



Marcher Apple Network

Charity No: 1095 151

NEWS SHEET No. 8

Spring 2009

MAN'S CELEBRATION OF APPLE DAY October 2008

The decision to try a new venue at the Hereford Food Festival, held over two days, was felt to have been a success and the room allowed a very impressive fruit display to be appreciated by large numbers of visitors.

MAN's AGM was held later, at *The Bunch of Carrots* at Hampton Bishop, just outside Hereford, and was quite well attended. MAN members made useful contributions to discussions and, after the business, enjoyed a fascinating talk by Penny Platts on the Story of Cider Making in Herefordshire. Holding the AGM on a separate date, with another attraction to draw members to it, is still under consideration. Ideally, we would like to find a two day venue, where the display material could be set up on the Friday, the AGM be held sometime on the Saturday and all the Open Day activities continuing through the Sunday. We repeat the question asked in last year's News Sheet. Should the venue/venues, be moved around in different parts of the Marches area? Please let us know what you think, by phone, letter or email.

PRUNING COURSES

Two training courses have been arranged by the Centre for Alternative Land Use (CALU), based in Bangor, North Wales and funded by Farming Connect. They will be held at the Primrose Earth Awareness Trust (PEAT), Primrose Farm, Felindre, Three Cocks, led by MAN member, Marc Richmond. Tea/coffee and sandwiches will be provided. There will be no charge for these events. Places can be booked either by Tel. 01686-650777 or emailing calu@bangor.ac.uk Directions will be available on booking.

Thursday, 26th February. Apples.
Tuesday, 5th May. Stone fruits.

PRACTICAL ORCHARDING AT PARAMOR

Here is a chance to gain practical experience on the planting and formative pruning of young trees. Members are invited to join with the MAN committee and Marc Richmond (trained in fruit cultivation at RHS Wisley) in a planting session at MAN's new Paramor Orchard, Cwmdru, on **Saturday 28th February 2009 at 10.30am**. We hope this event will give interested members an opportunity to visit and help plant at the orchard and will be particularly useful to those thinking of planting apple trees some time in the future. It will also be an opportunity to participate in the development of MAN's own

orchard and meet other members. There will not be a charge for this event. Bring a packed lunch or there is a handy pub a few hundred yards away!

If you would like to participate please contact Sheila Leitch, Network Co-ordinator. Tel. 01497-847354 or email sileitch@tiscali.co.uk

Directions for the Paramor Orchard, Cwmdru. NGR SO 182239.

From the A40 Abergavenny to Brecon road, turn off, in a north westerly direction, up the A479. At Cwmdru village turn right up lane at the side of The Farmers Arms and drive past the church until reaching gate on left into orchard site. If approaching from the north, leave the A438 Hereford to Brecon road at Bronllys and drive past Talgarth on the new bypass along the A479 to Cwmdru, then take left turn at The Farmers Arms. For those who wish to use SatNav, the post code is NP8 1RU.

PRUNING AND PLANTING WORK PARTIES

There will be some more work party days this year at Tredomen Court, Llanfilo. Please phone Sheila if you are interested in coming and she will phone you when provisional dates are arranged as these depend on weather forecasts. After the 'June drop' there may be need for a fruit thinning day at Tredomen Court if some of the trees are heavily laden. Help will also be needed for fruit picking in the Autumn as we have several outlets for sale of named varieties. Windfalls and damaged fruit are the perks for the helpers!

SUMMER VISIT TO FRANK MATTHEWS

Once again we have been able to arrange a privileged visit to the nurseries of Frank Matthews Ltd at Tenbury Well, Worcs. This will take place on **Thursday, 23rd July 2009** and there will be a nominal charge of £10. The visit will commence at 1.30 p.m. and will last approximately three hours. Refreshments will be served before going home. Places will be limited to 50.

If you would like to see rootstock growing, nurseries, glass houses and research/mother orchards and spend time in the beautiful Worcestershire/Shropshire/Herefordshire countryside — yes, the three counties are involved — send your cheque for £10 per person to the Treasurer, Mr Tom Froggatt, Ashford Mill, Ashford Carbonel, Ludlow, SY8 4BT, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope. Joining instructions will be sent out by way of acknowledgment.

It looks as though our long hunt is over. In October Charles Martell sent samples of his version of **Ten Commandments** from an orchard near Westbury and the apples were an excellent match for Hogg's description of the apple in *The Fruit Manual* (1884). Charles also sent samples of a variety known in Gloucestershire as "**Nine of Diamonds**" which is very like a small version of **Ten Commandments** – so similar that the two varieties would be extremely difficult to differentiate.

Margaret Gill has now illustrated fruit of all 31 varieties to be included in 'Welsh Marches Pomona'. We hope that the illustration of blossom of **Ten Commandments** will be painted this spring. Last summer she made line drawings of the leaves of all the varieties.

Meanwhile, our Project Officer, Sylvia O'Brien, has been pursuing grants towards the cost of printing the book: so far the quest has been unsuccessful, and we may need to look at other ways of funding the project.

ORCHARDS OF WALES

New members may be interested to know that Liz Gentil has set up, for Glasu, a Yahoo group called Orchards of Wales. Anyone in Wales or the border counties, with an interest in orchards, can join. Visit <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/orchardofwales>. Questions can be asked and useful information can be found and exchanged.

FRUIT IDENTIFICATION

The National Orchard Forum

The Newsletters of NOF are published twice each year and Newsletter Issue 13, Winter 2008, is now out. Electronic versions of all the newsletters are available from the editor, Ann Smith, smithcovell@btinternet.com. Contents of back copies are listed on the NOF website, www.nat-orchard-forum.org.uk. Or write to Ann Smith, NOF, 109 Orchard Way, Churchdown, Gloucester, GL3 2AP. Tel. 01452-855677

Bees

Felicity Norman has kindly sent us this alert which we are sure is of interest to many members, especially beekeepers.

"Concern is growing at the accelerating decline of honeybees in this country and across the world. Farmers and other food producers, gardeners and allotment holders, as well as beekeepers, see this as a potential disaster. Not only has there been a huge drop in honey production, but many crops, fruit and other plants depend on bees for pollination.

There is much speculation as to what has caused the catastrophic decline or 'colony collapse disorder', climate change, infestation of varroa mite or pesticides, or maybe a combination of these, being put forward as possible causes of the devastation.

It has been accepted in parts of Europe that a group of pesticides known as Neonicotinoids are implicated in killing honeybees and, as a result, they are banned in Germany, France, Italy and Slovenia, where as many as two-thirds of honeybee populations have been wiped out. The Soil Association in this country and Dr Charles Benbrook, Chief Scientist at the US Organic Centre, and former Executive Director of the US National Academy of Sciences Agriculture Board, have also called for these pesticides

Autumn 2008

The identification panel of MAN was again kept very busy. We started with a training course at 'The Harp' (23.09.08) — designed to brush-up the skills of our committee members. This paid dividends, resulting in an additional three helpers at our subsequent sessions. The panel was also greatly aided by a very useful computer program devised and demonstrated by MAN member John Savidge.

As will be seen from the summary below, this was our busiest autumn since 2004. After the Church Stretton Apple Fair we came home with 112 samples to examine — having already identified 70 at the event! A handful of varieties, mainly from Shropshire, have been grafted for further study in our Museum Orchards.

	2008	2007
Identification panel meetings	7	10
Events at which MAN offered identification	10	10
Total identification sessions	20	20
MAN hours involved	330	240
Number of varieties identified	460	354

Our thanks to the Committee Members who spent many hours puzzling over specimens and particularly Richard and Sally Cheshire who identified the cider fruits. We are also grateful to Sheila Leitch, who hosted the panel meetings at Glasbury.

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to be banned. The EU has recently listed 22 ingredients to be banned under a new agreement, but Neonicotinoids are not included, although it has been confirmed that they intend to pay attention to the effects of certain products on bees.

I have written to the Secretary of State, Hillary Benn, calling on the Government to ban the use of Neonicotinoids in this country, and also calling for the reinstatement of proper funding for research into honeybee health, as beekeepers report colony losses of up to 90% in some areas."

If you would like to support these requests, please write to: The Rt Hon Hillary Benn, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, DEFRA, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, LONDON SW1P 3JR
Felicity Norman

Other snippets

Would members please remember that we need at least three specimens of fruit when you bring or send material for identification.

Articles wanted for the next Newsletter

The next issue, No. 3, of our new magazine-style newsletter *Apples & Pears* (as opposed to this News Sheet) will be issued in the summer. Please send items to the Editor, Celia Kirby, 1 Kingswood Road, Kington, HR5 3HE, by letter or email (celia.kirby@btinternet.com) by **1st June 2009** at the latest, so that the publication is out in good time to give notice of all the Autumn apple events.

If you would like to place an advert in the Newsletter please contact Tom Froggatt (Tel. 01584 831650) to discuss size

Coming Apple Events

Further information will appear in *Apples & Pears*, Volume 2, No. 3, (due out in the summer) but advance notice of some dates may be useful to avoid clashes. Dates for the AGM and MAN's Apple Day Event have still to be arranged. Further information is also available on our website, <http://www.marcherapple.net/diary.htm>. Where MAN has a stand, there will be an apple display, books and CDs for sale, and an identification service will be provided (three typical specimens of each variety please) and pomological advice available. Help is required at all events. Free tickets provided. Please phone Tom Froggatt on 01584-831650, or Sheila Leitch

Saturday, 18th April. British Beekeepers Convention at Stoneleigh. Details from Tom Froggatt. See above.

Saturday/Sunday, 2nd/3rd May 'The Big Apple' Blossomtime. Walks & Cider Tasting at Much Marcle, Hfds. Details from Jackie Denman. Tel. 01531-670544.

Wednesday, 13th May. Annual International Cider and Perry competition. Open to local competitors. For further information contact The Cider Museum. Tel. 01432-354207.

Saturday/Sunday, 16th/17th May. Smallholder and Garden Weekend at Royal Welsh Showground, Llanelwedd, Powys.

Friday/Saturday/Sunday, 23rd/24th/25th May. Wales Welsh Perry and Cider Festival at the Clytha Arms, Abergavenny. Ciders will be on sale from several European countries, together with regional food and live music. Details from Alan Golding. Tel. 01873-8402066 or from website www.welshcider.co.uk.

Saturday/Sunday, 29th/30th August. Black Mountains Festival, Talgarth, Powys. MAN will be in the Cattle Market on the Sunday. Display of early apples & identification of ripe early varieties. Tastings and fruit for sale. Details from Sheila Leitch.

Sunday, 13th September. Entertainment under the Apples at Penlanole, near the Vulcan Arms, south of Rhayader, Powys. Please note that for safety reasons, the approach will be to the back of the farm and will be sign-posted from the A470. For details Tel. 01597-811487.

Saturday/Sunday, 26th/27th September. Autumn Show at Three Counties Showground, Malvern.

Saturday/Sunday, 26th/27th September. Apple Weekend at Berrington Hall, nr. Leominster. Details from Head Gardener, Nick Winney. Tel. 01568-610593.

Thursday, 1st October. Trumpet Ploughing Match & West of England Fruit Show, at Green Farm, Felton, near Burley Gate, Herefordshire, where A465 Hereford to Bromyard Road crosses the A417, Leominster to Ledbury Road. Details

from Mrs J. Eversham. Tel. 01531- 890447.

Saturday/Sunday, 3rd/4th October. Wyre Forest seed gathering, 11am to 4pm. Gather seeds to shape the landscape of the future, bring apples to be identified and pressed and join in lots of other activities suitable for the whole family. Free. No booking required. Tel. Liz Bunney. 01299-266929.

Saturday, 10th October. Apple Day at The Greenwood Centre, Coalbrookdale. Apple display and tasting. Contact Michael Pooley. Tel. 01952-433632.

Saturday/Sunday, 10th/11th October. 'The Big Apple'. For further details of talks, demonstrations and other events, phone the Secretary, Jackie Denman. Tel. 01531-670544.

Saturday, 17th October. Leominster Apple Fair. At Lion Ballroom, Broad Street. Details from Felicity Norman, Tel. 01568-780886.

Saturday, 17th October. Tenbury Apple Festival begins, lasting a week. Details from Tom Froggatt.

Saturday/Sunday, 17th/18th October. Cidermaking Festival at the Cider Museum, Ryelands Street, Hereford. For more details, contact the Cider Museum. Tel. 01432-354207.

Wednesday, 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. Web Site: www.commonground.org.uk

Saturday, 24th October. Birmingham Botanical Gardens Apple Day, Pumpkin Show & Conservation Day. Contact Linda Keene. Tel. 01214- 541860.

Saturday/Sunday 24/25th October. Flavours of Herefordshire Food Festival. At Hereford race course. For further details Tel. 01432-260621.