



SUFFOLK TRADITIONAL ORCHARDS GROUP

Newsletter and Workshop Programme Summer 2014

Programme of events

Date	Event
Sun 3rd Aug	Save it! Conservation event at Suffolk Owl Sanctuary 10am - 4.30pm Stonham Aspal, Stowmarket IP14 6AT. STOG will have a display of fruits and nuts. Thank you to our colleague Roger Fouracre who will look after the stand and accept fruit for future identification.
Sat 16th Aug	Summer Fruit Identification Day 10am - 4pm. Home Farm, Thrandeston IP21 4BL (near Eye). See below for detail and p. 16 for directions.
Sat 2nd Sep	Lukeswood ElmsWild Apple Day 12pm - 4pm Lukeswood, off Church Road, Elmswell. STOG will have a display of fruits and nuts. Thank you again to Roger Fouracre who will look after the stand and accept fruit for future identification.
Sun 12th Oct	SWT Foxburrow Farm Apple Day 10am - 4pm Saddlemakers Lane, Melton, Woodbridge, IP12 1NA STOG will have a display of apples, pears and other fruits and nuts. We'll identify fruit for you and Monica Askay will swap recipes.
Sun 19th Oct	Suffolk Wildlife Trust Redgrave & Lopham Fen Apple day 10am - 4pm Low Common Rd, South Lopham, Diss IP22 2HX. STOG will be there with a display of fruits and nuts. And again, Paul will identify your fruit and Monica will swap recipes.
November	Traditional Orchard conference. Venue and date to be arranged

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Summer Fruit Identification Day Saturday 16th August

We have usually seen plums and cobnuts at previous summer events, but some early apples and pears are ready mid-August. We hope to beat our record of displaying more than 40 varieties of locally grown plums, and 15 cobnuts. This will be just a quiet day focused on identifying your fruit, but Monica Askay will be on hand to discuss cooking plums and cobnuts etc., to swap recipes and may offer you a taste of something (black White Mulberries will be in season!). You can also walk round our footpath, watch some sheep, have a picnic or visit two nearby orchards. These have been planted within the last 20 years, one is on the footpath, the other a 2 minute drive away.

And now for something completely different

When all the frenzy of fruit harvesting and identifying is over and the clocks have gone back, on a Saturday in November, somewhere in Suffolk, to be arranged, STOG will hold its first **Traditional Orchard Conference**. Speakers will take a look at what we know about Suffolk orchards that we didn't know before the survey started, some of the new traditional orchards being planted, and guests from elsewhere in East Anglia will talk about their surveys and research. As soon as we have the details we will circulate them with a draft programme and list of speakers.



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Traditional Orchards – what are they!

Oddly enough, despite mentioning the “definition” of a traditional orchard when we are explaining how to recognise and survey them, we, STOG, have never dealt with this issue in a newsletter!

You can read about it in one of our Advice Notes, but here it is in brief. The fact is that the official definition from Defra is not widely accepted by ecologists or landscape historians, or even orchardists.

To summarise, Defra says that Traditional Orchards are, in essence:

Unsprayed top-fruit trees and nuts on large growing rootstocks set in natural vegetation i.e. grassland, which are in groups of more than 5 and whose canopies are less than 20m apart. Additional benefits that make them of greater “value” is the retention of dead wood in the canopy and on the ground, a preference for standard single trunked trees in grazed grassland, and the grass cut once a year.



A small old traditional orchard in the garden of a 1980's north Suffolk house. The trees date from the 1930's, some maybe earlier, and are in the garden of a row of 19th C cottages built by a local farmer (and also in this case the Rector) to house his farm labourers and their families. The 8 oldest trees include the old apple Hoary Morning, Bramley's Seedling, Blenheim Orange, the plums Pershore Purple and Yellow Egg, and an unidentified greengage. In flower here in April are an unidentified plum (in front) and behind, the characteristically upright growth of a Conference pear.

As the years pass this definition has been partially qualified to sound a little less like a late 19th/early 20th C west country cider apple orchard (which was quite clearly the original model), but it is still is very prescriptive. The definition matters because Defra uses it to define which orchards it will support with funding under farm stewardship agreements such as Higher Level Stewardship.



It also matters to those of us who can see that this may not be what orchards were like for millennia, nor does that definition fit many regional or local types of cultural landscape, and nor does it define the principle of what makes an orchard of high value for its wildlife. Perhaps the most extreme traditional examples that don't fit are the hillside damson "scrub" of Cumbria, and the multi-stemmed cobnut trees on their own roots in Kent. In Suffolk the nearest to Defra's tradition are the late 19th C cherry orchards in the Stour Valley.

In East Anglia the much more ancient farmstead orchards are largely a mix of whatever did best, cultivated in whatever way worked best, mixed up on a single site, in a variety of ages, species, cultivars and propagation methods. They fed the family and very local people, and weren't a 19th C invention to feed a city via the railway. Before the railways that was probably what most orchards were like throughout England.

As a result, apart from taking Defra's money (actually the EU's money!) and toeing the line to that extent, many traditional orchard owners today, mostly farmstead or old farmhouse owners, or those with a little land to plant five or more trees, take the more traditional viewpoint that orchards are what is practical, sustainable, long lived and of its time and place. Not a bad description of a cultural landscape!

There is one crucial character of old orchards planted before the early 20th C that has been with us since these fruit species were first grown here - the use of large-growing rootstocks for grafting (or planting trees on their own roots) - that Defra, its advisors, and everyone else, agrees. The use of short-lived dwarf and semi-dwarfing rootstocks, especially for apples and pears used universally since WW2 has no place in traditional orchards and will, unless addressed, result in a distinctive cultural landscape being lost within a generation.

Plum and Cobnut update

The plum disease Silver Leaf - In the last newsletter a note on silver leaf (the fungus *Chondrostereum purpureum*) mentioned why plums (and cherries) are pruned in summer not winter to avoid infection by silver leaf spores. The note said that some *Prunus* species are not susceptible to silver leaf. In general this is true. However, almost all *Prunus* species can be infected, but the tree rarely dies and can put up with a low level of infection and still crop well. We believe that this is probably true of cherry plums (*Prunus cersifera*) and bullace and damsons (*P. insititia*). Apples, almonds and pears have sometimes been diagnosed with silver leaf, and it seems likely that it can infect any woody member of the Rosaceae family. Rhododendrons too. In some regions of the world, silver leaf is so bad that pruning of all top fruit is done in summer to reduce the risk. There is even a case to be made to prune all top fruit only in summer.

Plum and cobnut harvest in 2014 - The plum harvest, at least in Suffolk, this year looks like being a bumper crop. Here at home Farm we have some plum trees that are old varieties that don't crop regularly, we think due to wet and/or cold weather during flowering reducing pollination activity by bees and hoverflies. This year's mild early spring has demonstrated that this is probably true – we will have more varieties for our Plum Day display than ever before (we hope).

Cobnuts flower early too and now, in early July, nuts are already very obvious and prolific on the sunny side of the trees, demonstrating the need for maximum light for maximum crop. Cobnuts should be cropped about mid-August, to eat "green". Before that, occasionally crack open a few nuts to test whether the nut has swelled to fill its shell.



Gypsy is a red skinned gold fleshed dessert or cooker recently introduced from the Ukraine and re-named Gypsy for sale in the UK. It's possibly a plum x cherry plum - it's always difficult to guess a plum's origins. A good crop, likely to cause some broken branches this year unless thinned.

The "June drop" has caused the loss of some fruit, but thinning plums by hand on a large tree is not at all easy. First to try is a good shake to branches - that will lose a few plums. To go further, a simple and satisfactory method is to cut these long fruiting branches in half reducing the weight, taking off some fruit and pruning the tree into a more resilient compact form for the future. It's best done before mid July while the fruit is still unripe to minimise damage to branches and junctions.

RECIPE IDEAS FOR CHERRIES

Monica Askay

Here are some recipe ideas for cherries ----- should the birds have left you any!

Jane Grigson in her "Fruit Book" gives a recipe for Cherry Brandy. I will definitely try it! It's the same principle as the fruit gins / vodkas I have written about in the past. It is best to use sour cherries such as morellos, or acidic dukes. Do not remove the stalks but cut them very short. Prick the cherries (like you would sloes) and place them in a jar. Add caster sugar, and top up with brandy. Seal the jar, and leave, turning from time to time until the sugar has dissolved, for several months (until Christmas?). Strain and bottle. Don't discard the soaked cherries. They can be used as the basis for a cherry pudding.

Alternatively try Cherry Gin or Vodka. Instead of pricking the cherries, just halve them and place them in the jar with their stones which will add an almondy flavour. Cherries do, in fact, go really well with almonds. Jane Grigson also suggests a Cumberland-type sauce made with cherries, to go with ham etc. She also suggests cherries pickled in vinegar with brown sugar, cloves, juniper berries, lemon and cinnamon.

Another thing I intend to try is cherry fruit leather ----- watch this space!



Sour cherries and dukes are best for cooking. Sweet cherries lack sufficient acidity. The French pudding clafoutis is a classic. It is a batter pudding studded with cherries. A Cherry Bakewell or Franzipan Tart / Cake would also work well. There is, of course, also the classic 1960s and 1970s favourite Black Forest Gateau. Dark chocolate and boozy cherries do work well together! Try adding halved and stoned cherries to Summer Pudding fruit or making a cherry Eton Mess. I think my favourite cherry pudding is a fresh summer fruit salad. I mix fruits such as sweet cherries, raspberries, strawberries, and pieces of nectarine. I then pour over a little amaretto (made not from almonds but from apricot kernels). I then leave the fruit salad to chill before serving. A real taste of summer!

July 2014

The STOG Buying Scheme

The considerable difficulty of obtaining trees grafted onto large growing rootstocks for planting in traditional orchards continues. In East Anglia just a handful of apple trees are grafted onto M25 each year for commercial sale by, we think, just two retail nurseries. No pears or cherries are grafted onto large growing rootstocks in the region. A few specialist retail nurseries elsewhere in England do graft apples and pears on large stocks. They are available online, but tend to be expensive.

The semi-dwarf or dwarfing rootstocks used by almost all East Anglian nurseries are not suitable for traditional orchards. Only some large growing triploid varieties tolerate growing in grass, and require the ground around their trunks kept bare, and so are suitable for garden cultivation only. These rootstocks are not permitted for schemes that are grant aided plantings under a Stewardship agreement, which specify M25 for apple, pear seedling stock for pears and cherry F12/2 for cherries.

Garden centres, without exception, sell apples only on MM106 and pears on Quince A, and cherries on Colt, as do East of England Apples and Orchards Project. EEAOP tell us they have no plans to sell trees on these large rootstocks. We think this is unfortunate; we already know that several community orchards that planted apples and pears on garden stocks now regret this.

Plums, gages, bullace, damsons and mirabelles are in a slightly different situation. The almost universal rootstock used in the UK is St Julien A. This is a vegetatively propagated greengage that makes a large

tree, and does well in a traditional grass orchard. It is not normally permitted for Stewardship funded orchards, but in eastern England it is widely given special consent. As a result plum trees are available from local nurseries, although the range of good varieties is very limited indeed.

Currently STOG propagates and gives away (and accepts donations for), about 350 trees a year, mostly of very rare or unusual varieties, grafted by volunteers trained on our courses. A proportion of this production goes to Suffolk Collections, and increasing this production would require more volunteer grafters.

For these reasons the STOG Buying Scheme began three years ago. It has facilitated the supply of nearly 2,000 trees in the last few years to orchards across East Anglia. It operates as a single buyer purchasing from (generally) wholesale propagation nurseries that supply trees (mostly bare root in winter) on these large rootstocks. Wholesale prices and carriage are paid by the purchaser to the Scheme organisation, delivery is direct to the purchaser and STOG requests a donation in exchange for the service. In essence, it is a version of an allotment society's bulk seed purchase.

The Buying Scheme will continue this winter, and lists of available fruit varieties rootstocks and tree forms will be available probably from August, with supply usually in January. This is not scheme for everyone planting a few trees – we think if you are buying 15 or more trees for a traditional grass orchard, especially under Higher Level Stewardship or its successor, then it may be of value. We can supply a more detailed description on how the scheme works as an email attachment from Paul at paul@home-farm.myzen.co.uk.



Orchard Biodiversity? Does that include the pests of fruit trees? Well...yes it does!

Silver leaf, the fungus that can kill cherry and plum trees; codlin moth larvae eating a tunnel through an apple; the plum pox virus; greenfly on everything; the sawfly larva that creates those russet brown scribbles on apples, they are all wildlife that contributes to biodiversity. As is the harmless green powder or orange fur on tree trunks, the algae that slugs graze on. They are also the lower end of a food chain that supports predatory insects, spiders, reptiles and birds. You saw the owl chick on SpringWatch being fed on slugs? You can see the food chain at work in an orchard every day; some are incredibly complicated, as is our attitude to them.

For centuries, even millennia, all pests were tolerated, or at least put up with, because there were no real alternatives until 19th C chemists discovered toxic chemicals that killed pests, and didn't seem to kill people (well, didn't kill them quickly enough to be important, or matter!). By the 1940's some truly awful chemicals were in use: lead arsenate, nicotine and lime sulphur could kill anything, and did...and were in time replaced. Then DDT (resulting in the demise of top bird predators), DNOC (a carcinogenic winter wash), and Aldrin (killed everything in the soil and never breaks down) went the same way, and before long neonicotinoids will too.

Some orchard sites are still toxic now. Just put "lead arsenate in orchards" into Google and see what the USA's orchard inheritance is to this day! No one wants to buy any old orchard sites in New York State!

We expect some small old Suffolk farm orchards were once given the same treatments, but we know that most were not sprayed with pesticides, or herbicides at all, or not much. We have asked owners of old farm orchards if they used to spray them, and only rarely is the answer yes. A reason why not may have been that the size of the traditional trees on full size rootstocks made the job incredibly messy and expensive (and probably sometimes lethal). Another was probably the tolerance that most rural populations had to somewhat imperfect

fruit that came from their own trees....and tasted better than those from the shop....

It seems that in rural Suffolk fruit trees in gardens were the main fruit trees sprayed, and probably still are today!

The illustration is from the 1936 edition of "*Modern Fruit Growing*" by W R Seabrook, a commercial apple grower, and apple breeder, in Essex. From the 1920's to 1933 he piped insecticide sprays into his orchards via permanent

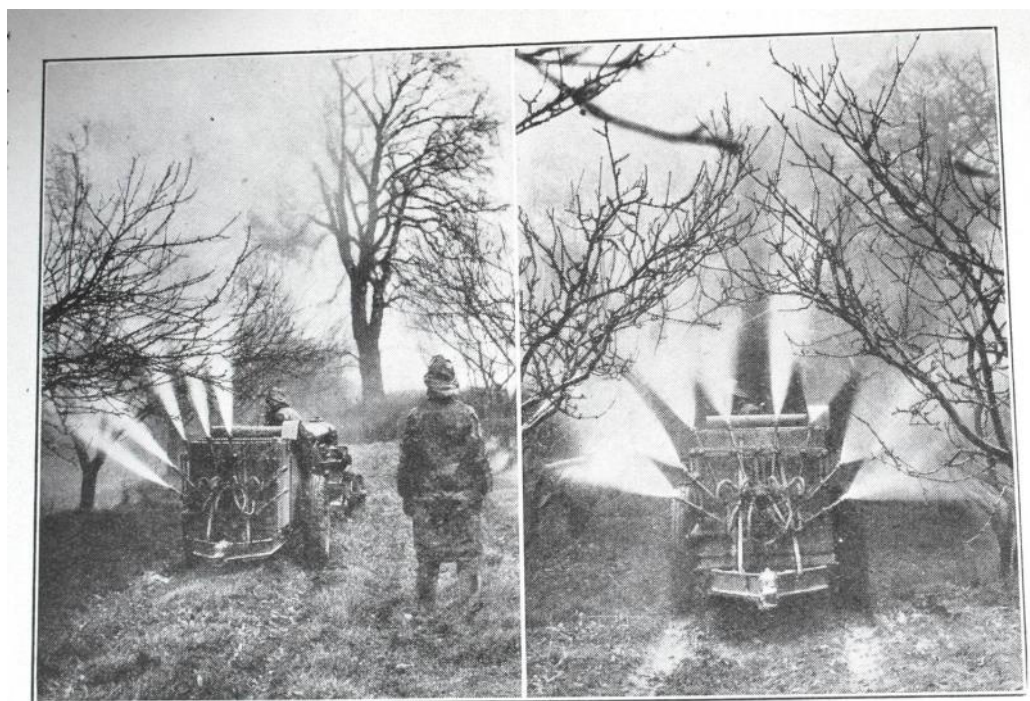


FIG. 33.—FIVE NOZZLES AT 500-600 LB. PRESSURE. FULL BATTERY OF EIGHT EMPLOYED.



steel pipework to make it easier to spray as many as 10 times in a season. Later he invented and sold these mechanical sprayers to spray lead arsenate dust, nicotine and tar oil wash. He supplied his men with gas masks (cost 6/- each) when they sprayed lead arsenate dust, but otherwise for wet spraying he advised a so'wester, as in this photograph. His book makes terrifying reading! Undoubtedly until the mid-60's some Suffolk commercial orchards - Kelsale, Charsfield, Braiseworth for example - were similarly treated, but it seems that small farmstead sites weren't sprayed in this way, or only spasmodically.

So first, animal pests

The situation in a traditional orchard with no chemical control is complex. The seasons, weather, temperature, amount of light and shade, and the presence of predators drive the ecosystem, with occasional major, dramatic, sometimes cataclysmic, effects from man - cutting the grass, strimming back brambles, pruning a tree, shooting rabbits or lighting a fire.

This spring was warmer than usual and the rains were not far enough apart to cause drought so the growth of groundcover and orchard trees was earlier, faster and greater than usual and the bees and hoverflies were out pollinating early. So were the eaters of leaves and suckers of sap.

Plums in particular this year were attacked early (apples and pears were less affected it seemed). One leaf eating plum moth attacked almost every plum tree in Home Farm's orchards as the leaves were opening, and by mid-April almost all the leaves were eaten down to a triangular section still attached by the leaf stalk. A week or so later the caterpillars were gone, eaten by birds or pupated in the ground. These were the Plum Leaf Moth. Had we sprayed the trees we would almost certainly have missed them and three

weeks later the new growth of leaves would have appeared anyway. New research (from an Austrian team) suggests that apples, and other trees, give off complex gases when their leaves are damaged by being eaten. Birds, especially tits, recognise the scent and this attracts them to the tree to feed. In May plums had another invader, this time aphids that cause the leaves to curl up which protects the aphids.



If you pull open these curled up leaves, you'll find that a large proportion have maggot (not unlike a brown blowfly maggot) inside as well as aphids. This is a hoverfly larva that eats aphids (the tiny white speck on its back is a sucked out aphid skin! Many of these rolled leaves will also have a hole pecked in them where a blue tit, attracted by the leaf's damage-induced attractant, has eaten both aphids and hoverfly larva!

This year some orchard owners have reported to us that the new leaves on young



trees, planted a year or so before, were infested with aphids this spring. We have experienced the same problem for some years and have suggested checking to see if the protection tube has an ant's nest! The ants farm aphids and fend off aphid predators like hoverflies. In some cases we have found ants' nests filling the tube up to a metre in height with fine soil. If you remove the soil in the tube the ant nest very often is not remade, and the ants no longer protect the aphids and the predators can get to work.



Here is a young apple (left) whose aphids were protected by ants nesting in the tube until April this year. The problem was discovered and the tube removed in early May and replaced by this netting tube. The close up (right) shows the new leaves are now growing normally; there are no aphids. (Netting tubes for very young trees have their own problems, as the side shoots grow through the mesh, but at least they don't support ant nests.)

Where Green Woodpeckers are common (as in one of our orchards in Thrandeston) ant nests in solid tube protectors are regularly targeted for their ants, even broken into pieces by the birds.

And then disease

A few fruit tree diseases seem not to be something that can easily be put up with today. Their effect on the tree and its crop can be dramatic and fundamental. Some may have originated and evolved their major effect in large dense commercial plantings. Others may have been minor diseases in related species which escaped into new environments with more susceptible species, as the fungus Ash Dieback, *Chalara fraxinea*, is thought to have done.

Perhaps the most serious for us is Plum Pox Virus (PPV), also called Sharka disease, especially its PPV type D strain.



SYMPTOMS OF PLUM POX VIRUS

Photo: Biologische Bundesanstalt für Land- und Forstwirtschaft Archive, Biologische Bundesanstalt für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Bugwood.org

Plum Pox Virus, a tutorial in historic economic botany

The symptoms of Plum Pox Virus (PPV) can be seen in the illustration above. It is a very nasty virus (especially PPV type D) distributed by aphids, and over long distances by the transportation of propagation material (for grafting). It can go undetected for years until its symptoms show. Defra's National Fruit Collection in Kent has PPV and cannot now supply any *Prunus* species wood for propagation, and may never be able to again! As it affects all plums, damsons, gages, almonds, cherries, apricots, and peaches (over 1,000 different cultivars) it renders the National Collection effectively useless as a source of any *Prunus* graft wood.

PPV is not transferable by seed, but seed can't be used to propagate a clonal cultivar. It is thought that the only protection in the long run is to breed new varieties with resistance to PPV, using genetic engineering to insert the relevant gene from a resistant species, but that, so far, is conjecture, and it would be a phenomenal task to repeat several thousand years of human selection! It is a world disaster, PPV is now on every continent; all over Europe by 1970, in USA by 1999. So far it hasn't been found in Suffolk (or it's here and not recognised). Remember also that the genus *Prunus* exists in all our woods and hedges as wild cherry, sloes, bullace etc. and in most suburban streets as flowering trees (and is the basis of slivovitz, the national drink of the Balkans).

On the other hand, if it is everywhere and the trees don't die (and they don't) maybe if this or something like it had occurred in the past the crop would have been tolerated for consumption until a few resistant cultivars progressively transferred their genes to new seedling plum varieties and were selected as a crop. Or maybe plums were grown from seed extensively (as we know greengages were until living memory) and that kept these aphid transmitted viral diseases in check. If so, these diseases may only become disasters because of the way we run cultivation today.

Discuss!



SOME ANGLO-SAXON INSPIRED IDEAS FOR FRUIT DISHES

Monica Askay

Last week I was involved in an Anglo-Saxon project. Although there are no surviving cookery manuscripts from this period, we do have some idea of what people ate, and how things were cooked, from a number of sources. These sources include medicinal and other texts, and archaeological evidence.

There is a collection of modern recipes based on this knowledge, written by Mary Savelli. In her book “Tastes of Anglo-Saxon England” (available at West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village near Bury St Edmunds), she gives a couple of interesting recipes for spreads to be eaten with bread ---- Apple Butter and Pear Butter. Both recipes call for the fruit to be cooked in apple juice or cider (perry would be a good idea for the Pear Butter), and then pureed and mixed with runny honey and black pepper. The Apple Butter is then mixed with chopped mint and ground cumin, the Pear Butter with ground cinnamon. The latter goes really well with roast pork and would be equally good with roast goose. It is definitely worth a try and another use for those hard cooking pears!

Some years ago I did an event on Viking food, which is very similar to that of the Anglo-Saxons. I devised a recipe which has become a favourite of mine. I halve and stone the plums and cook them with honey dissolved in a very little water (plums do exude a lot of liquid as they cook so take care only to add a very small amount of water) until tender. They are then served with buttermilk.

I hope to go into more detail about Anglo-Saxon foods, and tree fruit and nuts, in the next newsletter.

July 2014

Note re spices: Some spices such as coriander and fennel seeds grew here. Others such as pepper, cinnamon etc. came from the East and would have been very expensive, particularly when spice routes were disrupted between the C5th and late C8th. Spices at that stage were only for the wealthy. The spice trade then revived, and English merchants travelled to continental trade fairs. Mainz became the centre of Western spice trade. Most spices were then still for the wealthy although pepper became cheaper and would be used by small manorial landlords. Spices would also have been available to monasteries, both for culinary and medicinal use.

We need some help on a number of projects.....

Polstead Black and Captain Palmer

There is a cherry variety called **Polstead Black**, thought to have originated at Polstead or at least known to have been grown in Polstead and nearby parishes, but we are having some difficulty in identifying what it is, what it is not and what trees in and around Polstead still exist. We think a effective method of trying to sort out this tangled story may be to form a small group of people who would like to help us disentangle the conflicting facts. A good example of this is that old descriptions state the season of sale for Polstead Black was in August (the time when Morello cherries are ripe) whereas the two trees in the National Collection are ripe in mid-July. So please tell us if that's something you would like to do, and we will arrange a meeting to look at all the information we have from the NFC archives and other and visit trees in the area.



This is the formal photograph of Polstead Black in the National Fruit Collection archives.

Below are two items from the archives. On the left is the letter sent by Edgar Milne-Redhead (a well-known retired botanist) with budwood he sent for propagation to one of the curators, dated August 1992. On the right is the description of the fruit the graft produced in July 2002. The additional notes by the botanical recorder (who is still at the NFC!) says: "*Limited published description for a nondescript small black cherry. No real flavour, vey juicy and dark. Crops heavily. Looks more like typical rootstock fruit. Stone quite large for size of fruit.*"

4th Aug 92
Dear Mr. Ellis,
Here are 3 cuttings from a
very old tree of Polstead Black cherry,
growing in the grounds of Cherry Tree
Farm, Polstead, [Suffolk], Colchester
Zone, COB.
The names are Mr. & Mrs. J. S.
Coulson.
If there are not satisfactory, please let
me know.
Yours sincerely
Edgar Milne-Redhead

MR E. MILNE-REDHEAD
MATTHEW GREAT HOPWESLEY
COLCHESTER COB. ASH
TEL: 0206 271816
FAX: 0206 271182

Received
5/8/92

Cherry Verification Score Sheet

Variety Name: Polstead Black
Date: 16 July 2002
Name of Scorer: P. Hale

	Old Cherry Collection	New Cherry Collection
Row and tree number		1619
Date of fruit harvest		16/7/02
Skin colour		8 - blackish
Pit and shape		2 - flat
Stalk length (in mm)	1. 6 2. 7 3. 8 4. 9 5. 10	1. 50.7 6. 68.2 2. 49.0 7. 50.7 3. 60.3 8. 41.6 4. 49.5 9. 62.5 5. 52.5 10. 52.7
Fruit weight (in grams)	1. 6 2. 7 3. 8 4. 9 5. 10	1. 2.6 3 2. 2.7 3 3. 2.8 3 4. 2.9 3 5. 2 10. 2
Flesh colour		5 - dark red (black)
Flesh firmness		3 - soft
Juice colour		5 - purple (black)
Is the new tree the same as the old tree?	YES	NO
Confirmed by		

Limited published description for a very non descript small black cherry. No real flavour, vey juicy and dark. Crops vey heavily (looks like typical rootstock fruit). Stone quite large



Then there is an apple called **Captain Palmer**, known to have acquired its name in the area around Tibbenham in South Norfolk around 1900, and once apparently grown commercially for sale in local markets, presumably Diss. An apple has been sold under this name for maybe more than 20 years, originally by Ranworth Trees and briefly by Foundry Nursery of Hempnall (some of these were undoubtedly not Capt. Palmer) and today by EEAOP.

Several apples that seem to be similar have been brought to us at SWT Redgrave and Lopham Fen apple days from as far south as the Stonhams. They are definitely not the same, but are said to be Capt. Palmer. They all have some resemblance to the apple Harvey – large yellow, slightly sweet, dual use, five crowned and with the season of eating October to December. One from Tibbenham Long Row some years ago, appears to be one type and the second, very recently from Tibbenham Long Row, is another.

If you have what you believe is a tree, more than 20 years old, that you think may be Capt Palmer, we would very much like to know. Please contact Paul!

MORE MULBERRIES

Monica Askay

After my introduction last summer to the delights of the mulberry, I await this year's season with much anticipation!

There are a number of things I plan to try. Mulberry Gin / Vodka is a priority. It is made essentially using the same method as Sloe Gin, but is rather less labour intensive. The fruit is placed in a kilner jar or similar, some sugar added (the quantity will depend on sharpness of the fruit and personal preference ---- I prefer it less sweet so perhaps 3oz), and gin or vodka poured over. The proportions are roughly 1 lb fruit to 1 pint spirit. Turn the jar from time to time until the sugar has dissolved. Leave out of direct sunlight for at least 3 months. Then strain and bottle. The Gin or Vodka can be used as the basis of a Kir or Kir Royale-type drink. Just place a small amount of the Mulberry Gin / Vodka in a wineglass. Top up with dry white wine or sparkling white wine. Cheers!

I also plan to try versions of popular summertime puddings. Mulberries would make an interesting Eton Mess. Just combine berries which have been sprinkled with a little sugar until the juices start to run, with lightly whipped cream (take care not to overwhip the cream or it will split), and lightly crushed meringue. For some years I have been making variations on Trifle, using different fruits etc. I intend to try a mulberry version. The trifle sponges will be spread with mulberry jam and soaked perhaps with a mixture of raspberry liqueur (or in future years Mulberry Gin) and orange juice. Mulberries will then be placed over the soaked sponge, and covered with a layer of vanilla custard, followed by a layer of lightly whipped cream (no jelly or hundreds and thousands, I'm afraid!).

I shall report back on my experiments....

I am not sure how my mulberry cuttings are doing. My patio has been subject to great upheaval this year due to decorators and heating engineers and I fear my precious cuttings in their pot, although moved to safety, may well have been casualties!

June 2014



MORE RECIPE SWAPS

Monica Askay

Following our experiences last year we will be repeating recipe swaps at our fruit days this year. These will take place at the following events (for details see Events p. 1)

Saturday August 16th Plum and Cobnut Day, Home Farm, Thrandeston near Eye

Sunday October 12th Apple Day, SWT Foxburrow Farm near Woodbridge

Sunday October 19th Apple Day, SWT Redgrave and Lopham Fen

Please bring your favourite orchard fruit and nut dishes for others to try, along with copies of the recipe to swap. It is a great way for people to get new ideas and try different flavour combinations. Lots of new ideas for using that glut of fruit! As before we also welcome any recipes sent in so, as last year, the swap will continue on-line.

USING DRIED APPLES

Monica Askay

At a recent talk for Westerfield Gardening Club, Gen was asked about the use of dried apples. These notes will give you some ideas and will apply both to apples you have dried yourself, and those you have bought dried. Dried apples for sale take various forms. Dried apple rings available some years ago were very dehydrated and could not be eaten without soaking. Those now available can be eaten straight from the pack as a snack. Extremely dehydrated apples are also available sporadically in apple crisp form, making an interesting snack / unusual accompaniment to drinks.

I am assuming that we are not talking of fruit leathers and biffins, both of which have been described in previous STOG newsletters, and are delicacies eaten on their own.

Apples you dry yourself, most efficiently with the use of a dehydrator, can be in slices, rings or spirals. How much soaking they need, will depend on how dry they are, so you may need to do some experimenting. Very dry apples would need to be soaked overnight. Once soaked they can be cooked in the same way as fresh apples are ----- as an apple puree, as apple sauce, in casseroles, in pies, crumbles and charlottes.

In "We'll Eat Again", Marguerite Patten gives wartime instructions for drying apple rings using windfalls (note the imperial measures). Wash the apples, then core and peel them. Cut out any blemishes. Slice into rings about ¼" thick. Steep the rings for 10 minutes in water containing 1½oz salt to the gallon (stops apples oxidising and turning brown, also starts the drying process). Thread the rings on sticks or canes to fit across the oven or spread on trays. Dry very slowly (temperature no higher than around 75C) until they feel like chamois leather. Turn once or twice during drying. Pears (and plums) can be done in the same way but must be cut into halves or quarters and spread out on trays.



I think my favourite way of using them would be in a spiced dried fruit compote. This makes a good breakfast dish, or with alcohol added, a good winter pudding! I would soak the apples overnight in weak tea. Pears can be used in the same way. (Semi-dried fruit would not need the overnight soaking). The next day I would then add other semi-dried fruit such as prunes, figs, apricots etc. Zest and juice of an orange or lemon is a good addition. Add spices such as cinnamon stick and star anise. Stir in brandy, Armagnac, or better still cider brandy / calvados, or ginger wine. If made with ginger wine, this is delicious served with a syllabub flavoured with ginger and lemon:

1 lemon, ¼ pint ginger wine, 1 or 2oz caster sugar to taste (ginger wine is rather sweet), ½ pt double cream
Mix sugar, lemon juice and strips of lemon peel, and ginger wine and leave in the fridge overnight. (For an added ginger “kick” add a small piece of peeled fresh ginger root.) Strain the wine mixture into a mixing bowl. Add the cream and whip the mixture to form soft peaks (take care not to overwhip it). Serve in a decorative glass bowl, or in individual glasses.

This recipe is a variation of that for “Everlasting Syllabub” from “National Trust Book of Historical Recipes” by Sara Paston-Williams. The original C17th recipe is made with lemon and white wine or sweet sherry and is flavoured with rosemary. It is a recipe that lends itself to many variations.

June 2014

STOG AT THE SUFFOLK SHOW 2014

We were lucky enough to be offered a stand in the Floral tent and enjoyed meeting some of our surveyors, existing members and some new members. Thank you to the Suffolk Show for this opportunity!



The STOG stand at the Suffolk Show May 2014: Monica about to dispense STOG quince vodka!



Monica, Gen and Paul on the STOG stand at the Suffolk Show



Stop Press - latest on seaside apples!

More Minsmere apples!

Our volunteer surveyor, Sarah, has continued to walk round Minsmere and in late April / early May this year, when the apple blossom was out and could be easily seen, discovered yet more, and not just tiny seedlings or stunted, salt burnt little things, but at least one really large apple tree. This is buried inside the thicket of bullace immediately south of the sluice, close to the landward side of the seawall. She realised it existed because a branch with flowers peeked out of the centre top of the bullace, and she fought her way in find the main trunk. There has always been some discussion about a garden in the past and if there are any fruit we can see if it is a known variety (or an entirely new “pippin”).



Those of you who visited our stand at the Suffolk Show would have seen this updated version of Sarah's map (right of display) which included her discovery!

As soon as we can, this new map, now with 14 trees, will be available online as an Advice Note and as a triple fold map that can be printed and taken with you on the walk.



The future of STOG – life after a grant! Is another grant?

A message from the Chairman

Suffolk Traditional Orchard Group was born out of the Suffolk Traditional Orchard Survey, started by Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership to survey the old orchards of Suffolk in 2009/10 as part of a national project undertaken at county level. It only took a year for us to recognise Suffolk's enthusiasm for planting new orchards and a wish to know more about their history and their fruit. So we applied for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to satisfy some of that need under the project title "**New and Old Orchards for Suffolk**". This opened for business in November 2011 and its three year funding ends on 1st Nov 2014. Already plans to extend our remit with another grant are in hand, and we will keep everyone informed of how that progresses.

The last event of the current project is the **STOG Traditional Orchard Conference** planned for November or December 2014, to be arranged after the flurry of autumn apple days (see the events calendar).

A major event we have already committed ourselves to is to host the Ancient Tree Forum's Annual 2-day Conference in June 2015 with an emphasis on old orchard trees as well as other old trees. Some of our members are already members of this group; subscription to their newsletter is, like ours, free, and you can see more on their website, <http://www.ancient-tree-forum.org.uk/ancient-tree-forum/>. Our next newsletter will have more details. This will be in partnership with UEA's Landscape History Group.

Although STOG's regular funding ceases this November, and you may notice a fall-off in some of our activities, that may only be temporary. Many things will still happen - orchard surveying, identification, some training, grafting and the Buying Scheme - and we plan to be back with renewed, and hopefully extended, ability soon.

Directions to Home Farm, Thrandeston IP21 4BL

From the A140 travelling north from Needham Market turn left, signposted **Thrandeston**, just after the Eye Airfield Industrial park. After 100m turn left, signposted Thrandeston again, and pass one farm on the left to a gateway just before the Satnav says "you have arrived". It will be signposted **STOG**. Park on the grass, and walk to the barn. If you come south on the A140, the turning off is first right after the Brome Grange Best Western.

Next newsletter due : autumn 2014

Contact us

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