



Marcher Apple Network

APPLES & PEARS

AFALAU A PÊR

Volume 2 No1.

Non-members £2

Autumn 2007

The Paramor Orchard



In this issue:

	Page
The Paramor Orchard	2
Mike Porter's Orchard Gleanings	5
Our Museum Orchards	7
Meet the Committee	10
Brogdale: What's Happening ..?	12
'A very Happy Life'	
Profile of Ray Boddington	16
Plus our regular features	

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

www.marcherapple.net

CELEBRATION
ISSUE

CELEBRATION

Following news of the successful completion of the purchase of a site for a *MAN* orchard, members of *MAN* visited Cwmdy on 3rd May for a preliminary celebration of the acquisition. Dr Margaret Gill,

who generously provided the finance for the project, and is also the artist painting the apples and blossom for the forthcoming *Pomona of the Welsh Marches*, ceremonially cut the tape across the

orchard gateway, and poured a libation to the goddess Pomona. Members present made an informal tour of inspection and drank a glass of cider to toast the success of the project.



MAN members assemble to see Margaret Gill cut the tape



Margaret lines up the scissors



Cutting the tape



A libation



MAN members toast the success of the project



Tom Froggatt, the successful bidder.



Peter Austerfield, Mike Porter and Tom Froggatt (backs to the camera) discuss possibilities with Richard Wheeler

NOTES FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The year 2006/7 has been one of our busiest, and it says much for the hard work and dedication of your committee and support from you, the members.

Since we took the path of producing materials to aid identification and to be of general use and interest to as many people as possible, we have maintained, if not increased, our momentum. Even now there is talk of CD 3, and the possibility of a facsimile version of the Herefordshire Pomona has re-surfaced. But these are for the future and at the moment we are occupied with things described in more detail elsewhere in this Newsletter.

One thing that has helped us to keep up the momentum is our ability to communicate electronically. Most committee members now use e-mail as routine, and together with our secretary, Marie Ward, this has made our organisation much more efficient. Needless to say we also have our excellent website provided by our Webmaster, Richard Wheeler. (See Webmaster's Report, page 15)

There was a sigh of relief on the 12th April when the Pomona sub-committee finally approved version 15 of our new CD *Vintage Fruit*. The number of versions indicates the work involved in producing what I think is a very worthy follow-up to our earlier CD *The Herefordshire Pomona*. The two have taken about 5 years to produce and Richard Wheeler is to be congratulated once again for his splendid work. The CD, a unique publication on cider apples and perry pears, was launched on Monday 7th May at Westons Bottle Museum, when Keith Knight was the guest speaker. Buy it and you will not be disappointed.

The next publication will be our 'Welsh Marches Pomona' in book form. This project has been mentioned before (see Newsletter No 12) and is now well underway. With text by Mike Porter



and water colour illustrations by Dr Margaret A V Gill, this promises to be another unique production and one that, in its way, will contribute to the collection of Pomonas associated with the area. Publication is scheduled for 2008/9 (See progress report on page 9)

We have of course another reason to be grateful to Dr. Gill and this relates to the other major event of the year. Through her generosity we have been able to purchase 5.6 acres of land in Wales to give *MAN* its own orchard. This is the lead story in this Newsletter, and next year's Newsletter will no doubt see the first of many progress reports on the development of the orchard.

A recent 'Forward Planning' meeting focused on how we organise our AGM and Apple Day. This is *the MAN* event of the year, and last year we began to think about different ways of doing it. The discussion continues, but generally there is a consensus that the time has come for a change. This year we are separating the two events, so that the Apple Day will be on Saturday 6th October at the Cider Museum, Hereford, and the AGM, also at the Cider Museum, will be on Saturday 1st December. Following the AGM there will be a talk by Dr Murray Mylechreest on the life and work of the Herefordshire pomologist, Thomas Andrew Knight.

Speaking of change, you will be aware that the Newsletter has taken on a new appearance. After 12 years it was thought that it was time to review our major publication for members. What you see is the result of many meetings of the Editorial Committee, chaired by Tony Malpas, and discussions in general committee. We hope you approve of the new style.

Once again there were many activities over the year, from shows, fairs and identification sessions to orchard visits and pruning work. There were two members' events. Although, sadly, I could not attend the visit to Cui Parc to see the orchards of our President, Sir Andrew Large, it was very highly regarded. As numbers were limited, a number of you were disappointed not to have been in the first twenty respondents, so I am glad to say that Sir Andrew has kindly agreed to our arranging a repeat visit in 2008. Our thanks to Sir Andrew and Lady Large for their hospitality. October saw a full day devoted to 'The Long Ashton Legacy', hosted by the Cider Museum, Hereford, and organised by Tony Malpas. This well attended event provided an opportunity to hear at first hand, from two of those involved in research at Long Ashton, Liz Copas and John Worle, and to see the practical applications in the orchard at Field Farm. In January of this year I visited Whitecross School, Hereford, to present four framed prints of apples on which their 'Academy' names are based. The prints, provided by our Webmaster and professionally framed in 'Academy' colours, were a gift to this newly opened school from *MAN*. The 'Academy' names are Bromley, Hagloe, Moyle and Styre. Trees of the last three varieties (*Hagloe Crab*, *Gennet Moyle*, *Eggleton Styre*) have been planted at the school. They are still looking for *Bromley*, as indeed are we. There is a picture taken at the event on our website, www.marcherapple.net/whitex.htm

Peter Austerfield.

THE PARAMOR ORCHARD

A combination of two pieces of good fortune has enabled *MAN* to make our orchard dream come true.

Dr Margaret Gill made us an extremely generous offer of the purchase money, and a suitable parcel of land came up for auction at just the right time and place.

Mike Porter provides the background.

An orchard of our own has long been an ambition of the Marcher Apple Network. In March, at a tense auction at the Angel Hotel, Abergavenny, a parcel of land at Llanfihangel Cwmdu was knocked down to *MAN*, represented by our Treasurer, Tom Froggatt. The purchase, made possible by the generosity of Dr. Margaret Gill, illustrator of the forthcoming *Pomona of the Welsh Marches*, has presented us with an exciting opportunity to realise our dream. It will not happen overnight, nor without careful planning and a lot of hard work, but we are embracing the challenge with enthusiasm. The way in which the orchard will be developed and managed has already generated several proposals and provoked considerable debate; the committee would welcome further ideas. In the meantime, perhaps it might be helpful to look at the geographical and historical background of our holding.

The village of Cwmdu is situated in the foothills of the Black Mountains, in the east of the old county of Brecknockshire and within the Brecon Beacons National Park. Our holding lies on gently sloping ground at an altitude of 150 – 160m, facing south-west towards the village, with the sturdy fortified tower of St. Michael's Church a prominent landmark. Due west across the valley is an Iron Age hill fort, Coed y gaer, hidden by trees. A brook called Rhiangoll runs through the village and down the valley in a southerly direction, flowing past the

Norman Castle of Tretower before joining the River Usk.

In medieval times Tretower Castle was the stronghold and administrative centre of the Lordship of Ystradyw (usually called Straddewy by the Normans) which encompassed territory which later became the parishes of Llanfihangel Cwmdu and Llangynidr. Apples have been cultivated in this region for hundreds of years. A charter, dated about 1175, from John Picard, grandson of the first Norman Lord of Ystradyw, includes apples in a list of crops grown on his demesne. A manorial estate plan of 1587 shows a large orchard, marked 'Perllan', on the bank of the Rhiangoll beside the castle. A cider cellar, constructed in the sixteenth century, can still be seen at Tretower Court.

Our holding consists of two pasture fields, one of five acres and the other half an acre, both surrounded by stock-proof fences and hedges. In one corner of the larger field there is a damp copse with tall alder and ash trees and, in spring, a colourful ground flora. The soil in both fields is a fertile loam derived from the underlying Old Red Sandstone.

Cwmdu parish tithe map, drawn up in 1844, shows that the present large field was divided, at that time, into two smaller plots, which were part of the glebe. The rental charge on one field was paid to the Rector – at that time the Rev Lord William Somerset; the rent for the other field was due to the Vicar, Rev Thomas Price. Both fields were farmed by John Gwillim, who appears to have been the largest farmer in the parish, with about 380 acres to his name. In 1844 the Rector's Glebe was recorded as pasture and the Vicar's Glebe as arable. The small half-acre field was a meadow which belonged to the farm nearby called Pencaecrwn. Recent management as sheep pasture throughout the year has obscured former differences in vegetation. Any variation in the composition of the

present grass swards seems to be mainly due to fluctuations in drainage conditions, as the area of field near the copse is watered by a seasonal spring.

The churchyard below holds the tombstone of Rev Thomas Price, Vicar of Cwmdu from 1825 – 1848. He was a fervent patriot who did much to promote the Welsh language at a time when it was severely threatened by the Establishment. Thomas Price, perhaps better known under his bardic name of Carnhuanawc, was a polymath with a wide range of interests and accomplishments – historian, essayist, musician, orator, linguist and antiquarian. He played the flute, guitar and Welsh harp and was a wholehearted supporter of Eisteddfodau. He wrote a History of Wales, published in Crickhowell and, with his friend Lady Llanover, contributed to a translation of the Mabinogion.

According to his biographer, Jane Williams, he was a great supporter of traditional ways, and in his garden at Cwmdu cultivated vegetables favoured by his ancestors, such as the leek and small yellow turnip, brightening his plot by sowing seeds of broom and fragrant gillyflowers. Plainly an early exponent of biological control measures, he trained his ferret to hunt down the rats which had attacked his library. Such an enlightened man would surely have approved our plan to cultivate traditional varieties of apples, such as *Pig yr wydd*, *Landore* and *Ten Commandments*, in an orchard on his former glebe.

Mike Porter



Tretower Castle

PURCHASE OF THE PARAMOR ORCHARD



*25" OS Map (1882) of Cwmdau showing
Paramor Orchard Site Plan*

We became aware of this land for sale, described by the agents as Lot 1, Cwmdau, only very shortly before the date of the auction, which was 29th March 2007. The agents' particulars described it as 'conveniently situated close to the centre of the village of Cwmdau, just off the A479 Crickhowell to Talgarth road, and of total area 2.264ha or 5.59 acres, for the most part gently sloping and providing good grazing, with the benefit of good road access and a natural water supply.' An outline plan of the site is shown drawn on a section of the 1882 twenty-five inch Ordnance Survey map in which its position in relation to the church and village of Cwmdau can be seen.

Everyone on the Committee who went to see it thought that it would be suitable, so Tom Froggatt and Mike Porter were commissioned to go to the auction and bid for it. Tom takes up the story.

After several anxious hours on the phone with MAN member and solicitor Nigel Recordon, Mike Porter and I went to Abergavenny on March 29th to attend this auction sale, and were met there by Nigel to clarify several legal points. We were interested in Lot 1, and bidding soon commenced in a crowded room. Knowing the amount we had been promised, we felt that funds could be stretched a bit more, and, at £5000 over our 'limit', we were the victors. (Our benefactor afterwards very generously made up the extra £5000). The next, smaller, plot then went for very much more than we had paid, and we were even more excited. With legal formalities completed, we then had a celebratory meal before returning home in a jubilant, but sober, manner.

Tom Froggatt

WHO WERE THE PARAMORS?

Margaret Gill explains

Now that the Marcher Apple Network has been able to purchase its own plot of land for the creation of the Paramor Orchard, members may be wondering at the name. Who were the Paramors? Simply, they were my mother's family, about whom my brother has written in a volume of verse entitled *The Paramor Poems* - a celebration of a Kentish family.

"Labourers mostly, your ancestors and mine, who drudged from dawn to dusk in squire's fields..." are the opening lines of a poem addressed to our second cousin John Paramor (artist, now living on the Costa Brava and last male descendant of "gentle" John, vicar's coachman). But not all the earlier Paramors worked the land;

some were more adventurous, and some even achieved a local fame. There was the Elizabethan Thomas Paramor, remembered in Thanet as sponsor of the last trial by combat to be fought on English soil (or rather not fought, as it was banned at the last moment by the Queen); as Mayor of Canterbury, he presided over the second Guy Fawkes night celebrations and his name is to be found inscribed on the ceremonial sword. A century later when castaway on Anguilla, another Thomas was rescued by a warship of William III, fortuitously named *The Paramour* and carrying on board the astronomer Edmond Halley. Another seafarer was my grandfather William, master mariner; as first mate, he sailed with Joseph Conrad (second mate) in the "Adowa", and later

captained his own ship. Then there was "my might-have-been uncle" Jack, poet and idealist, who followed his "dreams of chivalry" to death on the beach at Gallipoli. Finally there are the Paramors I knew in person, my mother Marjorie (teacher and mathematician, "the sum of all gentleness") and her siblings: Frank (architect), who walked "without the torment of ideals" and sleeping "in Welsh chapels of quiet stone, left a shilling for the roof at dawn"; Edith (civil servant), who "shared her birthday with the century" and spent her latter years "content with Brecon's hills and skies"; and Helen (teacher), indirectly due to whom I moved from the orchards of Kent to make my home in the Welsh Marches. This is the family the Paramor orchard celebrates.

Margaret A.V.Gill



1. "Gentle" John Paramor (1832-1904)

John Paramor was born in Sibertswold in East Kent. Apprenticed as a boy to the blacksmith in Nonington, he later used his knowledge of horses to become the Vicar of Nonington's coachman. He married a local girl and begat nine children. On his employer's death, John moved the family to Rusthall, where he worked as a steward at the Spa Golf Club (Tunbridge Wells). A modest man who led a modest life, of whom his daughter-in-law was able to write, when learning of John's death: "His was a beautiful life, as near 'Christlike' as an earthly person could be..."



2. William Paramor, Master Mariner (1861-1904)

Unlike his ancestors, William went to sea. Indentured at the age of 16, he worked his way up to becoming a master mariner in sail and steam. His was an adventurous life which included being shipwrecked off Samoa, and nearly being rammed by a German cruiser in Penang Harbour in the autumn of 1914. Fond of reading, he made a congenial companion for Joseph Conrad, who served with him for six weeks in the "Adowa". In his reminiscences, 'A Personal Record,' Conrad refers to William's "cheery nature". In the year he gained his Master's Certificate he married the girl next door, Annie Middleton; and in due course there were five children, including Jack and Marjorie (see below). In 1928 the Paramors left Leytonstone for Worthing, where their bungalow was named "Adowa".



3. John Frederick Paramor (1894-1915)

Jack Paramor, William and Annie's first son, was sensitive, reflective, popular and as a poet certainly gifted. He won a scholarship to Bancrofts School, and later served in the Accountant General's Department of the GPO in London. Before war broke out he had already joined the 7th Battalion of the Essex Regiment, which arrived in the Dardanelles in August 1915. In early October Jack fell to a Turkish bullet. The family never really recovered from the tragedy. Pencilled in his brown army book are 11 beautiful sonnets dedicated to Jessica in Sussex. Did she ever see them?



4. Marjorie Maud Gill (née Paramor) (1908-1977)

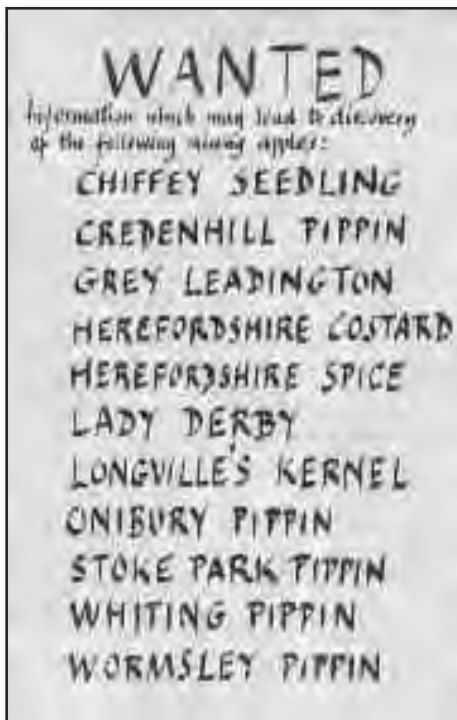
The youngest of the Paramor children, Marjorie had a sweet temperament and in time showed academic brilliance. She obtained a first-class degree in Mathematics at Bedford College (University of London) and went into teaching. In 1933 she married Donald Gill and they moved to Chislehurst, where their children, David and Margaret, were born. A Christian and a Socialist, Marjorie had a lively social conscience as well as a strong sense of family: her family picnics on the beach at Worthing were planned with mathematical precision and never without jelly.

Copies of the photographs from the family album, and their captions, were kindly provided by Margaret's brother, David Gill.

ORCHARD GLEANINGS 2007

In the **MAN** campaign to track down old apple varieties there have been some notable successes, but, says Mike Porter, there are still a lot more out there waiting to be found.

One of the main objectives of the Marcher Apple Network is to find and propagate old varieties of apples and pears. The launch of a new style of Newsletter seemed an opportune moment to review our progress in the hunt. In our apple exhibition at the Malvern Autumn Show in 1995 we displayed a "WANTED" poster naming eleven varieties of old apples we were hoping to recapture.



These varieties had been chosen either because they were of local provenance or had figured in reports of apple exhibitions staged by the Woolhope Club prior to their publication of *The Herefordshire Pomona*. At the Show in 1995 the poster provoked some discussion but provided no "leads". Subsequently two of the varieties (*Onibury Pippin* and *Credenhill Pippin*) have been refound; possible representatives of two other varieties



Onibury Pippin

are under surveillance in our museum orchards, and our research has shown that a further two were impostors masquerading under synonyms: 'Lady Derby', better known as *Thorle Pippin*, and 'Longville's Kernel', alias *Sam's Crab*. (See photo on page 7).

Since MAN was established fourteen years ago, at least 27 varieties of "lost" apples have been rediscovered and brought back into cultivation. Reports detailing the pursuit of the renowned *Newland Sack*, *Onibury Pippin*, *Chatley Kernel*, *Sugar Loaf Pippin*, *Gipsy King* and others have featured in previous newsletters.

Such "finds" may result from unknown apples being brought in for identification at shows or they may be the result of highly organised raids on local orchards. Establishing the true identity of suspects may result from the



Credenhill Pippin



Chatley Kernel

piecing together of small but significant clues or from a sudden flash of recognition. Whatever the initial stimulus, authentication requires painstaking research, sometimes involving cultivation and intensive study for a number of years.

Our museum orchards have been of great value in helping to untangle confusion over identification. We now know that apples collected from four different places are all examples of the variety *King's Acre Bountiful*. We can distinguish between the aristocratic *Codlins*, *Lords Grosvenor* and *Suffield*. *Keswick Codlin* can be separated from *Golden Spire* with more confidence. We now know that the so called "Newland Sack" from Erddig is *King's Acre Pippin*. The various types of 'Quoinings', for example, may be grown side by side for comparison.



Sugar Loaf Pippin



Gipsy King



Winter Quoining compare with Crimson Quoining on p7

From catalogues, handbooks and scientific reports we know that at least 260 varieties of culinary and dessert apples and more than 140 varieties of cider apples are associated with our area, i.e., reputedly raised here or introduced by local nurseries. Less than half (about 48%) of the former category remain in cultivation. Probably an even smaller percentage of cider varieties are still extant. There are still plenty of “lost” varieties awaiting rediscovery.

At the Malvern Show last autumn two visitors from Credenhill, Mr and Mrs Batchelor, happened to mention that they lived in a house formerly occupied by Frank Whiting, a notable fruit grower in the early part of the 20th century. At that time Credenhill must have been very much at the heart of apple growing activities in Herefordshire. The Rector, the Reverend C H Bulmer, had played a leading role in the compilation of *The Herefordshire Pomona*, and was celebrated locally as a judge of cider and perry. His son, H P Bulmer had established a cider-making business at Credenhill. Frank Whiting’s father, Richard, who farmed at Lower House, was churchwarden at Credenhill. The Batchelors told me that the smallholding which they now farmed had been bought by the Whitings to provide a living for Frank, who had suffered from polio in his youth. Much later, Mrs Batchelor’s father, Tom

Watkins, was one of three men employed on the farm. In the early years of the 20th century much of the fruit being produced was sent by train for sale in Edinburgh.

On a later visit I was shown the notebook in which Frank Whiting listed, row by row, the fruit trees he was growing between 1895 and 1906. Judging by the numbers of each sort that were planted, the most popular at this time were *Lane’s Prince Albert*, *King of the Pippins*, *Cox’s Pomona*, *Bramley’s Seedling*, *Stirling Castle*, *Bismarck*, *Frogmore Prolific* and *Worcester Pearmain*. About 170 varieties of apples are listed, including some which have been rediscovered in recent years, such as *Onibury Pippin*, *Chatley Kernel* and *Credenhill Pippin*.

A few years ago a visitor to our stall at the Big Apple event brought in apples which his father had called *Credenhill*

Pippin. Published descriptions of that variety are scanty, but the fruits we were shown certainly matched the account of *Credenhill Pippin* in *The Apples of England* by H V Taylor, who states that the variety had been raised by Mr. Whiting of Hereford. It is a colourful, red-striped apple with a fine flavour and keeps in good condition until February.

It was tantalising to read, in Frank Whiting’s notebook, the names of many varieties of apple which have disappeared from cultivation and are not even to be found in the National Fruit Collections. *British Queen*, *Blacksmith*, *College Apple*, *Wormsley Grange Apple*, *Caradoc Scarlet* and *Credenhill Beauty* were all being grown in Credenhill around 1900. Little is known about *Credenhill Beauty*, a mid-season cooker, which, *The Apple Register* records, was exhibited for the first and only time at the Royal Horticultural Society’s Fruit Conference in 1934. As Whiting was growing it in 1901, it seems quite likely that he also raised that variety, and, possibly others such as *Blacksmith* and *Black Twig* also sent from Herefordshire to the 1934 Conference at the Crystal Palace. Unfortunately, most of the apple trees on his plot were grubbed out about fifty years ago when the holding was converted to vegetable production.

Mike Porter



Sweeney Nonpareil

OUR MUSEUM ORCHARDS

Thanks to the generosity of local landowners, **MAN** was able soon after its formation to begin establishing museum orchards. Chris Porter looks back at achievements, and identifies a few pitfalls.

After twelve years of working to establish five MAN orchards in different parts of the Welsh Marches, what have we learned? What has turned out well and, with the benefit of hindsight, what could we have managed better? In the 1980s and 90s crisis loomed. Local orchards were being grubbed up and destroyed, grants being available for this. With them many wonderful varieties of apple were being lost and it looked as though future generations would never have the opportunity to taste a *Pitmaston Pine Apple* or *Ribston Pippin* or smell a *Crimson Quoining*.



Crimson Quoining

MAN has been very fortunate to enlist the support of several landowners sympathetic to the cause of establishing Museum Orchards on their land. Planting was started on four orchards between 1995 and 1998, at Westhope, Donnington, Tredomen and Croft Pendarren; and at a fifth, Little Ffordd-fawr, in autumn 2002.

Westhope has 15 standard trees grown from grafts of local varieties, such as *Sam's Crab*, *Severn Bank*, *Stoke Edith Pippin* and *Golden Harvey*, taken from trees in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Breconshire in 1993/4.

The crop last year was superb and the vigour and health of the trees demonstrate the suitability of this well-drained, slightly calcareous site on the hill above the village.



Sam's Crab

Donnington had problems with drainage at first because machinery had compacted the heavy loam of the field. Apples do not enjoy having their feet cold and wet, but after the drainage was improved this orchard of 60 trees is starting to flourish. Because Donnington's owners have lived and worked for many years across "the pond", several of the varieties here, like *King of Tompkins County*, *Golden Russet of West New York* and *Roxbury Russet*, were chosen because of their association with the U.S.A.



Planting the first tree at Tredomen Orchard in 1995. Ray Boddington, Frank Hemming, David Leitch and John Aldridge.

The other three orchards lie on the Welsh side of the Border. **Tredomen** is the largest with over 200 trees of various ages. Planting started in 1995, with trees having been grafted from

wood taken from old trees growing sometimes in derelict orchards which were impossible to identify, but which we thought ought to be conserved.

After being grown on healthy young rootstocks it is easier to check them out. A few favourite trees of the area were also grafted, like *Sam's Crab*, *Annie Elizabeth*, *Herefordshire Pomeroy* and *Bismarck*, which are useful as control or reference trees. Each autumn the ID panel tries to solve some of the mysteries, but many are still known only by manuscript names. We have had some success in sorting them out: "*Plas Wye 2*" and "*Bowling Green*" are varieties now recognised as *Alexander* and *Claygate Pearmain* respectively. Tree A4 from 'Plas Wye', B5 from 'Lothlorien' and F16 from Norton Canon all turned out to be the same variety, a rather delicious cooker *King's Acre Bountiful*, named after the Hereford nursery where it originated.

Identification can be a slow and painstaking process, however. The opportunity was taken to grow several versions of supposedly the same variety side by side so that they could be studied. In the early days grafts of an apple known locally as "*Monmouth Green*" were taken from several sites along the Wye valley in Radnorshire and Breconshire and the young trees were planted at Tredomen. When something similar, known as *Landore*, turned up in various places in West Herefordshire, it was identified as the same apple. *Landore* was referred to by the Reverend Francis Kilvert in 1870. There was much speculation about versions of another apple found in the Welsh Marches which resembled the pictures of the Costard apple varieties illustrated in *The Herefordshire Pomona*. A graft of "*Arrow Costard*" was planted and the fruit from this young tree intrigued the MAN ID panel for many seasons. After chopping up several kilos of apples and drawing, describing and comparing them, inspiration struck when a similar

tree, the “Winforton Costard”, was discovered and recognised as *Scotch Bridget*, an excellent apple variety which does very well in our Border area.



Scotch Bridget

Sometimes a special trip may have to be made to faraway RHS libraries to search through the old literature before an identification can be authenticated. This is how “*Ty'r uchod Codlin*” became determined as *Sugar Loaf Pippin*, another *Herefordshire Pomona* apple rescued at Tredomen. Twenty nine newly grafted trees were planted in March 2007, seventeen of which are unknown: so the work goes on . . . The trees have prospered especially in the better drained areas in this fairly level meadow of heavy Old Red Sandstone, for last year the wonderful blossom resulted in a surplus of apples, even more than could be sold at the AGM in October.



Chris Porter checking fruit at Tredomen Orchard, 2006

At Croft Pendarren, the landowner requested that traditional orchard trees be planted so that a mower could pass beneath the branches. The 40 varieties on M25 rootstocks have all been chosen because they are known to grow well in the wetter climate of the Welsh border. Therefore *Blenheim Orange*, *Catshead*, *Ashmead's Kernel* and *Ribston Pippin*, traditional favourites in orchards in the Marches,

have been planted alongside Welsh varieties like *Marged Nicolas*, *Pig yr wydd*, *Pig Aderyn*. Environmental considerations dictate the way this orchard is managed since it grows in established pasture (‘coed cae’ or wooded grassland) with its associated flora and fauna. The older trees planted in 1996 looked most beautiful this year, with their blossoms following the display of the ancient pear also growing there.



View of Croft Pendarren Orchard. The mature pear (right) is the only tree that remained from the previous orchard



Old Blenheim Orange tree in an orchard at Checkley

The youngest orchard at **Lower Ffordd-fawr** is more of a nursery plot, where all the grafts are being grown on the smaller and quicker developing M26 rootstocks. The fruit from these young trees should be produced earlier and, being from healthy stock, identification should be easier. Disappointingly many grafts failed here at first, but as it is suspected the cause for this is due to the method of grafting *in situ* in a very dry season before the rootstocks were established, perhaps we can learn from this.

Our trees have to fend for themselves without the application of fertilisers which tend to produce rather sappy

growth and anaemic tasting fruit. However, last autumn, the dark, pock-marked signs of “bitterpit” were noticed in some varieties at Tredomen. This condition, which is generally due to an imbalance in the mineral uptake, may need to be remedied in future by the application of calcium nitrate or calcified seaweed. Each orchard has different characteristics: Donnington and Tredomen have rich, water-retentive soils, usually positive qualities,

but difficulties occasionally arise. At Tredomen about thirty or forty trees were affected by stem-rot exacerbated by the use of plastic spiral guards. In a heavy, damp soil particularly, these encourage worms, woodlice and ants to creep up the inside, bringing in soil which cannot dry out, so eventually rot sets in. Now the spiral guards have been taken away each tree may have to be enclosed by chicken wire, as at Croft Pendarren, should rabbits start to be a hazard! We went wholeheartedly for the use of mulch-mats too, hoping these would keep grass from around the little trees. Unfortunately the grass grows over the mat in one season making cutting difficult and affecting the health of trees in the damp areas. Voles are on site, however, to take advantage of safe homes which the grassy mats provide, *MAN* maintenance being sporadic. Over the years quite a lot has been spent on ties for supporting the young trees, which have to be adjusted as trunks become sturdier. Some of the cheaper types of tie take two people to do the job, resulting in grumbles from maintenance staff. (Volunteers!)

A taller problem was encountered at Westhope where expensive seven foot high wire cages had to enclose every tree when deer were found browsing the orchard. This protection has worked well and we are very grateful for Herefordshire Council's contributory grant. Maintenance though is difficult: it takes an athletic chap to control the brambles and bracken inside the guards, as our Chairman, Peter Austerfield, will confirm.

Management of the orchards exploits the skills of all sorts of willing enthusiasts; from the early days of identifying unusual fruit and grafting the scions from these, to planting, pruning and training the resulting young "maidens". It is vital that reliable records are kept and the health of the

individuals monitored. The guidance of our Webmaster, Richard Wheeler and the competence of our new Secretary, Marie Ward, have been invaluable in helping with this essential "book-keeping" by setting up a database for the orchards which will make management easier.

Soon outlets for all this splendid fruit will have to be found. Possibly this will not be a problem, because this is, after all, the product which MAN members will enjoy. It is estimated that MAN must have nearly 400 different varieties of apple in its orchards, certainly a cause for celebration since many of these have literally been brought 'back from the brink'. Twelve years have seen changes. MAN, together with similar organisations around Britain, is not only helping to

create a feeling of hope about the future of traditional orchards, but can claim to be making a difference by establishing experimental, living museums so that our great-grandchildren will be able to crunch a *Worcester Pearmain*, make "biffins" from *Herefordshire Beefings*, and enjoy a baked *Herring's Pippin* and cream. We are grateful to the landowners of our orchards, Mrs. Molly Beaumont (Westhope), Mr. Roger Williams, M.P. (Tredomen), Mr. William Gibbs (Croft Pendarren), Mr. Roger Gouldstone (Donnington) and Mr. David Pryce Goodwin (Little Ffordd-fawr) for helping MAN to achieve some of its objectives.

Chris Porter.

A POMONA OF THE WELSH MARCHES

Three meticulously packed parcels of apple blossom, sent by post from Brogdale during May, enabled Margaret Gill to complete her watercolour paintings of flowers for the Pomona. We are most grateful to Dr Emma-Jane Allen, Scientific Curator of the National Fruit Collections, and her staff, for their help.

The timely arrival of *Tewkesbury Baron*, *King Coffee* and *Green Purnell* meant that only one variety, *Ten Commandments*, was outstanding.

In 2007 most varieties of apples in this part of the country flowered a fortnight or so earlier than last year, but *Ten Commandments* ran counter to the general trend and was a day or so later than usual. Eventually, in the middle of May, a telephone call was received from Nick Winney, Head Gardener at Berrington Hall, reporting that the two trees of *Ten Commandments* in their walled garden were just coming into bloom.

After a quick trip to collect samples, Margaret was able to complete the flower paintings – logistically, if not artistically, the most demanding part of the exercise. Sincere thanks to Nick for all his help in maintaining a watching brief that was anything but...



Blossom of Byford Wonder drawn and painted by Dr Margaret Gill

Only the fruit of four varieties still remain to be painted. Margaret should complete the illustrations in the autumn, so that part of the project is up to schedule. The illustrations are beautiful and will be a tremendous aid in identification. Further research will require more days in London, delving in the archives of the RHS Lindley Library in Vincent Square....Someone has to do it!

Mike Porter.

MEET THE COMMITTEE

The fourteen officers and members of the committee of the Marcher Apple Network are, it almost goes without saying, an extremely hard-working bunch. Not many committees can boast four Founder Members still serving after 14 years, and a steady growth from seven initially to fourteen now. Even so, perhaps not too much is known about them as individuals, how they came to it and why they do it. In an effort to remedy this, they were each asked to say, in about 100 words, how they first became aware of **MAN**, what induced them to join the committee, and what their hopes and aspirations are for its future. Oh, and also to supply a photograph of themselves. These are the results. Profiles and pictures compiled by Nicky Matcher.



Sir Andrew Large,
President

I first became aware of **MAN** when I began my collection of apple varieties here at Cui in the early 90's. I

was collecting old varieties, and particularly looking for local ones - by which I included those from all the Marches. Mike Porter introduced me to Sheila Leitch, and I was so impressed by their boundless enthusiasm and knowledge, as well as the commitment to help in whatever way with my modest project - scions to graft; advice about the varieties; identification etc.

My hope for the future - which I am confident will be met - is that **MAN** will continue the good work, spread the interest in our wonderful apple heritage, and ensure that future generations will be able to sample and enjoy these marvellous old varieties.



Dr Peter Austerfield,
Chairman and
Director of
MAN

When I moved to Herefordshire there were three things I

wanted to do: plant an orchard, a vineyard and establish a wild flower meadow. Naturally, for the first, I joined **MAN** and sought advice. Later I was persuaded by Ray Boddington to become the 'custodian' of the **MAN** orchard in the village. This led to my joining the committee and now I find myself Chairman.

Now well into its second decade, the Marcher Apple Network has become a well respected association. Our publications are highly regarded, our advice is sought. We do this through a voluntary committee and, as ever, the support of our members. It is our

hope that we can keep up the good work with your help and, although the people will change, that **MAN** goes from strength to strength over the coming years.



Ray Boddington,
Hon Vice-
President,
Founder
Member, First
Chairman and
Director of
MAN

In the autumn of 1990 I met Sheila Leitch, through a greengrocer in Hay-on-Wye selling 'Stirling Castle' labelled apples. I was soon introduced to Mike and Chris Porter, and along with the late Stan Baldock and John Aldridge we met to explore orchards in the surrounding area. Following advice, we established a formal organisation which we called the Marcher Apple Network (**MAN**) in 1993.

My hope for the future of **MAN** is that it will just flourish and grow, and that people will come along and tend its orchards and fruit collections!

For a fuller profile of Ray see 'A Very Happy Life', page 16.



Sheila Leitch,
Founder
Member,
Network Co-
ordinator,
Former
Newsletter
Editor and
Librarian

I joined the committee when seven of us set up the Network in 1993. My particular interest in apples arose from moving to Wye View, where the old espaliers in the walled garden proved a challenge to a botanist. Prior to marriage, my work with the Nature Conservancy in South Wales was a useful base for my position as Network Co-ordinator.

My hopes for the future of **MAN** are that we can enrol more young people and provide interesting events,

training courses and services to members, including those without specialist knowledge, but who support and appreciate our objectives.



Mike Porter,
Founder
Member and
Director of
MAN

Having grown up in western Herefordshire, surrounded by

orchards, I would have found it difficult not to have been interested in apples. A deterrent might have been the inordinate amount of time we seemed to spend peeling and cutting up cooking apples. As children we knew the taste and ripening time of all the apples in the garden and paddock and orchards behind the house. In autumn we helped to harvest the cider and pot fruit. Here there were ancient trees where little-owls, redstarts and nuthatches nested. All the orchards have gone, replaced by houses. I hope we can persuade a few people to plant orchards and include some of our local varieties of apples.



Chris Porter,
Founder
Member and
Archivist

I became involved with **MAN** because it seemed a brilliant idea at the time.

Having moved house about twelve years earlier to expand the apple collection which Mike (my husband) had been nurturing since the 1970s, it seemed a natural progression to join others in 1993 whose aim was to try to save traditional orchards and their fruit before these all became extinct.

MAN's aims are becoming more achievable as able, enthusiastic and younger people are coming forward to give their time and talents. 'Paramor

Orchard' is a wonderful opportunity, but it still has to be organised, planted and followed through. I hope we shall all be inspired by working together in this worthwhile venture



Tom Froggatt,
Company
Secretary,
Treasurer and
Director of
MAN

I first became aware of MAN in 1995 when I met some

members identifying apples at 'The Big Apple'. I had inherited some 100 trees containing almost 70 varieties, I was in need of help. I joined the Committee in 1996 and soon became Treasurer. I help at events and also give talks. Never a dull moment. My hopes for the future of MAN are that we can recruit younger members to care for our orchards and also learn the art and skills in identifying apples. Thanks to a generous donor we have purchased land to become a Museum orchard. The Paramor Orchard project is ongoing. Please let us have your ideas.



Richard Cheshire,
Chairman,
Cider Apple
and Perry Pear
Group

Ten years ago I bought a property with a cider apple orchard, and a

fortuitous meeting with John Worle of Bulmers got me interested in cider fruit. I joined MAN after speaking to members identifying apples at Leominster. My interest in the cider varieties led to the start of the Cider group and I was elected to the Committee in 2004.

My hope is that MAN can continue to create interest in our apple heritage. By branching out into production of books and CDs we can appeal to a wider public and inspire our membership to take an active part in the organization.



Diggory Kempton,
Membership
Secretary

I saw the RHS Fruit Show in London which marked the centenary of the great Fruit Conference of

1883, and remember the smell of apples a hundred yards away coming from the exhibition hall. That winter I planted my first orchard of old varieties in a large rented garden over the road from the Arsenal stadium. Neighbours responded by putting in fruit trees on their patch, and a streetful of back gardens became an oasis resembling the orchards and market gardens which had flourished there, provisioning the City, before the houses were built in the 1880's. On coming to Shropshire it was a short step to make contact with MAN in 1996. Full circle.



Tony Malpas,
Vice-Chairman
and Newsletter
Editor 2007

I first became aware of MAN when Sheila Leitch visited our

smallholding on an open day and asked if we had any interesting apples growing here. I think maybe Diggory visited as well. Later, visiting an apple ID session at Sheila's house, I realised what important skills the identifiers had and wished I had them too, so I joined the committee.

My hopes for the future of MAN are a doubling of the MAN membership, some new members on the committee, and the further development of methods and materials for passing on the skills of apple and pear appreciation and identification to younger generations.



Nicky Matcher,
Publicity Officer

I first became aware of MAN visiting The Black Mountains Festival in Talgarth.

I joined, hoping to access expertise and learn more about the apples in our old neglected orchard. I attended some apple skills courses run with Glasu. I joined the committee nearly three years ago and brought experience of working with community groups on practical environmental projects and event marketing. I know little about apples and I'm learning. The MAN committee is friendly, dedicated and knowledgeable. The future? MAN's expertise, like fine old apple varieties, must not be allowed to perish, enthusiastic apprentices are needed. You?



Sylvia O'Brien,
Project Officer

Having been a member of MAN for several years, I joined the Committee recently because, with the purchase of the

orchard land in Cwmdud, MAN had arrived on my doorstep. It seemed an ideal opportunity to start taking a more active part in MAN. In future I would like to see the orchard at Cwmdud developing into an important historical resource for MAN as a whole and also for Cwmdud as a community. This exciting venture should be seen and enjoyed by many people. I would like MAN to become more approachable and community oriented, while remaining true to its well-respected, more academic roots.



Marie Ward,
Secretary and
Events Organiser

I first became aware of MAN when I saw an advertisement for a part-time minutes secretary in our local parish

magazine in Spring 2006. I applied and successfully took up the post, which has become much more than just a job. As the newest of the present management team, I am learning rapidly about the world of apples.

I hope that MAN will reach more people, making links with children and their parents, especially in this era of environmental and food awareness awakening. I hope that we will be able to involve children in an imaginative way in the development of the 'Paramor Orchard'.



Richard Wheeler,
Webmaster and
CD Editor

One of my reasons for moving to Herefordshire

was to have my own orchard with a mixture of cider and pot fruit. It was natural to join MAN to learn more about traditional varieties and then to get more involved. I have tried to make myself useful both with the website and with the efforts to digitally reprint old books on apples and pears. With a background in computing I hope that in the not too distant future we will see programs to help with orchard management and, more technically difficult than it may appear, identification.



The Brogdale apple collection at blossom time



The Brogdale pear collection flowering



The Brogdale pear collection



The Brogdale cherry collection

BROGDALE:

What is happening to the National Fruit Collections?

The photographs on the facing page give some idea to those who don't know Brogdale, and will serve to remind those who do, of the importance of the collection of fruit varieties conserved there. But in spite of their importance, it is still by no means certain that these collections will continue at Brogdale, and a number of the Friends of Brogdale Horticultural Trust have established themselves as a campaigning group to try to ensure that they do stay there. Also, the cherry blossom picture reminds us that apples and pears are not the only fruit involved. Mike Porter reviews recent developments.

It has been quite a challenge for an interested countryman to keep abreast of events at Brogdale this year, let alone evaluate their significance. When planting began in 1952, the Ministry of Agriculture, precursor of the Department of the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), had a Fruit Research Station at Brogdale Farm, which managed the National Fruit Trials. From these experimental plantings the National Fruit Collections (NFC) developed. The Government closed down the Research Station in 1989, but retained ownership of the NFC and Brogdale Farm. DEFRA now funds the upkeep of the NFC through a contract arrangement..

The Brogdale Horticultural Trust (BHT), set up to manage the NFC, bought Brogdale Farm in 1990. Until April 2007 they occupied premises at Brogdale where they had a plant centre, offices, shop and tea room. They have now moved to another site nearby at Faversham. Their contract with DEFRA to manage the NFC expires in April 2008.

Brogdale Farm is now owned by Hillreed Land, an investment and development company, who bought it from the Brogdale Horticultural Trust in 1999/2000. The land on which the NFC are planted is leased to DEFRA until 2016.

The Friends of Brogdale Horticultural Trust (Friends) is an active support group set up in 1990, now with a membership of over 700, which supports BHT, both financially through subscriptions and by helping with activities such as guided tours, events and publicity.

In spring 2007 a contract for management of NFC for a period of five years from May 2008 was put out to competitive tender by DEFRA. Options of keeping NFC at Brogdale or moving them to another site were included. There are thought to have been four or five bidders, including BHT who submitted their bid in conjunction with Imperial College (Wye) and East Malling Research.

It is thought that DEFRA advised that the plans of the various bidders should remain confidential until the outcome is announced. However, a well-founded rumour that the BHT bid might involve moving NFC from Brogdale caused consternation in the ranks of the Friends, who also claim that they have not been kept adequately informed about the plans of BHT. At a Special General Meeting of the Friends in April 2007 the majority of those present voted to amend their constitution to demonstrate that their support depended on the NFC remaining at Brogdale. They have since established themselves as a campaigning organisation called the Friends of the National Fruit Collections at Brogdale. Thus there are now two organisations of Friends at Brogdale!

The owners of Brogdale, Hillreed Land, through their chairman Tony Hillier, have expressed their wholehearted

commitment to retaining the NFC at Brogdale and emphasised their willingness to co-operate with DEFRA to support the successful bidder. They are reported to be spending £1million on improving facilities to attract visitors and redeveloping appropriate commercial units. Presumably they would be prepared to provide suitable accommodation for the successful bidder to manage the NFC efficiently.

In the end it probably depends on the Government (and us the tax-payers) being prepared to fund the NFC in the measure it deserves. Over fifty years of records, research and horticultural expertise have gone into building up this wonderful collection at Brogdale. It would seem shockingly wasteful to squander such an invaluable resource. The decision by DEFRA about the award of the contract will be announced in early autumn 2007

STOP PRESS

Joan Morgan has reported that DEFRA has decided to issue a new specification for the contract to maintain and curate the National Fruit Collections. The closing date for bids is 21st September 2007. The new specification does not appear to differ significantly, but the full implications of the changes have not yet been fully assessed. The option to move the collections from Brogdale has been retained. Friends of National Fruit Collections at Brogdale has made a valiant effort to keep everyone aware of the changing situation. Anyone interested can access nfcfriends@hotmail.co.uk and sign a petition to keep the NFC at Brogdale.

Mike Porter

If you want to go into this subject in any greater detail, Joan Morgan's website and blog www.fruitforum.net which she has been running since March this year is well worth a look.

NEWS OF OUR ORCHARDS

CROFT PENDARREN

Last autumn Croft Pendarren orchard had its best harvest yet. Some trees cropped for the first time. Fruits from *Marged Nicolas*, *Bridstow Wasp* and *Pig yr wydd* were taken over to Margaret Gill to paint, so their portraits will be seen in the *Welsh Marches Pomona*. *Pig yr wydd* was blown over in one terrific gale, but it has been gently hauled back into a more upright position. Quite a lot of the older trees have fruit again this year. The owner is helping *MAN* to manage the cutting regime to control the bracken.

Mike and Chris Porter

DONNINGTON

There was a reasonable amount of blossom at Donnington this spring, and a prospect of a crop not as heavy as last year. The trees in the orchard are continuing to grow well.

Ray Boddington

LOWER FFORDD-FAWR, near Hay-on-Wye, Breconshire

Five years ago, this small nursery orchard site was established on a small-holding belonging to one of our members, David Pryce Goodwin. Some of the apples which we had located during surveys, or had received for identification, were grafted and planted on dwarfing rootstocks, in the hope that healthy young fruits would be easier to name than the small, often diseased specimens obtained from very old trees. A few varieties were grafted from scions obtained from Brogdale when we wished to have an example of a particular variety. These young trees were grafted on M9 rootstocks and some were soon bearing fruit. However, not all survived on this site, which tended to be stony and to dry out, and Paul Davis has begun using M27 for the more recent plantings. Replacements for some of the casualties were planted this spring and the site is now almost full.

Sheila Leitch

TREDOMEN COURT, Llanfilo, Breconshire

There was a good turnout in early December for the tutored pruning session led by Chris Fairs of Bulmers. Some major lopping was done on trees which had grown too tall for easy picking of fruit. Chris provided useful sets of notes for taking away and giving confidence to beginners pruning in their home gardens and orchards. Two more pruning sessions were held in the Spring, and trees which had died were removed and some planting was also done. A data base is being set up to record management at this site and, later, it will be extended to cover the other museum orchards.

Sheila Leitch

WESTHOPE ORCHARD

The autumn of 2006 saw the biggest crop of apples since the orchard was planted some 14 years ago. The full standard trees have achieved a good size, though this is not uniform throughout the orchard. *Sam's Crab* was so weighed down with fruit that two branches snapped, in spite of some earlier thinning. *Gascoyne's Scarlet* was a sight to behold with large and very colourful fruit. *Annie Elizabeth* was the same. Such was the abundance of fruit that juicing was an option and very good it was too. With John Aldridge's help and pruning skills a number of the 15 trees were selected for some quite radical pruning. The rest will have the same attention next year.

Peter Austerfield

CIDER APPLE AND PERRY PEAR GROUP

Last year was not the best for the cider apple crop. For some it was excellent but for others a bad year. The cold spring, followed by the dry hot summer, meant that pollination was poor in some orchards and the dry summer resulted in small apples in many of the old orchards. The grafts of last year's discovery, *Styre Wilding*, unfortunately failed, however more have been done this year.

Last year I mentioned an old tree in an orchard in the Golden Valley. This has

now been positively identified as a *Green Norman*. Grafts have been taken and I am waiting to see if they are successful. In addition to the *Green Norman* there is another very old tree which we cannot yet identify. The orchard owner has told me that many years ago Mr George Wood of Bulmers called it a "Willow Norman". The growth pattern is unusual in that the shoots at the ends of branches tend to grow out at right angles to the main stem and then branch again at right angles to form an almost square end to the branch. It has

been suggested that this may be a variety called 'Wellow'; however the only reference to this name found so far is in the Tidnor Wood list of apples wanted but not yet found. If anyone knows of this name or a tree with similar growth characteristics please contact me. Once again grafts have been taken and result awaited.

In my search for "lost" cider apple varieties I have tried the Internet. This has turned up a possible *Eggleton Styre*. The tree nursery that stock it have told

me that it has been imported from Tasmania. Given that their Mother tree has not yet produced fruit we cannot be certain if their identification is in line with the apple described in *The Herefordshire Pomona*. A maiden tree has been purchased and we may know some time in the future.

It is our continuing task to try and find 'lost' varieties. In addition, it is vital to find as many as possible of the varieties introduced subsequent to the publication of the early *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.

Richard Cheshire

WEBMASTER'S REPORT

As webmaster I am never sure whether to look at the large list of things which could be done or to look back at all the progress which has been made. I am naturally a pessimist and so would normally dwell on all the things which haven't been done. But this year I will try to keep away from false promises for the future and will look back over the last five years. Yes, it was five years ago that *MAN* burst upon cyberspace with its website. Some nooks and crannies of the website are little used but the List of Nurseries and the Events Diary remain the most popular pages (as, I suppose, they should). I could spend far too long investigating just how the website is used – how many foreign visitors come to the website, how graphics designers concocted a joke within the photo gallery and, currently, how another joke(?) is currently being played out over the fruit cages at Turnastone Farm. But even webmasters need to "get a life". Five years ago I could only reliably email one committee member with news about the website. This year only one committee member is without email and the majority are on broadband. This is an unexpected

outcome of the "Open Source" computer initiative – the committee have been stimulated to making their own IT arrangements for fear of having a different system imposed on them! *MAN* now has a range of computer equipment for individual use as well as for exhibition purposes. The latest *Vintage Fruit* CD includes a slideshow – another reason for *MAN* to acquire a projector now that prices are coming down to affordable levels whilst our needs are rising to meet them.

The Open Source computer initiative has proved somewhat of a disappointment. The *MAN* committee would make an excellent case study of how (not) to deliver new technology. Mistakes from the project sponsor include failing to deliver all the equipment, correctly configured, on day one; not having sufficiently directed training and related reference material; not having adequate time to ensure that everybody was set up in their own home with the internet connection and printing properly configured; and making the support team redundant before the project finished (!) Of course, *MAN* never makes mistakes. .

. With hindsight we could have been more forceful about managing the handover and training but, at the time, we did not want to rock the boat and lose the free computers. The benefit of the project has been that all the *MAN* committee, bar one, is now on email. This has made communication of minutes, meeting agendas etc so much more efficient. But the use of Open Source software has not taken off. Indeed, seven of our computers have reverted to using Windows.

At last, mainly thanks to Marie Ward, our database initiative is moving forward. We have prioritised our limited resources towards an Orchard Records database. By the time you read this we should have reviewed the second version of the prototype. I am quite excited at the prospect of *MAN* having a useful tool to help with orchard management especially as it arrives with the purchase of the Paramor Orchard at Cwmdru.

Richard Wheeler
MAN Webmaster

webmaster@marcherapple.net

HE'S GOT AN OLOGY

In fact, he's got two. You may have noticed in recent newsletters that Richard Wheeler has let it be known that, with particular reference to apples and pears, he is into deltiology (postcard collecting) and also tegestology. . ? Yes, you may well ask. The answer, in Richard's own words is, 'A posh word for beer mat



collecting. Beer mats were introduced in the 1920s and ever since then grown men have indulged themselves by collecting them'. Or in his case, cider and perry mats. The example illustrated here is from the Herefordshire cider and perry maker, Westons.

A VERY HAPPY LIFE:

Founders of *Man*: Ray Boddington

If any one person can be called the inventor of the Marcher Apple Network, it has to be Ray Boddington, Herefordian, musician and apple enthusiast. Here, in Ray's own words, is the account he provided when Tony Malpas asked him about his long life and his part in the setting up of **MAN**.

I have enjoyed a very happy life, extending to 80 years. My parentage was partly Lancastrian, partly of the south of England. My father farmed fruit at Burghill, just north of Hereford, but sold up when I was nine years of age, following the memorably disastrous late frost of 1934. I recall a number of trophies won for the quality of his apples and later learnt that there had been regular contact with the Long Ashton research establishment. Just previously I had narrowly escaped death from peritonitis which left me a rather delicate schoolboy for a number of years.

Childhood

In the meantime we moved to Hinton Hall, Peterchurch, in the Golden Valley. One couldn't imagine a more magical place to pass one's later childhood with the aid of a bicycle. The "South Wales Express" – as it was known among the family – ran along almost the bottom of our garden, three times a day (one tank locomotive, one carriage, three trucks and a guardsvan) between Hay and Pontrilas. Very rural – elderly ladies to whom I spoke had only been to Hereford three times in their lives and once to Cheltenham!

World War II

This idyllic state of existence ended in 1940 (with the War) when my father died, very young, and my mother was left with three children to educate – I had just started at Repton, in



Derbyshire (£70 per term) – and, having sold up at Peterchurch, we led a somewhat peripatetic existence for much of the War, ameliorated not least by the Bulmer family – Mrs Percy and her son, Howard, with whom we stayed in 1941. Little more than a year later my elder brother, Robert, disappeared on war service with his submarine, which has never been traced. His son, Christopher, now retired, cultivates apples at his house in France, and is a member of **MAN**.

Education and Employment

At the end of the War, my mother bought a house in Holmer – which is part of Hereford – and I, after a brief spell as a Naval rating – most of it spent in what is now Sri Lanka – was accepted for Brasenose College, Oxford, where I took a degree in Modern History. Returning home, I joined the firm of H&G Thynne, tile makers at Holmer and Withington, living with my mother until I married. On the demise of that company, I was offered employment by Henry Wiggin – Wiggin Alloys – a large company for Hereford at that time, where I remained until 1984 with responsibility for technical information and information retrieval systems.

Music

Being of a musical disposition and always based in Hereford, I have spent much of my leisure time in choral

singing, notably the Three Choirs Festival, of which I was Secretary/Administrator at Hereford for twelve years, and Secretary of the Festival's Association for another five, with close involvement in the running of the Choral Society, including seven years as its Chairman. All this came to an end in 1990, as did my close involvement with Hereford Civic Trust, when I developed angina.

Apples

What did I think about then? When my mother lived at Holmer, after the War, her newly built house lay in part of an old orchard where grew a fine *Warner's King* plus a *King of the Pippins* and a *Wellington (Dumelow)*. When my elder sister and her husband returned from colonial service in what is now Ghana, their Ledbury house lay in a well-established orchard containing *Rival*, *Winston*, *Peasgood's Nonesuch*, *Cox's Pomona*, *Golden Noble*, *Monarch*, *Hector Macdonald* and several others. In my own garden I have *Annie Elizabeth*, *Charles Ross*, *Lord Lambourne* and a mystery apple that might just be *Granges Pearmain*.

My footsteps towards **MAN**

It started in the summer of 1990 when I had to give up my Three Choirs work. Having had my father's copy of *The Herefordshire Pomona* passed on to me by my mother when she was moving house, I occasionally looked at the printed plates and wondered if there was any means around for tracing these old varieties. As a member of the Herefordshire branch of the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens, (Chairman, the late George Clive Esq) I found myself accompanying the late Stanley Baldock – their official Fruit Collator – in the latter stages of setting up the collection of 'rare varieties' at Berrington Hall, National Trust. Later that autumn, my wife Norma and I happened to be mooching around Hay-on-Wye, she in pursuit of the possible

antiques bargain, when my eye fell on *Stirling Castle* displayed in a greengrocer's window. I just purchased half-a-dozen saying that I was interested in tracing old apple varieties and would look them up in a special book that I had (the Harry Baker/Rosanne Sanders book which Norma had picked up on a stall when we were mooching, again, in Dunkeld (Central Highlands) two years previously). Anyway, the man picked up his phone and spoke to Sheila Leitch, that there was an "apple enthusiast" in his shop, gave me her address, and I was on my way to Wye View, Glasbury. That soon gave rise to meetings there, and expeditions to surrounding

orchards, Sheila calling on Mike and Christine Porter, who came over from Llangynidr (Crickhowell), and I bringing along Stan Baldock plus John Aldridge, whom I had met, I think, at Big Apple's annual meeting at Putley, near Ledbury. There we came across Tom Froggatt from Ashford Carbonel, who very soon took on as Treasurer.

How did I become aware of the Marcher Apple Network?

Well, it originated in my head. When we realised we might be eligible for public funding, we were advised to set up a formal organisation so that we could apply for grant aid such as the Prince of Wales Trust. The group

honoured me by making me Chairman – not that I knew very much about apples, seriously, – and we went on from there. What geographical area should we belong to, since we were all scattered about? That's it! – the Welsh Marches! – so that 'MAN' came to represent our several situations and was non – exclusive in scope, even if it did conjure up an image of (rusty) chain mail and the swish of arrows! (John liked to say, "Watch your back, Ray" when we drove across the border by the Rhydspence. His background was closer to Covent Garden, I believe). I believe these links – like a good marriage – are made in heaven!

Ray Boddington

MISCELLANY

Friends in High Places

Amazing how many apple and pear enthusiasts have an interest in mountain climbing and hill walking. Our Network Co-ordinator, Sheila, and our Chairman, Peter, have both spent time at high altitudes, Peter most recently in the Andes earlier this year (See his photograph on page 10). Next, our President, Sir Andrew, is going to climb Kilimanjaro, and, in doing so, raise money for Marie Curie Cancer Care and Penmaes School, Brecon (for children with special needs). If you would like to support what he is doing, or just to know more about it, see www.climbkiliwithus.com



James Bailey

Thanks to James Bailey

With the change in our publishing arrangements, this is a good moment to say Many Thanks to James Bailey, of Compuprint, Kilpeck, MAN member, and very patient and efficient printer of our newsletters over the years, almost from the beginning. We wish him all the best for the future, and are very

pleased that we shall still be able to call upon him for the printing of our flyers and other papers from time to time.

Acknowledgements

Grateful thanks to all who have contributed articles and photographs for inclusion in this newsletter, especially to David Gill, for the photographs with captions of members of the Paramor family, to Lloyd Lewis for the digital photograph of the 1882 OS map of Cwmdu, and to Dr Alison Lean for the photographs of Brogdale.

Finally, to Steve Bowgen for the design and layout of this newsletter, and to the Orphans Press, Leominster, for much helpful advice and assistance, very many thanks.

Regrets, we have a few, . . .

Because this has been a special celebration issue, it has not been possible to include a number of articles and reports which members and correspondents have kindly submitted. So to Tony Gentil for his Fruit Notes, to John Clarke for his Spotted Flycatcher Survey 2006, and to Anne Shepherdson for Clunton Scrumpers 2006, to Christopher Boddington for his report from France on Ancient Apple Varieties in the Tarn, and to others who have kindly offered articles and reports, many thanks, and sorry there wasn't room.

But the good news is . . .

You can see their articles on the

website, at.

www.marcherapple.net/news.htm

The National Orchard Forum. The Summer 2007, Issue 10 Newsletter is now available. Information about this most useful compilation can be seen on the NOF website www.nat-orchard-forum.org.uk Or write to the Editor, Ann Smith, NOF, 109 Orchard Way, Churchdown, Gloucester, GL3 2AP, Tel. 01452-855677.

Spring News Sheet 2008

Items for the News Sheet are welcome. Brief notices of spring and summer events can be included, and should be sent to the Editor, Sheila Leitch, at Wye View, Glasbury-on-Wye, Powys via HEREFORD HR3 5NU, Telephone No 01497 847354. Contributions, preferably on disc, to Sheila Leitch, or, by email, via Marie Ward, at marie.t.ward@googlemail.com. Items should arrive no later than the end of February 2008.

APPLES AND PEARS AFALAU A PÊR Autumn 2007 Volume 2 No1 is the Newsletter of Marcher Apple Network Charity No 1095151 Company No 3787303 Regd Office: Ashford Mill, Ashford Carbonel, Ludlow, SY8 4BT © Marcher Apple Network, Rhydwaith Afalau'r Gororau.



Marcher Apple Network

Available from the Marcher Apple Network

The Herefordshire Pomona CD, produced by Richard Wheeler for the Marcher Apple Network, 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.



Prices £16.00 per copy, including postage and packing in the UK.

The Vintage Fruit CD contains 290 separate descriptions of cider and 107 descriptions of perry pears, all taken from hard to obtain reference works, namely *Pomona Herefordiensis*, also known as Knight's Pomona, complete with its 30 colour plates, *The Apple and Pear as Vintage Fruits* by Hogg and Bull (illustrated by 12 colour plates from *The Herefordshire Pomona*) the research papers by Ray Williams and others in *Perry Pears* and 'Cider Apples and their Characters', and *Bulmer's Pomona*, including its 35 colour plates.

System Requirements These CDs each contain a "website on a CD" for use on as wide a range of computers as possible. You need just a CD drive and a graphical web browser (such as Internet Explorer). No additional software is required. Some of the colour plates are quite large and are best viewed on a large (high resolution) screen. On smaller screens you may need to scroll to see all of each plate.

Also published by the Marcher Apple Network



Apples of the Welsh Marches by Marcher Apple Network, with photographs by Michael Porter.

This first publication by MAN describes 55 old varieties of apples cultivated in the traditional orchards of the West Midlands and the neighbouring parts of Wales. Twenty four further varieties are described, which, though not in most cases originating in the Marcher Apple Network region, have been extensively grown here in the past and are still to be found in local farm orchards.

Price £5.00 inc p and p in the UK.



Full Colour Postcard Reproductions Seven plates from *The Herefordshire Pomona* have been chosen for this first pack of seven full colour postcards from MAN. In postcard format (6" x 4") the front features the plate and the reverse is printed with names of the fruits illustrated. There are three plates of apples, two of pears and one each of cider apples and perry pears.

Price £3.50 per pack, plus 50p post and packing for up to two packs, thereafter PLUS 15p per pack



Back Numbers of the MAN Newsletter If you are new to MAN (or if MAN is new to you) you may wish to catch up with the past and purchase some or all of the Newsletters 1 to 12 which comprise the now completed Volume 1. Many of the articles in this volume contain advice and ideas which have stood the test of time and still make an interesting read.

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.

MAN Library List An up to date list of all the publications in the MAN Library, 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 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.**



Marcher Apple Network

printed by ORPHANS PRESS 01568 612460