



Marcher Apple Network

Charity No: 1095 151

NEWS SHEET No. 13

Spring 2014

AGM review

The AGM was held at the Cider Museum on Saturday 16th November, 2013. Richard Wheeler, Vice-Chairman presided and presented the Report and Accounts, which demonstrated that MAN is vibrant (most of the detail has been given in the last issue of *Apples and Pears*).

Elections to the Board and Management Committee were held and members are:

Board of Directors (Trustees)

Peter Austerfield, *Chair of Board*
Ray Boddington
Mike Porter
Tom Froggatt
Jim Chapman
Jackie Denman
Nick Dunn
Sir Andrew Large
Andy Pillow, *Treasurer / Co Secretary*

Management Committee

Peter Austerfield
Andy Pillow, *Treasurer*
Mike Porter
Tom Froggatt
Diggory Kempton, *Membership secretary*
Celia Kirby, *Editor*
Sheila Leitch, *Network Co-ordinator*
Tony Malpas, *Cider Interest*
Gillian Menzies
Chris Porter, *Archivist*
Stephen Ainsleigh Rice, *Chair*
David Smith, *Vice-Chair*
Marie Ward, *Secretary*
Richard Wheeler, *Webmaster*

Tom Froggatt had decided that the time had come to hand over responsibility as Treasurer and Company Secretary to Andy Pillow. We all thank Tom heartily for his tireless efforts promoting MAN since he joined in early 1995. It was really nice to see Peter Austerfield back fitting fit, in harness on Board, in Committee, at Shows and in the Orchards. Our thanks to Richard Wheeler who has most generously guided MAN for many years as Webmaster, Vice-chairman, and during 2013 as modest and very effective Chairman. Many members confess to having divided thoughts but we hope that Richard and Mary's wish for an imminent relocation from Herefordshire comes true — but please, please, not just yet!

After the formal business, we were regaled and enlivened by Jonathan Blair, Master Cider Maker of Westons, and Chris Fairs, formerly of Bulmers. Those lucky enough to be there rapidly became experts. Enthralling; thanks to them both. And did you see Mike Porter's display of 240 named varieties in half-a-dozen bakers' trays! Wow!

New Directors

Another encouraging development at the AGM of last November was the election of five new Directors to work with our four founding Directors. They are long standing members of MAN, most of whom you likely know. Here are some of their interests:

Jim Chapman is Treasurer of the Gloucestershire Orchard Trust and luminary behind the Hartpury Perry Pear Centre.

Jackie Denman founded the Big Apple Association and is its secretary.

Nick Dunn is managing director of Trees for Life Nursery, and is a member of the Brogdale committee.

Sir Andrew Large is our President, has a wonderful museum orchard and might be described as having several other active "interests".

Andy Pillow is a surveyor with Smiths Gore farm management consultants; he has kindly agreed to takeover as Treasurer from Tom Froggatt.

Welcome and thank you for serving.

Autumn Shows and Identifications

MAN members were on hand at ten shows this Autumn including Talgarth, Malvern, Big Apple, Leominster, Chepstow and Old Railway Line, Three Cocks. That presence and the good cropping season resulted in many apples being offered for identification. This year our experts, led by Mike and Chris Porter, John Savidge, John Aldridge and Sheila Leitch, cracked 420 varieties.

News of MAN orchards

Tredomen

Emma Gardener, with sterling help from MAN members Tony Pain, David Smith, Paul Graves and friend Jim Wesley, made a big effort pruning at Tredomen last winter and the benefit really shows. There is less of the large restorative

work to do, it's now down to more formative and stimulation work. Emma has kindly agreed to do the pruning this year for free in return for having much of the fruit crop to make juice. We're delighted to help a start-up business and reduce our costs! And just five bush trees to plant. If you'd like to join a work party, we have one scheduled for Saturday 1st March, with the Sunday following as an alternative in event of poor weather.

Paramor orchard, Cwmdu

There are eleven standard trees to be planted in the main area and one dwarf specimen in the panhandle. A planting event, to include some advice on formative pruning of young trees, has been arranged for Saturday 22nd February with Sunday 23rd as alternative in the event of poor weather.

Lower Ffordd-fawr

We are fortunate to be working with two or three young employees of Drover Holidays, a go-ahead business in Hay-on-Wye. They join Ainsleigh for learning orchard management skills and managing this miniature orchard. Next, they will be doing a morning of pruning on Wednesday 6th March. You are welcome to join in and encourage these youngsters.

Bronllys Hospital orchard

The Green Valleys (TGV: www.thegreenvalleys.org) is bringing together several communities around the Brecon Beacons for exploring and carrying out a range of environmental activities. One initiative is an apple pressing event that tours the area enabling members to work together and then take away their juice. Bronllys Hospital has kindly granted TGV members permission to harvest apples from the old orchard of some 29 trees. "Those trees, they haven't seen a saw for 50 years and more!"

To fix that, MAN is going to guide the TGV volunteers in a campaign of major restorative pruning over the next few years. We're going to be getting some new members too. And they will then go on an ID training course for learning what varieties they've been pruning.

Grafting Course

Last March, Tom Adams, a highly experienced orchardist, gave us a superb day of training in grafting skills. Participants had three trees to take away and reports mention these babies are growing vigorously. It's going to be repeated! If you're interested to join the fun, and learning too, do please book early for this. There are just twelve places. You should bring with you a pair of secateurs but other course materials will be provided. (You are welcome to bring your own grafting tools and graft wood if you prefer). Yes, and please think where those four (yes, four!) trees you graft will be planted next winter. The course will be held on 15th and possibly also 22nd March from 10.00am to 3.00pm at Glasbury Village Hall, HR3 5NN, grid reference SO 17724 39317, just off the A438, with a light lunch taken at Maesllwch Arms or the Harp. (Lunch is not included in the course fee).

We intend the course to be held on the 15th March but if there are more than 12 attendees registered, we will arrange for a second course. If you would prefer to book

for the latter, please let Mrs Ward know. The course fee is £30.00 for members of MAN and £40.00 for non-members. Please phone Mrs M. Ward on 01497 847847 to confirm a place before sending in the enclosed booking form, to be sent to Mrs M. Ward, 8 Nant-y-Felin, Three Cocks, Brecon, Powys LD3 0SJ.

MAN's 21st Anniversary year and celebratory events

The first meeting of MAN's founders was in December 1993. So we're in our 21st year, and by the next AGM we'll just about be 21.

Several happy events and activities are planned for celebrating this year:

- Our Anniversary tree offer (many have been distributed already, though a few remain unsold— see below)
- We're continuing our association with local primary schools, this time in Herefordshire.
- A Cider Interest Group is just forming, apologies, ready to blossom.
- MAN has already contributed to Brogdale a list of all varieties confirmed in six our orchards. More to follow....
- We're hoping that the weather will be kind on Saturday 21st June for a lovely day with a BBQ at Donnington, including a relaxed talk on summer pruning and chances to have a go.
- Joining with the Gloucestershire Orchard Trust and Three Counties Traditional Orchard Project to initiate a series of Conference at the Three Counties Showground for fostering greater interest in and collaboration between fruit groups across the UK.

If you have more ideas and events, please do get in contact with Stephen Ainsleigh Rice, Ty Glyn, Cusop Dingle, Hay on Wye, Herefordshire HR3 5RF, 01497-820332. ainsleigh_jennifer@btinternet.com.

Anniversary trees

Do you recall that a number of membership benefits were planned for 2013. One was for members to purchase maidens grafted by Tom Adam from Tredomen scions. Six varieties were offered, Newland Sack, Kings Acre Bountiful, Colwall Quoining, Sandlin Duchess, Pig yr wydd, and Onibury Pippin. Twelve members ordered 38 sturdy maidens. Tom still has a few left over; if you'd like to buy any at £18.00 each, please contact Mrs M. Ward on 01497 847847 to confirm that there are still some left before sending in the enclosed ordering form.

Schools pollination project

Last year we reported in *Apples and Pears* that MAN had joined with Jenny Stevens to help children in nine Radnorshire schools understand pollination. To complement her "Bring on the Bees" project we gave each school a three-graft family tree. It was so successful that we're going to two more schools, this time in Herefordshire, Clifford and

Weobley. Just in case you would like to join the fun at one of the schools, telling children about apples and pollination, please contact Ainsleigh (as above).

Cider Interest Group

At the AGM last November Tony Malpas put forward a proposal to revive a group, open to all members, who would be interested in reviewing the current state of cider pomology, the conservation of valuable cider varieties, and cider apple ID. Twelve people signed the contact list, and offered ideas sufficient to prompt the drawing up of a tentative programme of things such a group might do.

This is not in any way to imply that hitherto there has been no interest in things cider among the MAN membership. In fact, over the years a great deal has been done, ranging from the Herefordshire Pomona and Vintage Fruit CDs, the brilliant annual displays of cider apples put on at shows by Richard Cheshire, and occasional meetings on the subject of cider such as that on 'The Legacy of Long Ashton'. It is just that now, with much achieved in 21 years of MAN, particularly in the field of culinary and dessert, and a renewed interest generally in all things cider, a number of us feel that a fresh look at cider pomology is of particular interest.

At the time of writing this, Tony has now suggested a whole day meeting (11 am to 3pm) on Tuesday 18th February at Hereford Cider Museum, when we can familiarise ourselves with the resources of the museum and learn about the work being done there. Dr Rebecca Roseff, the museum archivist, will be available to show us around the archives. There will need to be a charge to cover the cost of using the museum that day (£50.00), so the more people attending, the lower the cost. Lunch can be ordered (Soup and roll, £3.50, ploughman's £5.50, piece of cake, £1.00). This would also be an opportunity, perhaps over lunch, to share views and plan a series of further meetings.

If you are reading this before the 18th of February and would wish to attend, please contact Tony at once on anthonyjmalpas@btinternet.com or ring 01568 613023. If it is after 18th February, contact him anyway as he will be pleased to tell you what happened and what is planned for the next meeting.

EU inventory of apple varieties

Nick Dunn, a member of the Brogdale committee, has informed us that the EU has a programme for gathering names and specimen locations of all varieties of fruit trees over the next ten years. However, the proposed draft EU legislation to force official registration on all known, previously recorded and newly introduced/bred plant and seed varieties — at substantial cost to breeders, nurseries and interested organisations — is being resisted heavily by all representative bodies, including the NFU and the RHS. It is worth mentioning that this legislation is several years from implementation and there is considerable resistance from all fronts. MAN will receive regular updates.

Mike Porter has also been in contact with Brogdale and its curator Dr Matthew Ordidge of Reading University, giving them a list of 233 confirmed varieties held in MAN's orchards; more will follow. It's part of the public benefit that MAN brings.

And finally, what do Stilton Cheese, Melton Mowbray pork pies and Newcastle Brown have in common? The description of cider and perry as from Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire has been registered as Protected Geographical Indications https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/1472698/env_trader_info_leaflet_for_cider_and_perry.pdf. Yes the EU does formalise things, sometimes with benefits....

BBQ / Summer Pruning

Saturday 21st June we are planning an event for Members and families. We hope this will be at the MAN orchard at Donnington, near Ledbury, but if that is not possible we will let you know the alternative site in good time. We aim to gather at about 13:30 and spend an afternoon looking around, taking instruction from Nick Dunn in summer pruning and having a go on our trees there, and chatting, and reminiscing, and brewing tea (cider takes too long) and then having a BBQ.

Places are pretty well unlimited (that's a first, isn't it). We do ask a contribution of £5.00 from each attendee and this will include the cost of a burgher. We do also ask that you be willing to bring a dish to make it a pot-luck affair. If you would be willing to help organise and run the event that would be much appreciated. Please let us know if you wish to come by telephoning Mrs M Ward, 8 Nant-y-Felin, Three Cocks, Brecon, Powys LD3 0SJ, 01497 847847 or contacting her via secretary@marcherapple.net. We'd like to know numbers by 21st May for sorting out planning. And we have to be able to notify you if the weather turns nasty forcing postponement or cancellation.

Giving MAN an MoT

Six years after its founding MAN became a Company Limited by Guarantee and soon afterwards was registered as a Charity. We've maintained an active interest from our members, all fabulous people aren't you, and established six museum orchards, of which Paramor, thanks to a member's generosity is owned. And there are signs of a growing interest in old varieties and from young blood.

However, the world has been changing around us too. Not least at the Charity Commission. Do you recall those hearings about the Cup Trust before the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee? Well that, and a report by the National Audit Office <http://www.nao.org.uk/report/regulatory-effectiveness-charity-commission/> is forcing the Charity Commission to become a more effective and independent regulator. The Directors and Management Committee now consider that over 14 years after becoming a company we should check whether we were doing things

according to the most up-to-date requirements of the Charity Commission, and Companies House. Charity Commission gives six Hallmarks of a well-run organisation <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/CC10.aspx> :

- Clear about its purpose and direction
- Strong Board
- Fit for purpose
- Learning and improving
- Financially sound and prudent
- Accountable and transparent

We think MAN meets this test, but if you have queries please do contact Peter Austerfield 01432-830208; Mike Porter 01874-730354; Stephen Ainsleigh Rice as above. And while on accountability and transparency, there are some legal matters we think you would wish to be reminded of, or know, about.

Membership

The Company Limited by Guarantee was established (incorporated) in 1999. You may be aware that you are members of this Company. Annual membership is renewed each year and runs from 1st August until 31st July the year following. Life and honorary members do not have to renew membership. As members you are also under an obligation to pay up to £1 in the event that the Company has to be wound up because it is insolvent. You are a guarantor. It isn't a likely occurrence, and it is a rather small obligation. There is a big incentive, though, for taking on this obligation because you would not have any further obligation, no matter how big MAN's debts were. That was why MAN changed from being a club, with members having unlimited liability, to a company with this modest guarantee asked of members. And to reassure you further, as at 31st July 2013, our accounts showed a cash balance exceeding £17,000, that is about 2 years of expenditure. With that reserve, we think we're financially sound and chance of insolvency is vanishingly small.

If you are concerned about this situation, however, please do contact Peter, Mike or Ainsleigh. If you are still not comfortable with the situation you may of course terminate

membership, by letter e-mail or telephone, whenever you wish, by giving the membership secretary seven days' notice: we hope you won't, though. If you do cancel membership your voting rights lapse immediately. The obligation as a guarantor ceases one after year membership is terminated.

Proxy voting

MAN provides that members may vote on resolutions by proxy voting at General Meetings. A form can be made available to anyone wishing to do so (and we will include it in future notices of General Meetings). It has to be returned duly signed, or notarised, to MAN's Registered Office 48 hours before the general meeting.

Notice of General Meeting

Our Articles of Association requires that notice of a General Meeting be sent prepaid as first class post with dispatch a minimum of (effectively) 15 or 22 days before that meeting. There is no provision that allows use of second class post or e-mail. The Board and Management Committee would like to change this article to include options to send by second class post or by e-mail as you, the member, may wish. This change will be formally proposed at the next AGM.

Postage, paper, printing and envelopes costs MAN over £150 to send out the News Sheet, and much more for our *Apples and Pears* Newsletter. To achieve that saving we do ask you if you'd be willing to receive some future communications by e-mail? If so, please give us your e-mail address to membsec@marcherapple.net. If you do want a hardcopy, would you please let the secretary know at secretary@marcherapple.net or Marie Ward, 8 Nant-y-Felin, Three Cocks, Brecon, Powys, LD3 0SJ, telephone 01497-847847?

Other matters

Together, the (stronger) Board and Management Committee are now considering what changes should be made in running MAN. If any things require changing in MAN's Articles of Association, such as notices of General Meetings, we'll let you know and why. You'll get an opportunity for voting on them at a General Meeting.