

MARCHER APPLE NETWORK

NEWSLETTER No 4

Non-Members 70p

Summer 1998

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

MAN has seen further expansion of influence and interest during the past year. Our local displays, in addition to the Autumn Show at Malvern, have again included the 'Big Apple' weekend at Putley, and individual apple days at Croft Castle and Leominster. We were also invited to furnish an evening's pomological background for the local Poetry Society at the Hereford Cider Museum. Malvern '97 again witnessed a keen interest by the general public in our display. This included apples and pears from Berrington Hall National Trust (from the collection set up by NCCPG* Herefordshire) which Nick Winney, the Head Gardener, brought along to us. The pear varieties on display included Beurre d'Arenberg, Beurre Superfin, Catillac, Duchesse d'Angouleme, Jargonelle, Josephine de Malines, Nouvelle Fulvie, Santa Claus, Triomphe de Jodoigne and Van Mons Leon Le Clerc.

Our own evening at Kilpeck Village Hall attracted a good audience from the area, who enjoyed the late Kenneth Seed's audio-visual presentation, "Hereford, the Beauty and the Bounty" encapsulating a quotation from a John Masefield speech on the subject in about 1930. There were well over 100 varieties of apple (and pear) assembled for our guests, and we were visited during the course of the evening by an HTV team who came to interview Sheila for a programme on traditional apples located in Wales, and then filmed the display and some of the activities, such as the juicing process. Interested to hear that an identification session in the magnificent orchard of Croft Castle was due to take place the following week, by kind invitation of the Hon. Mrs Uhlman, the team members asked if they could be present. This was arranged, and we were duly filmed, examining the old trees in the grounds of the Castle. After a very wet start, the sun eventually came out, and Sheila, Mike Porter and Tom Froggatt sat down at a table under the trees, and went through the procedure of examining some apples from trees which were unlabelled, and arriving at a unanimous opinion. (There is not always such a conclusive outcome to our deliberations). The programme went out in the 'Grass Roots' series, on Apple Day.

During the autumn, some consultancy visits were made to widely scattered sites in the Marches, to advise owners of long-established collections of trees on identification and general viability, as well as recommend replacement planting. These sites were at Hughley, in the Wenlock area, Kinsham, near Presteigne, and a site north of Oswestry, which provided an opportunity for a brief visit to the splendid apple collection maintained by the Head Gardener at Erddig, the National Trust property in Denbighshire.

Later in the season we were contacted by Thomas Oliver, son of the Bishop of Hereford, who is now Administrator at Croome Park National Trust, near Worcester. He intends planting an orchard of traditional apples where only a fragment remains of the original estate collection. Some progress was made in identifying surviving specimens.

* National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens

Then we had our little saga over the Herefordshire Costard "dating back to the 13th century"! This kept the media happy for a few days, but Mike and Sheila are commenting on this in greater detail below.

We have recently been offered further opportunities to plant apples and pears on other people's land in Herefordshire - on its very borders, in fact! One of these sites is at Donnington, between Ledbury and Dymock - almost in Gloucestershire. The other offer is from one of our members in Orleton village just on the Shropshire border, who is hoping for MAFF support through the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, for some 70 standard trees which he has invited us to select and plant. These two initiatives arose after an abortive trip to Almeley, where we had been led to believe that an area of walled garden could become available for planting, only to find, on arrival, that the elderly Latvian tenant had every intention of staying! A full and frank exchange of views then took place - if slightly at cross purposes! It is hoped that some community involvement in these projects may evolve in the fullness of time.

Ray Boddington

THE GREAT EXHIBITION: KILPECK 1997

MAN's fourth Annual Exhibition last autumn at Kilpeck was a visual feast. The collection of 132 varieties of apple and 8 varieties of pear had been amassed from 25 different gardens and orchards, mostly from the Marches. We must have been lucky in our area, because the apple crop was good here in 1997: the spring frosts which had adversely affected the orchards in Kent and the South-east, had somehow missed those of the Border.

It was the first time 20 of the varieties, including King Charles Pearmain, Aromatic Russet, Keswick Codlin, Chatley's Kernel, Barnack Orange, Diamond Jubilee, Duke of Devonshire and Hanwell Souring had been on display by our group. Some have whimsical names like Winter Banana, Pig's Snout and Sheep's Nose, others like Genet Moyle have a historical significance, whilst Maiden's Blush and Fair Maid of Taunton prettily capture the imagination.

As the apples were brought carefully out of their bags, Kilpeck Hall was filled with a typical Harvest Festival aroma and the spectacle of 140 different plates of fruits glowing all shades of red, orange, yellow and green, shiny, matt, stripey, plain and russeted made a fine show. There were monster-sized Catsheads from Berrington Hall and super-scented Crimson Quoinings from Breconshire.

Mostly the varieties dated from before the turn of this century. The shiny, rich Red Victoria's name clues that apple into historical context, but Maltster, Margil, Northern Greening, Court Pendu Plat, Rosemary Russet, Nonpareil, Pitmaston Pine Apple and Ribston Pippin go back many more decades, even hundreds of years in some cases. Several, developed by Thomas Andrew Knight, like Downton Pippin, Yellow Ingestrie and Bringewood Pippin, were in the collection: we hope to be able to display more of his creations in future. Old favourites, stirring many people's memories, Tom Putt, Annie Elizabeth, Sam's Crab, Peasgood Nonsuch and Blenheim Orange ('Blemim') could be found there.

Many of the apples are quite rare and were prized specimens, because they had to be taken to other exhibitions at Putley, Croft, Leominster and Usk. Some have been lucky finds which we have been shown, or have been able to identify in the old orchards we have visited. Others have been grafted from known specimens growing, for example, in the National Collection at Brogdale, which we, in turn, are perpetuating in Museum Orchards in the Marches.

We have inherited a tradition and are trying to continue the vision of those Herefordshire Victorians who, over 100 years ago, mounted great Apple Exhibitions in the 1880s. The market was being swamped in those days by imported apples from the U.S.A. Dr. Robert Hogg and Dr. Henry Graves Bull saw there was a danger that fine, home-grown varieties might be forgotten. In 1879, Gladstone urged that apples and fruit and vegetables should be planted to help reduce the cost of imports. Nurserymen like George Bunyard determined to remind the public what good, flavourful varieties could be grown in Britain. Herefordshire took up the challenge to identify these, demonstrating the value and diversity of our own apples in the great Apple Exhibitions. So, at the end of the 20th Century, when we face similar problems from supermarket strangleholds and monotonous, sometimes tasteless imports, our apple exhibitions and identification programmes are trying to restore confidence again in our native produce and foster an appreciation of this diversity.

It is always good fun to sample the different apples. Ellison's Orange, Gravenstein, St. Edmund's Russet, Exquisite, Ribston Pippin and Crimson Quoining had produced splendid crops in 1997, so there were plenty of these for tasting and juicing at Kilpeck. We hope we shall be able to exhibit something of interest again at Talgarth in October.

Christine Porter

[Rosemary Francis, of Sollers Hope, sent us some lovely colour prints of the Kilpeck fruit display. These have been on show at the Spring events when there was no fruit to catch the eye. We are most grateful. - Editor]

THE YEAR'S EVENTS ON THE WELSH SIDE OF THE BORDER

Following the introduction last year, by the Countryside Council for Wales, of a grant scheme for restoration of traditional orchards, Hilary Miller, Forestry Policy Officer, wrote in February, asking if MAN could set up a one day training event with the focus on bringing neglected orchards back into management in a way that was compatible with the Orchards and Parklands Grant Scheme. The aim would be to give staff a better understanding of management so that they could give basic advice to scheme applicants, and begin to make an assessment of scheme applications regarding proposed management. We pulled out all the stops and, at the beginning of March, with the co-operation of our members, Colin and Daphne Gardiner, arranged an Orchard Training Day at their organically run farm, Gellirhyd, Llangenny, Powys, which is ideally suited for both indoor sessions and practical demonstrations in the old orchards. Colin welcomed the 16 'trainees' from all over Wales, and outlined the concept of Gellirhyd. Short talks followed from Ray Woods, of CCW, on the grant scheme and conservation aspects, Paul Davis on graftwood, budwood and remedial pruning, Frank Hemming on planting, spacing, staking and

aftercare, Mike Porter on varieties for different locations, and Sheila Leitch on pest and disease control by organic methods. Sandwich lunches had been brought, with Daphne providing tea, coffee or the very popular single-variety apple juices, made and bottled at the farm, and this break gave an opportunity for our members to meet the CCW staff. Colin then spoke on products and income from orchards, before we all went out to a practical session in the very old orchards around the farm. Small groups, each with a tutor, assessed pruning requirements of trees in varying stages of maturity and senescence, and decided whether any young growth was suitable as grafting material. Heavy rain brought the demonstrations of pruning by Colin and Frank to a hasty close. A useful discussion and tea followed, and the feedback to Hilary has since been very positive. It was an interesting exercise for the members of MAN who were involved, and the framework of the day may be a useful basis for any future training courses we may be requested to run.

For the first time, MAN was present at the Smallholders Weekend held at the Royal Welsh Showground in mid-May, sharing a stand with Paul Davis who had an eye-catching apple board. Some useful contacts were made, and new members enrolled. Soon afterwards, a 'Fair to the Future' day was arranged by the officers of the Brecon Beacons National Park, in the Market Hall, Brecon. It was organised to raise awareness of the principles of sustainable development and Agenda 21, which arose from the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. With the public becoming more environmentally conscious, the event was popular and 3,000 visitors were expected. At that time of year it was difficult to lay on any sort of display, but we had a table alongside Colin Gardiner's attractive stand with his bottled apple juices. As at Builth, the visitors to the stand were genuinely interested in the work MAN is undertaking, and the leaflets available, with a brief outline of autumn apple events, were all gone by the end of the day.

One thing leads to another. A questionnaire was completed by all the standholders, and one exhibitor suggested piloting a Farmers' Market in Brecon. This idea originated in the U.S., but pilot schemes are now springing up in this country. Bath tried one last autumn, and it drew an estimated 4,000 customers. Producers came from within a radius of 40 miles of the city. Fruit and vegetable products sold out by the end of the day. This interesting idea was acted upon by the BBNP and exhibitors who had been at the 'Food Fest' held earlier in the year at the Mountain Centre, or the 'Fair to the Future', were invited to attend an evening meeting to discuss the potential of setting up a Farmers' Market or a local food directory in the area. There was a very large response and many ideas were put forward. We have been sent a resumé of the points made by farmers, growers and interested parties such as MAN. A 'Market Research Survey' is now to be carried out in several towns. Local outlets for produce from small orchard owners would be very welcome. Carmarthen already has a Farmers' Market and a somewhat similar scheme operates in Hfds., Worcs. and South Shropshire. This was featured in Countryfile on Sunday, 2nd August. In that area they have a full-time co-ordinator, Farm Shops operate a pick-up service from producers, and all products are traceable to the farm gate. For shoppers who want fresh, local produce, at an uninflated price, which hasn't travelled the length and breadth of Britain before reaching the supermarket, these schemes hold out an attractive alternative.

Sheila Leitch

ORCHARD GLEANINGS

When MAN first exhibited at the Malvern Autumn Show, in 1995, our display featured sixteen plates of unknown apple varieties which we had collected from various old orchards in our area, hoping that some might be recognised by gardeners or nurserymen visiting our stand. The 'unknowns' provoked a great deal of discussion but few names, so we displayed a poster listing 'wanted' apples - old varieties which apparently had been lost from cultivation and about which we required information. The list included several with local connections, such as Credenhill Pippin, Chiffey Seedling, Herefordshire Costard and Onibury Pippin. The following year my wife and I visited Onibury, a village about four miles north-west of Ludlow, on a wild-goose chase to track down the pippin. A retired gamekeeper and taxidermist, basking in the early autumn sunshine, set us off on a trail which led eventually to the resident Shropshire Tree Warden. From him we learned that apple trees, known to the local people as Onibury Pippins, still grew in the village and we could scarcely contain our excitement when shown apples from an old tree growing nearby. Of course it is impossible to be certain, but, from the few clues available in the literature and the local tradition, it seems likely that this is the Onibury Pippin. The attractive golden dessert apple was raised by the pioneer pomologist Thomas Andrew Knight, who lived at Elton Hall, and later Croft Castle, and produced a host of new varieties of fruits and vegetables in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. There is no description of the Onibury Pippin in any of the standard reference books; it is surprising that the variety is not represented in the Herefordshire Pomona, as it was certainly in existence at the time the book was published. More research is needed, but full marks to the Shropshire Tree Warden Service for their action to ensure that the Onibury Pippin survives.

The Herefordshire Costard, another old variety on the Malvern poster, has posed similar problems for the MAN identification group. Herefordshire Costard hit the headlines last winter, and John Aldridge, who was involved with much of the subsequent correspondence, has pointed out that local radio, regional television and all the newspaper reports confused the Herefordshire Costard with the medieval Costard. The latter was a large, ribbed, cooking apple which, as Joan Morgan mentions in The Book of Apples, was being imported from France by Edward I as long ago as 1292. By medieval times street traders selling apples were known as costard-mongers, but just as nowadays greengrocers tend to call any eating apple a 'Cox', no doubt in medieval times any big cooker was a 'Costard'. By the nineteenth century, when apples were being described more critically, the Costard had been superseded by new 'improved' varieties. Several large ribbed cookers such as Catshead, Gloucestershire Costard, Herefordshire Costard and Pope's Scarlet Costard may have inherited genes from one or more ancestral costards, but we have no scientific descriptions of the original. There is no example of Herefordshire Costard in the National Fruit Collection at Brogdale, but the variety does figure in the Herefordshire Pomona (1876-85), so we have a description and a coloured plate showing both blossom and fruit to guide us. At the time the book was published, the variety was considered to have become very rare, surviving only "....in a few farmhouse gardens in Herefordshire". During the past two years large angular apples resembling the Herefordshire Costard, from old trees at Winforton and Eardisland, have been compared with the putative Herefordshire Costard at Berrington Hall, the National Trust property near Leominster. Their external

features, internal anatomy, taste and texture were examined on the same day in October, and keeping qualities and changing appearance monitored through the winter. The Winforton, Eardisland and Berrington apples appear to be the same variety. They are also very similar, if not identical, to samples of an apple called Scotch Bridget, grown by Tom Froggatt in the Ludlow area. That last finding will need to be checked against other authentic samples of Scotch Bridget, which, incidentally, was not included in the Herefordshire Pomona, although it had been described in 1851.

Further investigations have shed some light on this intriguing situation. About ten years ago, Stan Baldock took grafts from the old tree at Orchard Gate, Winforton, from which he propagated the trees now on display as Herefordshire Costard in the collection of old varieties in the walled garden at Berrington Hall. Orchard Gate used to be the home of Anne and Mary Powell. Anne, who was the Botanical Recorder for Radnorshire for many years, recalls that the tree in question was quite old when the family moved there in 1953. She sent apples from it to Clarence Elliot, a Gloucestershire Nurseryman, following an article by him in The Illustrated London News (circa 1960), and he said he thought they were 'costards'. The Eardisland tree, which stands beside the River Arrow, looks ancient and has been called both a 'costard' and a 'custard' by local people.

The Herefordshire Costard, (synonym Dadnor Costard), described in the Herefordshire Pomona, came from the orchard of Arthur Armitage of Dadnor in the parish of Bridstow, near Ross-on-Wye. Eleanora, his third daughter, who died in 1961 aged 95, was a renowned botanist with a special interest in mosses, and a past President of the British Bryological Society. As a young botanist, I was occasionally invited to tea with Eleanora and her sister Cecilia, who were living then (c1950) in a smaller house in Bridstow, surrounded by a garden full of unusual plants; but, sadly perhaps, I was less interested in apples than in hearing about their expeditions to hunt for rare brambles in the Sellack woods. In 1995 my wife and I re-visited Dadnor to see whether any of the old apple trees had survived, but, although orchards remain, the trees are all less than thirty years old, having been planted by the present owners.

So, are the old trees at Winforton and Eardisland surviving examples of the Herefordshire Costard? The apple of that name illustrated in the Herefordshire Pomona seems to differ only in being less highly coloured and having a slightly longer stalk; the flowers look identical and the written description matches the old trees. Even the discrepancy in fruit colour is not significant as Hogg, who had received the Herefordshire Costard from Dadnor, describes it in his Fruit Manual (1884) as having "...skin, fine deep yellow on the shaded side, and bright red on the side exposed to the sun, where it is streaked with red and orange". That describes accurately the colour of ripe fruit from a sunny position on the trees at Eardisland and Winforton. Grafts have been taken from the various trees mentioned above, together with other potential 'costards', and these are all being grown in our orchard at Tredomen Court, where they can be studied in more detail.

Last autumn a group of members visited an orchard at St. Dogmaels in Dyfed, which had been planted in the first decade of this century with fruit trees purchased

from King's Acre Nursery at Hereford. Ancient, neglected trees of Allington Pippin, Newton Wonder, Ribston Pippin and May Queen shared an overgrown walled garden with pears such as Doyenne du Comice and Josephine de Malines. However the atmosphere of decaying Edwardian gentility was enlivened by the thrill of being shown three Welsh apple varieties, Pen Caled, Pren Glas and Pig Aderyn. Pen Caled had produced no fruit last summer and that of Pren Glas, an early variety, had been devoured by birds, but hidden in the leaf litter we found several apples of Pig Aderyn. These were similar in appearance to Tom Putt, but in many cases, the fruit stalks projected sideways from a fleshy base so that in profile the inverted apple had a fanciful resemblance to a bird's head - which accounts for the name Pig Aderyn (Bird's bill), according to our guide. Is this a synonym for the Pig-y-glomen (Pigeon's bill) recorded in some old lists of Welsh apples? All three varieties were said to root from detached branches stuck into the ground, known in South Wales as 'pitchers' according to Joan Morgan (The Book of Apples). Paul Davis informed us that the other two Welsh varieties we have encountered, Marged Nicolas and Pig yr Wydd, can also be propagated in this way. I wonder whether this is a feature shared by many Welsh varieties, perhaps reflecting common ancestry, or merely the effect of our wetter climate? There seems to be very little known about any of the Welsh varieties and we would welcome information from our members.

Michael Porter

[Editor's footnote: Apparently, the old tree at Staick House, Eardisland, was a mature specimen when the present owner's family moved there in about 1911. The previous owner had been the Vicar of the parish. A check on the indexed 1881 census, showed the Rev. Joseph Barker, address, Leominster Road. (No houses were named). Aged 59, his large family, with their ages and places of birth, showed they had moved from Barston, in Warwickshire, in 1868/9. Confirmation that he lived at Staick House came from Littlebury's Directory and Gazeteer of Herefordshire of 1876/7, where this entry was found: Barker, Rev Joseph, M.A., (vicar of Eardisland, and head master of the grammar school), Staick house(sic). In all probability, he planted the tree. The girth now is about 5' 8" at a height of 3'0. Above that height, the trunk is split, and therefore wider. The tree lost its crown and was split in a storm about 30 years ago. George Cole, in the village, took grafts from it about this time, which are now well grown trees. He thought it was the same variety as two trees known as 'custards' in the Vowchurch area, where he worked before moving to Eardisland. So, we have one source of the naming of the old Staick House tree. We will be looking for the Vowchurch trees, in the autumn, hoping they have survived.]

NEWS OF OUR ORCHARDS

TREDOMEN COURT, Llanfïlo, Breconshire

The planting of the fenced area of this, our first orchard site, was completed last autumn by a hard-working group of members and over 70 interesting varieties, including a number of 'unknowns', all on MM106 stocks, are growing well there, apart from a couple where canker has set in, on the site of the leaf scars. The worst affected one has been removed. Roger Williams has kindly offered to fence another strip of the 3 acre meadow, so that two more rows of trees can be planted. Many of the newly planted maiden trees blossomed this spring and some were bearing fruits, which have now been removed, to allow the trees to concentrate on growth. Some of the eight planted in autumn 1995 have also borne fruits, which

have now been thinned. We look forward to examining the mature fruits, particularly on our 'costard' type trees, and comparing them with Scotch Bridget.

Sheila Leitch

CROFT PENDARREN, Llangynidr, Breconshire.

Another four trees were put in during winter, so that now about half of this site is planted up. A small wicket gate has been added, providing easy access for visitors.

Michael Porter

WESTHOPE, near Canon Pyon, Herefordshire

The care of this small orchard, now completely planted up, has been greatly assisted by Dr Peter Austerfield, a keen member who lives nearby. He has sent in the following report entitled:—

"I'm just going up to the orchard. I may be some time."

(Some thoughts on managing the small MAN orchard at Westhope).

When I moved to Westhope three years ago, I had it in mind to plant a small orchard in one of the fields adjacent to the house. Through joining MAN in my search for more information on apples and orchards, and a suggestion from our persuasive Chairman, I now have two orchards to care for, the second established by MAN on a piece of donated land in the village.

The MAN orchard is in a beautiful spot, on the brow of a hill with wide ranging views, so on a nice day it is a pleasure to be up there, even if it is for some time. As the field is no longer grazed, keeping the grass under control is a major task, but, so far, a combination of hand and machine has kept the more rampant species down. I learnt my lesson last year by leaving things just that bit late, and it needed a powered scythe to cope with the thick growth. There is a good variety of wild flowers, and care is taken to cut round these, or mow late, so that they seed and increase. I hope, gradually, to get things more meadow-like except at the edges.

A major problem is deer. When the orchard was established, each of the 15 trees (all on M25 rootstocks to give full standards) had to have its own cage some 2 yards square and 5 feet high. These have proved to be successful in keeping the deer from the trees, but keeping the vegetation under control inside the cages does demand a certain agility with a step ladder, sickle and strimmer. So far I have managed to keep all my toes!

All the varieties are thriving and were recently re-staked by Ray Boddington and John Aldridge. They include Butter Apple, Lady's Finger of Hereford, Severn Bank and Winter Quoining. The full list was given in Newsletter No.3, Summer 1997.

Peter Austerfield

REPLANTING AT REDHOUSE FARM, TILLINGTON

At Redhouse Farm there are three existing orchards around the farmhouse. They are a mixture of dessert, culinary and cider apples with some pear and cherry. Most of the trees date to early in the century. Apples include Devon Red, Dumelow's Seedling, Annie Elizabeth, Warner's King, King of the Pippins, Cox's Pomona, Blenheim Orange, Queen and Tillington Court.

Present management includes grazing for cattle and sheep. Most apples go to Bulmer's for cider and pectin extraction, (used in jam making), although I picked some for sale last year. John and Mary Wakefield-Jones manage the land

organically, and it is registered under the Soil Association. Many of the old trees are thriving. The Tillington Court tree is about 14 yards in diameter across the crown. However, others have died or been blown over.

John and Mary have been keen to see the trees replaced, and with help from grants from Hereford and Worcester, I have planted 36 apple trees in one of the orchards over the last two years. The new trees are a mixture of dessert and culinary, mainly old varieties, and mainly resistant to scab and canker (in theory). I have also planted a few cherry, plum and walnut trees. There was no grant aid for these, however. In order to minimise disease problems from replanting on sites of existing trees, I have positioned the new rows half way between the old ones. New trees are standards, mostly on M25 stock.

Each tree has a cage consisting of three stakes, and two sets of horizontal rails. Pig netting is attached to the rails to a height of 2m (6'6"). This has worked as a protection against cattle. I mulched around each tree with black plastic from old silage bags. Unfortunately, the cattle managed to pull some of these out where the wire netting was fixed with its lower edge slightly off the ground. Rabbit guards are formed from 2' x 2' squares of wire netting.

I hope to continue the programme of replanting over the next few years. Suggestions for easy methods of picking from standard trees would be welcome.

Frank Hemming

SALE OF SURPLUS STOCKS

Last year there were numerous interesting varieties, surplus to our orchard planting requirements, and these were listed and offered very cheaply to members. This year, owing to the unanticipated involvement with new orchard projects, most, if not all, of the stock which has been propagated, has been allocated. However, members who require trees could contact me in the evening, in case there may be a small number left over available for sale.

John Aldridge

IDENTIFICATIONS

Last autumn produced a bountiful harvest of fruit and consequently a large number of apples were brought by the public to events, sent through the post, or collected from orchard surveys for identification. Part way through the season, we decided to draw up a form to be completed and sent in with the fruit, so that we would be supplied with some information on season, whether eater or cooker, under or over 50 years, and the address. We ask for three typical specimens of a variety, instead of receiving only one, which was frequently atypical or unripe, or worse, so 'past it', that all flavour had gone. Identification sessions involve our 'team' members travelling up to 40 miles to gather round the table, so a charge of £1 per variety for members, and £3 for Non Members is made. We try to limit time spent for detailed examination and book searches to 20-30 minutes for the difficult apples, but, even so, we could not cope with the numbers last season. We are aware that some bags deteriorated before there was a chance to look at them, and sometimes the name and address suffered from proximity to a decaying apple. We apologise to those who have not heard back from us and you are welcome to bring your fruit again this season, asking for top priority, and there will be no charge.

Sheila Leitch

Modified Renewal Pruning for Large Trees and Tip Bearers.

I was delighted to see Paul Davis' excellent description of Renewal Pruning in the last newsletter. I am a great fan of the technique, having used it for number of years now. As he stated in his article, the method is well suited to spur bearing varieties on dwarf or half standard trees. However, there is a modification that will allow tip bearing varieties to be pruned along the same lines, and it can also be used on large standard trees and on very vigorous varieties. This technique is used widely in the commercial Bramley orchards.

The "cycle" is exactly as described by Paul Davis, with well spaced maiden shoots being selected to make new laterals, each lateral being retained for 3 or 4 years and then removed to allow for another young shoot to take its place. The important modification is that for tip bearers the selected laterals are spaced much further apart and the 2 and 3 year old laterals are not shortened, but are left unpruned to allow fruit buds to form on the tips. (hence the more generous spacing). The spacing of the laterals depends on the size and vigour of the tree, about 12 - 18" on a dwarf tree, and up to 2 - 3ft on a vigorous growing full-size standard.

For dwarf trees the laterals are removed completely after their fourth year. For very large trees, the laterals may be left until they are about 5 or even 6 years old before removal, this is because vigorous varieties on non-dwarfing stock often do not produce many fruit buds until the lateral is about 3 years old.

As Paul stated, the young shoots selected to make new laterals should preferably be at an angle of less than 45 degrees, or else they must be "flattened" if they are strong growing and erect. Do this by bending, tucking, or even cracking them slightly. Obviously, if any of the new shoots bears a fruit bud on the end, it is ideal for choosing as a new lateral. If the fruit sets, the weight of it will bring the shoot down to a shallow angle, and it also helps to arrest vigorous extension growth, making the lateral likely to produce even more fruit buds in the second year.

By leaving the 2 and 3 year old laterals unshortened, not only does it mean that tip bearing varieties get a chance to produce fruit buds, but also making fewer cuts means that very vigorous trees tend to make less growth than they would if pruned hard.

Bob Lever

Arcure Cordons

Arcure cordons are a fairly unusual method of training dwarf apple trees. They are easy to maintain once established and make an interesting ornamental feature in a garden. You will need to stretch horizontal supporting wires at about 18 - 24 inch intervals along a fence or wall.

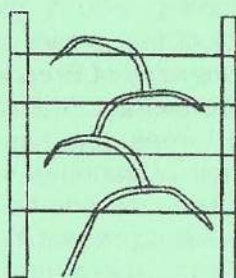
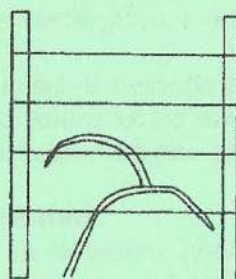
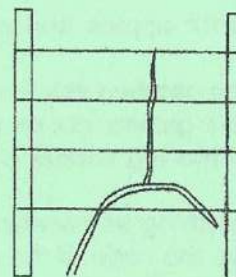
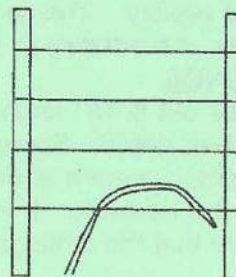
It is best to choose a spur bearing variety on a dwarfing rootstock (M27 or M9 for strong soils, M26 for poorer soils). It is important to start with an unpruned maiden tree. Feathers are not required, so a one year old "whip" will be fine.

Plant the tree at an angle of 45 degrees, as if planting a normal cordon. The tip of the tree must then be gently bent down in an arch and tied to the bottom wire. Do not shorten the tip.

The tree will usually put out at least one strong upright shoot near the highest part of the arch. Allow one such shoot to grow strongly upwards as a new leader, remove any competing shoots.

At the end of the growing season, this shoot may be bent down in an arch in the opposite direction to the first arch. Bending the shoots thus supresses vigour and encourages early formation of fruiting spurs.

The same technique is then repeated in the next year to make the third tier, and so on for as many tiers as you wish to make. Maintenance pruning is as for a normal cordon or espalier - shorten maiden growth in summer.



Bob Lever

ROOTSTOCKS ON THE CHEAP

In the last two Newsletters, we learned about different rootstocks, and how to graft and bud on to them. While it is better to obtain certified rootstocks from a reputable supplier, it is cheaper and more interesting to propagate your own. This can be done in several ways.

FROM SEED

Only suitable for producing standard trees. Ripe seed from cider apples or perry pears is best. Simply soak seed in water for 2 days and plant in pots or boxes under glass. Germination takes 2 - 3 weeks providing heat is given, but will otherwise be delayed until the spring. To speed up germination, we need to scarify the seed by placing in a small sack or muslin bag and plunging into a large vessel of water at 74° C. Move the bag about for 10 seconds, and then lay out to drain. After cooling, repeat the scarification once more, but this time plunge the bag into iced water to cool the seed rapidly. The seed can either be spread out to dry and sown in the spring, or sown immediately in the warm.

FROM CUTTINGS

Take one year old 6-18" shoots in the autumn when leaves have just fallen, and plant to half their depth. Some 2 year old wood is useful. Use a hardwood rooting hormone. Apples require a minimum soil temperature of 7° C to initiate roots, so give them heat if possible. It is quite easy to propagate diseased rootstocks in this way, so ensure that the cuttings come from disease-free trees

STOOLING

Most suitable for apples and pears, especially where less vigorous rootstocks are needed:-

1. Obtain some certified stock and plant 1' apart in 3' rows.
2. After 1 year's growth, cut off at ground level in mid-winter.
3. When the resulting shoots are 5-6" high, earth them up to half their height in mid-summer.
4. Continue earthing as necessary, but never more than half way up, until the soil is about 8" above the base of the shoots.
5. At the end of the growing season, when plants are dormant, remove all the soil, cut off the new shoots, whether rooted or not, where they join the old stump, and plant them out.
6. Well-rooted shoots can be grafted immediately, but sparsely rooted cuttings should be grown on for a season, and budded or grafted later.
7. This process can be repeated for up to 20 years.

Paul Davis

OWN-ROOT FRUIT TREE PROJECT

A document, intended as an introduction to this project, (ORFT), has been prepared by Phil Corbett, of Ashbourne, Derbyshire, and we have received a copy, via Frank Hemming, who is interested in the qualities of trees grown on their own roots. The project has grown out of pioneering work, carried out over 20 years, by Hugh Ermen, formerly of Brogdale Horticultural Station. He is supporting the project in the role of Consultant. Phil Corbett lists the advantages and the disadvantages of Own-Root (OR) trees, and has set up a small nursery site at 800' above sea level, where the range of varieties will, of necessity, be limited. Like MAN, ORFT have little funding, and are hoping to hear from sponsors or site-donors. They have numerous interesting research trials underway. For instance, they are planting on the 'tripod' system, where three trees, planted about 75-100 cm apart in a triangle,

are tied together a few feet above the ground, forming an extremely wind resistant wigwam, ideal for exposed sites, and needing no staking. The stems grow at about 45° and spacing between tripods is 5 metres. Good mutual pollinators can be chosen for each tripod, and on a windy site, self-fertile varieties can be used, in case there is a lack of pollinating insects. We look forward to hearing more of all the experimental work being undertaken as part of this interesting project.

Sheila Leitch

MARCHER APPLE NETWORK, COMMON GROUND & THE BIGGER PICTURE

Orchards attract life - insects for pollination, birds propagating mistletoe, grazing pigs, sheep and geese. Orchards attract people - wassailing on Twelfth Night, mulching in April, and scrumping almost any time. They are embedded in cultural and spiritual memories of the country. Locally, they may contain unique varieties suited to soil and climate, a resource for plant material and creating new varieties. All this without mentioning the look and the taste and the feel and the smell of an apple.

The value in this diversity is recognised by Common Ground, the charity set up to encourage people to enjoy, and help them to recognise and value, the quality of their locality. Apple Day was initiated in 1990, and is celebrated more boisterously each year. In 1992 it began to promote the idea of community orchards as a focus for community activities, and as havens of rest and learning for hospitals and schools. For a society confused about who cares for whom, the act of tending a communal space can become a powerful model for another generation.

By organising events to celebrate and encourage this revival in traditional fruit, I see MAN working in tandem with Common Ground. A further aim - to establish orchards of specimen trees, albeit not for communal use - gives importance to local distinctiveness, and to perpetuating lost and near extinct varieties.

There is an upsurge of interest; and it's all local. Devon Orchards Initiative, The Norfolk Orchard Survey, Kent Liaison Group, Cumbria Apple Forum, Hertfordshire Orchards Initiative - the list goes on. Apples are flavour of the month. And why not? Of all things done to the land, planting an orchard is one of the least damaging, especially if managed organically. It can then act as a centre of excellence, helping to counter the twin threats of intensive farming and genetically modified crops.

Orchards need not be conventional. They can house sculptures. Appropriate trees may be mixed to form a fruit wood. With careful attention to pollination, linear planting on a field boundary, along a disused railway line, or around the bounds of a parish, are possible. County Councils offer grant aid for plantings in selected field corners. Alternatives to the traditional orchard will pose questions about tree protection and management. But whatever form it takes, fruit trees provide wildlife corridors and habitat havens, strengthen the character of the landscape and perpetuate tree cover.

Dan Keech has been appointed by Common Ground as its first Community Orchards Officer. He will be in post in September. His work will be to promote the advantages of orchards, and to assist and advise community groups on setting up

their own orchards. [Operating only in England.- Editor] Common Ground itself is on the move. From 1st August 1998 its address is PO Box 25309, London NW5 1ZA.

There must be a huge fund of skills and experience amongst readers of this Newsletter, and a wide appreciation of apples too. People interested in pooling ideas about community orchards, or who would like to look into the possibility of setting up such a scheme, may find it useful to contact me on 01588 660392, and I would act as co-ordinator to put people in touch with each other.

Diggory Kempton

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENTS

It is surprising how often a telephone call or letter to *MAN* refers to an apple article which had caught readers' attention years before, and been kept. One particularly eye-catching half page feature was in The Sunday Telegraph of 16th October, 1994, Home and Garden section. Coloured photographs accompanied a piece, based on an interview with Ray called 'On the scent of the Pomona', and pictured 'Apple Detective, Ray Boddington, Chairman of the Marcher Apple Network' examining an apple on one of the trees in his garden, and alongside, was a reproduction of one of the colour plates of apple paintings from the Herefordshire Pomona. My telephone number was given as a contact, and the phone was red hot for days, with callers from all over the British Isles, convinced their unknown garden or orchard apple was the same shape as one of the featured varieties, which were Pigeonet, Api, Pigeon, Cowarne Queening, Colonel Vaughan, Tyler's Kernel, Winter Queening and Herefordshire Queening (syn. Crimson Quoining). We are still on the lookout for the first four named, although the other four are now safely gathered in. Other calls put us onto interesting apples, which we have since propagated.

Bridgwater Pippin

One recent call was from Chrystal Harris who was resting a damaged achilles tendon, and doing some paper sorting, and was reminded by finding this article that she meant to contact us then about a very old apple tree, which grew in their Georgian House at Pitsford, Northamptonshire. The elderly gardener had called it Bridgwater. As it was dying, Moulton Agricultural College successfully grafted three new trees, of which Chrystal had two, but had to leave them at her previous house. She said it was a large apple, delicious to eat and cook, and asked if I could confirm its name and let her know if it was obtainable from any nursery or other source, if possible in our area, as she would be up this way later in the year. I rang her back, after looking it up. It dates from 1665, when it was recorded by Rea as Bridgwater Pippin. Taylor, in 'Apples of England', describes it as a small, round, distinctly ribbed apple, and calls it a dessert, but quotes that it was "A fine large apple of great worth", when exhibited in 1818. (Some discrepancy here). Joan Morgan, in The Book of Apples, regards it as a mid-season cooker, with a "lovely creamy texture" and writes that the tree at Brogdale matches Hogg's description in 1851. I found it was also listed in a new addition to our library - 'The Directory of Apple Cultivars', by Martin Crawford, published by the Agroforestry Research Trust, based in Devon. This useful publication includes a supplier list, and I was able to tell Chrystal that it was available from Paul Jasper, in Leominster. She has now written to say that leaves sent to her by Paul Jasper match hers, so she has ordered a new young tree, and is delighted at the prospect of again growing it. One to try perhaps. Good dual purpose apples are particularly useful where space is limited.

Lady Llanover Apple

A letter was received early this year from the Llanover Trust, informing us of the plan to convert the very underused Lady Llanover Chapel into a place of retreat, healing and re-creation, on behalf of the Presbyterian Church of Wales. They are considering establishing a community orchard in the grounds of the Chapel, which could become a reservoir of local Monmouthshire apples. They had heard that a Lady Llanover apple was rumoured to exist, and asked if we knew of it. Enquiries in the area have not yet yielded any record of it. Lady Llanover was a patron of Welsh folk culture and the Lady Llanover Reel commemorates her interest in music and folk dancing, but was she also a breeder of apples? Has anyone out there heard of this apple? Llanover Court became the repository of the manuscripts of Edward Williams, whose bardic name was Iolo Morganwg, (1747-1826), the controversial figure best remembered for introducing the ceremony of the 'Gorsedd' to the National Eisteddfod. This MS collection was later deposited in the National Library of Wales. Two years ago, Henry Ferguson-Thomas, a member living in Llanwrda, Carm., sent me a list of "Welsh Names of Apples", published in the Cambrian Journal 111, of 1858, and 'compiled with especial reference to Glamorgan', based on the one drawn up by Iolo Morganwg. Lady Llanover would have known of his interest in the Welsh names of apples. Some appear to be distinct varieties, not merely Welsh synonyms for apples such as Catshead. Perhaps Lady Llanover's interest in Welsh apples was aroused by this work. Photocopies of this list are available for 50p with SAE for anyone keen to start a search for them.

Welsh Druid

Derek Mayo, a member recruited at the Gwent Tertiary College show last autumn, has proved to be a mine of information on apples grown in South Monmouthshire and the Forest of Dean. He has now run to earth one he mentioned at the show, called Welsh Druid, and we hope to obtain graftwood. Does anyone else know of this apple?

"The Drover's Apple"

Richard Livsey, Liberal Democrat MP for Brecon and Radnorshire, was present at an event, 'Fair to the Future', held, for the first time, in Brecon Market Hall. He told me an intriguing story about an apple found on a farm in Pembrokeshire and brought to the attention of E.G. Bowen, the late Emeritus Professor of Geography, at University College, Aberystwyth. It was finally identified as a Kentish apple, and thought to have been brought back to Wales by the drovers, on their return journey from London after taking the Welsh cattle for sale. This tale was included in a lecture which Professor Bowen gave, on several occasions, in various places, including Aberystwyth. Does anyone recall this tale, know the apple, or the place it was found? Another one for the apple detectives, as the press love to call us!

"The Harrow Weald Slip"

A story has come in from one of our Life Members, Will Messenger, of Moreton in Marsh, of a tree, which grows easily from cuttings. Known in Wales as 'pitchers', in other areas as 'burrknots', they are also known as 'slips'. Will's letter says that the tree may have been planted as a pip by his grandfather, born in Harrow Weald which was then in rural Middlesex, but is now in N W London, or it could have been acquired by him, as a slip, from one of his employers, as he was a gardener. The great virtue of this tree was that 'slips' could be taken, which would root without the need for grafting; a true cottagers' apple. His mother told him about her family's

apple tree, and spoke of it as the 'Harrow Weald Slip' as if that were a well established name. Some years ago, Long Ashton examined fruit and leaves and suggested they were close to Newton Wonder. The descriptions of the latter in Taylor (3rd Ed.1946) and Morgan & Richards (1993) broadly match the slip, except that the fruit is rarely larger than 2½" and the biennial habit is not clear. Has anyone experience of Newton Wonder growing easily from cuttings? Will writes, "If it is Newton Wonder, maybe I shall put effort into other varieties. In the meantime, I shall look after my two Harrow Weald Slips as if they were the rarest!"

Dr Harvey/Waltham Abbey Seedling.

The confusion between these two varieties, mentioned in Newsletter No 2, is continuing to produce a good deal of correspondence. Much background information on the differences between the two varieties, and how the mix-up may have arisen, has been given to us by Gerald Fayers. We would like to hear from anyone who believes they have an old Waltham Abbey Seedling. A second, closely related, controversy concerns the authenticity of Dr Harvey itself. The Brogdale version appears to differ from the large number of examples of the variety which have been catalogued by Gerald Fayers, Bob Lever and others in East Anglia.

The Herefordshire Costard

It is said that there is no such thing as bad publicity. Sometimes, though, the Press causes problems. This has been the year of the Herefordshire Costard, not, I may say, that the publicity arose from MAN. The background needs some explanation. We are always pleased to examine fruit on old trees, and had been asked to check an ancient tree at Burton Court, Eardisland, locally supposed to be a 'costard', and brought to our attention by a telephone call from Paul Selfe of the Eardisland Oral History Group. This particular tree was certainly of great age, but, on examination, was not a 'costard' of any type. Paul, therefore, was invited to accompany us as we revisited one of the trees at Staick House, in the same parish, from which we had taken graftwood four years earlier, so that he could see fruits which were close to the descriptions available of the Herefordshire Costard. Later Paul Selfe wrote to us, and with his permission, parts of his letter are quoted below:-

"I am writing to let you know that I am taking every opportunity to set the record straight with regard to the possible existence of a costard in Eardisland. I am astonished at the way the story has moved from three or four lines sent to the Hereford Times Village News page, which I thought were reasonably cautious and guarded, to items in the National Press which exaggerated and invented statements which I certainly never made. I spoke only to a journalist from Bristol and made it clear that nothing was certain but that Wisley had requested cuttings and said it may be a costard. I was shocked to then see the story appear in The Express with the falsehood that I had been acting as an "apple detective for two years" and made the "discovery" of the tree; and then even more so to find The Times inventing the idea that "one wild tree caught my eye".... The only paper to come out of the matter with any credit is The Mail, whose journalist obviously checked the details with you and realised it should not be published. I have written to the Hereford Times asking them to include a short explanation that there were errors in the original story which have become exaggerated by the National Press. I am extremely upset by the way the matter has been dealt with by the Press, and I apologise to you and your committee for any embarrassment caused to you. I shall write to the editors of the papers involved clarifying the matter with them. However, I shall be much more cautious

about the items of village news I send to the Hereford Times in future and stick to the Bowling Club results, WI news and the meeting times of the bell ringers."

Paul Selfe has now joined *MAN* and become a helpful member of the Network, providing a good set of close-up photos of the Eardisland trees in blossom. The present 'costard' situation is given in Mike's account in *ORCHARD GLEANINGS*.

STOP PRESS. I was shaken to find Common Ground's 'Orchards and Apple Day News, Summer 1998, quoting the report in The Times. Editors give little prominence to letters of reply refuting 'a good story', so the inaccuracies are compounded.

Sheila Leitch

MORE LETTERS PLEASE

We have over 200 members, some of whom I'm sure will have something to tell the rest of us. Perhaps you could share your knowledge, relate apple stories, or offer opinions. I'd like to start the ball rolling for next year's Newsletter, with opinions on two issues.

As you know, *MAN* is primarily interested in varieties raised before 1900, although we do have a few later ones, especially Edwardian, in our collections. I find it hard to be enthusiastic about most modern dessert varieties, where complexity of flavour does not count as important a factor in breeding as other commercial considerations. Is *Katja* (syn. *Katy*) introduced 1966, an improvement on either of its parents, *James Grieve* x *Worcester Pearmain*? Give me the parents any time. Admittedly, I've not tried a garden sample, but only the usual supermarket fare which tends not to be tree-ripe. (For similar reasons I'd eat only a garden *Worcester Pearmain*).

There are plenty of tastier older varieties ready at the same time as *Fiesta* (1972, now called *Red Pippin*). I have always found this apple rather disappointing and inferior to *Cox's Orange Pippin*. I can understand commercial growers wanting a Cox flavour without that variety's problems. But what do you expect when you cross with *Idared*, a variety that might have many commercial attributes, but unfortunately isn't worth eating? I prefer *Jupiter* (named 1973) to *Fiesta*, but *Jupiter* already seems to have disappeared from supermarket shelves. *Greensleeves* (raised 1966, introduced 1977), *Elstar* (introduced 1972) and *Redsleeves* (introduced 1986) have no appeal for me, and some of the other new ones appear more suitable for warmer climates. I might find a place for *Discovery*, remarkable in an early apple for its handling and keeping qualities. On second thoughts, I'd still rather eat an *Irish Peach* or *Miller's Seedling*.

You may occasionally come across dessert varieties raised a little earlier than those mentioned above, including about a dozen bred at Merton (the John Innes Horticultural Institute). I don't know much about these - perhaps someone can apprise us of their merits? Stepping back to the Twenties, we begin to see the introduction of interesting apples like *Winston* (1920), *Sunset* (1918) and the truly great variety *Kidd's Orange Red* (1924). You can experience a hint of the wonderful flavour of the last-named apple in *Gala*, which is *Kidd's Orange Red* crossed with the American variety *Golden Delicious*, the latter weakening the flavour, but giving it the 'clean' look much loved by supermarkets.

If apple development continues along the present lines, then there will be no temptation for us, as connoisseurs, to move away from the old varieties raised in times when people really appreciated our national fruit.

The second issue to which I hope our members will respond, concerns varieties suitable for particular areas. Once, I overheard a nurseryman advise a customer that Ribston Pippin was ideal for the North, because it had been raised in Yorkshire. How sound is this kind of logic? Seed (possibly from Reinette du Canada) which had been brought from Rouen, was fortuitously planted near Knaresborough. Thus arose one of the classic apples, which would, presumably, be eminently suited to Normandy? I don't necessarily recommend an apple because of its nationality or county origin. My view is that you should grow the variety of the highest quality that will succeed in your situation. A genuine local variety, tried and tested over the years, might have an advantage over a nationally-known one where unfavourable conditions prevail. On the other hand, is Common Ground too indiscriminating in its championing of local varieties? Should we plant for romantic reasons? I would never bother with 'Granny's Grotty Pippin' if conditions were good enough to finish Ashmead's Kernel and Ribston Pippin to perfection. Also, long may other outsiders be planted in the Marches. These include three varieties from the far side of the country, which are generally agreed to do well in parts of East Wales, viz. Adam's Pearmain, Lady Henniker, and Norfolk Beefing, the last, according to Bunyard, having the synonym Taliesin, the most famous of all Welsh bards.

We are often asked to recommend varieties, particularly by members who live in areas which are less favourable for apple cultivation. Feedback from those whom we have helped would be useful, as would further suggestions based on local observation and experience.

John Aldridge

LOCAL LECTURES

David and I are often asked to talk to W.I. groups on local history or how to begin researching your own family history. You soon get pulled in on the circuit, and, with my interest in old apples known to some of our audiences, a number of requests have started coming in for a talk on local apple varieties. With the growing slide collection, these have aroused quite a bit of interest, bringing in new members and news of individual trees and orchards which should be visited. Other MAN members might like to give a similar talk, which can be very informal, in their home patch, thus tapping local knowledge. You do not need to be an expert, just an enthusiast.

Sheila Leitch

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, 6th September. Open Day at Elton Hall, near Wigmore. (Grid Ref. SO 458 711) The former home of Thomas Andrew Knight, the garden has been recently restored and developed and garden produce and specialist plants will be on sale. Small display of early-season apples by MAN. Open 2.00 - 6.00pm. Admission £2, proceeds to NCCPG.

Saturday, 12th September. Kington Horse Show. 10.00am - 5.00pm. MAN has been invited to put on a fruit display there. Show schedules from McCartney's, Kington.

Saturday/Sunday, 26th/27th September. Malvern Autumn Show at the Three Counties Showground, Malvern. The RHS mount a magnificent fruit display and offer an identification service. MAN will also be displaying there, together with Berrington Hall NT.

Sunday, 27th September. Leominster Regeneration. 'A Fruity Affair'. Town Square, from noon. Details from Patrick Broadhurst, Tel. 01568-616348.

Saturday, 3rd October. Croft Castle will again be holding an 'Apple Fair' this year. A National Trust property, north of Leominster, with connections with the fruit breeder, Thomas Andrew Knight. Apple displays and identifications by MAN, fruit and cider tastings, orchards to visit, plus sales. For details, Tel. 01568-780246.

Saturday/Sunday, 10th/11th October. Erddig. This National Trust property near Wrexham has a walled garden which, to quote the leaflet, "is one of the most important surviving 18th century gardens in Britain". It has rare fruit trees, a canal, pond and a National Ivy Collection. The house is a unique family home. MAN will have a fruit display there for the first time, and we are looking forward to visiting an orchard where the varieties are actually known. What a treat!

Friday, 16th October. Marcher Apple Network's annual event to celebrate Apple Day. To be held at Talgarth Town Hall. Doors open 7.00pm. There will be a display of old apple and pear varieties, with the opportunity to taste some of them, though not the ones on show! An identification panel will try to name your unknown fruit. (At least 3 specimens please). There will be a juice-making demonstration, with tastings of mouthwatering flavours, and bottles of single variety apple juice will be on sale, which make most acceptable Christmas presents. Later, there will be a chance to sit quietly and listen to Roy and Pat Palmer reading from Roy's anthology, 'Ripest Apples', together with some music and songs. Home-made refreshments with an apple theme will be on sale. Tickets £3, schoolchildren under 16, £1, can be booked through Ray Boddington or Sheila Leitch, and will also be available at the door. Offers to provide food will be much appreciated.

Saturday, 17th October. The Church Stretton Apple Fair, at Silvester Horne Institute, Church Stretton, Shropshire, from 11.am - 4.00pm. Stalls, displays and apple dishes from Europe. Further details available from John Lloyd, Tel. 01694-723143.

Saturday/Sunday, 17th/18th October. 'The Big Apple'. A harvest-time celebration of English apples and cider in the Herefordshire parishes of the Marcle Ridge. This year the venue will be Much Marcle, where there will be one joint weekend instead of two, combining interest in dessert and culinary fruit with cider fruit. There will be fruit displays, tastings, identifications and apple teas. MAN will be there. For details of talks, demonstrations and other events, phone Jackie Denman, Secretary of the 'Big Apple Association', on 01531-670544.

Wednesday, 21st October. Apple Day. Events countrywide. Programme available from Common Ground. Send SAE to PO Box 25309, London, NW5 1ZA.

Sunday, 25th October. Celebration of the Apple at Llancaiach Fawr Manor, Treharris, Mid Glam. Display of 17th Century apples. MAN will be there. Apple juice and cider producers will be selling their products in the Long Barn. For details of other attractions Tel. 01443-412248.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The financial year for MAN begins 1st August, to coincide with the beginning of the apple season. We are pleased to report that there has been a further increase in membership over last year, with numbers now well over 200, from far and wide. We send out the Newsletter to all those on our address list for the previous year, trusting they wish to continue supporting MAN. PLEASE SEND YOUR MINIMUM SUB. of £2 NOW, for the current year, while you read your Newsletter No. 4, unless you are a Life Member or pay by Standing Order. Slips are inserted in this Newsletter, reminding members who pay by cheque that subscriptions are now due.

NEXT YEAR'S SUBSCRIPTION

When MAN was first started up, in 1993, with seven members, it was decided to set the Membership fee at £2, a nominal level, so that we could pull in as many interested supporters as possible. We are finding that this minimum subscription barely covers the cost of printing and posting the Newsletter, and leaves very little over for our work, which is expanding fast, now that we have several orchards requiring care. We have been most grateful to the members who have sent donations in addition to the basic subscription.

We are now intending to put MAN on a more formal footing, which will place us in a favourable position to apply for funding. It has been decided, therefore, that the Membership fee will have to be increased as from 1st August 1999, to £5. This increase will allow us to expand our work in surveying more old orchards, maintaining the increasing number of 'Museum Orchards' with which we are involved and providing other services such as training courses. Those members who pay by Standing Order will need to contact their bank before the above date.

John Aldridge

Material for Newsletter No. 5 welcomed throughout the year, but please send to Editor, Sheila Leitch, by the beginning of July 1999 at the latest. Your contributions have led to N° 4. being larger. We should point out that the views expressed in the Newsletter are those of individual contributors, not necessarily those of MAN.

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