



Marcher Apple Network

# APPLES & PEARS

## AFALAU A PÊR

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Autumn 2011



*Thomas Andrew Knight, FRS*  
1759-1838

*President, Horticultural Society, 1811*

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

[www.marcherapple.net](http://www.marcherapple.net)

# HYITO



MAN members don't need reminding that orchards are worth celebrating as a vital part of the heritage of this part of the UK. But that's not to belittle the excellent **Herefordshire Year In The Orchard** project being organised by Herefordshire Council. There is plenty of publicity around, with leaflets in libraries and museums and the excellent web site [www.yearintheorchard.org](http://www.yearintheorchard.org) is a handy link to see what's on locally.

Having benefitted myself from the tree-planting grants available when setting up my orchard some years ago, I was delighted to see that a 'Fruit Tree Initiative' is being continued under HYITO whereby selected fruit trees (7 apple,

2 cherry and 2 quince varieties, on either M25 or M6 rootstocks) are being offered at discount prices.

*Editor*

## Which apple ?

As 2011 is the 'Herefordshire Year in the Orchard' it seems very appropriate that the Hereford Cathedral Close Project should incorporate in the pavement leading up to the West Door of the cathedral, a mosaic featuring an apple tree bearing 12 varieties of apple. The Dean, Michael Tavinor, and his helpers must be congratulated for bringing together so many symbols of Hereford city and county in this creative enterprise. The mosaic is to be unveiled on October 15th – which day promises to be exceedingly busy in the apple events calendar for our area this year.

The Apple Tree Carol (Jesus Christ the Apple Tree) which inspired the idea, demonstrates the project's wide influences. The design has an apple tree within a circle of stones which will be engraved, "The Tree of Life my soul hath seen, Laden with fruit and always green; The trees of nature fruitless be Compared with Christ the apple tree": words written in 1784 by Joshua Smith of New Hampshire, USA. Herefordshire Council has an apple as its motif, for orchards are an integral part of its landscape, past and present and, with cider-making surging forward, of its future too.

There is much to ponder as various links dawn on an observer studying the design. In the mosaic the tree's roots are connected to the circle of the universe. In the structure of its branches the Cross of Christ, the Crown of Thorns, and even the architecture of the cathedral, may be discerned, and there are 12 apples on the branches – 12 different varieties which represent the 12 Apostles.

So what of these 12 apples? Each is named, but their selection must have been difficult!

The designer has chosen names of apples to symbolise various aspects or attributes of the Cathedral (the mother church of the area), the diocese of Hereford, the city and county and the occupations of some of its inhabitants. Mother, Chorister Boy, Gloria Mundi, Ten Commandments, Rev. W. Wilks, are apple variety names chosen for their association with Hereford Cathedral. St. Lawrence and Shropshire Pippin (better known as King of the Pippins) are names to bring in the northern extent of the Hereford diocese, which stretches as far as Ludlow. St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music together with Chorister Boy, recalls the sounds enjoyed within the cathedral walls and the link with the Three Choirs Festival. St. Cecilia is an apple raised in neighbouring Monmouthshire.

Cider, the traditional liquor from Herefordshire apples, is remembered by Foxwhelp and Bulmer's Norman. The pomologist Thomas Andrew Knight believed Foxwhelp to be a native of Herefordshire. Another source says it was found growing near a fox's earth in the Forest of Dean. In either case it was known and valued in the 17th Century by Herefordshire cider-makers for blending and giving strength to the brew. Bulmer's Norman was found to be a vigorous grower, useful as a stembuilder, after Bulmer had imported it as un-named propagating material from Normandy at the

beginning of the 20th Century. Now it can be found in orchards throughout the West Country. Perhaps Bramley has been chosen because its name is recognised universally for its qualities as a sturdy grower and an excellent cooking apple. It also travels well!

However, what of the only apple of the 12 with the prefix "Herefordshire"? Herefordshire Costard is no longer in cultivation and early in 2011 it was suggested to the project managers that an apple which is still in existence might be substituted. Herefordshire Quoining was proposed as an alternative as it can still be found in old orchards around the county and young trees are readily available to those who would like to grow a local dessert apple. So at the moment we are waiting to hear whether MAN's suggestion has been taken up.

Whatever the outcome, the mosaic packed with wide-reaching significance, will be a lovely addition to the Cathedral Close. Much care has been taken in the choice of materials – Forest of Dean sandstone, hard-wearing granite and colourful porphyry having been selected for the 12 apples. At the beginning of the 21st Century the pavement with its visionary mosaic will provide Hereford with a wonderful heirloom.

**Chris Porter**

## What's on?

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

[www.marcherapple.net/diary.htm](http://www.marcherapple.net/diary.htm)

contains the most up to date information

# Notes from the Chairman

Writing these notes for the Newsletter in the last days of June, as always, puts me in a dilemma. With a year to look back on and perhaps a look at the future with so many events, meetings and developments, some selection is necessary. However, any gaps are usually filled by my committee colleagues.

We are unlikely to cap, this year, the event of 2010, the publication of our '*Welsh Marches Pomona*'. I can record steady sales from various outlets and some bookshops have requested second or third batches for sale and display. Our CDs '*The Herefordshire Pomona*' and '*Vintage Fruit*' are still selling, with stocks of the first now getting fairly low. We are considering a further pressing this year. Our '*Apples of the Welsh Marches*' remains the most successful publication and is now in its third printing. All these publications are a tribute to the authors, illustrators, software and graphic designers who produce them and to committee members who steer such works to the final product. This year is the first time in about a decade that we haven't had a major project in hand. Perhaps we deserve a well earned rest but it would not surprise me if one of our number came up with a new idea.

As a committee we are aware that we can always improve our skills and knowledge to help us run the Network more efficiently. Over the year a number of committee members have attended short training courses run by the Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO), ranging from Management Skills to Funding and Report Writing. We will continue to explore any courses which might bring benefits to our work.

At the AGM in December we were fortunate that Tony Pain joined us as a committee member and he was soon appointed Communications and Publicity Officer as we were aware of gaps in our efforts to publicise MAN more effectively and to be in closer contact with the membership. Tony comes to us from a Royal Navy and business background.

Our treasurer will be dealing with matters financial but I would mention our continuing success at getting funding from Environment Wales through the efforts of our Project Officer, Sylvia O'Brien. We have received a substantial four figure sum over the year to help planting at the Paramor Orchard along with fencing, hedging and drainage work on the site. Bat

boxes have been made with the children of Cwmdru Primary School for the copse and a number of wildlife surveys have been carried out. We have also added to our equipment list to help with orchard maintenance. We are very grateful to Environment Wales for their support.

Our 'Forward Planning' meetings are still continuing where we try to look at the 'bigger picture' about what we do, where we want to go and how best to go about it. We have also improved our calendar arrangements to help us look further ahead when planning our activities.

Mentioning the calendar brings me to some future events. This autumn promises to be one of the busiest yet. As well as running our regular events there is also the Herefordshire Year in the Orchard (HYITO). This Council-backed programme celebrates, among other things, the bicentenary of the publication of Thomas Andrew Knight's '*Pomona Herefordiensis*' in 1811, the same year as he became President of what was to become the RHS. Two hundred years later we have another Herefordian, Elizabeth Banks, as the President. There is a programme of events throughout the year, from blossom time to harvest and to

yuletide. The Marcher Apple Network will be supporting some of these events and details of the programme can be obtained from [www.yearintheorchard.org](http://www.yearintheorchard.org).

My thanks, as always, to our hard working committee and membership for continuing support. We hope to see as many members as possible at our next AGM in December 2011 and we look forward to meeting member volunteers at some of our events.

Peter Austerfield

## Miscellany

- Good news from the Brogdale Horticultural Trust that Defra have agreed to the repropagation of the national apple collection. The graftwood has now been cut and despatched to a professional nursery (not in the UK, unfortunately) for grafting onto M9 rootstock.
- An interesting snippet on grafting: we learn that both Tom Adams (see Apples & Pears Vol 2, No. 3) and Cormac Griffiths (Irish Seed Savers) have both successfully grafted pears onto hawthorn.

## Marcher Apple Network Accounts for year ended 31.07.10

EXPENDITURE		INCOME	
Events	30.73	Subscriptions	1216.00
Library & equipment	1256.99	Life members	400.00
Orchard maintenance & equipment	1196.36	Apple IDs	749.00
Purchase of trees	283.50	Bank interest	174.26
Committee admin. + expenses	1069.35	Donations & Gift Aid	111.37
Newsletters	566.69	Pomona project	1197.77
Misc. payments	1366.21	Purchase/sale books	1268.93
Paramor Orchard	4067.74	Speaker fees	105.00
		Misc. receipts	1547.36
Surplus for year	4238.12	Grants	7306.00
	14075.69		14075.69

### BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31.07.10

LIABILITIES		ASSETS	
Unused Paramor Grant	7306.00	Publications at cost	13038.00
Accumulated fund	64396.11	Orchard equipment at cost	
		less 20% p.a.	1200.00
		Planting and exhibition materials	1065.00
		Library & reference books	
		& equipment	2360.00
		Land at cost + improvements	36000.00
		Bank balances	17639.11
	71702.11		71702.11

# Orchard gleanings

## Identification 2010

Reflecting the excellent harvest, 2010 was a bumper year for apple identification, bringing the heaviest crop since 2004 with 545 fruit samples to examine and try to name! Most of the samples appeared at shows, Chepstow Apple Day being our busiest event where we investigated 114 bags of fruit. The biennial Apple Fair at Church Stretton was also hectic, with 60 lots being determined. Our busy season began in September with the arrival by post of another consignment from Marc Richmond — two large boxes containing 38 carefully selected and documented bags of apples from the historic allotment gardens at St. Ann's, Nottingham. The parcel included several early dessert apples such as *Owen Thomas*, *Epicure* and *James Grieve*, together with some fine examples of *Emperor Alexander* — an impressive exhibition variety — and a possible *Northern Spy*.

Some of our most challenging puzzles were encountered at Chepstow where some enormous highly coloured and much treasured *Peasgood Nonsuch* were rivalled by another set of huge shiny red apples which defied determination. These were as big as well-grown *Bramleys* and had conspicuous star-shaped lenticels similar to those sported by *Red Chatley* and, like that variety, the apples were said to keep well until late Spring. A sample which followed bore some resemblance to *Guelph*, but did not quite match.

At the Big Apple event at Much Marcle a box of 16 varieties from Wroughton near Swindon included more puzzles; in particular, a type of *Sops-in-wine* apple with red-suffused flesh, and a large, late-keeping apple which resembled *Upton Pyne*. During the winter, scions were collected from trees of the unknown varieties so that they can be cultivated for further study in one of the *MAN* orchards.

Some apples from Orleton brought to the Leominster Apple Fair seem to match *Marged Nicolas*, if the identification is confirmed, it will be the first time that old trees of that variety have been found growing outside Wales.

## Thomas Andrew Knight's 'lost' apples

Thomas Andrew Knight was born at Wormsley Grange, near Tillington, in Herefordshire, in 1759. After his marriage to Frances Felton in 1791, the family settled at Elton Manor near Ludlow. In 1809 they moved to Downton Castle, which had been built a few years earlier by his elder brother Richard Payne Knight.

Many of T.A.Knight's new varieties were named after his homes or those of his friends.

A special project for *MAN* in 2011, the bi-centenary of the publication of *Pomona Herefordiensis*, is to try to find at least one of Thomas Andrew Knight's apple varieties no longer in cultivation. Knight was President of the London Horticultural Society from 1811 until his death in 1838. He was reputedly the first person to breed new varieties of known parentage; in a controlled scientific way he raised new varieties of many sorts of fruits and vegetables, from potatoes to strawberries, including at least 21 varieties of apples.

Only four of his apples are still cultivated: *Bringewood Pippin*, *Downton Pippin*, *Onibury Pippin* and *Yellow Ingestrie*, and trees of these varieties are growing in the *MAN* Paramor Orchard. Hunting for varieties about which little or nothing is known, such as *Knight's No. 1* or *Knight's Large*, would be a waste of time. Detailed descriptions of 9 of the 17 'lost' varieties of apples can be found in the archives so we are focussing on five of these which were cookers or eaters.

### *Downton Nonpareil*

This variety, first recorded in 1831, is described by Hogg in his *Fruit Manual* (ed. 5, 1884) as a small, flat-round, greenish-yellow apple with extensive patches of russet. It had a small, closed eye, with erect-convergent sepals, set

in a wide, shallow basin. Contrariwise, the only illustration we have, in *The Herefordshire Pomona*, shows an apple with a large open eye with reflexed sepals. Both accounts agree that it was a very late dessert apple with crisp yellow flesh that was sweet but briskly flavoured. *Downton Nonpareil* was listed in the catalogue of J.C. Wheeler and Sons, a nursery at Gloucester, but does not seem to have been recorded since Victorian times.

### *Knight's Lemon Pippin* (synonym *Downton Lemon Pippin*)

No illustration has been found, but there is a fairly detailed description in Hogg's *Fruit Manual*. It was a small, round, greenish-yellow apple with a sprinkling of grey russet, and had a closed eye with erect-convergent sepals. The stalk was often deflected sideways by a fleshy lip on one side, in the manner of *Kerry Pippin*. The apple was sweet and juicy when ripe in late autumn but shrivelled before Christmas. This variety also seems to have fallen out of favour by the end of the 19th century.

### *Red Ingestrie*

Unlike the two previous apples, the parentage of this variety is recorded. It was raised about 1800 by crossing *Orange Pippin* and *Golden Pippin*, the latter providing the pollen. The same cross produced *Yellow Ingestrie*. Indeed, Knight wrote in 1811, when he sent grafts of



Pages from the *Herefordshire Pomona* showing Spring Grove Codlin, Wormsley Pippin (uppermost page, centre left and bottom), Downton Nonpareil and Red Ingestrie (top and centre left, page below).



both new varieties to the Horticultural Society, that they “sprang from two seeds of the same Apple, which occupied the same cell”. The fruit of *Red Ingestrie* was small, of a regular ovate or oblong shape, and with an open eye and a short, slender stalk. When ripe in October, the fruit was golden-yellow, with an orange-red flush and faint red stripes. Coloured illustrations which appeared in the *Pomological Magazine* (1828–30) and *The Herefordshire Pomona* show that it closely resembled *King of the Pippins*. Victorian pomologists considered *Red Ingestrie* a dessert apple of the highest quality, the 1894 catalogue of the Worcester nursery of Richard Smith and Company describing it as small and delicious, but in 1920 Edward Bunyard commented that the variety was “now rarely met with”. No later references have been found. Ingestrie Hall in Staffordshire was the home of the Earl Talbot.

#### **Spring Grove Codlin**

Sir Joseph Banks first brought this apple to notice in a paper read to the Horticultural Society on 3rd April 1810. In early September 1809, Knight had sent Sir Joseph a box of ripe *Spring Grove Codlins* and the baronet had been much impressed by their culinary quality. “All who tasted the pye, agreed, they had not met with any autumn Apple which, for baking could be compared to this new one”. The apple also filled another gap in the market of gastronomic delights. “Mr. Knight informs me, that it is ready for use in the month of July, at a season when London Geese are probably better than any other, but when the old English Accompaniment of Apple sauce was not, till Mr. Knight furnished us with this Apple, possible to be obtained;”

An illustration of *Spring Grove Codlin*, which accompanied this paper, showed a fairly large, rather irregular, conical apple with a slightly russeted greenish-yellow skin, tinged with orange-red. There are descriptions of the apple in various Victorian apple books and an illustration was included in *The Herefordshire Pomona*. The original paper mentioned a feature which, surprisingly, was omitted from later accounts: “...it [the codlin] proves to be of the Burr Apple kind, and may be accordingly propagated by cuttings without difficulty”. This is a characteristic of several Welsh varieties such as *Pig-yr-wydd*.

*Spring Grove Codlin* was named after the home of Sir Joseph Banks near Hounslow in Middlesex. Many years later, Knight's eldest daughter, Frances, recalled a family visit to Spring Grove in 1808, when Sir Joseph was suffering from gout. Her brother hauled his wheelchair around the garden while the baronet regaled the children with an account of his voyages around the world with Captain Cook.

*Spring Grove Codlin* was probably superseded as an early cooking apple at the start of the 20th century. It was not included in E.A. Bunyard's *Handbook of Hardy Fruits* (1920) or shown in the RHS 'Apples and Pears' Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in 1934. Until recently there was an apple called *Spring Grove Codlin* in the National Fruit Collections at Brogdale, but it was misnamed and has, consequently, been left out of *The New Book of Apples* by Morgan and Richards.

#### **Wormsley Pippin (synonym Knight's Codlin)**

In 1811 Knight sent grafts of this variety to the Horticultural Society. William Hooker, who

engraved and coloured the plates for *Pomona Herefordiensis*, included an illustration of *Wormsley Pippin* in his *Pomona Londinensis* (1818) and there were descriptions of the variety in several apple books written in the 19th century. According to *The Herefordshire Pomona* it was Knight's favourite apple and the best he ever produced.

The early illustrations show a large, broad, angular fruit with obtuse ridges on the sides which terminated in prominent bosses around the apex, so that the open eye was set in a deep, furrowed basin. In September the apples ripened to a golden-yellow, with a brownish tinge on the sunny side, and there were conspicuous dark spots (lenticels). The flesh was yellow, with a rich, aromatic flavour. Hogg concluded his account in the Fruit Manual by writing in a footnote “As a culinary apple it is not to be surpassed; and even in the dessert when well ripened...it ought to be cultivated in every garden, however small.” Despite such accolades, the variety clearly declined in popularity and was dropped from local nursery catalogues early in the 20th century. E.A. Bunyard (1920) commented “Seldom grown now” and the sample shown at the Crystal Palace Exhibition (1934) appears to have been misnamed. However, H.V. Taylor included an account of Wormsley Pippin in his book “*The Apples of England*” (1936). There are several impostors in cultivation but the true *Wormsley Pippin* still awaits re-discovery.

During the autumn we will be on the lookout for Thomas Andrew Knight's “lost” apples and we would welcome any information about them from members of MAN.

**Mike Porter**

## **News of MAN Orchards**

### **Westhope Orchard**

Not a good year for fruit this year with most of the trees showing only very modest crops. Poor croppers include *Stoke Edith Pippin*, *Scotch Bridget*, *Prince Alfred* and *Sam's Crab*. There are some fair crops on *Duke of Devonshire*, *Newland Sack* and *Lady's Finger of Hereford*. One or two others are good, for example, *Domino* and *Severn Bank*.

Deer have always been a problem at Westhope and the trees are in protective enclosures. However, now that they are approaching 20 years old they are of considerable size and reach well beyond any protection, at least for the lower branches. This means that most

of the ends of branches are either broken or nibbled off at the lower levels. Plenty remains above though.

The leaning trees are still leaning, their tilt caused by a combination of the way they have grown, towards the light in one case, and I now suspect that the considerable amount of rabbit activity might also have contributed to their state. At some stage soon some branches may have to come off one tree to relieve the trunk.

### **Tredomen Court**

Autumn 2010 saw a light crop of apples, so in Feb. this year we made a determined effort

to try to improve the physical health of the trees and carry on with the pruning scheme already started.

Feb. 26th was a good day for the work-party of 17 enthusiastic helpers. MAN members, together with 5 energetic folk belonging to Hay-on-Wye Transition group got on well together and put in a good day's work. A MAN member's family with two young sons seemed to relish the experience of clearing branches, chopping them up for firewood and being generally helpful. We also took the opportunity to replace labels, posts and ties and to remove dead trees.

The apple trees have responded well to the pruning and the extra light and air resulting from the taming of the northern boundary hedge and bigger trees. So much so that we have had a small work-party in mid-July thinning apples on the larger, older trees, which should help improve fruit quality. Perhaps there will be fruit from Tredomen for sale this autumn!

Both work days have been very rewarding for the orchard and also I think for the participants. We get the jobs done (more-or-less!) but have time to relax and enjoy the company too over lunch at the Honey Café.

Bryn Davies, who has mown the orchard for a number of years, has had to retire and we are very grateful for all his input and dedication. We warmly welcome Bryn's successor, Ted Williams.

A rare bramble, St. Bilo's blackberry (*Rubus biloensis*), has turned up in the orchard this summer. It was first found and described from bushes found growing around the village of Llanfilo, about a mile away.

**Chris Porter**

## Croft Pendarren

This orchard at Llangynidr featured in a 'case study' in the Powys orchard survey report put together by Chloe Ward and the Dyfi Seed Savers group, supported by money from GLASU. The orchard continues to prosper and last autumn most of the older trees had good fruit which was useful for our displays at the shows. Rather less fruit than usual has set this year, due perhaps to the hot and dry spring weather.

A lot of thought and effort is needed when trying to maintain a wildlife-friendly traditional orchard. This year the hedges have been trimmed back and some of the blackthorn suckers and brambles halted to allow the bluebells to spread along the banks. However, Indian Balsam plants have spread in from the river bank below and although the bees enjoy the flowers we are developing stricter methods of cutting, to control this invader. Bracken poses a persistent problem, but as the areas around the apple trees are being kept clear, this should help daunt its advance.

The blackcaps were back again this spring, nesting in the patch of scrub next to Marged Nicolas. Mistletoe has yet to colonise the apple trees here, but it is still hanging on to its hazel bush under an old oak.

**Chris Porter**

## Lower Ffordd-fawr

This small nursery orchard has cropped very well this year. Most of the 40 young trees are bearing fruit and many required thinning to avoid branches breaking. This was done on a visit in late July. The plot had been recently strimmed. Following the severe winter, there has been no aphid damage, nor have leaves been nibbled by caterpillars, as has happened in a number of orchards this year, including Tredomen Court. The orchard would benefit from summer pruning.

**Sheila Leitch**

## Paramor Orchard

This year marks the end of our works programme for the orchard with all fencing of boundaries and hedge planting having been completed. We also employed a contractor to carry out a drainage project at the far end of the site where it was felt that the land was too wet to plant apple trees. Another area of damp grassland has been left, however, for its wild flower interest.

The main job of planting up the orchard continues steadily with 38 more trees planted at a very enjoyable volunteer day in January. This brings the total up to well over 100 with room for probably three or four times as many again. Look out for dates for next year's volunteer planting day as we have more than 50 different trees being grafted and will need plenty of help with planting! We should like to see plenty of *MAN* members joining in with

people from the local community. As well as the main planting area where all trees are full standards on M25 rootstock, we have a small 'pan handle' area where unknown varieties collected by us are grafted on dwarf rootstock. These will fruit much more quickly enabling us to identify them as soon as possible.

Environmental surveys have continued throughout the year. Local mycologists Mike and Shelley Stroud make frequent visits to study and record fungi while our own Mike Porter carries out botanical surveys, his latest report including no fewer than 20 different varieties of dandelion!

April to November is the time for moths and during this period Sue Furber of Brecknock Wildlife Trust and local enthusiast Chris Evans carry out regular trappings in both the copse and grassland areas. This involves setting up a trap with a fluorescent light in the evening and getting up at the crack of dawn to identify and record what has been found before releasing them. So far over 100 different species have been found.



*Moth survey helpers from Cwmdru school: species found included 'Green Arches' (above) and 'Pale Brindled Beauty' below*



Children from Cwmdy primary school joined in with a recent trapping session. They helped set the trap during an afternoon but weren't expected to get up early. Instead Sue and Chris had dismantled the trap and taken the moths to the school where the children could

look at them through magnifying glasses and find out more about them. A couple of months earlier, MAN volunteers helped the children build bat boxes which have now been installed in the copse.

Sylvia O'Brien



## Current members of the MARCH APPLE NETWORK Committee

Siir Andrew Large.....	President
Ray Boddington.....	Hon. Vice President, Director & Trustee
Dr Peter Austerfield.....	Chairman & Director & Trustee
Tom Froggatt.....	Company Secretary, Treasurer & Trustee
Mike Porter.....	Director & Trustee
Diggory Kempton.....	Membership Secretary
Dr Celia Kirby.....	Editor
Sheila Leitch.....	Network Coordinator & Librarian
Sylvia O'Brien.....	Projects
Tony Pain.....	Publicity & Communications
Chris Porter.....	Archivist
Richard Wheeler.....	Vice Chairman & Webmaster
Marie Ward.....	Secretary

## My favourite apple

**Richard Wheeler, MAN Vice Chairman and Web Master, gives his reasons for his choice of *Mère de Ménage*.**

When we were looking for somewhere to live in Herefordshire my wife would come over to "do a recce" on possible properties. One day she came across with a shortlist of two — a barn conversion with six acres of cider orchard, and an old vicarage. Needless to say that we were

moving to Herefordshire to make cider so I had strong hopes that we had found somewhere suitable. However, my wife dismissed the barn conversion but I was, nonetheless, called upon to catch the Hereford train. After looking over the vicarage we wandered round the gardens.

A woodpecker flew into a rather old and decrepit apple tree. That convinced us and the vicarage it now is.

Over a year later we were able to gather apples from that old tree. Large flattened apples with a very large open eye — the sort you feel you could poke your finger right into. The skin was bright mauve over a yellow base and the apples cooked to a mush. (Joan Morgan in *The Book of Apples* says they "cook to a purée" and are good for Apple Charlotte). I took one along to the MAN AGM and Show held that year at Bodenham Village Hall. This is the first and only time I have identified an apple and it was *Mère de Ménage*. The following year at the MAN AGM

Paul Davis arrived with a *Mère de Ménage* on MM106 rootstock. So I bought that for the orchard I was planting as I thought the old tree would not last much longer. Indeed, a few years later we had the tree surgeon round. One task was to remove a large branch from the old *Mère de Ménage* to balance its shape. The night before he arrived there was a strong storm and the other half of the tree fell off. You can see what a poor state it was in from the photograph. We now have just a tall stump from which we hang nuts for the woodpeckers (who nested in a flowering cherry this year).

Paul's *Mère de Ménage* is now a reasonably large tree. I find the growth a bit whippy and the heavy apples weigh the branches down. They get lower and lower as the fruits get bigger and bigger, making it harder to mow the grass underneath. These fruits are not so noticeably flattened as the old ones and are more ribby in appearance. The bright mauve is more dull in colour with some grey shading to it, making me think of the hodden grey kilts of the London Scottish regiment. I hope the lovely distinctive colours will become more prominent as the tree matures. The illustration in *"The Herefordshire Pomona"* (which you can see on The Herefordshire Pomona CD) appears midway between my old and new apples but the description "A beautiful and valuable culinary apple of first rate quality" is spot on.



# Developments in DNA techniques

Hartpury Heritage Trust holds a Plant Heritage NCCPG National Collection of perry pears, which now comprises 134 different varieties. This was established a few years ago, initially from the Malvern collection of some 70 varieties. The National Fruit Collection at Brogdale contains 20 varieties. **Jim Chapman** describes how the modern technique of DNA analysis is helping to sort out some anomalies

Last year we commissioned East Malling Research Centre to provide a DNA analysis of the collection. We now have the results, which will eventually provide a definitive profile from which the identity of any tree may be determined – if it is a recognised variety.

## The results so far

We are still analysing these, but the following cautions have come to light for anyone who has recently planted any perry pears:

- A number of varieties supplied by Scotts of Merriott, Somerset are incorrect. Some of these were presumably errors — *Barnet* supplied as *Gin*, *Hendre Huffcap* supplied as *Yellow Huffcap* and also as *Judge Amphlett*, but more worryingly a number (such as *Hellens Early*) do not correspond with varieties bearing the same name in the National Fruit Collection. Scotts, before they closed, said that all their trees originated from Long Ashton, so are theirs correctly named or are those at the National Fruit Collection at Brogdale? Critical comparison with published descriptions should resolve this.

- The *Red Longdon* in the National Collection at Malvern is not correct. It is probably the same variety as *Brookhill* (also at Malvern), which was once thought to be a synonym of *Red Longdon*. DNA analysis has shown it to be a unique variety. A correct *Red Longdon* has been sourced and is in the Hartpury collection, but scions are not yet available.

- The look-alike Rock at Wick Court, Arlingham identified as a virus-free Rock by Ray Williams of Long Ashton, is in fact a unique variety in its own right.

- The Coppy at Malvern is incorrect being a Thorn

- One Early Griffin at Malvern is in fact Nailer. The other was not analysed, but appears to be correctly named

- Ducksbarn at Malvern would appear to be Butter pear

- A number of trees at Malvern (and consequently at Hartpury having been propagated from those at Malvern) are not the named variety, but Old Home, which was used as stem-builder. Clearly the original graft failed.

The results emphasise the need always to check the identity of any tree visually by comparing the fruit with existing written descriptions. The disadvantage is the delay before the tree fruits. Beware that the fruit of a young tree is not always typical of the mature variety

Inevitably research of this nature throws up a number of problematic genotypes and other issues, which we are now seeking to

resolve. The next stage will be to consider the characteristics of the different genotypes as revealed by analysis of the juice, building on and extending the results already published by Long Ashton Research Station (Luckwill and Pollard 1963) and other sources. The industry and others will then be able to utilise this information as a pre-breeding resource to develop crosses to produce new perry cultivars, to introduce pest or disease resistance into the perry germplasm and for many other purposes.

There are over 100 varieties of perry pear, but today only a few are used for perry – what gems remain to be rediscovered. A variety that produces vintage quality juice when planted in some soils may be indifferent in others.

Before any conclusions are drawn from the analysis, it will be necessary to re-sample trees, to check others in the collections and to resolve any differences with named trees in the National Fruit collection, but eventually the Hartpury orchard will provide a nucleus from which material can be provided to propagate any known variety – but plant a pip and you have created a new perry pear for experts to argue over!

**Jim Chapman**



Hartpury  
Orchard  
Centre



# Self sufficiency — a pipe-dream?

In August 2005 my wife Elizabeth and I were awarded a two-year contract to act as orchard consultants to the Perllannau Powys Project under the Glasu LEADER + Programme.

This was one of a number of environmental initiatives aimed at helping to regenerate the rural economy of Powys. For the project we were known as the 'Orchard Doctors'. So that we could be recognized at public events, we had produced for us green rugby shirts with the words ORCHARD DOCTOR emblazoned in white across the front and back.

When we attended our first apply day event at Penlanole in Philip Bowen's beautiful old orchard, a visitor noticed the wording on our shirts. He was really impressed that Philip had planned everything down to the last detail, considering every aspect of 'Health & Safety' such that he had even brought in

special orchard doctor medical experts in case someone was taken ill or injured during the event!

There were a number of strands to our contract. Amongst others, we had to produce a range of technical leaflets on orchard topics, undertake survey work in 30 orchards across the county and run training courses.

Driving around the county from our home in Nantwich in South Cheshire we came to appreciate how beautiful this part of Wales was. It also became obvious that there were huge areas of farmland in the gently rolling valleys ideal for hardy fruit production.

I believe that with the right political will and sufficient financial input, it would be possible for Powys — and perhaps the rest of Wales and neighbouring areas — to become totally

self-sufficient in the production and supply of top fruit and soft fruit.

Of course this could not be achieved overnight. It would need a tremendous amount of commitment of financial resources to persuade land holders of the viability of such a scheme; it would also need to be financially worthwhile for landowners. There would need to be extensive training in fruit management and a marketing structure for coordinating the collection and selling of the produce, along with storage facilities. But it would only need a relatively small acreage on each agricultural holding to make the scheme workable.

Could the powers that be become courageous enough to start the ball rolling.....?

**Tony Gentil**

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## Apples, Grapes, Cider and Wine



Apples and grapes are obviously very different but both produce delightful fermentation products known and enjoyed for millennia.

In a brief profile I wrote for 'Apples and Pears' a few years ago. I mentioned that I had three ambitions when relocating to Herefordshire. One was to plant an orchard, the second to plant a vineyard and the third to create a wild flower meadow. This last ambition, the most difficult to achieve, is only partly fulfilled but we do have an area of annual wildflowers which is a riot of colour in the summer.

The small orchard (some 20 traditional varieties) and the vineyard (about 240 vines, all white varieties), were planted in the late '90s. In terms of the orchard the idea was to be, as far as possible, self-sufficient in dessert

and culinary fruit and apple juice. In a good year the orchard will provide fruit to April (Winston and Annie Elizabeth keep particularly well) and enough apple juice to last to the next crop, in our case about 12 dozen bottles. On some occasions there has been a surplus of juice and I have tried my hand at cider making taking some advice from Tony Malpas, ex-Vice Chair and a serious organic cider maker. It also happens that the present Vice Chair, Richard Wheeler, makes cider and while this may be a coincidence, I'm thinking of making it a condition for the post!

Both apples and grapes need to be crushed and pressed to extract the juice and here they show their differences. Apples are subjected to some 'heavy' treatment in say an electric mill and serious pressure is then exerted to produce the juice. Grapes, however, need more gentle crushing and pressing so ideally you need two sets of equipment. Although quite expensive, mine is more than a decade old and still very serviceable.

One of the things about cider is that it makes itself. Wild yeasts do the fermenting, often over months, until the process gradually stops and the cider, after settling, can be bottled. I sometimes add a small amount of sugar (a bare teaspoon full) to give the slight 'fizz' of

secondary fermentation. Recycled champagne bottles are ideal for this with a crown cap.

Making wine is more complicated and involves a number of processes. The juice (or 'must') is allowed to settle, drained off, clarified to a certain degree and tested for acidity. If very high the 'must' can be de-acidified and in some poor years this might be necessary. Properly ripe grapes mean that this process can be avoided. Throughout, the 'must' is also tested for sulphur dioxide levels, an essential anti-oxidant, and a certain level is maintained into the finished wine.

It is possible to make wine with wild yeasts but there are risks so most winemakers use specially prepared yeasts to suit whichever style of wine they aim to produce. Fermentation can take a couple of weeks or more and temperature control is important. Some yeasts will work at 10 degrees C or less. Others will stop entirely at these temperatures. Maintaining the right temperature isn't easy in a converted stable but I usually manage with fan heaters and a 'tent' of old blankets.

Over the years I have made dry, medium-dry, medium sweet and a champagne-style sparkling wine using traditional in-bottle secondary fermentation. The next challenge will be to try and make a 'pudding' wine, not

easy in our climate but it is produced by a few professionals.

Over the last few years I have put my wines to the test (other than with family and friends) by entering competitions. Last year, 2010, was a 'vintage' year with three bronze medals and the Best Overall Non-commercial Winemaker award, presented by the South

West Vineyards Association. The SWVA is mainly for commercial winemakers but amateurs are invited to join and take part in their annual competition. Standards are high and all the wines are tasted 'blind' so the judges do not know whether the wine is made by an amateur or professional.

I don't think my cider is up to award level yet

although I have tasted worse. Perhaps it is not a 'true' cider, being made of dessert and culinary apples. However, when you are sitting in the garden on a summers evening with a glass of your own cider or wine in hand, all the hard work producing them seems worthwhile.

Peter Austerfield

## Forward planning

Every so often your committee gets together for Forward Planning Meetings. These are meetings when we think about strategy rather than the day to day business of running *MAN* which we cover with about six normal committee meetings in a year. Starting on 10 December last year we held five Forward Planning Meetings before giving up, not quite in exhaustion but in anticipation of summer holidays and the autumn rush of activity.

Well, apart from talking a lot, did we achieve anything noticeable? Actually the talking is quite important as the newer committee members find out a lot about *MAN* which had never been apparent. Which only proves the oft-repeated claim that *MAN* is very poor at communication. Not just with our members but also within the committee. You will, if you check the website, now notice that there is a new "Contact Us" webpage. Most, if not all, of the committee members can now be contacted using an email address appropriate to their position/ function.

We are also introducing a third regular mailing each year to the membership. Now that Apples and Pears is appearing earlier in the year we think it appropriate to "beef up" the notice of the AGM with other items of interest to members. In particular we are trying to review our progress on an annual and three year basis. The results of these reviews will be part of the mailing and the committee can be quizzed on them at the AGM. [On the 3rd December at the Cider Museum in Hereford – do come!] Please be gentle in your interrogation as this is the first year we are experimenting with this. The impetus for these reviews came out of a Forward Planning Meeting mentored by Abi Dakin of PAVO – Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations. She also encouraged us to develop a calendar of activities which we need to address at our regular committee meetings. With that calendar we should no longer say "Bother, it is too late to organise .

... as we should have started last committee meeting".

One thing that concerns us is knowledge transfer/ succession planning. A wide ranging concept we are only just starting to tackle. A small step forward is that our calendar now includes annual "refresher" training on apple identification. Novices will then be encouraged to sit in on ID sessions to build up their experience. More details can be found in a separate announcement.

All the committee are volunteers and our time is limited. We are trying to follow the example of other organisations – such as the National Trust – and encourage more involvement from volunteers. Not necessarily *MAN* members, volunteers provide various levels of practical assistance. We now have a Volunteer Co-ordinator – Celia Kirby – and a Workparty Organiser – our most recent committee member, Tony Pain. If you replied to the recent survey saying that you would be able to help out in some way then Celia has your details. (If you missed the survey or have not got round to returning the form then Celia would like to hear from you). When Tony is asked to organise a workparty he turns to Celia for volunteers (whilst Tony ensures that the tasks are clearly defined, equipment is available, etc). As a result of the survey we now have email addresses for about 20% of the membership. We do not intend to replace the existing three annual mailings but I expect we will move to letting members know about any interim matters of importance by email. But in an electronic world *MAN* has no Facebook page or Twitter feed. If anybody would like to look after either or both for *MAN* then please step forward.

In November we will start a new series of Forward Planning Meetings. We will begin by going back to the basics to consider just what *MAN* is about – our "Vision, Values and Mission".

Richard Wheeler

## Thomas Andrew Knight

Much has been said about Knight, particularly during the past year, but wouldn't it be wonderful to discover actual trees that were propagated by him? The passing of 200 years means that it is very unlikely that any apples or plums he worked still survive, but what of the pears? We know these can live for 300 years or more.

Knight records that he used the red-fleshed pear in his early trials to establish the effects of parentage. He is also known to have used the Bergamot in many of his breeding experiments.

I have found an orchard in Gloucestershire with a large number of (quite possibly 200 year old) trees that appear to be unnamed seedlings – many once grafted (with Oldfield) where the grafted variety has died or is in poor shape. Three of these are red-fleshed (now named Beetroot pears) and the fruit of a number of others are of Bergamot shape. There is a folk tradition that these trees were supplied by lightermen working on the Severn.

Knight must have planted hundreds of trees in the course of his experiments (and saved just a few after fruiting). Would all the remainder have been destroyed, or could some have been sold as stocks suitable for grafting?

It is great to dream .....

Jim Chapman

## Spring News Sheet 2012

It's not too early to be thinking about this – items always welcome. Details may be sent to the Editor at Three Stones, Kingswood Road, Kington, HR5 3HE or, preferably, by email to: [celia.kirby@btinternet.com](mailto:celia.kirby@btinternet.com). Items should arrive by the end of January 2012.

# The answer of course is up to the individual.....

Some people prefer not to get involved in the computer world being more comfortable with paper and pen. That's OK: I still prefer to use the good old pen for composing letters, etc. (I am writing this missive with a pen and will transfer it to the computer when I am happy with it). There is something about paper and pen that gets the imaginative juices flowing, a computer screen is so impersonal: maybe it's a generational thing.

On saying this, a computer does have its place in today's world. In the wider context it helps to save trees which of course we all know are the lungs of the world and we surely need those on today's polluted earth.

On a more local note, charities like *MAN* can save money using e-mail. How? you might ask. Well the big one, of course, is on postage,

which costs 100s of pounds a year. And that is only the post; if you include the paper, envelopes and printing costs it would conservatively quadruple that. It might surprise you to know that if only half the membership used e-mail *MAN* could purchase approx. 40 trees for Paramor Orchard.

Another benefit is the time saved; to send an e-mail to members takes seconds whereas printing, stuffing and addressing envelopes and then sticking stamps on them takes time, time better spent in the core (excuse the pun) business of apples and pears. In fact it could be used to plant those trees that were purchased with the money saved!!

Another advantage of being contactable by email is that sometimes *MAN* is able to offer places on training courses (ID or Pruning) at

short notice, maybe even a chance to visit a place of interest, and this can only be done by e-mail.

I do hope that reading this will encourage those of you who do have e-mail to let *MAN* know (it will only be used to contact you and details not passed around willy nilly). It might even encourage some of you who haven't tried out this modern piece of equipment to give it some thought. After all, if people hadn't started using a plough when it was invented then we wouldn't have any Apples of the Welsh Marches to preserve.

Marie Ward

## MAN Cider & Perry Group

Eagle-eyed members will have noticed that there is no report in this issue. This is because Richard Cheshire, long-standing and knowledgeable member looking after our cider and perry interests has resigned from the *MAN* committee. Any member who would like to take on this task would be most welcome on the committee and we hope that we will get such a volunteer stepping forward at the AGM in December (see page.12)

### The National Orchard Forum

Previous issues of Apples & Pears have carried a little flag to remind members of the usefulness of the NOF which existed from 2002 to 2010 as a national umbrella organisation for Local Orchard Groups. They provided a gazetteer of local groups as well as advice and guidance in setting up new groups. NOF's bi-annual newsletter pulled together news from all over the country, enabling different groups to share their experiences and exchange information.

Regrettably, NOF no longer exists, but their newsletter archive is still available at [www.orchardnetwork.org.uk/content/local-orchard-groups-0](http://www.orchardnetwork.org.uk/content/local-orchard-groups-0) and contains many useful articles and references.

## Kemerton Orchard visit

A group of *MAN* committee members went to visit orchards in Kemerton, Gloucestershire, on the 10th November 2010. *MAN* had already assisted with IDs for the Kemerton Trust in the previous year but this visit allowed us to see some of the current season's fruit and thus make refinements to earlier decisions.

We also visited the Daffurn's Orchard, a community orchard for the village of Kemerton. This is maintained by a group of villagers, the Kemerton Orchard workers (KOW), with the aim of preserving old fruit trees and apple varieties growing in the orchard. Again, the opportunity for Mike Porter's and Richard Cheshire's detailed knowledge came to the rescue in naming (or sometimes correcting!) the labels on several of the older trees, including Joeby's Crab (pictured below), featured

in The Herefordshire Pomona.

The orchard was left to the village in the will of the original cottage owner and, after several years of hard work and fundraising, the community now has a lovely tranquil nature reserve haven, with many wild flowers. A major feature is a stately Barland perry pear which, quite rightly, features on the KOW logo.

Celia Kirby



*Funny how all the most interesting apples are at the top of the tree....*



Photographs: Sylvia O'Brien



*.....I think I need Mike's help with this one.*



# Oh cruel, cruel frost!

"Looks like being another good apple year.." say my friends, as well they might as they look complacently at their laden trees. In my orchard, alas, its a different story. On the night of 4 May, a really vicious air frost swept across this corner of Kington [on its way to the Black



Mountains?) and blackened all the tender newly-emerged foliage on the oaks, walnuts and ornamentals. The blossom on the fruit trees went brown and most of the already set crop of pears just disappeared.

However, all is not lost. The photo below was taken on 15 June (yes, 15 June!) and shows blossom on my *Broom Apple*, a Welsh cider variety I got from Paul Davis. This has now set and I shall have some apples after all — perhaps not enough for cider as well as pot fruit, but a crop nevertheless. This little incident shows why local varieties are so important for their diversity in flowering seasons.

Celia Kirby

p.s. My stone fruit is doing just fine — lots of plums, damsons and even some peaches are swelling nicely in the July sunshine.

## MAN Annual General Meeting

Cider Museum, Hereford,  
3rd December 2011  
from 10.30 am

### Advance notice

We are pleased to announce that **Sir Andrew Large**, President of the Marcher Apple Network, will be our guest speaker at the AGM 2011. He will be giving an illustrated talk on his recent travels to Kazakhstan and the Tien Shan mountains, places of great significance in the story of the apple.

More details will appear on our web site and will also be circulated to members nearer the time.

## Available from the Marcher Apple Network

**Welsh Marches Pomona** is written by Mike Porter and illustrated by Margaret Gill. It contains beautifully illustrated descriptions of 31 varieties of local apples, some of which have never featured in the apple literature. Life-size views of ripe fruit and blossom at both pink bud and fully open stages, plus line drawings of leaves and sections of fruit make this a truly unique reference work.

Hardback format, 300mm × 230mm; full colour throughout. 96 pp.

**Price** £25.00 + £5.00 p and p [UK]

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

**Price** £5.00 inc p and p in the UK.

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

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

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

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

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

### Back Numbers of the MAN Newsletter

Many of the articles featured contain advice and ideas which have stood the test of time and still make an interesting read. Copies of last year's issue of *Apples and Pears* (Vol 2. No. 4) are also available.

**Prices** Nos 1 to 6 (1995 to 2000) £4.00: Nos 7 to 12 (2001 to 2006) £7.00: All 12: £10.00, all including p and p in the UK. Vol. 2, Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4, £2.00 ea. including p and p.

**MAN Library List**, managed by Sheila Leitch  
**Price** £2.00 inc. p and p in the UK.

**To Order:** Preferably download an order form from [www.marcherapple.net/books.htm](http://www.marcherapple.net/books.htm) — note that MAN now has a PayPal account — or write to Diggory Kempton, the Membership Secretary, Marcher Apple Network, Brook House, Hopesay, CRAVEN ARMS, Shropshire, SY7 8HD. Cheques should be made payable to Marcher Apple Network. **Wholesale price list on request.**

### APPLES AND PEARS

AFALAU A PÊR Autumn 2011

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