



Marcher Apple Network

Charity No: 1095 151

# NEWS SHEET No. 14

## Spring 2015

### IMPORTANT MESSAGE !

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS THE LAST MAN NEWS SHEET TO BE PRINTED AND SENT ROUND TO MEMBERS. ALL FUTURE EDITIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE TO READ AND DOWNLOAD FROM OUR WEB SITE — SEE PAGE 4 FOR MORE DETAILS

## AGM review

### AGM Business

At the AGM members unanimously approved two special resolutions for changing our 'Articles of Association' to:

- increase the quorum at a General Meeting to 5% of membership or 4 whichever is the larger,
- allow notices of General Meetings to be sent to members by e-mail or second class post, whichever the member prefers.

Additionally, members supported the change of Financial Year end from 31st July to 31st March, with effect from 2015.

Both Mike Porter and Peter Austerfield resigned as Board members as required and were re-elected unanimously. Tom Froggatt resigned and did not feel he could continue; members present thanked him heartily for his many years of loyal service during which he inspired us all with his love of apples. Stephen Ainsleigh Rice was also elected unanimously to the Board.

### Present Board of Directors/Trustees:

Sir Andrew Large, Mike Porter, Andy Pillow, Jim Chapman, Nick Dunn, Jackie Denman, Peter Austerfield, Stephen Ainsleigh Rice.

### Management Committee:

The Management Committee has been approved by the Board. After many years of quiet efficient work, Diggory Kempton, Membership Secretary, has resigned from the Management Committee; at the AGM members expressed their fulsome thanks to him for those many years of service. Ainsleigh will take over as Membership Secretary *pro tem* until David Smith (Vice-Chair) is free from another commitment later this year. We thank Gillian Menzies for her support at Shows and appreciate her time with the Committee; we look forward to her continued support. Charlie Searl has joined the Committee: she is Community Support Officer at the Green Valley CIC and has already

made a valuable contribution to committee matters. Mike and Chris Porter have agreed to continue attending the Committee though with a reduced role.

The Management Committee has approached Marion Owen to be a co-opted member and she has agreed. Marion and her husband are stalwart members and volunteers at our shows. She is already actively engaged in committee work.

### Present Management Committee:

Peter Austerfield, Celia Kirby, Sheila Leitch, Andy Pillow, Chris Porter, Ainsleigh Rice, Charlie Searl, David Smith, Richard Wheeler, Marion Evans (co-opted).

### Our AGM Speaker

Following the formal business of the meeting, Hilary Dodson who is the chair of the Northern Fruit Group, gave us a lively and inspiring introduction to their activities — see <http://www.northernfruitgroup.com/>. Hillary described how the Northern Fruit Group was formed some years ago to assist the Northern Horticultural Society in looking after its fruit at Harlow Carr Gardens in Harrogate.

*"Subsequently, after the gardens were taken over by the RHS," explained Hilary, "we were no longer required and had to move our fruit. This led to the establishment of our teaching gardens at an allotment site in Huddersfield and at Harewood House near Leeds.*

*At the allotment site we replanted the mature cordon trees, both apples and pears. We have also planted a reference orchard of the 50 most commonly grown apple varieties, grafted onto M27 rootstock for small size and early fruiting. In addition there are some 70 other less common or unique varieties. Plums and pears are to be planted this winter. A new plot has enabled a trial to compare micorrhizal fungi, peat-free compost and fertiliser. The plot at the top of the site has fence panels against which an apricot, a peach and a fig are grown whilst the rest of the plot is used to grow vegetables. The walled garden at Harewood House had an existing orchard to which we have added espalier and step-over apple trees at bed edges. A wide range of soft fruit is grown.*

*We have a presence at shows such as the*

*Harrogate Shows, Great Yorkshire Show and Tatton Park. There is normally a competitive stand and members present to answer questions from the visitors about growing fruit.*

*Each Autumn we put on a range of Apple Days and try to name varieties brought in by the public. Having done quite a bit of work on apples, we are now turning our attention to pears."*

It was interesting to note there are monthly meets of the Group; it encourages members to put it into their diary. Should *MAN* do that too?

## The Marcher Apple Network website is changing!

Marcher Apple Network's website dates way back to 2002. Every so often, as your webmaster, I have muttered something about making significant changes to it but, for one reason or another, nothing happened. However, matters have now come to a head and there are some significant changes being made. The key impetus is that this 2015 spring newsheet will be the last to be printed and sent out.

An events diary is also included with the newsheet and that also will cease. However, the events diary is available on the website — at [www.marcherapple.net/diary.htm](http://www.marcherapple.net/diary.htm) — and that will continue to be kept up to date. It is actually one of the two most popular webpages on *MAN*'s website. (The other is the list of nurseries selling traditional varieties). If anybody wants a printed events list it will come, in future, from the website. The old events diary, when printed, left a lot to be desired and so I have been working on a more print-friendly version. As a result many changes have been made to the way the website looks, from a larger typeface to more pictures of what *MAN* does, from using *MAN*'s tree logo to more compact navigation links. Please take a look and let me have your comments on the new format.

Each of the existing pages needs reviewing before being upgraded to the new format: it is amazing what has changed over the last 12 years. I am expecting we will be adding some new pages, maybe on graftwood and apple identification and also some administrative stuff like annual reports. Do we have any Welsh speakers who can help me with a few Welsh phrases? There are a number of orcharding leaflets in Welsh on the website and it would be nice to have a proper introduction to them. Bringing the website up-to-date takes time so please bear with the website sub-committee. In fact, if you are a budding webmaster who would like to take over running the website, why not make yourself known and give it a go?

*Richard Wheeler – MAN webmaster*  
webmaster@marcherapple.net

## Social Events

First, there is going to be a Social Event for members at the Cider Museum on Saturday, 25th April, starting at 10:30. This is an opportunity to meet one another and the Committee, to look around the Museum for seeing an original

Herefordshire Pomona and (probably) a new exhibition. As a star attraction, Tom Oliver, a well-known local cider maker (and *MAN* member), has kindly agreed to give a talk on cider and perry and taste his products... and to critique your own products if you wish. It will be followed by a light lunch and more discussions. It is free to Members, though we would appreciate donations.

Second, a Visit to F P Matthews of Berrington near Tenbury Wells on Thursday 3rd September, 2015. Tour starts at 11:00. Nick Dunn, the Managing Director of F P Matthews, has kindly invited Marcher Apple Network and Gloucestershire Orchard Trust members to see around and watch operations at the UK's largest tree nursery <http://www.frankpmatthews.com/>. It will include seeing the fruit trial orchard, nursery for trees and the Tree Shop for browsing.

Location: F P Matthews Nursery, Berrington Court, Tenbury Wells WR15 8TH, is located at grid reference SO 57153 67592 (you can use <http://gridreferencefinder.com/#> to see this aerially).

Transport: Nearer the time, we'll help you make possible arrangements to pool car journeys for your journey to/from Berrington. At the Nursery, F P Matthews will drive us around in their trailer pulled by a tractor.

Facilities: Lunch room, toilets and tractor drawn trailer for moving around (little walking is required, though there are opportunities to stretch legs).

Clothing: Be prepared for rain and have sturdy footwear as grass may be wet.

Cost: tour cost per member £12.00 inclusive of lunch.

This visit is only available to Marcher Apple Network and Gloucestershire Orchard Trust members and their immediate family members. Please note that this visit is not suitable for children under the age of 16. Also dogs cannot be accommodated. There are 40 places, twenty reserved for *MAN* and GOT members until 30th April, 2015, thereafter any remaining places will be assigned to members on a waiting list. We anticipate much interest so book early! And for non-members, you can join either organisation and then apply for places.

Both *MAN* and GOT members should make reservations using the form on our website <http://www.marcherapple.net/diary.htm> or contact *MAN* secretary Mrs M Ward, 8 Nant-y-Felin, Three Cocks, Brecon, Powys LD3 0SJ. Both *MAN* and GOT members should make cheques payable to 'Marcher Apple Network' and send together with your reservation.

## Cider Interest Group

At the AGM last November Tony Malpas put forward a proposal to revive a group, open to all members, who would be interested in reviewing the current state of cider pomology, the conservation of valuable cider varieties, and cider apple ID. Twelve people signed the contact list, Regrettably, events have overtaken Tony and he no longer wishes to pursue this proposal.

## Winter pruning and grafting courses

MAN arranged two courses this winter.

- [1] A **Winter Pruning of Apple Trees** [14th February ]
- [2] Tom Adams will repeat his successful workshop on **Grafting Apple Trees** at Glasbury Village Hall on Saturday 28th February, 2015 at 10:00.

Both course were fully booked but we could probably squeeze in an extra person on the grafting course. If interested, booking forms are available at <http://www.marcherapple.net/diary.htm> or you may contact Marie Ward via [secretary@marcherapple.net](mailto:secretary@marcherapple.net)

## Organic pest and disease control

The winter and spring 2013/14 was wet and warm. It proved ideal conditions for both luxuriant apple scab and codling moth development. If you seek an organic control on either then perhaps you will be interested in the same approach as H. E. Hall and Son [http://www.hehall.co.uk/organic\\_concept\\_orchard](http://www.hehall.co.uk/organic_concept_orchard). They plant red clover between the rows for encouraging predatory insects and pollinating bumblebees. The cut is used as a mulch. Control of scab is effected by timely treatment with sulphur and potassium bicarbonate during the early growing season. They have experience of when is the best time and weather conditions to spray — clearly tricky on standard trees. Codling Moth caterpillar pest is controlled in May by hanging a pheromone mating disruption system. [Bio-degradable] soap application is used to control aphid pests and apple sucker.

## What's going on in Gloucestershire Orchard Trust

After twelve months of effort, Gloucestershire Orchard Trust is now the owner of two mature orchards at Longney, just south of the city of Gloucester. And not just these two lovely orchards, but through the generosity of the previous owners, Mr and Mrs Browning, two adjacent parcels of land: one a remnant orchard, the other old pasture, are now also in GOT ownership, bringing the total to about 18 acres.

The results of TWO appeals for funds were amazing for their success and speed, with both exceeding expectations. All who contributed gave generously, often more than once and others provided substantial resources in different ways. The Trust now begins the substantial task of bringing the orchards back into conservation and productive management. The present plan is to work with the National Perry Pear Centre at Hartpury to set up an Orchard trading company registered for VAT and with the Rural Payments Agency. This farming company will then manage both the Longney and Hartpury orchards on behalf of the owners [Gloucestershire Orchard Trust and Hartpury Heritage Trust].

Hartpury's policy has always sought to combine a responsibility to care for a part of the nation's heritage with the use of the orchards by the public for both training

and pleasure, whilst at the same time developing their conservation values. GOT plans to adopt similar aspirations — the 7 acres of existing orchards will be cared for as traditional orchard and the 6 acre remnant orchard replanted with 'standard' trees (apple, pear and plum) that have regional associations. The present idea is to use the remaining 5 acres as a 'mother' collection of local fruit varieties, both to conserve them for future generations and to be a source of graftwood for new orchards now. The Severn Way passes through the orchards, so eventually GOT plans to add information about the heritage fruit, perhaps even encouraging modest sampling [it will happen anyway!]

One, very welcome, new development is the discussions with the Marcher Apple Network to consider on what basis might our Trusts collaborate, to mutual benefit, in the future vision for the Longney land, particularly the vacant meadow. Further discussions will be taking place and we hope to have some firm proposals to put before members later in the year. This might include extending the remit of the new orchard management company to include *MAN* orchards. The company may even develop into an organisation that can speak with enhanced authority on behalf of a number of Orchard Trusts having similar objectives, while respecting each trust's individual loyalties and priorities.

## Raising a glass to traditional orchards!

Orchard enthusiasts throughout the Three Counties have been celebrating a Heritage Lottery award to the Three Counties Traditional Orchard Project. This is an orchard project with a difference — focusing on people as much as trees. Orchards need people to survive and our target is training people to become orchard 'champions', teaching them the skills needed to keep old orchards in good condition and helping them to celebrate, use and enjoy them. The project will be focus ing on key orchard areas throughout the Three Counties (initially Ross on wye, Breinton and Whitbourne in Herefordshire) and we aim to restore at least 40 old orchards over the three years of the project. We are actively looking for volunteers to help us with all aspects of the project — from identifying fruit varieties through to working in the orchards and recording orchard stories and uncovering their history. If you would like to be a part of this exciting project please contact Karen Humphries on 01684 560616 or email her on [khumphries@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:khumphries@worcestershire.gov.uk)

## Next Annual General Meeting

With our financial year end now 31st March, the Next AGM will be held earlier, on Saturday 27th June with tea and coffee available from 10:30 for a start at 11:00. However, it will still be at the Cider Museum in Hereford. Paul Davis has kindly agreed to give a talk 'All you ever wanted to know about fruit trees but were afraid to ask'. We're already queuing up to listen to and learn from him.

## Orchard News

### Planting at Paramor

There will be a planting work party of volunteers from the Cwmdu village group and *MAN* members at Paramor orchard, on 28th February\*, starting at 10.30 a.m.. A light lunch is to be arranged at the pub for all helpers.

Most of the grafted trees are destined for the small field (the 'pan-handle'). These 11 grafted trees are on MM106 rootstocks. They are mainly unidentified apples of interest brought in to shows during 2013.

\*Note: The grafting course at Glasbury is on the same day but hopefully won't affect those *MAN* helpers who would like to come to help at Paramor.

### Tredomen

After the pruning course (see page 3) we've still a lot to do, both formative and restorative work. You are welcome to join a work party, though a specific date is difficult principally because my scateurs are mad keen on the six nations. And we've just had a report of rampant rabbits gnawing at the base of quite a few trees. It's rabbit guards, dogs, myxa, or .... well you can guess. We can't ignore this threat.

Hence some dates for you to join : Saturday 21st February, Tuesday 3rd and Saturday 7th March. Please contact Ainsleigh (membsec@marcherapple.net) if you're raring to go.

### Lower Ffordd-fawr

In early March we'll arrange a pruning session lasting about 2 hours. If you are interested to join Drover Holidays staff and *MAN* there please do contact Ainsleigh. We've been asked to reduce the size of some of these trees as despite being on M9 rootstock they have grown quite vigorously. It'll be a rewarding event.

### Ride-on Mower

*MAN* have a Countax ride-on mower that is used for cutting grass at both Paramor and Tredomen. It is now about 10 years old, and has worked well until this last year, when the cutting deck seized. During the servicing it was found that all three bearings holding the three rotary cutters were severely corroded to the point that they would not rotate.

Consequently the drive "V" belts were heavily abraded. It would appear that during autumn time when there are many apples on the ground, the apple mulch splatters on the underside of the cutter deck, resulting in steady corrosion by malic acid of aluminium and steel in the housings and bearings. This, together with regular service and replacement of an actuator, explains why we had a bill of £880. If you also use your ride-on mower to run over apples you might like to consider washing the cutter deck underside afterwards. That isn't practicable at our orchards.

## Other matters

### Publicity article available for use

If any members would be willing to publicise Marcher Apple Network in any local magazine — Parish, or Advertiser or whatever — we have available a short account of *MAN*'s aims and activities available (some 288 words). If interested, please contact Ainsleigh at membsec@marcherapple.net.

### MAN apple juice

Come next autumn, we propose to capitalise on the produce from our orchards and turn our wonderful apples into juice for sale. Those of you who are already juicing experts know full well that this will be no mean undertaking and we will be seeking help and advice widely. However, one particular aspect of the venture is how to label the bottles. Any suggestions for designs, information on how best to proceed with printing, etc. will be much appreciated.

### Useful website?

During some of the discussion at the AGM, Mike Porter mentioned that *Lady's Finger of Bledington* was also known as *Black Gilliflower* in New York. A subsequent Google search for both names brought up the interesting website [http://food.oregonstate.edu/learn/faq/faq\\_apple6.html](http://food.oregonstate.edu/learn/faq/faq_apple6.html) which lists parenthood and families of many varieties. Might be worth a try if you are searching for more information on a particular cultivar. (Sorry to say, on this particular search, no definitive answers were forthcoming.)

### Twitter

*MAN* now has a Twitter account — do join up to keep abreast of our activities.

### Future of the New Sheet, e-mail addresses and a Survey by Telephone

As part of our plans for reducing costs and making administration easier, the Management Committee has decided that this News Sheet will be the last one to be printed on paper and posted to members. In future we will produce these and send by e-mail to those who wish to receive it and make the information available on our website.

We shall continue to produce the Newsletter '*Apples and Pears*' on paper and post that to Members