



Marcher Apple Network

Charity No: 1095 151

NEWS SHEET No. 16

Spring 2017

AGM

Our last AGM was held on Saturday 26th November 2016 at 11:00 in the Cider Museum. Your chairman of the Management Committee had the pleasant task of describing a successful year of achievements, from Forward Planning Meeting to DNA campaign (see preliminary results below), identification work shop sessions, and potential collaboration with the National Trust (see below).

Our guest speaker was Steve Oram of the Peoples Trust for Endangered Species. We had over 40 members present. Steve emphasised the importance of traditional orchards for having a biodiverse wildlife: substantially that they are undisturbed spaces with many different micro-habitats. There are literally tens of thousands of sites that PTES has located and many more yet to be added.

Steve is keen that we participate in moves to share top fruit graft material throughout the UK for increased resilience. He also is looking at finding sources of local ground seed mixes to improve grassland bio-diversity.

Following Steve's presentation, Gill Barter has kindly noted that the Coronation Meadow project promotes enriching new meadows with seeds brought in with green hay from species-rich fields of a similar region. <http://coronationmeadows.org.uk/conservation/loss-stats/>.

Is this something that we should try?

Ainsleigh Rice

MAN Committee and News

Membership remains steady at about 290, with some subscriptions outstanding.... PLEASE!

Current committee consists of: Peter Austerfield, Sheila Leitch, Andy Pillow, Daniela Bergman, Wade Muggleton, Chris and Mike Porter, Ainsleigh Rice, David Smith, Charlie Searl and Marie Ward. From 2016 we reduced the number of meetings from six to four each year; if you're interested to join the committee please let Marie our secretary know, at secretary@marcherapple.net.

You'll have received an invitation to a Forward Planning Meeting at the Grange Court in Leominster on Saturday 28th January. We want to review our objects, define where we wish to be in 5 years, and agree on the key things necessary to get there. If you were unable to join your Management Committee

at this meeting, there will be a report in the next 'Apple and Pears' issue.

Did you know that our Treasurer, Andy Pillow, is now the Chairman of the Shropshire branch of the National Farmers Union? He'll be pretty busy, so the Committee will be doing all we can lighten his load. He's generously promised to join us at Shows, where his organisational skills, generosity and salesmanship has proved invaluable.

Many of you have kindly confirmed that we may occasionally communicate with you by email, as with this communication. If you do not wish for us to contact you by e-mail or only with more formal communications, please do let us know. For us to serve you better we need to know your wishes.

At the AGM it was mentioned that Marie Ward would be leaving the Committee in a few months as she wishes to move to Devon in order to be nearer her daughter. We have been very fortunate to have her as secretary, organising courses and being a face of MAN, and shall miss her very much. Thank you, Marie, we hope that your removal goes smoothly.

Sheila Leitch asked if any members would be interested in and willing to take over some of the roles Marie has filled over the last years. Moving forward, we wonder if things would work better if the secretarial role was broken down into a few simpler tasks such as:

- Minute taking
- Booking meetings
- Archiving meetings on Google group (or wherever)
- Library list maintenance
- Communications
- Assisting with website updating, helping with Facebook and other publicity.

The committee would be pleased to hear from you however much or little you could / would like to be involved. Entirely as you may choose: what an offer!

Ainsleigh Rice

Identification Report Autumn 2016

Favourable pollination weather and good growing conditions during the summer led to the best crop of apples for the past 20 years. The identifiers were kept very busy at the various apple events attended by MAN and there were seven subsequent identification sessions to cope with the puzzles

encountered at shows and sent in by post. Fourteen members undertook identification at shows (JS, JA, PA, DS, SAR, DB, CS, CK, SL, WM, JD, CP, and MP) and twelve have been regularly involved with the ID panels at The Harp. It has been most encouraging to welcome younger, enthusiastic members to our panel and we are very grateful to all who have helped. Special thanks are due to JS (and his dedicated chauffeur) who travelled from Aberystwyth for every session to contribute information from his invaluable database.

An identification service was offered at the events listed below and the number of apple samples determined is shown in brackets.

<i>Event</i>	<i>Identifiers</i>	<i>No. of samples</i>
Black Mountains Festival	SL, DB	1
Malvern Autumn Fruit Show		
(Day 1)	WM	21
(Day 2)	JA, SAR	19
Tenbury Apple Fair	DB, CP, MP	52
Big Apple, Much Marcle		
(Day 1)	CP, MP	65
(Day 2)	JA, JS, SAR, SL	44
Leominster Apple Fair	CP, DB, CK, MP	85
Cefn Ila, Woodland Trust	CS, SAR	10
Chepstow Apple Day	CP, MP, SAR	69

Summary of fruit identification 2016

ID panel meetings	7
Events at which MAN offered identification	9
Total identification meetings	16
MAN hours involved	476
Number of samples identified	530
Exhibitions staged	3

During the seven identification meetings at The Harp, at total of 164 samples of apples were examined. As usual there were some we could not identify and we will graft from their parent trees for further study in one of our museum orchards.

Apart from these conundrums, some of the more unusual varieties we encountered are noted below:



- Ard Cairn Russet
- Ben's Red
- Captain Tom
- Colwall Quoining
- Dutch Mignonne
- Emperor Alexander
- Herefordshire Quoining
- Kentish Fillbasket
- King's Acre Bountiful
- Lord Stradbroke
- Pig yr wydd
- Reinette du Canada
- Wheeler's Russet



We also made some progress with some of our own mysteries. Just before we received the DNA results, at our last ID session in The Harp, we were looking at King Coffee and John Norman as well as samples from trees at Colwall. They were agreed to be the same. And the DNA has confirmed that.

At the same session we puzzled over some russets, a small and a large one we found at Trevithel, and one from Mary Crichton's. They are still puzzling us. And there is some confusion nationally about Sykehouse Russet, Leathercoat Russet, Leathercoat and other russets.

Mike Porter

Cider Apples

For many years Richard Cheshire organised splendid cider apple displays at Shows and identified fruit brought in by visitors. For some time he also explored methods of identification and experimented with ways of modifying the "Bunyard System" to provide a key for identification of cider apple varieties.

Last year, as a result of health problems, Richard was forced to abandon his involvement with the cider displays. When he and his wife Sally moved to Leominster he gave MAN a dossier containing descriptions and photos of more than 60 varieties of cider apples, many of which he had cultivated in his orchard at Kinnersley.

We are very grateful for all the help that Richard and Sally have given to MAN and we hope that, in due course, one of our members may be able to follow up Richard's extremely useful research and enable us to offer an effective identification service to our cider enthusiasts.

Then there are the pears...

Mike Porter

Orchards and work parties

These are jolly occasions when you can come as a family or as individuals to enjoy some team work, exercise, fresh air and glorious views. There is ample parking but no toilet facilities at our orchards. Please contact the organiser if you intend to come, just in case there is a last minute change forced upon us by inclement weather or whatever.

Paramor

Mike has ordered 23 trees on MM106 and 6 on M25 for grafting in readiness for planting in 2017. We have some really good stakes to use from now onwards: hot creosote impregnated ones which will last much longer. We hope to see you with spade, gloves and muscles on Saturday, February 25th. Contact Mike Porter on 01874-730354

Tredomen

This year there will be a pruning course on 11th February (see Events). Since we expect to be grafting a number of trees for the National Trust (see below), we've decided that only limited pruning work will be carried out, else we may remove potential scions. A few trees may be removed and we have to protect against nibbling rabbits. There may be a few trees to remove; a consequence of DNA analysis results confirming duplication.... There are no trees to plant.

Friday 17th February 2017 from 10:00–15:00 — pruning (practice) for orchard maintenance. If volunteers are keen to work at Tredomen, please would you contact Ainsleigh on 01497-820332

Lower ffordd-fawr

Dover Holidays staff have helped with the pruning and maintenance of this small orchard near Hay-on-Wye. If you're interested to join in, please contact Ainsleigh, as above.

Donnington

I wrote in 2013 that Donnington orchard had been 'off radar' for a while and needed some TLC. Now about 15 years old, some of the plantings are good examples of mature trees. Originally there were 73 plantings, but as some 20 are dead or in a poor state a 'cull' is scheduled for this winter to coincide with some winter pruning. Some trees were a sight for sore eyes this year with *American Mother*, *Blenheim Orange*, *Adam's Pearmain*, *Twenty Ounce*, *Nine Square* and *Hanwell Souring* and others producing good crops. A branch of *Twenty Ounce* split under the weight of fruit and had to be cut back to the trunk.

[*Sounds more like 20 cwt, Ed.*]

For the last two years we have hired a contractor to cut the main lanes between the trees and this has made a considerable difference. Previously this was done by the landowner but the Estate has changed hands and no longer provides this service. Fortunately I have the help of Mr Theo Hughes (paid by MAN) and together we strim under and around the trees at least twice a year — no small undertaking.

The future of Donnington is under review but meanwhile we will continue to maintain the orchard as best we can.

Peter Austerfield.

Westhope

This small orchard of 15 standard trees is now more than 20 years old and the trees are of a considerable size. Tree by tree, I aim to reduce some of them this winter to try and make them more manageable. Cropping is variable but some did well this year, especially *Stoke Edith Pippin*, *Sam's Crab* and *Lady's Finger of Hereford*. *Gascoyne's Scarlet* had a reasonable crop but every year most of the fruit is blighted with scab which certainly stands out on a pale yellow and scarlet skin.

The orchard is strimmed twice a year (it is not suitable for machine mowing) and general maintenance carried out, again with the assistance of Mr Hughes.

Peter Austerfield.

Accession list for our orchards

As part of work for updating MAN's website, an accession list of confirmed varieties has been prepared for each of the Orchards, and is being updated with the DNA results (which is a pretty big task). Already we've got over 2700 trees listed!

Would you be willing to let us have your list of varieties you have planted at your home, particularly those that you consider local, traditional or ones that grow successfully here? If you do not wish these to be made public, that wish will be respected. Would you be willing that the location and inventory is made available to PTES and especially if you have an interesting variety of wildlife: see <https://ptes.org/get-involved/surveys/countryside-2/traditional-orchard-survey>. Would you like to consider arranging for a survey of your orchard to add to the 8000 already surveyed and let us know the results?

Ainsleigh Rice and Wade Muggleton

Preliminary results from DNA analysis in 2016

In our Newsletter '*Apples and Pears*' of Autumn 2016, we introduced the campaign of DNA analysis that we have embarked upon. Now it's time to give you some preliminary results and thoughts for implications.

We submitted 169 samples of apple leaves from MAN and associated orchards, which is 28% of the 603 analysed by East Malling Research.

The analysis gave the various allele lengths found by amplifying fragments formed by using 12 pairs of primers on the 'junk DNA' or introns. Each sample gave typically 20–30 numbers which are characteristic of the apple variety and these are the 'fingerprints'. As we mention below, the method cannot differentiate between sports of a variety. However, it is considered highly unlikely that two seedlings will have the same fingerprint. Well that's all the technical stuff we'll cover here but if you want to know more, please contact Ainsleigh.

The cost of this campaign was about £4000 to MAN, covered by our reserves and donations. We think it was well worth that, as it answers many questions. Admittedly it's thrown up a goodly few more besides. Overall though, 80 varieties are now confirmed through this work. We've found identities for many that would have continued to prove difficult. Four

varieties originate from the Netherlands (as most of us really knew about but were keeping very quiet!)

In several cases discussion of our results with National Fruit Collections (NFC), FruitID, and/or other local Apple Groups will be necessary, so it would be unhelpful at this time to set out full details of the results from the DNA fingerprint scheme, but an outline of the findings is given below.

A: Database Matches

Of the 169 samples submitted by MAN for analysis, database matches were found for 100; i.e. varieties with the same DNA fingerprint that are in NFC; ten of these are not finally resolved because further research is needed into the names of some varieties at NFC.

B: Duplicates

Ten of the MAN samples gave a DNA fingerprint match with samples submitted by other Orchard Groups but no match with NFC varieties. In two instances the duplicates were given the same names by the other Orchard Groups; in eight cases the names were different. There will need to be discussions about these with the other organisations.

C: Unique Fingerprints

Sixty of the samples submitted by MAN showed no DNA match either with varieties in NFC or the samples sent in by other Orchard Groups. About 20 of these, such as *Bridstow Wasp*, *Sweeney Nonpareil* and *Winter Quoining*, following several years of research, are thought to be old varieties described in apple reference books. The remainder range from those, like *Lady's Finger of Shropshire*, which have been found in several places and studied in detail, to some encountered on only one occasion. The Welsh varieties are particularly difficult to authenticate because there is usually little or no information about them in the apple literature.

D: Further Research

An extraordinary Identification session has been scheduled for early March to discuss and, we hope, agree on our views on the results of the DNA analysis. There will be no real apples for inspection, but we do have John Savidge's wonderful archive of photographs.

We expect that it will range over a number of thoughts such as:

"Yes, that confirms what we had already thought."

"That's a surprise, but it is maybe reasonable."

"Perhaps the assignment in the NFC is not correct?"

"Well, it's a unique variety but we've no idea what it is, so what shall we call it?"

As further follow-up later in March, there is a National Meeting of Orchard Groups at which the more general implications of this campaign will be discussed. One of the interesting dialogues will be when two or more groups have different names for cultivars that have the same DNA fingerprint: rest-assured it will be a civil dialogue.

Finally, what we've already learnt of the capability of this DNA

analysis method is so encouraging, that we want to have at least another campaign — this year we hope. That should raise many more questions but also increase certainty in lots of identifications.

Mike Porter and Ainsleigh Rice

Website updating

Progress on re-designing our new website has been slow. That's a reflection of how good the one that Richard Wheeler created for us has been. A really hard act to follow, we've found. MAN has received very generous and welcome funding of £1500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, via the Three Counties Traditional Orchard Project, for assisting the redesign of our website. We have now paid the deposit on this to Mid Wales Design.

First drafts of text have been written and are being revised to correct them and make them more suitable for our space. It's a wonderful opportunity to publicise more of MAN's work and achievements. We're open to offers of help with the content, editing and proof-reading. A nice opportunity to work with the team.

Charlie Searl

charlies@thegreenvalleys.org

Personal

Wanted

"New to Herefordshire with fruitful cider orchard. Looking to acquire a cider fruit harvester (pedestrian type), but would like to try one out first. Can anyone help?"

Contact Russell at hoipolloi@innocentpilgrim.co.uk."

Gloucestershire Orchard Trust

We are planting a collection of plums, damsons and cherries of local heritage interest – not just from Gloucestershire. We would welcome any suggestions of varieties that it might be appropriate to save.

We are particularly looking for *Herefordshire Prune* (similar to *Shropshire Prune*) which was once popular around Hereford, and *Gloucestershire Violet*, one of a number of plums grown in villages alongside the river Severn and shipped to South Wales.

Herefordshire Prunee is mentioned in:

<http://www.chathamapples.com/PlumsNY/MinorPlums.html>
"Herefordshire Prune." *Domestica*. 1. Thompson Gard. Ass't 4:160. (1901). Fruit large, obovate; flesh firm, yellowish-green.

Jim Chapman

jjrchapman@btinternet.com

Peat-free compost

F P Matthews intend offering Peat-free SILAGROW bark Compost in 50 litre bags. To MAN members the discounted cost per bag would be £5.75 incl VAT. Collect at the Tree Shop, Berrington near Tenbury Wells <http://www.frankpmatthews.com/> 01584 812800. This offer is available for 12 months and should be available from early Spring.

Visit to F P Matthews

We've been invited to have another visit to the Frank P Matthews Tree Nursery, Tenbury Wells WR15 8TH on Saturday 6 September 2017. Frank P Matthews is the UK's largest fruit tree nursery and MAN is offering another opportunity for anyone interested to join this visit. If you've not been there before it is well worth signing up for this event.

"Thousands of trees to see"

"A very enjoyable day"

"Well organised"

"A myriad of trees to buy"

Our group will be shown round the extensive site by Nick Dunn, a highly respected fruit tree expert. The tour will include the fruit trial orchards, the nursery and the Tree Shop. There are over 200 varieties of apple to see, including rare and heritage varieties. Transport around the site will be on a trailer drawn by a tractor. Some walking also required. Cost £15. Lunch and refreshments included. Profits to MAN.

For further information, contact jilly_rosser@icloud.com
www.frankpmatthews.com
www.marcherapple.net

To book, send a cheque for £15 made out to Marcher Apple Network, together with the slip below, to Jilly Rosser, 16 Canon Frome Court, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 2TD Closing date: 15 August 2017

Collaboration with the National Trust

One crisp November day last year, Wade Muggleton, Mike Porter and Ainsleigh Rice met with staff of the National Trust — Iain Carter, their Estates Manager for Herefordshire and Alison Crook, their Plant Collection Curator. We were shown around the grounds of both Berrington Hall and Brockhampton. At the former there is a plan to re-establish an orchard of local variety standard trees to the east of the north entrance roadway, perhaps several hundred trees. At the latter, National Trust wish to expand their orchards by planting up several more hectares. In addition, at Croft Castle a small collection of varieties developed by Thomas Andrew Knight might be hosted.

We discussed how MAN could offer varieties that are local to the area for these locations. It would enable MAN to increase the geographic spread of those local varieties we've found. For NT it would support their objective of building a collection of UK varieties. Since this meeting, an outline agreement has been drafted by the NT.

If you've thoughts about this we'd be delighted to receive them.

Mike Porter, Wade Muggleton and Ainsleigh Rice

Courses

Winter Pruning Course led by Paul Davis www.applewise.co.uk/

Saturday 11th February, or Sunday 12nd February (weather dependent) 11:00–5:00. Twelve places. Paul will explain the objectives of winter pruning and give a demonstration of pruning at MAN's Tredomen Court orchard, postcode LD3 0RL grid reference SO 12136 31643. You may then carry out guided pruning on our trees to gain a wider variety of 'hands on' experience. Whilst MAN will be providing pruning equipment for the course you are encouraged to bring your own. Lunch will be taken at a nearby café/restaurant for participant cost. There are no toilet facilities except at lunch time. £15.00 for members of MAN, and £20.00 for non-members.

Enquiries to Daniela at dbergman@tiscali.co.uk or send this form to The Furzes, Pudleston, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 0RA.

Regretfully we haven't sufficient numbers for justifying holding the grafting course this year.

However Gloucestershire Orchard Trust are running workshops [https://e through U!](https://e-through.org.uk/)

Work parties

Friday 17th February 2017 from 10:00 – 15:00 at Tredomen - pruning (practice) for orchard maintenance.

Saturday 25th February 2017 from 10:00 – 15:00 at Paramor – tree planting and pruning (practice) for orchard maintenance.

Events listing

Friday 17th February from 10:00 – 15:00 Tredomen pruning [practice] for orchard maintenance. And again **Saturday 4th March**.

Saturday 25th February from 10:00 – 15:00 at Paramor – tree planting and pruning [practice] for orchard maintenance.

Agricultural Shows and other Events

Saturday 4th March 10:00-17:00, [Lucton Food Festival](http://www.luctonfoodfestival.com/) <http://www.luctonfoodfestival.com/> Exhibitors include local cider makers.

Saturday 25th March [Welsh Bee Keepers Convention](http://www.wbka.com/news-events/convention-2017/) at Llanelwedd <http://www.wbka.com/news-events/convention-2017/>.

Sunday 30th April and Monday 1st May. [Blossomtime Festival with the Big Apple](http://www.bigapple.org.uk/) <http://www.bigapple.org.uk/>. A seasonal celebration of English Apples and Cider in the Herefordshire Parishes of the Marcle Ridge. For further information send a SAE to 'Big Apple', Woodcroft, Putley, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2RD or phone 01531 670544.

Saturday/Sunday 13th-14th May. [Ludlow Spring Festival and Marches Transport Festival](http://www.ludlowspringfestival.co.uk/) <http://www.ludlowspringfestival.co.uk/>. There is a good selection of local cider makers and fruit juicers in attendance.

Saturday/Sunday 20th – 21st May [Royal Welsh Spring Show \(Smallholders\)](http://www.rwas.wales/spring-festival/) at Llanelwedd <http://www.rwas.wales/spring-festival/>

Monday/Thursday 24th – 27th July [Royal Welsh Agricultural Show](http://www.rwas.wales/royal-welsh-show/) at Llanelwedd <http://www.rwas.wales/royal-welsh-show/>

Saturday 19th August, Three Counties Showground, Malvern, [Second National Orchard Conference](#), principally on Plums and other Stone Fruit.

Saturday/Sunday 25-26th (tbc) August, [Black Mountains Show](http://www.talgarthfestival.org.uk/), Talgarth <http://www.talgarthfestival.org.uk/>.

Wednesday 6 September. [Visit to the Frank P Matthews Tree Nursery](#), Tenbury Wells WR15 8TH. To book, send a cheque for £15 made out to Marcher Apple Network, together with the slip below, to Jilly Rosser, 16 Canon Frome Court, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 2TD Closing date: 15 August 2017

Friday/Sunday 8-10th (tbc) September. [Ludlow Marches Food and Drink Festival](#). There is always a good selection of local cider makers and fruit juicers in attendance.

Sunday, 10th (tbc) September. [Entertainment under the Apples at Penlanole](http://www.penlanole-organics.co.uk/events.php), near the Vulcan Arms, south of Rhayader, Powys <http://www.penlanole-organics.co.uk/events.php>. Please note that for safety reasons, the approach will be to the back of the farm and will be signposted from the A470. From 2.00–5.00 p.m. Details: Tel. 01597–811487.

Saturday/Sunday, 23rd/24th September. [Autumn Show at Three Counties Showground](http://www.threecounties.co.uk/tradestands/malvernautumn/), Malvern. <http://www.threecounties.co.uk/tradestands/malvernautumn/>

Saturday, 7th (tbc) October. [Applefest 2017](http://www.tenburyapplefest.co.uk), Tenbury Wells, held on the town's Burgage Recreational Area, from 10.00–5.00. Further details: www.tenburyapplefest.co.uk

Thursday, 5th (tbc) October. [Trumpet Ploughing Match & West of England Fruit Show](#). (No apple display.) Details of venue from Mrs J. Green. Tel. 01531–670609.

Saturday 14th October. [Apple Day at The Green Wood Centre](http://www.shropshireappletrust.co.uk/appleday.php), Coalbrookdale nr. Telford, from 10.00–5.00 <http://www.shropshireappletrust.co.uk/appleday.php>. Apple pressing using the large community apple press, fresh juice for sale; hog roast, live music, apple display and apple trees for sale, cider bar, WI stalls, craft demonstrations and hands-on opportunities to practise pole-lathing, pottery, etc. Contact: 01952-433594 or 432046.

Saturday/Sunday, 14-15th tbc October. 'The Big Apple'. Weekend rural events in and around Much Marcle <http://www.bigapple.org.uk/>. £2 entry to historic grounds of Hellens, from 12.00–4.45 where there will be apple and pear displays, ID services and tastings of a selection of cooking apples. Further details of talks, demonstrations and other events, from Jackie Denman, Tel. 01531–670544.

Saturday, 21st October. [Leominster Apple Fair](#) at The Priory, Leominster. 10.00–4.00. Parking nearby in Bridge Street Car Park. Details from Felicity Norman, Tel. 01568–780886.

Saturday, 14th or 21st (tbc) October. [Kemerton Orchard Workers fund-raising Apple Day](http://www.kemerton.org/news.htm) at Kemerton Village Hall, near Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire 13:00–17:00 <http://www.kemerton.org/news.htm>. Apple pressing, and fresh apple juice, home-made jams, tea & cakes for sale. Conservation stands for information and discussion. Visitors can walk to the Kemerton Conservation Trust arboretum and lake. Details from Steve Fletcher, Tel. 01368–725271.

Friday 21st October, National Apple Day <http://commonground.org.uk/projects/orchards/apple-day/>

Sunday, 21st or 28th (tbc) October. [Chepstow Apple Day](#), organized by Chepstow Town Council at the Drill Hall, Lower Church Street, Chepstow. Admission free. 11.00–4.00. MAN Apple display, apple juice, cider and perry tasting.

Saturday 25th November 2017, 11:00 in the Cider Museum – **MAN AGM**