



# SUFFOLK TRADITIONAL ORCHARDS GROUP

## Newsletter and Workshop Programme Summer / Autumn 2013

### EVENTS

**THE TROUBLE WITH SUMMER IS.....** that running events and courses in August is when our members who said they would like to come **INSIST** on going on holiday!

Well, of course they do.... Its holiday season and school holidays and so events now are bound to be poorly attended and that is why **try** to avoid this period. Unfortunately for us all the best plums are ripe in August, and by mid September the squirrels and jackdaws have eaten all the cobnuts. We still went ahead with the visit to the cobnut plats in Kent on the 10<sup>th</sup> August with just 6 of us, but the visit to the National Fruit Collection meeting at Brogdale, Faversham, Kent will be re-arranged to an autumn visit when most of you would really like to come. We won't see cobnuts and plums, but apples, quince and pears instead! We will send out this information separately later.

The budding course is scheduled for almost the last Saturday of the year on which budding is likely to be successful – we actually start some budding during the 2<sup>nd</sup> week in August.

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### Programme of events

Date	Event
<b>Sat 17 Aug</b>	<b>Plums &amp; Cobnuts Day, Orchard Barn, Ringshall, Suffolk. Open to all - please come along!</b>
Wed 21 Aug	<i>"An introduction to the identification of summer-ripe tree fruit varieties"</i> , a one day course, at Thrandeston, Suffolk. <i>Contact Paul Read</i>
Sat 31 Aug	<b>Autumn Harvest Festival</b> , Wandlebury, Cambridgeshire (STOG providing fruit identification). Open to all.
Sat 7 Sep	<i>"Propagation of fruit trees by budding"</i> , a one day course, at Home Farm, Thrandeston, Suffolk. <i>Contact Paul Read</i>
Sat 21 Sept	<b>Farnham Common Orchard Day</b> , Bucks, (STOG providing fruit identification) Open to all.
Sun 6 Oct	<b>SWT Foxburrow Farm Apple Day</b> (STOG providing fruit identification) Open to all.
Sat 12 Oct	<i>"An introduction to the identification of tree fruit varieties"</i> , a one day course, at Thrandeston, Suffolk. <i>Contact Paul Read</i>
Sun 13 Oct	<b>SWT Redgrave &amp; Lopham Fen Apple Day</b> (STOG providing fruit identification) Open to all.
TBA	<b>Little Ouse Headwaters Project Open Day</b>



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## DETAILS OF STOG EVENTS

### ***"An introduction to the identification of summer-ripe tree fruit varieties"***

**Wednesday, 21st<sup>st</sup> August 2013**

**Venue** Thrandeston Village Hall, near Eye  
**Cost** Free

#### **About the day**

This course will look at all varieties of fruit ripe in summer, principally plums, sour cherries and cobnuts (and maybe early apples) and their identification. This will take place in Thrandeston Village Hall with a short excursion to a nearby farm orchard with a range of fruit.

**To book** Please email [paul@home-farm.myzen.co.uk](mailto:paul@home-farm.myzen.co.uk)

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### ***"Propagation of fruit trees by budding"***

**Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> September 2013**

**Venue** Home Farm, Thrandeston, near Eye  
**Cost** Free

#### **About the day**

This is a new course and has been arranged due to popular request. However, the weather will be critical as this is usually carried out with rootstocks previously planted out in the open. The course will take place at Home Farm where a range of rootstocks is already growing in the ground. The budded plants will stay there for another 15 months before being transferred to a final site, but we hope that those who attend will be able to eventually retrieve the plants they have budded. More details later.

**To book** Please email [paul@home-farm.myzen.co.uk](mailto:paul@home-farm.myzen.co.uk)

### ***"An introduction to fruit tree varieties"***

**Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2013**

**Venue** Thrandeston Village Hall, near Eye  
**Cost** Free

#### **About the day**

This course will look at all varieties of fruit ripe in October and throughout the winter, principally apples, pears and quince (perhaps some late damsons and bullace) and their identification. This will take place in Thrandeston Village Hall (near Eye) with a short excursion to two local farm orchards with a range of traditional fruit trees.

**To book** Please email [paul@home-farm.myzen.co.uk](mailto:paul@home-farm.myzen.co.uk)

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**Courses  
arranged as  
required**

***"Surveying Traditional Orchards in Suffolk"***, a one day course, arranged depending on demand, for new (and existing) surveyors who volunteer to survey the orchards in their parish. *Contact Paul Read*

**A new event we are attending is the Harvest Festival at Wandlebury Ring, Shelford, Cambridge, 11am—4pm on 31 August 2013.** We plan to have a display of summer fruit and nuts and also to identify the fruit and nuts brought us; and Monica will have some interesting tastings and be operating her experimental recipe swap scheme.

## **STOG RECIPE SWAPS**

With Food Safety Notes

At this year's various Plum and Apple Days we are putting on something new. As part of the events we will be organising recipe swaps. These will take place at the following events:

- ◇ August 17<sup>th</sup> Plum and Cobnut Festival, Orchard Barn, Ringshall
- ◇ August 31<sup>st</sup> Plum and Harvest Festival, Wandlebury Country Park, Cambs
- ◇ October 6<sup>th</sup> SWT Apple Day, Foxburrow Farm
- ◇ October 13<sup>th</sup> SWT Apple Day, Redgrave and Lopham Fen

What will this entail? The idea is for people attending the events to bring their favourite orchard fruit and nut dishes for others to try, along with copies of the recipe to swap. It will be a great way for people to get new ideas and try different flavour combinations. Lots of new ideas for using that glut of fruit! We shall also welcome any recipes sent in and so the swap will continue on-line.

Apologies if the following points seem obvious. Please don't let any of this put you off sharing your favourite dishes!

There are a number of food safety issues to be aware of when preparing and transporting your dishes. These involve taking steps to avoid cross-contamination, and temperature control.

- ◆ Please ensure that knives and boards etc. used for raw meat are not then used, unwashed, for cooked / ready-to-eat items.
- ◆ Regular hand-washing is important before and after handling food items, after touching rubbish etc.
- ◆ Food stored in the fridge should be stored below 5C.
- ◆ High risk foods e.g. containing meat / poultry / fish should be cooled as rapidly as possible after cooking and refrigerated within 1.5 hours.
- ◆ Store and transport food covered.
- ◆ Transport refrigerated foods in cool bags / boxes. (Cool boxes will also be provided for storage at the events.)

We shall provide boards, knives, serving cutlery, and assorted anti-bacterial wipes and gels, as well as disposable plates and cutlery.

The above has been discussed with my local Environmental Health Officer. Do please contact me if you have any queries.

We look forward to tasting your dishes!

Monica Askay  
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# Fruit Leathers!

*Monica Askay*

There are 2 possible definitions of Fruit Leather, one of which has played a large part in our culinary heritage and one which has not!

I now have quite a collection of books of old recipes, and books on preserving from different periods. In my researches to date I have only come across a very few references to fruit leathers.

Dorothy Hartley in "Food in England" quotes a 1700 recipe for Quince Comfits (which survive today as fruit pastilles) which requires the mixture to be as "stiff as candied fruit leather". I have also come across Fruit Leather used as a synonym for Fruit Marmalade (see the Marmalade article I wrote for the January 2013 Newsletter). I assume that these are both the same and that candied refers to the fact that it is preserved by boiling with sugar, which a marmalade was. The method, to refresh memories, was to cook the fruit to a pulp, with or without liquid (depending on the fruit used), and then pass it through a sieve extracting any peel and pips / kernals etc. The pulp would then be weighed and boiled with equal weight of sugar till very thick. It would then be poured into a shallow mould and then dried, either at room temperature or in a stove (obscure equipment in C17th, providing heat such as that of a modern airing cupboard) or in an oven. It would then be packed in boxes, or kept in its mould.

Marmalades or fruit pastes (seeing a resurgence - fruit pastes made from various fruits are now available from delis) are part of the same tradition as Fruit Butters and Cheeses. A Fruit Butter is usually potted like a jam and is spreadable. It does not contain butter! The fruit pulp is cooked with 8-12oz sugar per lb of pulp. A Fruit Cheese is much thicker and is closer to a Marmalade / Paste. It is poured into an oiled mould to set. It will keep in its mould for a couple of years. For use it is un moulded and sliced. Once un moulded it will need to be eaten as quickly as possible. The pulp is cooked with 1 lb sugar to 1 lb pulp.

The other references I have come across are to the a different type of Fruit Leather, which is the type I shall be concentrating on here. This is a confection which can be made just from the fruit pulp, although sugar, honey, or other sweeteners may be added to taste. This is a form of drying fruit. Although early (prehistoric) fruit preservation would have been drying in the sun it seems to have survived in our culinary heritage only as fruits dried whole, halved, quartered, or sliced, depending on the fruit. There are many recipes for fruit to be dried in this way, usually in an oven or stove (see above), sometimes with sugar, sometimes without. (Some of these recipes are reminiscent of the Biffin, see April newsletter). There are no recipes in which the fruit is pulped (either raw, or after cooking) and then dried without being boiled with the sugar. It would seem to me that drying fruit in the sun would need a more reliable climate than ours and would very much be in the culinary tradition of countries such as South Africa.

I have come very few examples of this type of Fruit Leather in this country. It is pulped fruit, spread in a thin sheet and dried slowly. The result is a very concentrated and very thin flexible sheet which can be rolled. Common Ground's "The Apple Source Book" suggests that it can be used formed as cones or rolls to contain ice cream etc. It can, however, be rather chewy so perhaps not a good idea for the more insecure dental crowns! Suzie's Fruity Bits (!) are products available to buy. There is also a recipe by Pam Corbin in "River Cottage Handbook No 2". This is for Blackberry and Apple Leather, and gives variations. There are several recipes, however, on the Internet, mostly originating in America, some from universities. The advantage of making your own is that you control the ingredients - fruit used, amount of sweetening, types of flavourings etc. Fruit Leather can also be made using dried fruit - "*The Brogdale Stone Fruit Recipe Book*" gives a recipe using dried apricots and peaches.



This week I have made 2 fruit leathers. The first was Bramley Apple with Cinnamon, the second Damson (last year's damsons, from the freezer). Pam Corbin suggests drying the fruit in the oven at 60C for 12 – 18 hours. One of my attempts took rather longer! The Bramley was very wet. I also put it on 1 large baking sheet - smaller quantities dry faster! It took 28 hours! The Damson mixture was far less wet, and the quantity rather less so it fitted on 1 small baking sheet. It took 16.5 hours. It is a long time for the oven to be in use and may not be an option for many. The other option is to use a Dehydrator if you can gain access to one.

Here is a Fruit Leather recipe to try. You can use any fruit, whether top fruit or soft fruit. Sweetening is to taste, depending on the sharpness of the fruit used. You could even try savoury leathers, for instance mixing sharp apples with tomatoes and flavouring with celery salt.

1kg fruit  
Juice of a lemon to prevent fruit discolouring  
Honey to taste (optional)  
Spices / Flavourings (optional)

Prepare two 24x30 cm baking sheets by lining them with baking parchment.

Preheat the oven to 60C.

Prepare fruit according to type ie peel, core and chop apples, halve and stone damsons.

Put fruit in a pan with the lemon juice (I used lemon with the Bramley but not the Damson). Add flavourings (best to use ground cinnamon rather than cinnamon stick). Cook gently, stirring frequently, until the fruit is very soft. Next, pass the fruit through a fine nylon sieve, or a mouli. Stir in honey to taste (if using). Spread the fruit pulp thinly and evenly over the 2 baking sheets using the back of a spoon. Place in the oven and leave for 12 – 18 hours (or longer!) until the puree is dry and easily peels off the baking parchment. I switched the oven off at this stage but left the fruit leather in the oven till cold.

Roll the fruit leather sheets in fresh baking parchment and store in an air-tight tin. Pam Corbin suggests that it will keep approx 5 months. Other sources suggest varying keeping times from 2 – 4 weeks to years! Storage by freezing has also been recommended but I am not sure how this would affect the texture long-term.

This is a good time of year to experiment with different fruits and flavourings. Please share your experiences with us!

## SUMMER TREE FRUIT

Nowadays we tend to associate summer with "soft fruit"; strawberries, blackcurrants and raspberries in particular, a rather odd phrase as many tree fruits at this time of the year are just as "soft", and have been largely forgotten in recent years – in some cases because the trees that bear them can be rather large and don't suit the suburban garden.

An example is the range of mulberries: there are two species that have been grown in England for centuries: black and white mulberries. And apples can be eaten from late June onwards, pears from July. And figs. It's just a question of planting the right variety. Sour cherries were also widely grown in Suffolk and they must have been far more common than they are now.

### BLACK MULBERRIES (which are dark red!)

The **BLACK MULBERRY** (*Morus nigra*) is a dark red intensely juicy slightly acid cluster of drupelets (a bit like a blackberry) on slow growing wide spreading trees with characteristically rough heart-shaped or fingered, palmate, leaves. These large self-fertile trees produce fruit from late July to the end of August, often erratically and rarely as large crops, despite the size of the tree. They are so soft and fragile they





do not travel well and need to be eaten raw or made into something immediately (ice cream for example), and may never have been sold in markets in England, but always kept for use by the tree owner. They are worth growing - if you have the space and patience and the tolerance of poor years (2012 was a very poor year for all mulberries). The oldest clonal variety available is called **Chelsea** (after the Chelsea Physic Garden where the original tree still grows) or **King James I** (who thought his staff were importing white mulberries in the C17th to feed silk worms but instead it was Black Mulberry brought in from France). It is also very likely that the tree was already here! In Suffolk they are almost always in large old gardens; only one appears to have been in an orchard with other orchard fruit.

### **WHITE MULBERRIES (which are often black ....or white or dark red!)**

The **WHITE MULBERRY** (*Morus alba*) is just as much a misnomer as the black. Its fruits are consistent from tree to tree, but vary from jet black to reddish to creamy white and some never change from pale green here in England, and so it is imperative to obtain a good clone. It has shiny very smooth leaves. Many trees in Suffolk are seedlings, and some were planted in the belief that they are black mulberries; in the Thornham walled garden are two trees that sadly produce insipid small pale green tasteless fruit. However, if you can locate a proper clonal selection the results can be rewarding (and as all species of mulberry cuttings pushed into the ground in autumn will usually have rooted by the spring, no complicating grafting is needed). The most frequently found forms produce jet black fruit when ripe, travel well and are extremely prolific and fall off the tree when ripe (just as well as old white mulberry trees are huge). They suffer from two major problems; blackbirds love them, and the fruit fall on the ground when ripe and stain the ground purple for several weeks attracting everything that likes fruit, including badgers, rats, muntjac and voles and, it is reported, hedgehogs. The best black White Mulberries can be eaten raw (excellent with muesli or cornflakes) or used as blueberry alternative in muffins and sponge and upside down puddings; the only preparation needed is to remove the green stems by hand. They do not have the intense juiciness of the black, are more meaty, and have less acidity. There are some named black varieties brought in from eastern Europe and India recently available from nurseries, good ones are **Pakistan** and **Agate**. Our best at Home Farm is one propagated from a tree in a small orchard in Oakley, Suffolk (no longer there) and is highly productive. This winter we plan to propagate from it. There are several nice white varieties, Paradise is one, but we haven't found these in Suffolk (probably because they are recent introductions).

### **RED MULBERRIES (except that some are black...or white!)**

In America, *Morus rubra*, the American Red Mulberry, has been crossed with *M. alba* to produce fruit that is red, black or white. These are not available in the UK. The only trees we know of in Suffolk are all probably the hybrid variety **Illinois Everbearing** with dark red-black fruit with a good flavour although a little chewy, but producing a crop more or less continually from end of July to the end of September. **Ivory** is a white fruited hybrid.

Mulberries have been grown in England for centuries, yet they appear in orchards only as the black *M. alb* and never commercially. In southern Europe, the near and middle east and India they are widely grown; *nigra* to eat fresh and *alba* for both fresh and as dried fruit (available from some shops near



Now....we know they are good to eat fresh from the tree with muesli, but what else can you do with them? Please let us know!

**Monica:** *"What about ice cream / sorbet? Or a fruit coulis? Or include them in a Summer Pudding or mixed berry Fruit Salad?"*

**Paul:** *"Yes, apparently Jen does put black White Mulberries in summer puddings, but I am not always aware they are there! She tells me one has just gone into the freezer to await a family filled house one weekend which has gooseberries for the juice and mulberries as whole fruit...."*

*Apparently the last one had mulberries too, but the blackcurrants flavour was dominant, so I didn't notice!*

*We have also just had a very pippy, but delicious, Summer Pud made with mixed black, white and red currents. Fine if you don't mind swallowing all the pips. I remember that the bog man from Tolund was found preserved in the peat with his last meal of seeds intact and still identifiable in his stomach - clearly he didn't chew his pips!)*

*Today the lawn under our white mulberry is strewn with black mulberries, and even the blackbirds are sated!!! "*



**Top left :** A 30 year old black fruited white mulberry *Morus alba* in a Suffolk garden, over 8m high, producing well over 20kg of fruit each year (most of which is eaten by birds). Probably not an particular variety, or could be a selected seedling. We think here are many more white mulberry trees than back mulberries in Suffolk, and many more than we expected to find, so we are about to start to propagate the best clonal forms.

**Centre:** The black fruit of the white mulberry and the characteristic shiny hairless leaf.

**Bottom left:** Ripe fruit, partially ripe and completely unripe fruit are present together so the tree produces a crop continually over many weeks.







# SUFFOLK ORCHARD SURVEY UPDATE

Gen Broad

## Survey timeline

**2009** : The Suffolk survey began using a map prepared by Suffolk Biological Records Centre from the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition OS maps (1903-1920's). This has revealed about 6,000 historical sites across the county, many of which are tiny. From the survey work completed to date, about one sixth of these old sites appear to still have recognisable orchard trees; the rest are now part of gardens or have been built over, others are more or less abandoned. However, some old, grown-over orchards have been sensitively restored and some new orchards have been planted with traditional varieties and managed without sprays. The People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) used aerial surveys to identify possible orchards in Suffolk, old and new.

**2011** : STOG bid successfully for a 3-year Heritage Lottery Fund grant to find out how many of these really are orchards and to discover more about their management and history.

**2013** : **We need you!** We're looking for new volunteers to join the growing band of existing surveyors to help in this exciting survey to reveal the nature and extent of Suffolk's orchards. We use maps showing the orchards from the early 1900s, the current OS map and the PTES potential orchards and ask people to 'ground-truth' these orchards in their local area. The results will be reported and mapped to the benefit of communities and the county as a whole.

*A huge Thank You to all our volunteers!* We've completed surveys in 30 parishes to date: Barking, Beyton, Bottesdale, Brome, Burgate, Corton, Dalham, Denham, Earl Stonham, Framlingham, Framsdon, Grundishburgh, Hartest, Helmingham, Henham, Higham, Middleton, Oakley, Ramsholt, Redgrave, Rickinghall, Shottisham, Sotherton, Stonham Parva, Thurston, Ufford, Wangford, Worlingworth, Wortham and Wyverstone.

I am in the process of writing to everyone who has, at one time or another, volunteered to check the orchards in their area to check if everything is going well or if they need any support. If you've started a survey and got stuck, if you expect to finish soon, or if you now find you're unable to continue, I'd be enormously grateful if you could let me know. We have nearly 150 surveyors on the books, so it's taking a while to write to everyone.

I am very grateful to the many people who have responded. Some have confirmed that they are underway with their survey; others do not have the time, so we will be re-allocating those parishes; and some people have requested revised maps and survey packs to bring their information up to date.

These 150 people are covering about 200 parishes. Since Suffolk has over 420 parishes in total, we have some way to go!



Elmswild Orchard Group (Elmswell) at an open day

**PLEASE JOIN US TO FIND OUT MORE  
ABOUT SUFFOLK'S ORCHARDS!**





## NORFOLK BEEFING

Norfolk Beefing is a very odd apple from many viewpoints. When you take it off the tree in late October it's hard, flushed a rather unpleasant purplish black, and eaten raw, its greening flesh is as tasty as a deal plank and much the same texture. Cooked, it holds its shape, doesn't puree and tastes only marginally better. Indeed dried, said to be one of its uses, it can't compete with almost any other dried apple in flavour.

By mid-May the apple looks like a lump of polished old oak, dull bronze and ochre, with sometimes a dark-dark red splash, actually quite handsome. The odd damage such as a bruise or a peck mark seems not to have had any further effect; it does not even rot! Eaten in May, the flesh has whitened and has faint apple-ish overtones and is just a little sweeter...and it stays like that for many more months.

And yet....this variety has so much history and literature behind it that it is still widely grown, new trees are easily obtained, but when we ask, no one admits to liking, or even using it. The fact is that the flavour changes with a long slow cook. Monica's biffin's are definitely a step forward on any I have tried before, but her Black Cap's move us into a new experience, they are not beautiful, but they are absolutely delicious (see Spring newsletter).

And some fruit are uninteresting, even unpleasant, to eat raw, but are transformed by specific cooking processes. This is known to be due to chemical reactions taking place with and between the complex sugars, acids and aromatic compounds in fruit. The old plum **Yellow Egg** is bland and unexciting raw; true **Damsons** are astringent and acid and no one would eat them raw; yet as single variety jams their flavours are strong, instantly recognizable and desirable. Several large culinary pears from Suffolk are no more interesting than Norfolk Beefing raw, but are transformed by roasting, others by long poaching in red wine.



By the way...other apples with Beefing in their name (like Striped Beefing, Hereford Beefing etc.) are quite unrelated and do not behave the same way in terms of keeping or cooking or taste.

Here are my Norfolk Beefings in May, taken off the tree at the end of October, stored in a box in a frost free location outside, dully gleaming like a well polished oak desk!... before Monica used them to make Black Caps.



## SOUR CHERRIES, MORELLOS, AMARELLES, AND DUKES

More about these cherries. To remind everyone....the first three are all general names for the *Prunus cerasus* varieties. Sour cherries and morellos are all quite acid when first red in late spring/early summer (and not liked by birds) and slowly develop more sweetness, usually becoming darker red in August or even into September, depending on the variety (when birds eat them avidly).

They can be grown and harvested without any protection as long as you pick them before they are attractive to birds. They were once grown in gardens all over Suffolk, often in large quantities, and more evidence is coming to us. In about 1900, National Trust Ickworth House's walled garden orchard had 49 "morello" trees along a west facing brick wall. Several small short-trunked trees in Thornham turn out to be sour cherries and we are told of single trees being found in farm orchards, especially in south Suffolk. As some of the varieties called **Morellos** are more or less self-fertile that would have been a distinct attraction in a mixed site.



*Prunus cerasus*, the Sour cherry is a native of central and eastern Europe and is the cherry used for cherry brandy, kirsche, maraschino, glacé cherries and of course fabulous open tarts.

This photograph of Morello B (we think!) was taken on August 4<sup>th</sup>. Almost any cherry still on the tree at this time, or later, will be a sour cherry; that is how we look for them!

Notice the end of this shoot has been chewed. Birds don't eat them yet, but they are low trees and muntjac (and in this case sheep) are very fond of them!



The different cherry species are difficult to tell apart, except by taste and leaf shape. On the dish are sour cherries; on the table are two sweet cherries, *Prunus avium*, the native British tree, almost always eaten fresh as they are almost universally disappointing and bland when cooked.

In Scandinavia cherry pies are made with sweet cherries and almost always flavoured with cinnamon and cardamom.

An essential piece of equipment for cooking cherries is the cherry (or olive) pitter!





## APPLES IN JULY AND AUGUST

At one time in Suffolk the most expensive apples one could buy were the first to be sold each year, in early August. A few might have been sent to market around the end of June, in particular a variety called White Genetting, or Joannetting, or ....June-eating.

Almost everyone has heard of **Beauty of Bath** (thought to be a seedling of **Juneating** of about 1850) delicious at its best (for about one day), routinely sent up to London by train in a basket to fetch the highest price, but it was well known that all the apples fell off the tree in a single night just when they should be picked!

Other early apples competed with Beauty of Bath for the prize position, Gladstone, Miller's Seedling, Irish Peach and others. The two common early apples here after WW2 were **George Cave** (the harbourmaster at Dovercourt), still very widely grown and **Scarlet Pimpernel**, until recently grown in south Suffolk. Scarlet Pimpernel's original name was **Stark's Earliest**; discovered on a roadside in Idaho, widely distributed, including to Notcutts Nursery in Woodbridge from Stark's Nursery in Missouri. It was extensively planted in Suffolk. STOG propagates this variety from the last stand of commercial trees (we think) in Stoke by Nayland.

Two events changed everything. First the introduction of the apple **Discovery**, in a garden in Essex in the 1940's by the Suffolk apple nurseryman Jack Matthews who gave it its name. Picked in mid-August it will last until late September or even longer if cold

stored, and is a **very** nice bright red apple. The trouble with early apples is that they are often rather small, so as apples grown all over the world are sold in England why bother with early English apples at all? Taste a **Scarlet Pimpernel** or a **Discovery** at their best, ripe, straight off the tree and you will know why.



The apple Scarlet Pimpernel picked off the tree on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2013, and ready to eat. They haven't coloured as much as they do in some years. In the USA it is called Stark's Earliest but that wasn't a very attractive name so it was changed to sell it in England!

## AND ONCE AGAIN, QUINCE

At the Wildlife Day at Holywells Park Ipswich a week or so ago I admired two magnificent quince trees in the orchard. We need to identify them from the fruit this autumn, but they may be the very ancient variety Portugal. So now back to the subject of a past newsletter that has fascinated a lot of our members....





The Ranger of Holywells Ranger (Peter Locke) standing in the shade on one the hottest days of the year. Behind him stand the two quince trees in the orchard.

Remember **marmalade**, **membrillo** and **quince** in a previous newsletter? I had questions suggesting that the word **marmalade** was an alternative for the word jam, so I thought I would add something from my trip to the Spanish-Portuguese (the Sierra de Francia) border in May this year.

Spain's quince recipes are based on **membrillo**, the Spanish word for quince which we in England use for the solid quince "cheese" they eat for breakfast. Actually in Spain all sorts of membrillo conserves are made - the one we call just membrillo, the firm brick like one is **carne de membrillo**, a clear jelly is **dolce de membrillo** and a smooth firm opaque jam is **Crema di membrillo**. I did notice as we were buying a block of "artisan made" carne de membrillo in a market there were several makes and sources just listed on the cardboard price board as "membrillo".



*Carne de Membrillo* made with just fruit and sugar. Some "artesano" versions are made with fruit only and are sold by weight in markets cut from a large slab.



*Dulce de Membrillo*, a jam consistency made with all the additives you expect to find in jam, including preservatives, E numbers etc.



*Crema de Membrillo* in separately wrapped spreadable segments made with all the additives plus added Vitamin C!

In Spain (and in many countries from Greece to Norway) the term **marmalade** or its derivative (including **mermelada**, Spanish) is any jam not necessarily quince. So, just across the border into Spain **mermelada de ciruela** is greengage jam and **marmelada de manzana** is apple jam, a particular feature of the apple-growing Basque country and Navarre. In England, **marmalade** was almost uniquely used for jam made with the bitter Seville oranges (which do still almost entirely come from Portugal and southern Spain). Only quite recently did someone “invent” **onion marmalade**.

In Portugal quince is **marmelo** and their word for a conserve made with it is **marmalada**. This is virtually identical to the **carne de membrillo** sold in Spain. I doubt if this is the full story but it's what we bought, and our Spanish and Portuguese friends have told us.





Portuguese *Marmelada*, made with *marmelo* (quince), and a load of preservatives, but artesan versions made just with fruit also exist, as in Spain).



Spanish *Mermelada de manzana*, apple jam.

Made in Navarre, the label is in Spanish; as this is in the apple growing Basque country, versions in Basque also exists.

## AND NOW – SNIPPETS

### Eat your own cherries!

Another Item we are following up is how to have cherry trees, and get to eat the cherries instead of feeding the birds.

It involves putting a very simple easy-to-use transparent bag over the cherries while unripe and then they ripen inside. They don't rot off, they do ripen and the bags do keep the birds away. Old systems used paper bags and the certainly didn't work! Again I have seen three different systems and they do seem to work!

### *Jazz age hits sales of our traditional apples as customers turn to fruits from New Zealand* MAIL ON-LINE, Sunday August 11th

*Sales of traditional British apples are being pipped to the post by a crisp, sweet interloper from the other side of the world.*

*As home-grown favourites such as Cox's Orange Pippin and Granny Smith decline in popularity, shoppers cannot get enough of Jazz apples from New Zealand, whose sales are growing faster than any other variety.*

To read the article click [here](#)





## EARWIGS

Everyone I know (well almost everyone I know) thinks earwigs are a pest. Indeed they are on strawberries, but they are also (as an entomologist told me yesterday) the pigs of the insect world – omnivores that eat anything.

They eat succulent leaves and flowers (famously *Dahlias*), decaying plant material, but also fungi, and any other small animals they can manage, especially aphids, in particular, to take them back as food for their young. So at East Malling Research (a fruit research company and charity in Kent) there is a project to evaluate earwigs in orchards as a potential biological pest, and fungus, control on fruit trees. Yesterday I saw a scheme that could catch them on the strawberries and dahlias into a housing system they liked, and transport them to fruit trees for them to protect! No kidding, and very simple! I have the pictures! This is for another Newsletter, but we will try it out right now! The project at EMR still has a year to run and we will be following this sophisticated biological control idea.... to see if it works.



**Next newsletter due : autumn 2013**

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