



THE FRUIT GROUP NEWSLETTER

No. 43

August 2010

Fruit and the Weather a tale of two extremes

340mm of rain in North Wales in July
5mm of rain in parts of south east England.

How has the extreme weather affected your fruit this year? Please send me your regional reports and let's see what we can learn from the vagaries of the British Weather

Photograph, right, shows Fay's Prolific redcurrant, July 2010, in the dry south east of England.



Soft Fruit Special

On page 4 Alex Deadman gives a summary of the talk he gave at the Fruit Group meeting at Wisley on 24th March 2010. It is full of hints and tips about getting the best from your soft fruit.

This interesting feature is followed by an account by Tony Gentil about a meeting of a Mid-Cheshire gooseberry club.

Finally, we have a brief report on fruit at the Summer Fruit & Vegetable Competition at Tatton Park.

Europom

As we announced in the last FG Newsletter (#42, February 2010) Europom is being held for the first time in the UK and it will be at Wisley. It takes place from Thursday 21st to Sunday 24th October 2010, in conjunction with the Taste of Autumn event, with Sunday 24th October for the Europom lecture day. The RHS Fruit Group is planning to stage an exhibit with FG members available to talk to UK and overseas visitors, and to promote the RHS Fruit Group. But all of this will take some organising. John Beswick is asking for help from members to provide material for the display and spend some time on the stand. Please see page 8-10 for more information about Europom and page 10 for John's contact details.

Fruit Group Events 2010

Wisley, 24th March

After a cheery welcome and update from our Chairman, Gerry Edwards, Fruit Group member Alex Deadman gave a fascinating talk on 'Growing currants, gooseberries, strawberries in Malvern'. An account of the gooseberry part of this talk can be found on pages 4 & 5. His stories of dealing with mistletoe (apparently a significant problem in the Malvern area) and his secrets for getting the best from strawberries will have to wait until a future Newsletter. The second half of the meeting was a 'Fruit Growers' Question time' with an all-star panel of fruit growing experts – Jim Arbury, Harry Baker, Gerry Edwards and Adrian Baggaley. The questions, raised by FG members, were many and varied. This was such an interesting meeting that I intend to share the questions and answers with members who could not attend. Unfortunately there is not enough space in this Newsletter to do them justice, so I intend to publish them in full in a future Newsletter. Editor.

Garden Organic, 14th July

It was a real pleasure to be able to spend a full day at the Garden Organic site at Ryton, near Coventry. We were the guests of our own vice-chairman, Bob Sherman, who is the Director of Horticulture for the Garden Organic organisation. After a welcome and orientation talk from Bob, we were split into two groups: one group, led by Head Gardener Andy Strachan, visited the fruit collection, to look at a wide range of top fruit and soft fruit grown using organic methods of management.

Of particular interest was the demonstrable effectiveness of a raspberry beetle trap which mimicked a giant raspberry flower and attracted beetles into its inner chamber and dispatched with them humanely. Just one trap seemed to have kept clear an area the size of a tennis court, containing several rows of raspberries, loganberries and other cane fruit that would be susceptible to damage from raspberry beetle larvae. On the strength of this demonstration at least two FG members (myself included) have bought a raspberry beetle trap for our own gardens. The second group was led by Deputy Head Gardener Sam Green, and we were taken on a tour round some of the 32 separate areas of the Ryton gardens – each demonstrating different organic approaches to growing fruit, vegetables, flowers and herbs. At lunchtime the groups swapped leaders for the afternoon session, so that we all had the chance of listening and learning from the two expert leaders.

But lunchtime was not a time of rest – we were treated to a talk and presentation on 'Bacterial Canker of Stone Fruits' by eminent plant pathologist, microbiologist and horticultural scientist Dr Steve Roberts. A report on his presentation and findings about bacterial canker is planned for the next FG Newsletter, but if you would like to find out more, please look at his website www.planthealth.co.uk

Another highlight of the day was the tastings of currants – black, white and red – organised by Clair Cowie. Also a special thanks to Webbs Garden Centres who now run the shop and restaurant at Ryton, for their generous and useful gift of a pair of secateurs to each Fruit Group member who attended. Editor.



The Garden Organic Team, left to right: Clair Cowie, Andy Strachan, Steve Roberts, Bob Sherman, Sam Green



Fruit Growing for Strength and Stamina

Congratulations to Fruit Group Chairman Gerry Edwards, who together with Team HAWKS, Steve Lee (pictured left) and Graham Tomlinson (centre), and 27,000 others, cycled from London to Brighton, over 50 miles in the blistering heat of June this year. Gerry aims to raise about £900 for the British Heart Foundation, and you can help increase this figure by making a donation. If you feel you can make a donation, no matter what, please visit <http://original.justgiving.com/gerryedwards1> where there is a very efficient procedure for making donations.



Here, the children from Namanyanga school in Malawi have a fruit tree planting lesson. Photograph: Seeds for Africa



On the subject of fund raising, I am pleased to announce that £151.00 was raised by members who added a donation when paying their membership subscriptions for 2010. This has gone towards fruit trees planted as part of the Seeds for Africa campaign.

For more information please look at their website www.seedsforafrica.org

Don't forget that at all Wisley meetings there is a chance to meet with other members before the meeting proper begins. Come to the Hillside Events Centre from 12.30 onwards for some refreshment to meet other members, swap ideas, and 'talk fruit' with other enthusiasts.

Growing gooseberries for flavour

Fruit Group member **Alex Deadman** gives a summary of the talk he gave at the FG meeting at Wisley on 24th March 2010

My favourite summer fruit is the gooseberry, which I have been growing for more than 25 years. For me maximising flavour is the primary objective in fruit growing, and one variety I grow is *Leveller* - a relatively modern variety with really good flavour. Flavour in fruit is affected by many factors such as site, soil, climate, variety selection, cultivation - feeding weeding, pruning etc. and even harvesting at the correct moment. In principal, all one has to do is to get all of these factors just right, and although we might have little or no control over some of these, the amateur grower can do something to maximise the flavour of fruit.

In growing gooseberries for flavour, I have found 3 techniques which can affect fruit quality and flavour:

1. Growing as a cordon,
2. Paying attention to trace elements,
3. Restricting water in the later stages of development

I grow gooseberries as double cordons since I discovered that growing as a bush resulted in two problems. Firstly American gooseberry mildew was usually present, and secondly harvesting the gooseberries - especially from an awkwardly growing branch in the middle of the bush – which nearly always resulted in an unwelcome encounter with a nasty thorn!

Growing as a double cordon solved both problems: the gooseberries were now growing up in the fresh air, and not near the ground, so that now the air could circulate the fruit and branches; and this minimised the occurrence of American gooseberry mildew. Also, the cordon shape is more open and so harvesting fruit is much easier. I utilise a slight variation in the pruning regime to that advocated in most books. Instead of pruning back to 3 buds with the final summer pruning, I tend to leave these side shoots at about 4in-6in (10mm-15mm) long - what I call 'branchlets'. Thus the gooseberries are always formed on new shoots (from the previous season's growth) away from the main cordon stem, and giving them the maximum amount of fresh air and sunlight to ripen the fruit.

Growing fruit on these branchlets results in the maximum sunlight for fruit ripening, easier fruit thinning also to maximise fruit quality and flavour, and harvesting is made much more pleasurable as it is much easier to avoid unwanted encounters with thorns.

My 2nd technique is adding a good layer of compost around the "leg" of the double cordon, and a proprietary rose fertiliser is used to ensure an adequate supply of trace elements. Many years ago I discovered that rose fertiliser was excellent for gooseberries. The reason appeared to be the addition of trace elements in the fertiliser, giving strong growth and making the rose 'hard' to which resist pests and diseases. So, I thought, if it was good for roses it should be good for soft fruit. I have found that on gooseberries and also other soft fruit it produces this 'hard' appearance, most noticeably in the leaves, which take on a glossy 'holly-like' appearance.

Alex's photograph shows these main features in the leaves and 'branchlet' on *Leveller*



As a result of growing as a double cordon, a modified pruning regime, compost in early spring plus proprietary rose fertiliser for trace elements, I now never get American gooseberry mildew. In fact my gooseberries are remarkably free from all of the usual pests and diseases.

Although I have to date used a proprietary rose fertiliser to ensure the trace elements, I plan in future to experiment with seaweed extract to see if this is a successful organic alternative.

The 3rd technique I have experimented with is to restrict water in the later stages of fruit development. I first came across this technique about 10 years ago when I read an article about growing vines in hot countries - growers in Australia, Chile and Spain were investigating the effect of water stress, or 'partial root zone dryness' (PRD) on the quality of grapes for wine. It was reported that by withholding water in the later stages of fruit development, increased sugar and flavour levels have been obtained.

At a RHS Fruit Group visit to East Malling Research a few years ago, their scientists presented the findings of PRD research on strawberries. Briefly: half the roots were watered, leaving the other half to dry out; the dry roots were found to release abscisic acid - a stress hormone that signals the plant to inhibit leaf growth and close pores in the leaves through which water is lost. By encouraging this, a significant saving of irrigation water was achieved. The PRD effects on plant-signalling were reported to keep the plants well charged with water and leaves and fruit did not experience damaging water deficits. Most importantly, it seemed likely that with leaf formation suppressed, sugars would be redirected to the fruit, sustaining fruit growth and maintaining or improving fruit flavor.



Whilst many studies in this area are directed at reducing irrigation and water consumption for commercial reasons, I am more interested in how it enhances flavour.

However with the rainfall in our climate we don't usually have the need to irrigate so much as restrict the rainfall! So, I have been experimenting with restricting rainfall from reaching the roots using a plastic sheet shown here in photograph 2. I have found that in recent years, the plastic covering needs to be applied by early May.

I will be conducting experiments over the next few years with a total of four cordons, to see if there really is any improvement in flavour.

In addition to this, my main experimentation over the next few years is to compare the fruit quality and flavour of gooseberries between two cordons which have all 3 techniques applied and, as a control, two other cordons which will not be treated with these techniques. Such an experiment will, hopefully, indicate whether I can encourage any additional flavour that is worth the extra effort.

Alex Deadman, grows fruit in Malvern

Money may not grow on trees, but in mid-Cheshire gooseberries definitely do!

It's the last Saturday in July. I walk into the pub shortly after lunchtime. In a side room a meeting seems to be about to start. I enter and stand unobtrusively in a corner.

The room is laid out as if a committee meeting is due to take place. About 20 men sit round a series of tables, laid out to create a large rectangle with an open space in the middle. In front of each person sits a wooden box. Each box is slightly different. Some are beautifully made of polished wood, the sides adorned with brass handles. Others are less ornate. Each box has a series of drawers with handles facing the owner. Curiously, each box is tied-up with string, like a paper parcel, the string knotted at the top and sealed with a blob of sealing wax.

The meeting does not appear to have started. Some men murmur quietly to their neighbours, others sit staring straight ahead. There is an air of anticipation. One of the company, at the head of the table signals to a man standing in the central space between the tables: 'Will you check the seals please John?' As John moves round, he bends over each box in turn and examines the string and sealing wax. When he has finished he declares: 'All seals correct Mr Chairman'. 'Right, you can cut your strings and begin', replies the Chairman. In front of him is a pair of antique-looking balance scales, at the side a range of tiny metal weights, the kind used in schoolboy chemistry classes.

'May I have the berry from last year's winner of the premier berry', he asks. A man signals to John, then carefully opens a drawer in his box and delicately lifts out an egg-sized gooseberry from its nest of cotton wool. The gooseberry is carefully placed in a saucer and handed to John who carries it to the Chairman. It is transferred from the saucer to a scale pan causing the balance to lurch to one side. 'Has any member a berry to challenge this one?' asks the Chairmen. For the first time the group of men are stirred into action. Drawers are opened guardedly, and hands go up. The first challenger is collected and carried in its saucer to be placed on the empty balance pan. Slowly the balance tips in the newcomer's favour. The first berry is returned to its owner via its saucer, and the next challenger comes forward. This ritual continues until the heaviest of all berries is established. It is then weighed, and its weight declared.

'This year the premier berry is a *Woodpecker* at 38 pennyweight and 5 grains' declares the Chairmen (about 2oz or 59.42g). There is a round of applause, and Mick, its owner, is congratulated. The weight is recorded in the competition log, and the premier berry, with a label showing its weight, is conveyed to pride of place in a tiered display box.



Woodpecker gooseberries on the Rougham Hall Nurseries website

The competition continues, working through the four colours – reds, yellows, greens and whites - and finishes with the plates of a dozen berries. By the end, the display box is full of berries, arranged in colours and sizes. Then the participants retire to another room for a meal, leaving the room for visitors to drift in to gaze at the display of huge berries, varieties with unfamiliar names, such as *Woodpecker*, *Just Betty*, *Millennium*, *Montrose*, *Castle Rock*, *Allostock* and *Bank View* most of which have been raised by specialist growers in the mid-Cheshire area and are generally unavailable from most commercial nurseries or garden centres.

I remain in the show room for a while, reflecting on what I have witnessed over the past two hours. I have witnessed a horticultural event that hasn't changed in the last two hundred years. The only difference between this show and the one taking place 200 hundred years ago in 1809 is the dress of the gooseberry growers. The specialist terminology of the gooseberry growers hasn't changed since the clubs were formed in the late 18th century. For example, the 'berries' are grown on 'trees'. The 'trees' are protected from birds and weather by being grown in 'gooseberry pens'. Berries are collected on the night before the show under the watchful eye of a witness, known as the 'getter', they are weighed in the archaic pennyweight and grains. To increase their size the growing berries might be 'suckled' with saucers of water under them to provide additional humidity to make them swell. Occasionally, these special varieties might be sold at 'lettings out'. All of these terms and many more would have been familiar to any early Victorian grower.

I have been involved professionally in horticulture since 1960, and over that period many things have changed. The gooseberry shows are one horticultural practice which has remained unchanged and uncontaminated by 'progress' since they began.

I felt very privileged to have been an observer of the show, and if the Duke of Wellington or William Cobbett had walked into the room I would not have been in the least surprised.

Tony Gentil, who grows fruit in Cheshire

More information about Mid-Cheshire Gooseberry Shows can be found at http://www.theblackdentrust.org.uk/projects_gooseberries.php

For members who would like to grow huge gooseberries, Woodpecker can be found in the Rougham Hall Nurseries fruit list www.perennials-of-distinction.co.uk Editor.

Electronic Newsletter

Remember - you can receive the FG Newsletter in full colour via email but in accordance with the Data Protection Act we require your consent

The RHS is committed to minimise its carbon footprint. One way we can help is to encourage electronic communication. Combine this with the rising cost of postage, photocopying, and paper and there is an advantage in distributing our Newsletter by email. The most obvious and direct advantage to you is that you will receive it in **full colour**, which is much superior to the black and white photocopied version. For members who do not have email or Internet access we will continue to produce and mail black and white copies. However, we know that some 80% of the members do have email but we need your permission first

If you would like to receive the colour electronic version of the Newsletter please email your permission to: fruitgroupmembership@rhs.org.uk

To open the Newsletter you need Adobe Reader, which can be downloaded free from <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

Europom – what we can look forward to...

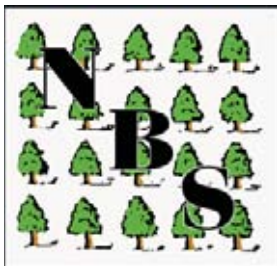
Howard Stringer gives us a background to Europom and a flavour of what we have to look forward to at Wisley, on Thursday 21st to Sunday 24th October 2010.

The RHS have announced that the continental Europom exhibition will be held at Wisley this year. As in my more active years I became involved with some of the European societies, I thought it would be useful to write a bit about those organisations which participate in regularly in Europom.

EUROPOM is short for European Pomologists' Exhibition.

Nearly all the societies are very different from our own Fruit Group, which was formed in 1945, when nearly all our old fruit varieties had been already located and in safe hands in the National Fruit Collection. We had to be members of the RHS and had no control over the National Collection. The European societies were all formed much later with different aims and objectives.

The stimulus of their foundation was the advent of the *Golden Delicious* apple in Europe, which rapidly became a 'must grow' variety commercially. This led in the 1970's to the wholesale grubbing of the old orchards and their replacement by the new variety, causing great sorrow to some enthusiastic people, who started to gather other like-minded people together to try to save the old varieties.



BELGIUM. I shall start with the Belgian society, Nationale Boomgaarden Stichting (National Orchard Foundation), NBS for short, as I was involved with them first, when representing Brogdale at an early Europom show. I have since twice enjoyed being a guest of their members and being shown around collections and Research Stations.

Its founder was a teacher, Ludo Royen, who started collecting the old varieties and planting them on his own ground. In less than 5 years he had 500 varieties in his collection. In 1984, he and other fruit enthusiasts founded an organisation for the purpose of hunting down and propagating examples of the old varieties, planting them in gifted land named 'The Keizel' near Diepenbeek, gradually building up a collection which could be propagated and planted elsewhere in regions where they were originally grown. A skilled money raising effort won financial support from banks, local authorities and support from the local government, also receiving membership fees from their members. He was granted a chair at the University of Diepenbeek, so that they had a place where they could hold meetings. The orchards planted were laid out exactly as they had been in the past; standard trees, grassed, grazed by cattle or sheep and were looked after by people who they had trained.

NBS members receive a quarterly magazine, *Pomologia*, A5 size, printed in colour on quality paper and every autumn members receive a catalogue containing a large number of fruit trees and soft fruits on various rootstocks from which they can purchase at reasonable prices. I am a recipient of the magazine, which I find extremely useful. Unfortunately it is in Flemish, so few in the UK can read it. The Society's aim is to collect all the varieties that used to be grown in specific regions of their own countries, propagating them (with owner's permission) and planting them out in areas where they used to be grown. Much research goes into this, old books are studied to obtain descriptions of old varieties which have not yet been found; local authority records studied to locate areas where they used to grow and searches of old farmhouse land undertaken to see if a specimen can be found. Talking to old residents in villages has also been useful in tracing long lost specimens.

HOLLAND is represented by the Noordelijke Pomologische Vereniging (Northern Pomological Organisation) (NPV) which was formed in 1989, its newsletter is entitled *Pomopost*. Its headquarters are at Assen near the city of Groningen (Friesland).



Its function is similar to that of the NBS, having a large collection of fruit trees and soft fruit at its own orchard in the 'Kroezerhof' nearby, where meetings are held regularly.

As a special point of interest, a group of members have banded together, calling themselves 'speurpom', (pomological sleuths) who, when the fruit ripening season approaches, select an area and track down all the cultivars they can find, approaching the owners and trying to identify the fruit. If they cannot, they request samples and take them back to base for examination. If the variety is still unknown, they request a sample of graftwood at the appropriate time, so it can be grown on in the society's orchard. One year they decided to research the whole city of Groningen. With help from a local newspaper, which announced when they were coming, they discovered a lot of old fruit varieties that were not in their collection and even found 25 Bramley trees, showing that at least in earlier times our favourite cooking apple had penetrated the continent!

GERMANY has 2 organisations linked to one another, as befits this large country.



The northern society is a revival of the 19th century Deutsche Pomologen Verein, whose members were professional pomologists. This organisation slowly faded and was disbanded in 1919. It was reborn in 1991 under the new title of Pomologen-Verein. It was the result of a getting together of a number of the original enthusiasts still living, but is now open to all fruit enthusiasts wishing to join. The first chairman was Gert Müller and the early meetings took place in

Barnstorf near Diepholz, in the area where he lived. Nowadays the organisation has been split into branches so that meetings can take place in most parts of Germany, so that members living in areas distant from Barnstorf could contribute.

It is organised very similarly to the societies in the neighbouring countries, the orchards it plants can also be similar but there is one special difference: in former times, certain parts of the country, particularly in the warmer areas where vine growing had been abandoned, fruit trees of all kinds and varieties were mixed and planted over the area. This was called a 'Streuobstwiese' (randomly planted meadow), although 'streu' also means straw, in that the soil was incapable of growing grass suitable for grazing, so it was utilised as a bedding material for cattle. These are now being recreating in small patches near roads, where they can be seen easily, as in the eyes of the public they look so much more fitting to the countryside than more formal orchards.

The streuobst system is also very prevalent in Austria, in fact an organisation has been formed purely to encourage their planting, aiming to help every local group which wishes to plant one in their area.

The Pomologen-Verein is linked to the Bavarian society.



Bavaria (Bayern)

This warm part of Germany has had an interesting history. Back in the 17th. century, the government in the state of Franken ordered that every household head dwelling in his domain should plant from 2-5 heavily cropping fruit trees, dependant on the size of his land. The problem was that no trees were available for purchase in the area, so the ruling could not be obeyed. It was not until 1792 when a new state governed the area, that a decision was made to build up a collection of good fruiting trees. A suitable area of land in Triesdorf was granted for the trees to be grown. Slowly a large collection of varieties built up and in the 19th century it was decided to build on a horticultural college, the tree collection being left in the charge of a head gardener. In the 1960's a decision was made to close the college and move the collection from the area, as demand for the trees declined. The then head gardener, Friedrich Renner, was granted permission to repropagate the collection onto his own land in Merkendorf nearby, named Pomona Franconica, where it now stands for the use of the Bavarian Society.

LES CROQUEURS



de pommes®

Last, but definitely not least, our nearest neighbour, **FRANCE**. Because my mind refuses to comprehend the language, I have little knowledge of their work.

However, Les Croqueurs de Pomme (apple munchers) was formed in 1978 by Jean-Louis Choisel of the Montbéliard area, near Limoges, making it the earliest of the traditional fruit tree organisations in Europe.

This is not surprising, because the desire to grow modern fruit varieties started in France. The society, separated into self-governing divisions, has spread right across France, even as far south as Provence. The varieties collected and grown are the ones for which that particular area was once famous, as in Lorraine, apricots.

If all these societies come to England, it should be quite an exciting time for us, to view their favourite fruits and to discuss fruit growing with them. I am sure that they will arrange English speakers to assist the conversation.

Europom 2009 and 2010

John Beswick reports and asks for help to support the Fruit Group at this year's Europom

Well, those of you who did not go to Europom 2009 missed something! In the event a modest number of us groupies went along to meet up with Jim Arbury and Ali Valsecchi.

Europom really was a fantastic event held in the glorious grounds and buildings of Alden Biesen Castle with displays from many European countries, including Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and others. The object of the exhibition was to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Nationale Boomgarden Stichting, the National Orchard Society of Flanders, and show fruit of all kinds from across Europe and to highlight the importance of 'tall trees' by which was meant standard orchard trees in the context of their contribution to the landscape.

I have never seen so many apples and pears in one place, or to be more accurate four separate large halls, nearly all the usual English apples and pears but also hundreds of other European varieties as well. There were the plums and cherries in jars, and the pear and apple syrup (I bought three jars, it was so good!) with an explanation of how to make it.

There was the band and the stands selling fruity refreshments, apfelstrudel like you have never had before, and the large trailer-mounted mobile juicing plant, plus ancient and modern books and journals. There was Johan Bakke with his apple grafted into a pyramid (by which I mean the branches were grafted together to form an enclosed pyramid, not the conventional radial open sort), and his amazing collection of apples and pears grown under different conditions from an apparently small garden. From a German breeder there was the *Weirouge* apple with its red-flushed flesh, terribly healthy with lots of antioxidant anthocyanins to give it the red colour and then of course there were the technical arguments about whether or not it was worth using inter-stocks for this and that and.....too soon it was time to move on.

Well that was Europom 2009, now the baton has been passed to us - the RHS are to host the first British Europom, at Wisley. The Europeans are coming and we want to show our friends what we are made of. So please come forward if you care about our reputation, we have something to live up to. The staff at Wisley can't do it all and we should lend a hand where we can, so if you can spare some time let me or Jim Arbury know, if you have something to show at Taste of Autumn remember that it is also Europom, do not hesitate. The event is to be held from Thursday 21st October to Sunday 25th October at Wisley, set up is on Wednesday 20th October. Contact me johnabeswick@aol.com

Summer Fruit and Vegetable Competition 2010

For the second year running the RHS Summer Fruit and Vegetable Competition was held at the Tatton Park Flower Show, 21st-25th July 2010. By all accounts, the standards were high this year – which proves that top quality summer fruit can still be grown across the country, despite the wide variations in the weather that growers have experienced this year.

Congratulations to all Fruit Group members who entered their produce.

Particular mention must be made of Adrian Baggaley, Hilary Dodson and Doug Palmer, each of whom won several first prizes. First prize in Class 1: a collection of 6 dishes of fruit went to Adrian; first in Class 2: a collection of 6 dishes of fruit staged by a horticultural society affiliated to the RHS went to Yealampton Allotments, represented by Doug Palmer. Adrian again won First for Class 25: a trug or basket of fruit, of at least four kinds. Hilary Dodson was given 'Most Meritorious Single Dish of Fruit' award for her *Red Lake* redcurrants.



Photograph, by John Beswick, shows Adrian Baggaley's splendid basket of fruit, the winning entry for Class 25. Redcurrant plates in the background.

Silly Season Competition

Watching a live concert by a well known British rock musician, I was surprised to hear the lines:

*'Show me round your fruitcage
'cos I will be your honey bee
Open up your fruitcage
Where the fruit is as sweet as can be'*

But who was the mystery singer who is (apparently) into serious fruit growing?

Email or send me the name of the performer and the song from which these lyrics come, and you could win a copy of the CD containing said song. **Closing date 30th September 2010.**

If I receive more than one correct entry, a winner will be drawn from a hat.

Email: fruitgroupeditor@rhs.org.uk Post: Fruit Group Editor, PO Box 74, Hertford, SG13 7EE

Dates for 2010

Thursday 19th August, St Anns Allotments, Nottinghamshire. Tour of historic private allotments and budding demonstration by team from Frank P Matthews Ltd. (M)

Tuesday 24th August, Wisley. 1.00pm (RHS)

Focus on Cane Fruit – talk, followed by walk through the cane fruit collection.

Thursday September 2nd Early morning, 9.00am, visit to Adrian Baggaley's orchard, Lowdham; PM visit to Sir John Starkey's Bramley planting at Norwood Park. (M)

Saturday 4th September, visit Sharpham Wines and Cheeses, Totnes, Devon, for vineyard, wine tasting and cheese tasting. (SW)

Wednesday 15th September, West Sussex(RHS) 10.00am, **Visit Paul Barnett's spectacular Bramley,** grafted with 200 different varieties of apple + afternoon visit to **Peter Collett's garden,** Tangmere.

Thursday 23rd Sept. Morning visit to **Three Choirs Vineyard and Winery,** Newent, Gloucestershire. Cost £5 per Fruit Group member, £7-50 per non member of Fruit Group, including tastings. Followed by the afternoon visit to **Castle Fruit Farm Apple and Pear Orchard.**

Sunday 10th October, 10am – 5pm. **Apple Day RHS Garden Rosemoor,** Great Torrington EX38 8PH. A great day out for all the family, Rosemoor's Apple Day is organised in conjunction with Orchards Live, Thornhayes Nursery and the RHS South West Branch of the Fruit Group. (SW)

Saturday 16th October 11.00am Apple Day at Garden Organic's Ryton Gardens. Meet at the entrance to view the Ryton Apple Day activities, picnic lunch or eat in the rather nice Ryton Café or restaurant, followed by Midlands Branch AGM. (M)

Thursday 11th November, Wisley, 1.00pm (RHS)

Winter pruning demonstration, plus Gerry Edwards & Peter Collett on **'Exhibiting Fruit and what judges are looking for'.**

Other Events

Autumn Fruit & Vegetable Competition, Westminster, 5th & 6th October

Taste of Autumn & Europom, Wisley 21st -24th Oct.
Late Fruit & Vegetable Competition, Wisley, 12th & 14th November

In addition, the South West Branch, Midlands Branch and the Northern Fruit Group will be organising regional events and visits; please contact them direct for more information.

RHS Fruit Group (RHS)

For more information contact:

Stephen Colfer, 01483 212342

South West Branch (SW)

For more information contact:

Brian Fox, Chair, 01264 357229

Midlands Branch (M)

For more information contact:

John Beswick, Chair & Secretary, 01604 403115

Northern Fruit Group (N)

For more information contact:

Hilary Dodson, Chair, 01943 464325

The Regional Branches extend a warm welcome to all members of the Fruit Group. No matter what your geographical location, members may attend any event organised by Regional Branches.

YOUR COMMITTEE

Chairman: Gerald Edwards

Vice-Chairman: Bob Sherman

RHS Fruit Department Representative:

Jim Arbury

Treasurer: Tony Benham

Committee members: John Beswick (Midlands), Peter Collett, Hilary Dodson (Northern Fruit Group), Brian Fox (South West), Alan Mansfield (Editor), Julia Mitchell, John Poole (Webmaster), John Sale, Howard Stringer, Eric Spanier

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The RHS Fruit Group Newsletter relies heavily on contributions from members. Many thanks to all of you who have submitted articles, apologies if they have not appeared in this issue. We always need short articles of 100-150 words to fit around longer articles. If you have anything that may be considered for publication, please hand it to me at a Fruit Group meeting or send it to: Alan Mansfield, PO Box 74, Hertford, Hertfordshire, SG13 7UG. Telephone: 01992 550175 Ideally, copy should be in electronic format emailed to:

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