

James Bisset Principal Countryside Officer said "This year we have tried to look further a-field and in to the corners of old Midland's gardens to find a very unusual selection of varieties with some surprising flavours" **he added.**

"Following the current craze for flavourful fruit drinks, King Coffee and Winter Banana are self-contained smoothie flavours, well they will be in two to five years when they start fruiting. Imagine biting in to one of your "five a day" that also fulfils your desire for a coffee and is completely caffeine free – Brilliant!"

"We may also be able to supply to special order other fruit types and varieties on a choice of rootstocks please contact me with your requirements and I will see what I can source"

The kits, which consist of a tree supplied as a '1 year maiden' complete with tree tie, cost just £9.00 each.

You can pre-order fruit trees by using the form available on the Council's website www.herefordshire.gov.uk or call 01568 798320 and ask for a hard copy to be posted. To ask about special order trees of any type or any other related enquiry contact James Bisset, Principal Countryside officer email: jbisset@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01568 798341

Numbers are strictly limited so order early to avoid disappointment.

If you would prefer to wait and see what is available on the weekend 25th and 26th November, then any spare trees will be on “Cash & Carry” sale between 10am - 3pm at the Country Park. We are also hoping to source some other fruit and nut trees that will only be available that weekend on a first come, first served basis.

Queenswood Country Park can be reached by taking the A49 north from Hereford – follow the brown signs on Dinmore Hill.

Abby Marshall Interpretation and Promotion Officer. Tel: 01568 798342



Friday, 09 June 2006

COUNCIL AWARDS CASH FOR COUNTRYSIDE PROJECTS

If you would like to restore an old orchard, have a hedgerow in serious need of some management or some other landscape-biodiversity enhancing project in mind then the Herefordshire Council Parks & Countryside Service may be able to help you.

They now offer ‘Landscape & Biodiversity Enhancement Grants’ for projects that will provide significant improvements to the county’s landscape and biodiversity.

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 English section of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or the whole of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

James Bisset, Principal Countryside Officer said “Herefordshire Council’s Countryside Team is pleased to once again be in a position to offer cash grants towards work and projects that help enhance the landscape, biodiversity and countryside character of the County and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

For the second year running, in addition to its own funding, the Council has secured extra financial support from the Countryside Agency, or Natural England as it will be known from this Autumn, to allow a higher maximum grant, improved rate of grant-aid and a wider range of eligible work types for successful applicants within the local Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

We have also developed a partnership with Worcestershire and Gloucestershire County Councils to enable the scheme to cover all of the *Malvern Hills* as well as this year extending the scheme to cover all the English part of the *Wye Valley* Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. To keep the

scheme, quick and easy to apply for we have just one application form which covers all applicants - outside and within the AONB areas." **He added.**

"Early application is recommended as funding is limited and all grant offers made must be claimed by 14th February 2007".

For further details please download the information-application leaflet from the Countryside section of Herefordshire Council's website: www.herefordshire.gov.uk/leisure/parks_recreation alternatively telephone 01568 798320 or email: countryside@herefordshire.gov.uk and request a printed copy.

To discuss your project please contact:

James Bisset, Principal Countryside Officer Tel: 01568 798341

email: jbisset@herefordshire.gov.uk

The Landscape Enhancement Grants are non-statutory and are funded by Herefordshire Council, the Countryside Agency with support from Worcestershire and Gloucestershire County Councils.

Abby Marshall Interpretation and Promotion Officer (01568) 798342

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 traveling 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.

SALE OF GRAFTWOOD AND BUDWOOD

A few members have taken 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. Sheila Leitch and John Aldridge will have lists of varieties grown within the Network. Prices per stick (10 - 12") to members, £1.25 (non-members, £2.50). Postage at cost, minimum £2.00. The scheme is geared to personal, not commercial, quantities.

TRAINING COURSES

See Page 30 for *MAN*'s practical orchard work, including tutored pruning session with Chris Fairs. The formative and restorative pruning courses scheduled by 'The Blue Remembered Hills Project', in Shropshire, are both already fully booked. Dates of Autumn training courses to be run by Glasu, in Powys, have not yet been arranged, but, as mentioned on Page 4, there may be additional courses arranged after this Newsletter goes to the print and will be advertised in local papers, or, if you have already attended a course, you will be on the mailing list.

Sheila Leitch

WINTER PRUNING DATES 2006/07

We are trying this year to give as much advance notice as we can about our orchard maintenance programme. Members local to these orchards (or not) are most welcome to join us. We have also included a couple of weekend dates for members who cannot attend weekday sessions. Our two largest orchards are at Tredomen and Donnington and this is where most help is needed. Normally we spend a whole day pruning, recording, staking, tying, clearing but not forgetting coffee and lunch breaks! Tutored pruning days are different. If you would like to join us please contact Sheila Leitch, who will advise on the date depending on the conditions.

Date	Orchard	Time
Sat. 2nd Dec. (Reserve Sun 3rd Dec.)	Tredomen	10.30am
This will be a tutored pruning session with Chris Fairs of Bulmers. Members £10,.Non-members £25.		
Sat. 9th Dec. (Reserve Sun.10th Dec.)	Donnington, Nr. Ledbury	10.30am
Wed. 10th Jan. (Reserve Thurs. 11th Jan)	Westhope, Nr. Canon Pyon	10.30am
Wed.17th Jan. (Reserve Thurs. 18th Jan.)	Lower Ffordd fawr, Glasbury	10.30am
Wed 24th Jan. (Reserve Thurs. 25th Jan.)	Tredomen (2)	10.30 am
Feb. 2007	Others	10.30am

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday/Sunday, 26th/27th 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, on the Sunday only, from 12.00am–5.00pm.

Friday, 1st September. Visit to the orchards of Sir Andrew Large at Cui Parc, Talybont. 2.00pm.

Saturday/Sunday, September 2nd/3rd. *Open* weekend at the Sunnybank Vine Nursery, Journey's End, King Street, Ewyas Harold, Hfds. From 12.0am–4.00pm. This nursery holds the National Vine Collection of outdoor hardy dessert and wine grapes, plus the National Seedless Vine Collection. Total over 300 varieties. An opportunity to see the largest collection of vine varieties ever assembled in Great Britain, most carrying ripe or nearly ripe grapes. Everyone welcome. Plenty parking space. Refreshments available. There will be no charge but a contribution to help cover costs and to support a local good cause will be welcomed. Wine for tasting and sale. Also orchards with 100 varieties of apple, including many Herefordshire varieties. These, too, can be tasted. Further details from Brian Edwards, Tel. 01981-240256. Web site: <http://vinenursery.net.com>

Saturday, 9th September. Kington Show. Details from Tom Froggatt. Tel. 01584-831650.

Sunday, 10th September. Entertainment under the Apples at Penlanole. From 2.00pm–6.00pm. The newly planted Globe Willow Theatre will be in use. On the A470 between Newbridge-on-Wye and Rhayader, just south of the Vulcan Arms. For further details Tel. 01597-811487.

Saturday/Sunday, 16th/17th September. Abergavenny Food Festival. Details from Julia French. Tel.01873-851643.

Saturday/Sunday, 23rd/24th September. Autumn Show at Three Counties Showground, Malvern.
Thursday, 6th October. Trumpet Ploughing Match, & West of England Fruit Show, Much Marcle.

Saturday/Sunday, 30th September/1st October. Apple Weekend at Berrington Hall, near Leominster. Details from Head Gardener, Nick Winney, Tel.01568-610593.

Thursday, 5th October. Trumpet Ploughing Match, & West of England Fruit Show, Much Marcle. Details from Tom Froggatt. (See Page 30)

Sunday, 8th October. Fruit Identification at Acton Scott Working Farm Museum, near Church Stretton. Take your apples for identification by Mike & Chris Porter, of the Marcher Apple Network. (Three typical specimens please.)

Tuesday, 10th October. Preserving and Juicing at Primrose Farm Organic Centre, Felindre, near Glasbury-on-Wye. For details Tel. 01497 847634. www.primrose trust.org.uk

Saturday/Sunday, 14th/15th October. 'The Big Apple'. From 12.00am–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. There will be tastings and apple juices on sale. For final details of talks, demonstrations and other events, phone Jackie Denman, Secretary of the 'Big Apple Association', on 01531-670544.

Saturday/Sunday, 14h/15th October. Cidermaking Festival at the Cider Museum, Ryelands Street, Hereford. For more details, contact the Cider Museum. Tel. 01432-354207.

Saturday, 21st October. Apple Day. Events countrywide. For programme 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, 21st October. Leominster Apple Fair. At Lion Ballroom, Broad Street. From 10.00am–4.00pm. *MAN* will be holding an identification session. Details from Felicity Norman, Tel. 01568-780886.

Sunday, 22nd October. Marcher Apple Network's Annual Event to celebrate Apple Day. This year we will again be holding it at The Baskerville Hall Hotel, still known locally as Clyro Court. If you can help with stewarding please contact Chris Porter beforehand on 01874-730354. Preceded in the morning by the AGM, for members only. We hope members will make a day of it and the general public will come too and learn something of our aims. The AGM, for members only, will be held from 11.30am-1.00pm. This should give time for discussion. There is no charge for members who attend the AGM. Lunches and bar snacks will be available for those who require them. It would be helpful if you would book lunch in advance, Tel. 01497-820033. The

venue, has beautiful grounds with a view of the Black Mountains for those who would like to picnic. 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 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. An identification panel will try to name your unknown fruit. £1 per variety on the day. If has to be taken away and done later, the charge is £3 for Non-members. (Bring at least 3 specimens of each variety please.) Tea and home-made refreshments with an apple theme will be on sale at the Baskerville Hall. Admission, at the door, Single, £3, Family £5. There is plenty of car parking space.

Sunday, 22nd October. Church Stretton Apple Fair at Sylvester Horne Institute, High Street, Church Stretton, Shropshire, from 11.00am–4.00pm. There will be a display of local apples. Details from John Lloyd, Tel. 01694-723143.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The financial year for *MAN* begins 1st August, to coincide with the beginning of the apple season. We send out the Newsletter to all those on our address list for the previous year, trusting they will wish to continue supporting *MAN*. PLEASE SEND YOUR SUBSCRIPTION of £10 NOW, for this year, while you read your Newsletter No.12, unless you are a Life Member or pay by Standing Order. Slips are inserted in this Newsletter, reminding members who pay annually by cheque that subscriptions are now due.

SPRING NEWS SHEET & NEWSLETTER NO 13

Any items for the Spring News Sheet would be welcome, to arrive by Saturday, January 20th. Brief updates and advance notice of summer events etc can be included on this double-sided A4 sheet. Material for Newsletter No.13, 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 to the Editor, Sheila Leitch, by June 1st, 2007, at the latest. Dates of events are also required by this time. If you miss this deadline, event dates can be sent to Richard Wheeler and added to the website list of events. If you have access to email, please send your article as a Word attachment with the letters MAN in the title to marie.stairs@hotmail.co.uk

The *MAN* Editorial Committee express grateful thanks to all contributors, the Editor and 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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