



NEWSLETTER

**TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY:
FIRST PUBLISHED 1998**

No 84 October 2018

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

OFFICERS

Chairman

Hilary Dodson

Treasurer

Peter Robinson

MEMBERS

Membership: Sharan Packer

Minutes: Peter Nichol

Newsletter: Jean Richards

Apple Events: Margaret Drury

Rachel Benson

Jo Murphy

Philip Rainford

Chris Simmonds

LOCAL CONTACTS

Local contacts are an informal network of volunteer members who may offer a range of services from organising occasional events in their area, to swapping seedlings, or simply providing information to visitors and newcomers. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you think they can help you.

James Ellson: Hayfield (and area) (SK22 2LJ)

Bridget Evans: South Yorks

Melanie Fryer: Skipton/Gisburn,

Ken Haigh: Darlington,

Ann Hindley: Crowle, Scunthorpe

Jo Murphy: York area

Peter Nichol: Manchester area

Philip Rainford: Cumbria & North West

Chris Simmonds: Ryedale & North York Moors

(Contact details available to members only)

As you can see, the list isn't complete, so if your area isn't included, would you like to volunteer? Simply get your name and contact details in the Newsletter, and you take it from there, doing as much or as little as you wish.

DIARY

Dates for your diary for the next few months: please see the Programme and Events sections below for further information, and visit our Facebook page for updates and last minute changes to the programme.

OCTOBER

Wednesday 3: Dewhurst Road teaching garden

Thursday 11: Otley teaching garden

Wednesday 17: Dewhurst Road teaching garden
Thursday 25: Otley teaching garden
Wednesday 31: Dewhurst Road teaching garden
Wednesday October 31 to Sunday November 4: **NFG Apple Event**

NOVEMBER

Thursday 8: Otley teaching garden
Saturday November 10: **Annual General Meeting**
Wednesday 14: Dewhurst Road teaching garden
Thursday 22: Otley teaching garden
Wednesday 28: Dewhurst Road teaching garden

DECEMBER

Thursday 6: Otley teaching garden
Wednesday 12: Dewhurst Road teaching garden

EDITORIAL

Welcome, at the end of that long, hot and curious summer, to the October edition of the Newsletter. Many fruits defied expectation and did well notwithstanding (or in some cases because of) the heat. The Newsletter too continues to blossom, with no less than a mammoth 40 pages in this issue, so take some time out from the final burst of harvesting and preserving to have a look.

Not surprisingly at this time of the year, we have lots of information about apples and orchards, and what to do with your surplus fruit. Anne Lee explains some of the mysteries of apple identification, James Ellson plans to name a new apple after his long-suffering wife, and there's more information on how to breed a new cultivar. Plums also get a look-in, with Chris Simmonds following her bizarre method of dealing with pear midge (July Newsletter) with an equally curious remedy for the wretched plum moth. We take a look at two exciting compost items, tea bags and snake eggs, and at the introduction of exotic tropical fruits in the eighteenth century. My thanks, as always, to those members who have taken the time to send in contributions.

Member Brian Gable recently drew my attention to the fact that while we are celebrating 20 years of the Newsletter, the Northern Fruit Group itself is two years older, having been formed in 1996, with Brian as

its first Secretary. (His membership number, I discovered, is 002!) Thanks Brian, sorry if the cover was a bit confusing, I've altered it now and we'll look forward to a 25 year celebration of the founding of the Group in 2021.

Now, you didn't think you were going to escape the boring housekeeping items, did you? Firstly our annual nag about renewing your membership. The membership year begins on January 1, so you have plenty of time, but why not do it now, while you still have the form (enclosed) handy. And secondly, please don't skip all that dull stuff about the Annual General Meeting. Do come if you can, this is our most important meeting of the year, a good turnout is a sign of a flourishing society, and Martin Fish's talk promises to be most interesting.

Regretfully I won't be able to make it to the AGM this year, so if there is anything you are dying to tell me about the Newsletter, please email me.

PROGRAMME

Fruit Group Events

Executive Committee members please note that the next meeting is scheduled for November 10, immediately preceding the AGM.

Annual General Meeting

Arrangements

Our Annual General Meeting will be held at 1.30pm on Saturday November 10, 2018, at Harlow Carr Garden, and will be followed by a talk by Martin Fish entitled "A North Yorkshire Garden".

You will find the minutes of the 2017 AGM as an appendix to this Newsletter. No further papers will be circulated; the agenda and other documents will be tabled at the AGM.

If you are attending, please bring with you your membership card, or wear your NFG sweat shirt, to get free admission to the Garden. There should be time after the meeting to have a look round the Garden, which won the title of best garden in the North East in a recent poll.

The Constitution allows for 13 members on the Executive Committee and we have only 10, so there is room for three more. Why not nominate someone you think would do a good job, or consider standing yourself (in

which case please contact our Chairman to discuss it)? You don't have to be an expert; our society covers a whole range of expertise, and sometimes we need someone to speak up for beginners.

Speaker

Martin Fish developed his love of gardening as a child whilst helping in his Grandmother's garden, an old fashioned cottage garden that was full of flowers, vegetables, fruit, hens and laughter!

His gardening career started as an apprentice gardener and he studied horticulture at Brackenhurst College, Southwell and Merrist Wood College in Surrey. At 21 Martin went on to become Head Gardener at Rufford Abbey, at the time the youngest head gardener in the country.

Fulfilling his ambition to work for himself Martin bought 6 acres of land in Nottinghamshire and started his own landscape, garden maintenance and nursery business.

In the early 1990's Martin began writing for Garden News, a weekly gardening publication. He quickly became a regular columnist and created a series of demonstration gardens on the nursery site which were featured in the magazine. Regular gardening projects and features were also created for The Garden, Gardener's World Magazine, Kitchen Garden and Garden Answers.

As the gardens developed they were also regularly used for outside broadcasts as part of Martin's work as one of the gardening experts for BBC Radio Nottingham and BBC East Midlands Today.

Martin loved being behind the camera and much of his television work was filmed in his garden, including a 12 part series for Carlton TV called Simply Gardening, that he presented with fellow gardener John Stirland and Coronation Street's Thelma Barlow.

Always one for a new challenge, in 2009 Martin and his wife Jill moved to North Yorkshire where for five years he ran the award winning Harrogate Flower Shows.

In January 2014 he decided to return to the roots of gardening by developing his own garden alongside writing and broadcasting about gardening. He works with several local charities including the Friends of the Valley Gardens in Harrogate as their President. Martin is active on the flower show circuit giving talks and Q&A sessions and as an accredited RHS judge Martin is thrilled to be judging at many RHS and independent flower shows.

From the website martinfish.com

Teaching gardens

We will continue to meet fortnightly at our two teaching gardens, from 10.30am to 3.00pm, on Wednesdays at Dewhurst Road, and on Thursdays at Otley, with a break over Christmas and New Year: dates are in the Diary.

New volunteers - beginners included - are always welcome to join us. If you haven't been before and need further information or directions, please contact our Chairman.



Shows

NFG Apple Event

The Group's annual Apple Event will take place this year from Wednesday October 31 to Sunday November 4 in the Lodge and Greenhouse at Harlow Carr Garden in Harrogate.

Dozens of varieties of apples will be on display, and experts will be available to identify any mystery specimens you care to bring along.

Setting up will take place on Monday and Tuesday October 29-30. Volunteers are needed both to help with setting up, and to 'police' the event as it takes place. You do not need to be an expert! This could be a great learning opportunity, as well as supporting a fruit group event. If you would like to help, please contact Margaret Drury, details in the Committee list.

Admission to the event is free, as is admission to the Garden if you can prove you belong to the NFG by producing your membership card or wearing our shirt.

For an introduction to the science - or should that be art? - of apple identification, see Anne Lee's article on page 27.



Great Yorkshire and the rest

Good news, we won silver gilt with all our show entries this year. "Not a bad record, especially for the RHS Show at Tatton Park" said our Chairman (who does most of the work) modestly. Look out for a full report in the January Newsletter.

20TH Annual Fruit Show, September 9, 2018

Show Organiser's Report

This year we were back at Harlow Carr in the Sunley Room for the Fruit Show. It was very pleasing that the number of members exhibiting and number of exhibits were up substantially on last year, and included several members who have not shown before which was very welcome. Because of the poor weather there were fewer members of the public visiting the show this year.

As regards the exhibits themselves, there was some really good quality fruit on display, and for the first time in some years there were entries in every class. Class 1, a plate of three dessert apples, had more than 30 entries. This took some time to judge, especially as the judge ended up being yours truly this year. Unfortunately Dick Tresize, who has been judging ever since we started the shows and was looking forward to judging at this the 20th show, had to pull out a few days beforehand because of personal circumstances. Despite ringing around several other judges it was not possible to obtain a replacement at short notice because all were already booked for other shows. Rather than cancel the show at very short notice it was decided that since I had shadowed Dick for all the previous shows and learnt about judging from him, I should try my hand at doing it myself. As members can imagine, I was a bit worried about being able to follow in Dick's footsteps and make a good job of it, so I hope I did him proud.

The winner of the highest points in the novice classes was Gill Haigh. The prize for the most points overall in the show was won for the second year by our Chair, Hilary Dodson. Well done to everyone who entered and won prizes.

I do want to say a very big thank you to all the members who helped out in any way with the show, especially in taking over some of the roles I usually fulfil but could not this year because I was judging, such as helping people to stage their exhibits. Thank you to Gill Haigh who has taken over from Roger Hole in writing out the prize cards very professionally. Without all those who helped it would have been extremely hard to run the show this year.

All in all the show was a success although a bit more exhausting for me this year because of judging as well as booking in all the entries. I hope everyone who exhibited, helped in any way or visited enjoyed the show and that they and more members will support the show next year.

Sharan Packer, Show Organiser

Non Fruit Group Events

Some up-coming Apple Days

Astley Hall, Chorley: Sunday October 7

Astley Hall is a museum and art gallery housed within a Grade I listed historic house, with the beautiful surroundings of Astley Park which include historic woodland, a lake, a fully renovated Victorian walled garden alongside clean and modern facilities for visitors to enjoy.

The Apple of Your Isle, Epworth: Saturday October 13

‘The Apple’ is a local organisation which encourages the growth and use of apples and pears. The Apple Day takes place at Epworth Old Rectory, 11.00 to 15.00.

Acorn Bank, Cumbria

Acorn Bank is a National Trust property best known for its comprehensive herb collection and traditional fruit orchards.

Please note that due to planned major roadworks on the A66 during October, Acorn Bank has decided not to hold its annual Apple Day (advertised in our July issue) this year. They will however be holding the following events:

Saturday October 20: Apple Identification: Do you have an apple tree and you want to know about it? Here is your opportunity to ask the experts.

Saturday November 10: Community Juicing Day 11am – 3pm
Bring your clean, washed fruit to our press and take home fresh juice.
Bring your own bottles or containers.

Helmsley Walled Garden, North Yorkshire: Saturday October 20

Left derelict in the 1980s, the Garden was brought back to life as a visitor attraction and a place of solace and healing for those in need. In a slight change from previous years, there will not be a lot of juice for sale at the Apple Day, but there will be displays of juicing and a chance to taste different pressings as they come out of the press. There will be apple trails for children, and other activities to make a memorable day.

Don't forget that we are happy to advertise any non profit making fruit related events open to the public: just contact me with the details. Ed.

CONFESSIONS OF A FRUIT NOVICE



Possibly my favourite of all the fruit grown by the Constant Gardner (aka the Husband) is plums. We have only one tree, by the garden gate, so daily as I come and go I can keep an eye on the ripening fruit. Eventually I can resist no longer and pluck the ripest specimen I can see as I pass.

This year I carried it into the house and, I'm not sure why, cut it open. Thankfully, because there was a resident wormy thing, scurrying away from the light. (My parents used to share this joke: what's worse than finding a worm in your apple?

Finding half a worm in your apple. As a child I could not understand this!) Anyway, following my policy of live and let live, I didn't drop it to the ground and stamp on it, I merely let out a shriek and hurled it onto the table. The CG of course comes to my rescue, and with a scornful look removes the inmate, cuts out the evidence of its habitation, the nature of which I do not want to know, washes the rest under the tap and presents it for my consumption. Not altogether happily I pop it into my mouth and am relieved to discover that it tastes just like a plum ought to taste.

This was my introduction to plum moth, which I am told is prevalent this year, and which I have now removed from several kilos of fruit prior to making jam or poaching for bottling. I wish it no harm, but why can't it go and breed somewhere else?? Meanwhile, I spent a week looking like a woman who smokes 40 Woodbines a day from the ingrained plum juice. I used to paint my fingernails before I met the CG: those were the days.

On a quite unrelated matter, we took some visitors to Nunnington Hall, our nearest National Trust property, where there was an exhibition of beautiful bronze sculptures by Lloyd le Blanc and Judith Holmes. I suggested to the CG that I would like the one shown on the following page for Christmas: perhaps you can see why? Me at 13, or thereabouts. (OK, who am I kidding?) The CG glanced at the (admittedly eye-watering) price tag, and merely said "where's the tea room?"

Thanks to friend Julie Heptinstall for the photo. If you would like to see more of these sculptures, you can catch the exhibition at Nunnington up to October 7, or visit the website <<http://www.leblancfineart.com>>.

For a more serious account of the plum moth and how to deal with it, see page 24. Ed



YORKSHIRE VINEYARD WINS AWARD

Members who enjoyed last year's visit to the Yorkshire Heart Vineyard and Brewery, based at Nun Monkton, will be pleased to hear that it was one of only four gold medal winners at the International Wine Challenge Cellar Door of the Year awards.

The first vineyard at the 14-acre site was planted in 2006 and since then more than 30,000 bottles of award winning wine have been produced by the team.

Owners Chris and Gillian Spakouskas said: "We could not be more delighted to be recognised with the best vineyards in the country, we are so very proud of our team and what we have all achieved."

Visitor numbers to the vineyard have trebled in the past three years. And there are plans for another three acres of land to be planted with a

further 4,000 vines in 2019, focusing on varieties of red wine grapes. The company's English sparkling and rose wines have also been popular with visitors.

FROM OUR NEWSLETTER OF OCTOBER 1998

Here is the last of our retrospectives on the first year of issue of the Newsletter, in 1998. It's been interesting to see how much has changed, and in some cases, how little. For example, in October 1998-

Honey bee disaster looming:

The spread of the Varroa Mite is threatening Britain's wild bees and cultivated (hive) bees. This is very bad news for fruit growers and for gardeners generally. Although bumble bees are not affected and can make up some of the shortfall in pollinators (they are used in polytunnels), the wild colonies are small (average 200 bees) compared to a honey-bee hive (up to 30,000 flying bees) and cannot do an adequate job in large orchards.

The Varroa epidemic began 6 years ago and the Government has only now announced a £400,000 research programme to find a biological control. Apparently formic acid is an effective control but is illegal under EU regulations.

Twenty years on, the handwringing seems to be more or less the same! Perhaps Brexit will see the re-introduction of formic acid.

ROOTSTOCK

Orders for 2019

I have taken over from Peter Robinson the ordering of rootstock for members of the NFG.

This note is for the benefit of new members, remembering that I, also, am new.

Rootstocks are bought from Frank Matthews: bulk purchase qualifies us for a discount. The minimum order per member is five. If you are planning to use rootstock for the first time, remember that grafting is an

uncertain process so you will certainly need several for each tree you plan to graft.

Orders should be made by e-mail to me. I will confirm receipt of orders. The reason for e-mail is that I am away for periods in France, looking after some citrus trees.

Orders must be made by the time of the AGM (November 10), to enable us to get delivery in late January/early February. Delivery is in bulk to Paul Yashpon in Leeds. Large orders will be collected from Paul. The remainder will be 'collected' from me. Last year the majority appeared to be collected at the Scion distribution meeting in early 2018.

[Collection addresses for members only.]

The cost of rootstock depends on the size of the total order. Last year the price per rootstock was about £1.60, I believe.

John Shea



Apple Rootstocks Explained

For beginners in the magic art of grafting, here is some information produced in leaflet form by the NFG some years ago, which might be helpful. There are, of course, many other rootstocks for other fruits.

Apple rootstocks have been developed to provide a tree with predictable characteristics, especially size. These may be modified to some extent by the vigour of the variety that has been grafted on to that rootstock. Rootstocks are numbered, but those numbers do not form an obvious or logical pattern. The rootstock that forms the smallest tree is M27, followed by M9, M26, MM106, and M25 or MM111 giving trees of increasing size. The characteristics of each rootstock are listed below.

M27 can be described as EXTREMELY DWARFING, producing a tree of about 4 to 6 feet. It is useful for trees to be grown in pots as patio fruit and also for reducing the vigour of triploids such as Bramley's Seedling. This rootstock requires good soil and will not stand neglect or competition from weeds or grass. It needs continuous support. The trees will come in to fruit in between 2 and 3 years.

M9 is described as VERY DWARFING, producing a tree of about 6 to 10 feet. The main problem with this rootstock is that it has brittle roots, and even when staked, has a tendency to blow over. The trees can be pulled upright again and stabilised using a tripod. This rootstock tends to be the main one used for trees available in Garden Centres. These trees come in to fruit in about 3 years, but do need careful staking and will not withstand competition from grass or weeds.

M26 is DWARFING producing a tree of about 8 to 12 feet. It is a useful general purpose rootstock, and can be used to produce most of the tree forms such as bushes or cordons but not espaliers. Trees on this rootstock will grow in most soil types, and come in to fruit in 3 to 4 years.

MM106 is SEMI DWARFING producing a tree of about 12 to 15 feet. It can be used for most purposes, including all trained forms. This rootstock will grow in most soils, even light ones. The trees come in to fruit in 3 to 4 years.

M25 or MM111 are VIGOROUS rootstocks, producing trees over about 20 feet tall. These rootstocks are used for trees in grazed orchards. They will grow in most soils and take about 5 years to come in to fruit.

COMPOST

If you have a garden, orchard or allotment, chances are you make compost, so here are a couple of recent items from Which? Gardening that may be of interest.

Grass snakes may lay eggs in your compost heap.

The compost heap is naturally warm and fairly well protected from predators, so it makes a popular choice for grass snakes to lay their eggs. If you find the pale leathery eggs in your compost, it's important not to disturb them. Grass snakes and their eggs are protected by law from injury or destruction. They are not dangerous to humans or pets so are nothing to worry about. The eggs will hatch in late summer, so try to avoid turning your heap until October, when they should have left.

Which? Gardening March 2018.

Which tea bags can go in the compost heap?

With all the publicity surrounding the damage that plastic pollution does to our planet, if you compost tea bags you'll probably be concerned to hear that you could unintentionally be adding plastic to your heap.

Some tea bags use a plastic called polypropylene to strengthen and seal the bags, so you don't end up with leaves floating in your drink. This plastic isn't biodegradable, but can 'disappear' into the soil, leaving a white mesh after a year or so. Considering there are billions of tea bags sold across the UK every year, that's a lot of plastic leaking into the earth.

Not all tea bags contain polypropylene: Teapigs, Pukka Tea and Twinings Pyramid tea bags are all plastic free, as are Clipper 'string and tag' bags. In February, the Co-op became the first UK retailer to roll out fully degradable paper tea bags in its own brand tea, and PG Tips made its pyramid tea bags fully biodegradable in March.

Tea brand Heath and Heather whose bags are made from soft and hard woods and long fibre, such as manila hemp, explained how it cuts the need for plastic: "Instead of using a traditional heat-sealing process like many everyday tea bags, ours are sealed by being folded and sewn with string."

But until this catches on, if you want an environmentally friendly cup of tea, you'd better look for a bag with string and tag, or better still treat yourself to some leaf tea.

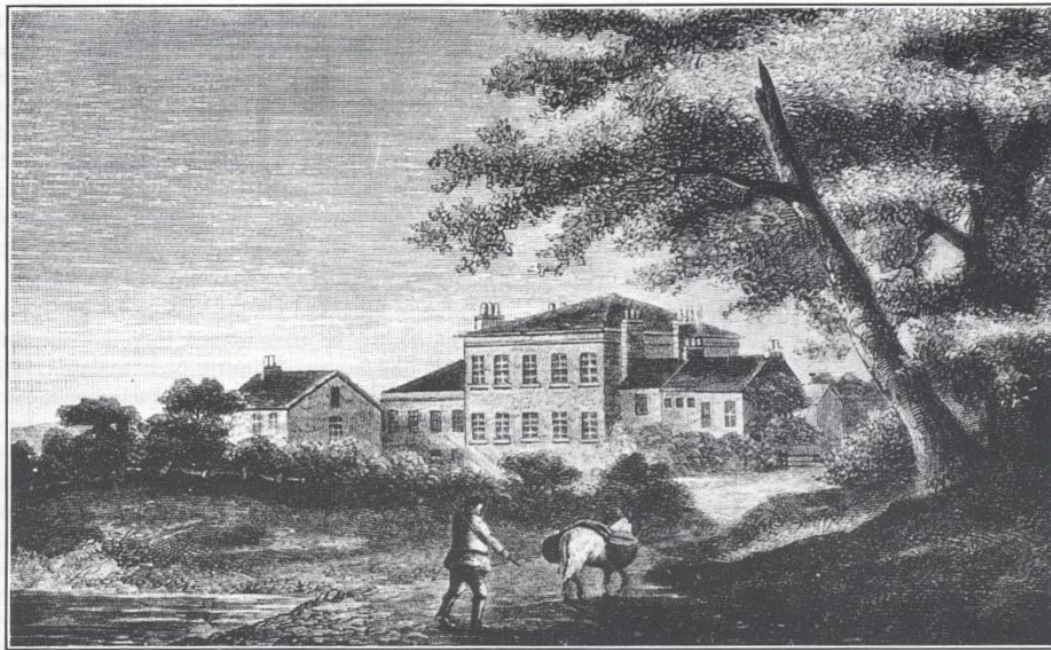
If you don't want to change your brand of tea, WRAP maintains that composting them into your food recycling bin is still the best way of disposing of them.

Abridged from Which ? Gardening May 2018

REPLANTING AN HISTORIC ORCHARD IN YORK

The Retreat is a provider of specialist mental health care in York, to the south east of the city towards the site of the University of York. It has extensive grounds of 16 hectares (40 acres, on a slope – one of few in York - to the south east. It has a very significant place in the history of psychiatry and was an original trail blazer in the reshaping of attitudes towards people who are mentally ill.

"The hospital was opened in 1796 by William Tuke, a retired tea merchant. The original Retreat was intended to be a place where members



From a Painting by Cave.]

Original building of The Retreat, York. Instituted 1795.

of The Society of Friends (Quakers) who were experiencing mental distress could come and recover in an environment that would be both familiar and sympathetic to their needs. Some years earlier, a Leeds Quaker, Hannah Mills, had died in the squalid and inhumane conditions that then prevailed in the York Asylum, and appalled at this Tuke and his family vowed that never again should any Quaker be forced to endure such treatment.” (<https://www.theretreatyork.org.uk/history/>)

The grounds have probably been through as many changes as there have been shifts in mental health care provision. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, records show that the land was cultivated to provide produce for the kitchens, as well as ornamental borders and a rose garden. There are also still some exquisite tree specimens such as ginkgo and redwoods, and a signature cooper beech on the top level. Patients still regard the grounds as contributing to their recovery, and staff manage the various needs of vulnerable people to be able to enjoy the tranquillity and open spaces.

Around 2010, realising I was unlikely ever to fulfil a dream to have land of my own on which to have an orchard (and a wood, and a stream...!), I got involved in the planting of several community orchards in the York area: at primary schools with an Edible York project managed by the Centre for Global Education at York St John University; at Beningborough Hall; and in my own neighbourhood on Scarcroft Green. Then a conversation with the Retreat’s Quaker Chaplain, Bronwen Gray, led to the plan to replant the orchard slope of the kitchen garden grounds.

She arranged for me to have access to The Retreat's archive at the Borthwick Institute at University of York. The great tomes were brought out into an atmosphere-controlled room, I was given a pair of special gloves, and allowed to browse through the extensive records. All the entries are in beautiful copperplate writing, with corrections and amendments neatly made, and there is a detailed plan of Division 3 of the grounds: Kitchen Garden. Within Division 3 are 10 sections, and each section has an annotated list of the trees planted – and when they were removed. Two sections were removed by 1939, and the remainder in the 1950s and 1960s. There was an extraordinary number of trees, so they must have been closely planted; numbers 1 and 2 are *Fondante d'Antonne* pears; numbers 235 and 236 are *Czar* plums.

We wanted to replant with some of the original varieties, but also to ensure that the trees would crop well, using what is now known through observation in the area. I and Tony Chalcraft were employed briefly by a BTCV (as it then was) project in York called *Get Growing*, and with funding from the project, from Big Lottery monies, we selected the first group of trees*. In December 2011, we planted 2 espalier apples and an espalier pear around a seating area the then head gardener created, and 12 half standards towards the bottom of the slope, choosing varieties we trusted to cope with the possible frost pocket there. It was a freezing day with driving hail and snow. Several patients came out to help prepare the planting holes on the grid we had previously drawn out, and that was so moving: the energy and enthusiasm of some very troubled people, planting wishes for the future, planting in memory of others who had died, laying a poem at the bottom of a hole. Even the CEO came out in the wild weather, to plant a *Vranja* quince, which is bearing a fantastic crop this year.

The following year, we were able to plant a further 12 trees, moving up the slope and keeping to the grid system. Again, patients came to help plant, and brought their own significance to the intention to grow something to bear fruit in the future. The Retreat's employed gardening team was shrinking, but they were still doing a great job in mowing paths along the grid lines and leaving a longer sward around the trees. Another planting of nine trees to fill the slope was made in 2013, so in all there are 39 now, all different varieties apart from the pair of *Jester* espaliered apples, and a mixture of apple, pear, damson, a cherry and plum.

We have had many events to mark the seasons of blossom and harvest: writing haiku to hang on the branches; celebrating Apple Day when patients and staff come to taste different fruits. Staff from local businesses and visitors from the USA have come to donate a day of labour

weeding around the trees, and learning about the flowers emerging in the grass. Patients have planted bulbs in lovely curving arcs through the squares. And we have run pruning workshops to learn about fruit tree management. But we fail to manage the pigeons who have taken to scoffing tender new leaves, mainly on the plums, in the spring, and even breaking lesser branches under the weight of their filled tums!

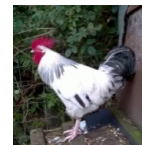
Tony and I continue to organise three or four work days a year, along with Bronwen, and supported by patients and staff on a more ad hoc basis. As the organisation goes through a period of change we hope to continue caring for the orchard. Whatever the future of the hospital and its clinical care services, the orchard remains an important landmark, with historical and personal significance to many.

Laura Potts, August 2018

A Smallholder Writes . . .

No 10

NFG member James Ellson writes a blog about his smallholding <http://jamesellson.blogspot.co.uk/>



Looking for a legacy project?

If, like me, you haven't got children and you haven't been Prime Minister, then you might want to consider developing a new apple cultivar. Apple crossing (sometimes known as breeding) is a lot easier than you think.

The basics

Apples don't come true from seed – the Fruit Group mantra. So, planting an apple pip will result in an apple tree but only a new 'wilding' variety and one likely to taste acidic and insipid. However, crossing two

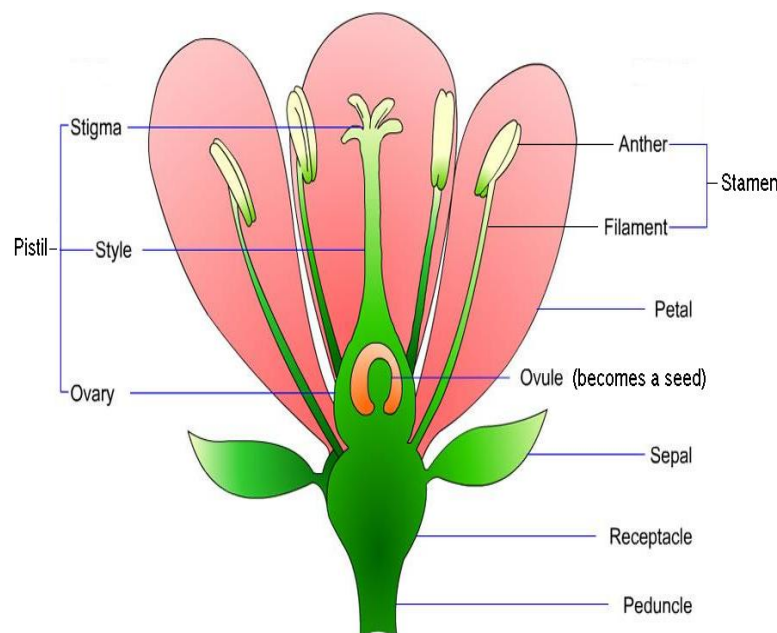
known varieties (e.g. Sunset and Red Devil) can create new and appealing varieties.

Flowers can be pollinated by bees, insects, wind, and by hand. Crossing apples requires hand pollination.

Stage 1: decide which 2 cultivars to cross – now!

Stage 2: hand pollination - May

- i. (on first tree) use tweezers to snip off the anthers (male) from three flowers, then dispose of them (this stops self-pollination); snip off extra flowers
 - a. protect groups of three flowers with their pistils (females) intact with pollination bags
 - b. label
- ii. (on second tree) protect closed flowers with bags (OR remove flowers and store inside) (to prevent contamination by visiting insects etc)
- iii. after 2-3 days, flowers on first tree will have opened and stigmas will be receptive to pollen
- iv. use anthers (rusty in colour with the pollen) from second tree to brush on stigmas of first tree
 - a. Re-cover flowers with bags
- v. after 3 or 4 weeks, fruitlets will form – remove bags and write on ID numbers



Stage 3: collect and store pips – August / September

- i. Collect numbered apples
- ii. Remove pips
- iii. Stratify pips by storing in fridge
 - a. Pack in clean damp (not wet) sawdust in tin in fridge
- iv. Watch for sprouting 45-60 days

Stage 4: plant pips – winter

- i. Plant 1 cm deep in pots of fine nursery soil; grow in greenhouse or cold frame

Stage 5: pot into larger pot or into ground - spring

Stage 6: wait 2-5 years for pips to grow into trees and form apples

Stage 7: taste new apples and name a new variety!

e.g. James' New Russet or Lady Sarah (the wife)

- **Websites / YouTube:**

Ystywth Valley breeders <https://www.yvapplebreeders.com/>

Steven Edholme https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_i2_soyLDSQ&index=2&list=PLLOT4tjJCFHyqVAMmXFZrOtlsh0RuM-Gq&t=0s

And, finally . . .

If you have been the PM (or still are), then please get in touch. I'll do it all for you. Maybe name the new apple Prime Minister's Pippin.



I can vouch second-hand for the pleasure this process can give. The late Mo Weatherhead was a friend and orchid grower, and here she is: Orchid Pleione Dr Mo Weatherhead. Ed.



Reading James' item above I was reminded of this article which I stumbled across in an old edition of the Daily Telegraph (February 2013) while looking for something else. Anyone who researches on-line will know the feeling!

BREED YOUR OWN VARIETY

There are not many ways to gain immortality in gardening, but breeding your own variety is one approach.

Many of us have fond feelings for Rosmarinus 'Miss Jessopp's', even though we might not be on first-name terms with her. Numerous gardeners might think that breeding your own is far too complicated, but like many things in life, once you try it you realise it is easy to do and it can become fascinating and highly addictive.

Of course, some great plants are not bred, but just pop up as a sport. For instance, the well-known shrub rose 'Iceberg' suddenly threw up a long straggly shoot. Someone with keen powers of observation noticed this and recognised its potential as a climbing form. They propagated this up from cuttings and found it was stable (it did not revert to the bush form) and marketed it as *Rosa* 'Climbing Iceberg'.

"Sports", breaks or chimeras can arrive by freaks of nature. A mutation occurs causing a random change in the plants' chromosomes brought about by insect damage, the weather or other factors. If you see a different flower, habit or leaf you can email the RHS (gardeningadvice@rhs.org.uk) – they will put you in touch with nurseries looking for new plants.

New seedlings may also arise "naturally". Bob Flowerdew noticed a seedling thyme (among an extensive collection) that was very prostrate, long lived with a scent of caraway. One he grows, *Thymus herba-barona*, also has a caraway scent, but is bushy and taller; the seedling was a chance cross. It is registered and named as *T. herba-barona* 'Bob Flowerdew'. Bob also noticed in his garden a new seedling, evergold, golden comfrey, similar to *Symphytum orientale* (the white-flowered, invasive one). He offered it to a large seed house which in turn offered him just £400 for all rights. So he kept it himself.

Charles Welch has been breeding new plants for 50 years or more. He is an amateur but has bred scores of new award-winning plants. Eight of the 10 apples in his garden are his own. His sweet pea 'Ballerina Blue' has won many accolades.

Perhaps Welch's most interesting new variety to date is the chuckleberry. This fruit, which looks like a blackcurrant but tastes very different, fruits in its first year and can be eaten fresh, cooked or made into jam. As this berry (a cross with a redcurrant, a red gooseberry and a jostaberry [gooseberry/blackcurrant cross]) is such a breakthrough, he is working with Meiosis in Kent (meiosis.co.uk), which specialises in introducing new fruit varieties throughout the world. It is being bulked up for mass marketing and trialled by a major corporation*.

Plant Breeders' Rights have been taken out and so growers cannot profit from it without giving a percentage to the breeder.

Registration of new treasures is complicated. I asked Michael Marriot, the rosarian, who works for David Austin Roses, how it all works. Michael explained that they register a new plant with the CPVO (Community Plant Variety Office) in Angers, France. There it is tested for DUS (Distinctiveness, Uniformity and Stability). If it passes, then Plant Breeders' Rights are given. The process costs several thousand pounds. Naming the plant, which we all think of as the fun part, can be exceedingly taxing. To get the trademark on the selling name, they apply to the World Intellectual Property Organization in Geneva, which passes it on to the relevant national office, which decides if it is acceptable.

Rosa 'Malvern Hills' was passed a few years ago, but now it would fail as, although the nursery is near the Malverns, it did not actually come from there. If they wanted to call a rose 'Cath Kidson' they would have to get her approval – and possibly from all other Cath Kidsons too. They may find that a daffodil had that name in the past, which would probably rule it out. They might find that later on another plant was too similar, as happened with the (old) *Geranium* 'Jolly Bee', which was thought to be the same as *G. Rozanne*. The whole process can become hugely expensive in lawyers' fees and time.

The real fun part is the “doing of it”. Charles Welch started with pansies. He observed bees pollinating the flower and saw how the flower closes after the bee deposits foreign pollen, stopping the plant from self-pollinating. He tried crossing two very different plants, a dark maroon and a yellow pansy, and got hundreds of different plants. Now he has a more refined approach. He gets a top-notch plant from a breeder and another great plant from a different breeder and crosses the two, so he is starting with winners. Then he may backcross some of the progeny with a plant with certain desirable traits.

He recommends starting with a plant you like and is easy, such as the sweet pea. It is always self-pollinated, so if you open the keel (the lower

petal which encloses the male (stamen) and female (stigma) parts, you can cut off the male parts and let the keel go back in position. Then the next day you can brush pollen from another plant onto the female parts. Hopefully seeds will develop which you can sow and see all the different types of seedlings that come up, and maybe cross the most promising back to another one – and so the process goes on. You never know, you might just breed a brilliant new blue rose.

Charles Welch's book 'Breeding New Plants and Flowers' (The Crowood Press, £14.99) is concise and easy to follow, and includes breeding of fruit, flowers, shrubs and vegetables.

This article is five years old: chuckleberry is now commercially available, see our Newsletter for April 2018.

PLUM MOTH

There is nothing better than the taste of a ripe plum, straight from the tree, and then as you take that first bite you come face to face with a small pink caterpillar (or even worse, half a caterpillar!*) Say hello to the larva of the plum moth, *Grapholita funebrana*. This particular little beastie is a known problem across mainland Europe but was rarely mentioned in this country until suddenly, in 2013, it appeared for the first time in the RHS top 10 list of garden pests. Since then it has been making itself at home and this year almost everyone I know who grows plums has had a problem. Even if you don't see the actual caterpillar, because it has already left the fruit, you may come across the brown gritty deposit around the plum stone that is a fun reminder of its toilet habits. Victoria plums seem to be a particular favourite of this moth but they can be found in any of the plum family, if it is a plum then it is not safe. The only comforting factor is that infected fruits tend to ripen early and drop so the later ripening fruits on the tree are probably OK. Of course if you are a thrifty Yorkshire man (or woman) you could just cut all the fruit in half, evict the caterpillar, and still use the fruit for jam or wine. Even the gritty brown bits add a certain something to the flavour, so long as you don't dwell on their origin.

Now I am all in favour of encouraging wildlife but I am also particularly fond of my plums and resent sharing them with caterpillars so it is time for defensive action. All the literature will tell you that this is a

particularly difficult pest to beat. The adult moths emerge anytime from mid May to July depending on temperature (It is claimed that they are most active in a temperature range of 18 – 25C). They find a mate, and the female lays between 2 and 5 eggs close to the stalk of the young developing fruits. When the caterpillar hatches it chews its way down into the fruit where it happily continues to gorge itself before tunnelling out and falling to the ground to pupate. The pupae overwinter either in the soil round the base of the tree or in crevices in bark until the weather warms up the following spring and the whole cycle begins again.

There are very limited opportunities to interrupt this life cycle but it can be done. Disturbing the soil around the base of plum trees in early spring can expose the pupae to foraging birds. Hanging bird feeders in plum trees over winter can also attract small birds who will enjoy picking the pupae out of crevices (blue tits are said to be particularly good at this). Covering the ground around the tree with barrier fabric has also been suggested as a method of preventing adult moths overwintering in the ground from emerging. Of course none of this stops the moths that have spent the winter in a hedgerow or your neighbours garden so the next step is to hang a plum moth pheromone trap in the tree. This contains a synthetic version of the pheromone from the female plum moth so amorous males will enter the trap expecting a good time and meet a sticky end. This disrupts the breeding process but it is not fool proof although it will alert you to the fact that the moths are on the prowl. One trap is sufficient for most average sized gardens and they should be deployed from about May onwards, depending on temperature.

Once you know that there are plum moths around there really isn't an easy way of protecting the small developing fruit that you can barely see. The RHS does half-heartedly suggest you could try a pyrethroid spray but what are you going to spray? Short of liberally dousing the entire tree in the stuff to prevent the females from laying their eggs which is not a realistic proposition. However, once the caterpillar has entered the fruit it is too late to do anything. But fear not.... I have a cunning plan!

In my former professional life I was involved in preventing mosquito transmitted infection. Research has shown that the presence of a mosquito net impregnated with permethrin not only protects the person sleeping under it but also acts as an insect repellent for the area immediately surrounding it. To put it simply insects avoid going anywhere near the stuff because it disrupts their nervous system. Permethrin spray for impregnating nets, tents and clothing can be bought from most outdoor

shops. It is colourless and odourless (to humans) and once dried on fabric will last for about 2 years or 35 washes.

Now this is the clever bit. The plum moth does not affect the fruit until all the pollinators have finished doing their work and the petals have dropped, they need developing fruitlets to lay their eggs, so this is the time to intervene. Draping treated net curtains round all my plum trees is just impractical but if a treated piece of cloth has a repellent effect for several feet around it then all I need to do is to spray an old cotton sheet with permethrin then once it is dry cut it into strips and hang several strips in each plum tree. Even if it rains it shouldn't be a problem because the treatment will continue to work through up to 35 wash cycles (or rainy days). With a bit of luck any female plum moths looking for a cosy place to lay their eggs will give my trees a very wide berth and go somewhere else. I will let you know.

Chris Simmonds

**Ah, so the joke about half a worm wasn't confined to the Fruit Novice's family! And we very much look forward to a report next autumn on whether this cunning plan worked. Ed*

EDIBLE HEDGEROWS

The Woodland Trust is giving away "edible hedge packs" to schools in parts of Scotland.

Although we are the *Northern* Fruit Group, this is probably out of our range, but enterprising members might like to try this at home.

The pack comprises eight metres worth of trees and shrubs that produce autumn fruit: rowan, blackthorn, crab apple, hawthorn, elder and dog rose, though obviously you could plant any length or combination that takes your fancy. You will have to be patient though, as it takes five to seven years before the 'edible' bit kicks in.

The free packs were inspired by Morayshire organic farmer Pam Rodway, who won an MBE for promoting sustainable food in Scotland. The hedge shelters nesting birds and provides blossoms for nectar-hungry bees, and then - the edible part - you can make jelly with the berries, which is said to be "tart-sweet and a wonderful deep ruby colour".

Here is Pam's recipe:

Pick 250g each of rosehips, sloes, rowan berries and haws, and 500g each of crab apples, elderberries and brambles.

Chop the crab apples, wash the fruit and put in a heavy pan with water to cover. Cook over a low heat stirring gently.

Hang in a jelly bag for several hours to let the juice drip out. Add a kilo of sugar for each litre of juice and boil rapidly until it sets.

From the Summer 2108 edition of Broadleaf, the magazine of the Woodland Trust (www.woodlandtrust.org.uk).

OLD ORCHARDS: SOME DETECTIVE STORIES

**Anne Lee diverts from the trail of Ernest Oddy's Old Orchard
Notebooks to talk about apple identification**

WHAT'S THIS APPLE?

If somebody presents you with an apple, asks you what it is and you haven't a clue, where on earth do you start? Which one of the 2,000-plus varieties in the National Fruit Collection might it be? Or is it one of the 6,000 named varieties known to have been grown in Britain and recorded in Muriel Smith's National Apple Register of the United Kingdom? Now there's a daunting thought!

Some time after I first met Ernest Oddy, The Great Northern Apple Challenge, held at Harlow Carr in 1996 was a real learning experience and what it taught me was that there is such enormous variability in apples, even among those from the same tree, I would never, ever be capable of identifying apples like 'Prof Apple' could.

Before Apple Day was established in 1991, the only national identification services on offer were at Brogdale or RHS Wisley, which required either parcelling up and posting specimens (and paying a fee for each variety), or visiting the plantations to try to make a comparison. As Ernest's reputation grew, he used to receive so many parcels of apples in the post that he had to have an arrangement with the Post Office for them to be left under the bushes in his garden. Every year his annual holiday would be spent in the plantations at Brogdale and Wisley with boxes of specimens he was investigating.

He was well appreciative of the help and cooperation of experts, particularly John Bultitude and Harry Baker. When he had verified an apple, he would immediately write the name on the skin with biro. Too often I think 'I'll be able to remember these when I get home.' Invariably I don't.

For many years R V Roger's has offered a consultation service at their display stall at the Harrogate Autumn Flower Show, or at their Apple Weekend held at the Pickering Nursery. Another opportunity for people to get apples identified used to be an Open Day held at Ampleforth Abbey's famous apple orchards. Invariably, before Ernest managed to put his foot inside the door, his appearance would be greeted with: 'Ernest! Ernest! What's this apple?' He could generally give an immediate answer, although he actually hated doing what he called 'spot identification', because it was too easy to make mistakes. He would insist that what he gave was only 'an opinion'. I recollect him saying to one woman who presented him with a basket of miserable little scabby green fruit: 'Nay, missis, can't thee grow nor better apples nor these?' 'Yes.' she replied emphatically, 'But we eat those.' 'Well, how d'you think I can identify 'em, unless you show me at least one good fruit?' (But we still comment on Prof Apple's amazing ability to recognise the rough, non-standard stuff.)

Ernest always said that every year before he started identification he needed to revise. The fruit varies in accordance with the conditions during its growing season. Even the position on the tree will affect the fruit's appearance - apples from the south-facing side or the top of the tree will have received more sun and be more highly coloured and better developed than those underneath the leaves on the opposite side. So many specimens may not be a characteristic 'norm'. From early September I go out and about collecting fruit for displays and doing identification at several Apple Day events: thus by the time the final event of the season is held at Harlow Carr at the end of October, I have 'got my eye in' - but have also acquired a boxful of queries.

Identification is not easy, but actually not quite as difficult as might be imagined. (Except everybody groans when Philip produces his obscure Lancashire pears.) Our late NFG secretary, Simon Clark, a botanist, was convinced that identification could be tackled scientifically. He assiduously compiled a computer database of the characteristics of hundreds of varieties. At Apple Day he was a familiar sight with his laptop, knife, chopping board, magnifying

glass, calliper and ruler. Ernest was sceptical: 'Nay, thee can't identify apples with a machine!' So 'The Machine' was what we dubbed Simon's computer. And indeed The Machine seldom produced a realistic answer, but sometimes gave us a clue. Its problem was with samples that deviated from the norm. Simon also ran identification instruction courses, teaching how to diagnose from analysis of the external and internal features. Hogg maintained that the only consistent feature of an apple was the position of the residual stamens in the tube below the eye, so after the apple is sliced vertically you have to judge where you think the stamens might be, before you can follow his key. I have never yet succeeded with it. In an orchard Ernest would line up his specimens in the grass and note the common features. He also considered the russet in the stalk cavity was a pretty consistent indicator.

How do I cope without Prof Apple? I usually try a process of elimination. Here follow a few tips - I trust you will excuse me sometimes stating the obvious.

1). Establish that the apple being presented for identification is actually an apple! Daft that is not! Surprisingly, the NFG's ID team have been asked in recent years to identify 'apples' that proved to be Chinese pears, Japanese quinces, Cockspur Thorn berries, and medlars. One fellow proudly boasted that he possessed a pear tree in his garden that bore apples - then produced them - apple-shaped bergamotte pears.

2). Is it a cooker or dessert? The vast majority of apples brought in are the ubiquitous Bramley's Seedling cookers, but unfortunately these come in all shapes, sizes, and coloured from dull green to ones covered with dark red stripes. Nowadays people seldom grow any other cooker, because the Bramley has proved to be so versatile for every culinary purpose. It is well-flavoured, large, looks good and can be stored, so no demand for any other now exists. The person presenting their apples may well be disappointed to be told it is a common-as-muck Bramley, when they think they've got a rarity, but I tell them that if grown well and organically, Bramleys are the best.

3). Be aware also that apples grown in the North can look very different from those from the South, where the warmer climate tends to produce more highly coloured, larger and more rounded fruit. Our

northern specimens might not look anything like some of those illustrated in books, such as Rosanne Saunders'. Examples are Golden Delicious, a French variety that needs a warm climate, and Newton Wonder. Conversely northern cultivars, such as Scotch Bridget, Keswick Codlin and Galloway Pippin appear to thrive better in our cooler climate.

4). Have the apples come from a tree that was purchased, or was it grown from a pip? Lots of people plant pips, but if so, it is a seedling (also known as a pippin). The problem then is that we can't identify it as an officially named apple. We won't find it in a book or on a website, because an apple grown from a pip does not grow true to its parent tree - it has been pollinated by another variety. People will bring along apples they have picked from a tree growing in the hedgerow alongside a road verge, where it is most likely that somebody has tossed a core out of a car window (ten-to-one, Golden Delicious). Since mobile phones became popular, we are often shown a photo of the tree. True 'named' varieties are raised by grafting a scion onto a rootstock and we would expect to see an obvious join on the trunk where the graft was attached.

Occasionally the rootstock will take over a grafted tree, because it is more vigorous. The fruits it produces can be quite nice-looking, but are usually inedible.

What are the chances of a seedling apple being a good quality fruit? Virtually nil. Although Cox's Orange Pippin and Bramley's Seedling were both seedlings, dating from about 200 years ago, nurseries constantly try breeding improvements on these and have never yet succeeded. Hundreds of trial trees get thrown out. Every season the RHS examines fruit submitted for naming, but most will be rejected and even those to which the committee gives an award may never enter commercial production. They also have to stand the test of time (Gala, from 1934, is an obvious recent survivor). Whatever happened to Merton Worcester and Merton Knave? They were once considered top quality, but seem to have disappeared.) The late Jimmy Beale had an apple in his Sutton-on-Derwent orchard he raised from a pip he'd planted as a child and which he considered top quality. When Jimmy was in his 80s, Ernest submitted it for naming, but it was rejected as being 'too similar to existing named varieties'. So Farmer Beale's Pippin is not officially recognised and you won't find it

included in the National Collection. (Another local seedling is Grandpa Buxton from Copt Hewick.)

Occasionally we have been asked to identify feral crab apples or cultivated ornamental varieties, such as Golden Hornet and a dark red one with an unpronounceable Polish name.

Over the years the NFG's ID team has examined fruit from old orchard trees that have been planted as recognised varieties, but that we are still unable to identify. To some of them we have jokingly ascribed our own names, such as Fred's Apple (from Fred Hirst's grandfather's orchard at Swillington, but it's a variety that has turned up as far apart as Whitby, Poppleton, Halifax, East Riddlesden, so it is not a one-off). There are two or three at Newby Hall that still defeat us and a pear we call Skipton Castle Cannonball (also found at Great Ouseburn), a very late, golden stewing pear ('Cannonball' because it is as hard as a rock and we joke that they could be used to defend the castle.)

At the Harlow Carr Apple Days, when I can't come up with an instant spot answer, I tend to announce: 'Beaten! Another seedling,' which is invariably greeted with derision by the other identifiers. Ann and David are notable for their refusal to give in.

5). Beware again! Even bought apple trees are not reliably labelled. In recent years people have been bringing in large, conical, dark-red apples and before they open their mouths we anticipate what they're going to say: 'You're going to tell us that you bought that tree as a Bramley at Aldi or Lidl.' These are continental supermarkets and in Europe people don't use sour cookers - their popular culinary apple is the dual-purpose Belle de Boskoop, which is what these are; but if supermarkets in Britain were to label them correctly, they would be unable to sell the trees, because people are used to Bramley being the only cooker. In 1999 I bought two Cox's Orange Pippin trees (reduced to £1 each) at the former Netto supermarket: they have proved to be Tydeman's Late Orange, which suggests that English Cox's don't thrive in Denmark. Even the most reputable suppliers make mistakes: at Newby Hall a dark red Spartan was bought as a Ribston Pippin: I guess the mistake arose because in the nursery the rows of trees they are raising are planted in alphabetical order and 'R' is next to 'S'.

[PS: Another warning! Last year I thought, 'Those lovely-looking Spartan would be great for Rachel to juice at Apple Day. I'll pick 'em.' I stood on an underground wasps' nest and a swarm of angry wasps

pursued me up the hill repeatedly stinging me inside my shirt. And take care also when picking plums - you can get hold of a delicious-looking fruit that is an empty skin full of wasps.]

6). You can to some extent eliminate what the apple is unlikely to be, especially if the tree has been recently planted. People generally want to grow the fruit that they know, love and trust and there is a limit to the availability of different fruit trees normally stocked by garden centres and supermarkets. Usually if you are looking at a green cooker it is unlikely to be anything but a Bramley and the dessert apples people put into their gardens are almost invariably what they know from the supermarket, such as Cox's Orange Pippin, Golden Delicious, Red Delicious, Braeburn, Jonagold, Granny Smith, Gala. I usually ask people if they know where their tree was bought. [However if purchased from Roger's, or a similar specialist fruit tree supplier, they have extensive catalogues including many traditional varieties.]

7). When somebody brings in fruit harvested from an old orchard, the ID becomes much more interesting. Even then, the Victorians and Edwardians had their firm favourites and nurserymen published catalogues and recommended lists. When he was researching an old orchard Ernest would anticipate finding 'the usual stuff' and only occasionally come across a rarity. (Having said that, Newby Hall's orchard, contains so much that is not 'the usual stuff', it proved to be a major challenge.)

Different varieties grown in Victorian times were each intended for a specific purpose and each had its own season, from early codlins to late ripeners that were put into storage, thus providing for the culinary and dessert demand throughout the year.

So after deciding whether a Victorian apple is a dessert or a cooker, we next determine whether it is early or late season. The early codlins that will cook to a fluff were used for dishes such as apple snow (mixed with egg-white meringue); those that 'fall' to a smooth puree were wanted for apple sauce, while chutneys and mincemeat used apples that stayed intact in pieces. I personally rate Norfolk Beauty as the best for baked apples and Gravenstein for juice. John Downie is grown for crab apple jelly.

In addition to Bramley, the popular cookers 100 years ago would have included Emneth Early, Keswick Codlin, Lord Derby, Warner's King, Lane's Prince Albert, Bismarck, Newton Wonder. Favourite

desserts in addition to Cox's might include Worcester Pearmain, Ribston Pippin, King of the Pippins, Allington Pippin, Lady Sudeley, James Grieve and Ellison's Orange. Popular dual-purpose apples were Blenheim Orange, Peasgood's Nonsuch and Charles Ross. A russet apple will probably be the favourite Egremont Russet, occasionally the brownish-green Brownlee's Russet. Partially-russet apples have their own classification as reinettes, Ribston Pippin and Ashmead's Kernel were well-known.

If we know that an apple is from a tree over 100 years old, that eliminates varieties that became popular a bit later in the C20th, such as Laxton's Superb, Laxton's Fortune, Lord Lambourne, Gala, Jupiter, Granny Smith.

8). There's a good chance we'll find a match for our unknown sample in the display that Margaret and her team have mounted and the reference collection that Linda sorts in trays in alphabetical order (about 250 varieties). Identifiers are frequently to be seen, apple in hand, walking slowly along the display and peering closely.

9). When given an apple we can't match with the display, then as a final resort we try looking it up in books, such as Robert Hogg's, *The Fruit Manual*, 1874; or Edward Bunyard's *Handbook of Hardy Fruits*, 1920; Taylor's *Apples of England*, 1946; John Bultitude's *Apples*, 1977, and Rosanne Saunders' *The English Apple*, 1988. The books include tables that sort the apples into categories describing their appearance (e.g. 'smooth green culinary'), their size and season, whether early season or late. The books I find most useful are Bunyard, because his descriptions are generally spot-on accurate, but unfortunately he didn't include pictures, and Rosanne Saunders', because her precisely accurate botanical paintings are better illustrations than Bultitude's photographs.

10). The final thing we do is cut our specimen open to examine the internal features, because by doing so you are destroying it, but there Bultitude's photographs have proved their worth many times. Nowadays we can refer to the NFC and Fruit ID -websites and they allow us to magnify the apples on screen and observe the finest details. These websites are developing into superb reference sources.

The very, very last resort is to taste it - what if you've eaten the apple and still can't identify it?

Note: At the Harlow Carr Apple event the NFG's identifiers work collectively as a team and in recent years have been joined by Jim Arbury, keeper of the fruit plantations at RHS Wisley, so we are fortunate we can consult an expert. Why not come along and join us?

Anne Lee

Refer back to page 7 for details of this year's Apple Event.

Member David Mitchell is looking for scion wood for several rare apples:

- Beverley Pippin
- Arram White
- Helmsley Market

If you able to supply some, or know where it can be found, please contact David on 01274 883418.

RECIPES FOR YOUR SURPLUS APPLES

If your apple stocks are outstripping your appetite for fresh fruit, here are a few recipes that might absorb some of the surplus.

Eve's Pudding is an old favourite, now rather out of fashion. For two people: Butter a nice baking pan. Chop into it one or two apples, and scatter with a little sugar if you think the apples need it. Make a sponge mix from 4 oz each of butter, sugar, and self-raising flour and two eggs, and spoon it over the apples. Bake at 180C, gas 4 for 20 minutes. For more people, simply multiply the ingredients. Best eaten hot, but also good cold, with ice cream, cream or custard. If you look on-line, you will find many variants of this basic recipe, including additions of spices or almonds, or using other fruit.

Here's my own personal variant, which I call **Serpent's Pudding**, because it's based on things going wrong. Follow the recipe above, but use plain flour instead of self-raising. I did this by accident, and thought I would

have a disaster on my hands, but the result was surprisingly pleasant, a sort of light biscuit crust, and I now make it from choice.

Nunnington Windfall Cake comes courtesy of the National Trust, who bake it for the cafe at Nunnington Hall, using fallen apples from the garden. It's easy and tasty.

250g self-raising flour
170g margarine
100g sugar
100g sultanas or raisins
340g windfall apples, peeled, cored and chopped
2 eggs
Pinch of salt

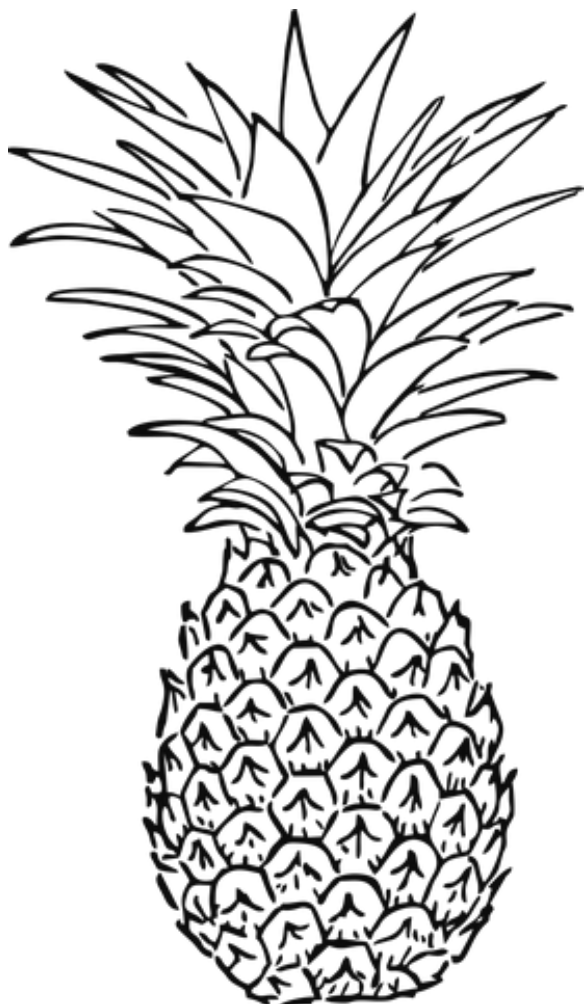
Mix all the ingredients together, and spoon into a greased 8 inch cake tin. Bake at 180C for about 50 minutes. When cold, dredge with caster sugar. Serve hot or cold.

FRUIT WE DON'T GROW: Pineapple and the introduction of exotics

The "*Fruit We Don't Grow*" column for this issue was to be about pineapples, but I got sidetracked somewhat by the introduction to them in my favourite fruit cookbook, which deals with the first growing of exotics in general into the UK, and I thought this might be of interest. Pineapples *per se* will appear in the January Newsletter.

At Ham House in Richmond there is a painting of John Rose, the royal gardener, handing Charles II the first pineapple grown in England. Such exotic fruits were among the first products of the 'stove houses', buildings heated by Dutch stoves, which were in due course replaced by steam and piped hot water, with brick walls and roofs gradually replaced by glass. Exotic fruits were grown for the delectation and at the expense of the landed gentry. The rich initiated a tropical English Eden in which pineapples, bananas, mangosteens, guavas, and passion fruit might be produced.

However, the pineapple presented to Charles II was by all accounts a poor effort and it took another 50 years before, in 1714, the gardener at Richmond produced a decent pineapple. This success pushed other landowners into a pineapple craze; they began to crown their gates and roofs with stone copies, while teams of gardeners beavered away at the real thing at ground level.



In 1779 the Duke of Portland's team raised no less than ten thousand pineapples in pots. When you consider that each pot produced just one fruit over a time period of two to three years, you have some idea of the labour involved: "the tan bark pits, dung-heat and steam-heat and oak leaves, the shifting and potting, the insects and the cleaning, you begin to see that pineapple production was an extraordinary battle between the English gentry and the English climate."

Quite soon, however - by the 1870s - steam ships had taken the heart out of so much industry and made the pineapple available to the middle classes, if not the working masses. Canned pineapples achieved that, after a fashion, and now every supermarket has pineapple - of which, more in the next edition.

Abridged from *Jane Grigson's Fruit Book (1982)*

AND FINALLY...

HOORAY FOR HOVERFLIES

Hoverflies can be very useful for anyone growing strawberries. A PhD project at East Malling Research in Kent has shown that one species can pollinate strawberries, something which has been unproven until now.

Two native species were tried and *Eupoedes latifascjatus* was found to be twice as effective as *Eupodes balteatus* at producing fruit good enough to be sold to supermarkets.

All you need now is a quick identification course on hoverflies, and some tips for enticing the right kind into your strawberry bed....



And very finally, as we are all dealing with surplus apples, a silly limerick:

The sad story of poor Jimmy Fust,
Who ate apple pie 'til he bust.
It wasn't the fru-it
That caused him to do it -
What finished him off was the crust.

That ends the Newsletter proper. The promised appendix giving the minutes of the 2017 AGM follows.

Summary of Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held 18th November, 2017, at Harlow Carr Jubilee Room. The Chair Lady, Hilary Dodson, opened the meeting by welcoming the 39 members attending. Apologies received for Sharan Packer, Paul Yashpon & Margaret Drury

1 Previous Minutes.

The AGM minutes were circulated prior to the meeting. Members gave approval with some small corrections.

2 Reports on NFG Activities.

Hilary briefly reported on 2017 activities.

Harewood work site is no longer available to us for health & safety reasons. All trees have been moved to Dewhurst Allotment work site. It may become available again at some future date. Dewhurst Allotments Five plum trees have unexpectedly died whilst carry a good crop. Hilary's Soft fruit trials continuing but some black currants removed to reduce overcrowding and transferred to Otley work site. Most trees have carried a good crop this year. New Otley Work site. A new work site has been found at Otley, the former site of a garden centre and has been partly planted up with trial trees and vegetables to establish ground fertility. A good crop of Potatoes & weeds so far. Rabbits are a serious problem, tree guards fitted to all trees & a fruiting hedge windbreak planned on the windward side to provide some shelter. All helpers welcome & members suggestions are wanted for the site design and for plants. Toilet facilities and shelter is available on site & cost for hire of ground is £200 per year. Grafting Courses Last years courses were fully booked. This year two grafting courses are planned for this February, dates and venues to be advised via the newsletter. They will likely be held at Hampsthwaite Memorial Hall. Apple Day. Apple Festival went well with around 200 varieties of fruit displayed. Sales of fruit, jams, juices and donations contributed £510. Apple ID enquiries numbered 114 with some 205 apple samples, many were Aldi & Lidl specials, only 23 samples needing further study. NFG Fruit Competition. Held at Hampsthwaite Memorial Hall this year, Competitor numbers & displays were reduced from previous years & there was little or no support from village residents. There were a lot more new members exhibiting for the first time. Shows. The shows we attended this year were successful financially but disappointing in regards to awards received. They were Harrogate Spring & Autumn, Great Yorkshire &

Tatton. Our show displays were very successful and more members helped this year on the stands and their construction than previous. Thanks were given to all help & contributors and all urged to do so in the coming year. The NFG plans to display at the same places in 2018. Harrogate Spring Show topic is to be “My Backyard”, contributions of galvanised Mop buckets Washtubs or Poss sticks are wanted for the display.

3 Guest Speakers.

Suggestions by members were requested for topics and speakers for future meetings. Today’s speaker was the Head Garden of Ripon Walled Garden.

4 Treasurers Report

The Treasurer Peter Robinson was unavailable to give the report and Hilary advised accounts provided by him for the 2016-2017 period. We had made a deficit this year but finances were still healthy. Figures as follows. Surplus in 2015-16 - £10703 Income for 2016-17 - £5278 Deficit for 2016-17 £1088. Surplus carried forward to 2018- £9615

There were some undefined extra costs for the new Otley work site. Also costs of £1070 for DNA testing of unknown Apples & Pears. The DNA testing is ongoing and more costs will occur in future. Other cost increases were for meeting room hire & Newsletter deliveries. Delivering newsletters by e-mail is our preferred method to reduce costs, non e-mail users will still receive copies by normal mail.

5 Membership update

The membership is fairly stable & stands with 438 members with single or dual membership, plus 6 associate society members. PDF versions of membership cards are being sent to those who chose to renew via email or bank transfers & this helps reduce postage & printing costs. Members without e-mail facilities will receive cards by surface mail.

6 Newsletter.

Our new Editor, Jean Richards, gave a summary of the newsletter over the year, getting good reports from members on recent issues, ending with the news the next issue was our tenth anniversary year of its publication. Also its our 20th years Anniversary, so something special is needed. Initial thoughts are to include previous years gleanings of newsletters that may be of interest. All contributions for anniversary edition is needed by 10th December.

7 Election of Officers.

Hilary advised a need for younger volunteers to replace our ageing committee members and specifically a Vice Chairperson to relieve her of some of the current workload & to stand in when she was unavailable for health or other reasons. No offers were forthcoming at this time. All committee members were up for re-election and a proposal was made to re-elect the entire committee. It was seconded and approved.

8 Any Other Business.

NFG New Website- Our difficulties with Clifford, the site owner of our old website, were unresolved and NFG has abandoned this and with help, have created a new one called “thenorthernfruitgroup”. It was going live this very evening and an online demonstration given to the meeting. It is still under development and members are asked to visit the site and view our offerings. We welcome suggestions to improve and add to it. There is also a link to our “Facebook” page where there’s lots of pictures of worksites, show displays, some fruit and members activities. The lady who provided us with the assistance in building the new website has been made a member in lieu of payment. DNA testing. Hilary gave a description of the DNA work done so far on apples and pears so far tested and on key features used for identification, commenting it is likely key markers will probably need increasing to improve result reliability.

Meeting closed at 2.30 pm and the invited speaker from Ripon Walled Garden was invited to take the floor.

My thanks to all contributors for their help in preparing this edition of the Newsletter. Ed

The next Newsletter will be circulated in early January 2019. All contributions welcome, to the editor please by December 10.
Please use our dedicated email address

Please visit the Group's new website:
www.thenorthernfruitgroup.com

If you would like to receive your Newsletter in electronic rather than paper form, please tell the Membership Secretary, contact details on page 2.



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