



# THE APPLE OF YOUR EYE

SLOG QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 50 – WINTER 2021

**\* FRUIT GROWING \***

**\*CONSERVING LOCAL ORCHARDS\***

**\*PROMOTING HERITAGE VARIETIES\***

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## Editorial

This 50<sup>th</sup> edition of “The Apple of your Eye” marks the end of quarterly newsletters. Future communications to members will be made via email at times which will be more relevant to upcoming events. Other forms of communication are the Facebook page, the website and the AGM. Apple pressing has now finished for the season. Despite a reduced crop, the Speidel Mill/Hydropress kit has been well used again, and for the first time we had no major breakdowns. The only problem encountered was a broken blade on the Speidel Mill at the end of the members pressing at Sprint Mill. Fortunately we have a back-up kit which permitted completion of pressing after only a few hours delay.

Again we owe a huge vote of thanks to Mike and Christine Gibson for very patiently managing the

bookings and hirings of the Speidel Mill & Hydropress kit at Tarnside Farm.

Meanwhile if you still have your spring-grafted trees in pots, now is the time to plant them out. The sooner they are planted, the better established their roots will be when growth starts in spring.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**For the most up-to-date information look in:**  
<https://www.slorchards.com/events>

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December – Winter Meeting**  
**7.30pm Crook Memorial Hall** Recent DNA analyses have demonstrated that we have discovered several unique varieties of apples and pears in local orchards. Until now, these varieties have been known only by code numbers but they now need proper names like any other recognised variety. At this meeting we will describe each variety and its location and then attempt to conjure up an appropriate name for it. Come along and join in the fun of naming our new babies! There will of course be refreshments, apple juice and socialising. Cakes etc welcome! **Directions:** From Plumgarth roundabout at the north end of Kendal, take B5284 direction Bowness. Go through Crook village, past the Sun Inn, then up the hill and the Hall is on your left at the top of the hill. Satnav LA8 8LG

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan 2022 - SLOG Pruning Workshop, Grange Community Orchard.**  
**1.30-4.00pm.** This workshop covers maintenance winter pruning, though all other types of pruning can be discussed on request. Bring your own secateurs if possible but SLOG secateurs and loppers will be available for anybody who does not have their own and we will have sanitiser available to sterilise them between users. **Directions:** Near Grange-over-Sands railway station, just south of the B5277/B5271 roundabout, opposite the Ornamental Gardens. Car parking on opposite side of road or in nearby carparks.

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## **Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2022 2.00–4.30pm SLOG Grafting Workshop, Growing Well, Sizergh LA8 8AE**

Graft your own apple & pear trees using M26, MM106, MM111 & Quince A rootstocks and a wide range of scion wood varieties. Bring your own Stanley knife (a few will be provided) and gardening gloves for protection. Wear suitable footwear as the path to the yurts may be muddy. SLOG grafting knives will be available for anybody who does not have their own and we will have sanitiser available to sterilise them between users. **Directions:** From M6 jnctn 36 go 4 miles on A591 towards Kendal, then A590 Barrow, then shortly on right follow brown signs for Sizergh Castle, then Low Sizergh Barn. From Kendal go 3½ miles south on the A591 then just before the A590 interchange turn left into the car park at Low Sizergh Barn Farm Shop and Tearooms. Park at the far end of the car park and walk over the fields. Rootstocks £2.50 each.

## RECENT EVENTS

### ORCHARD VISIT

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> August, Crookfoot**

A pleasantly warm and sunny afternoon saw 18 members gather at this beautiful secluded location beside the River Gilpin. Special commendation to five who had cycled there to ease the pressure on the limited parking space. The orchard is unique in being the only surviving pear orchard in this valley from the many shown on maps from the 19thC. Hilary Wilson told us that records showed that the land on which the orchard is situated was sold in 1874, so some of the trees are over 150yrs old. Andy Brown explained that the houses nearby were originally bobbin mills and a significant community lived and worked here and that much of the pear crop would have been processed into perry for local consumption. Phil Rainford guided us round the forty or so old pear trees, pointing out various features. He has grafted most of them over the past several years to ensure their survival. The fruit on most of the old trees is rather small but Phil said it is bigger on the younger grafted trees. It was noticeable that there was very little disease on the trees. Another curious feature was that grafting had been done at about 2' height, much higher than is customary nowadays. DNA analysis has shown that only seven of the trees matched a variety in the National Collection

database: four being English varieties, two Scottish and one each Welsh and Belgian. Sixteen varieties are unique, some of them occurring multiple times in the orchard indicating they were either favoured varieties or just good survivors. We have named some of these at recent meetings and plan to name some more at our next winter meeting. All agreed that after recent social restrictions, it was pleasant to spend a couple of hours socialising informally in such an idyllic situation.

### MEMBERS APPLE PRESSING DAY

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September, Halecat**

With unfortunate timing, the fine dry weather that had characterised the earlier part of the month came to an end. Drizzle set in from 11am and continued all day. We again operated the booking system of half hour slots from 10am to 3pm which had proved so successful last year.



The Voran mill and rack & cloth press worked well and by the end of the day we had pressed about half a ton of apples. Many thanks to Abi & Tom for hosting us and to Dick and Anthony for a sterling day's work!

### MEMBERS APPLE PRESSING DAY

**Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> October, Burneside**

October was our wettest month of the year so far with 15" of rainfall, and the forecast for our pressing day was not good. After much discussion of options, Romola came up with a solution whereby both the Speidel Mill and Hydropress were located indoors on the lowest floor of the barn. So despite the inevitable rain, we were able to press apples from 15 different SLOG members, the only slight inconvenience being that the juice had to be carried upstairs for bottling and pasteurising. Many thanks to

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Romola & Edward for hosting this popular event for the sixth time.

## SLOG ORCHARD UPDATE

The third quarter is a quiet time for the orchard, the only activities being mowing the alleys and taking a group of our local Hallgarth residents round on an orchard tour. Harvest time is a good time to do this because it displays the wide range of different apple fruits and of course the chance to sample them. We also need fruit to be able to identify and characterise varieties that are not in the National Collection at Brogdale.



One variety that sparked considerable email discussion is the old Yorkshire variety *Rymer*. It arose in 1750 in Thirsk and was recorded by Hogg and Bunyard but does not appear in Joan Morgan's Book of Apples. We obtained scion wood for the tree in the SLOG orchard from Phil Rainford who in turn received it from a member of the Marcher Apple Group. Fruit from the tree in the SLOG orchard correlated fairly well with published descriptions but with one significant exception: it had a wide open eye which should have been closed. The Marcher Apple Group believe that their assumed *Rymer* is probably incorrect and it seems that *Rymer* became a lost variety. However, Derek Tolman of Bernwode Fruit Trees rediscovered it in 2005 in Tasmania so we will attempt to get a scion or tree from him. Another old Yorkshire variety which does not appear in the National Collection is *Red Balsam* which Hilary Wilson saved from becoming a lost variety by taking scions from the only known surviving tree in North Yorkshire. Our tree fruited for the first time this year and the fruit have an unusual colouration and are particularly attractive.



Having characterised it, we have now applied for it to be listed in the Register of Local Cultivars, along with *Daphne's Delight*, *Dan's Pippin*, *Ritson's Red*, *Cockermouth Codlin* and *Oakbank Pippin*.

Our next working party will be on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> November from 10am to remove some trees shown by DNA to be non-authentic and replace them with their definitive versions, put a few new canes in and general tidying up.

## PLAQUES & PESTILENCE: EARLY BLOSSOM

The issue profiled here is neither a plague nor a pestilence but it is certainly a problem for all apple growers worldwide. Cherry blossom in Kyoto reached its peak this year on 26<sup>th</sup> March.



This is the 85<sup>th</sup> day of the year and the earliest in over 1,000yrs of records. Before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, blossom dates had varied but rarely fallen below the mark of 90 days into the new year. We see a similar pattern with apples. Over the last 50 years, the average blossom time has progressively come earlier and earlier. The blossom time varies from year to year, sometimes very early and sometimes not so early, but over time the average blossom time has advanced by circa 14 days. Last year *Cox's Orange Pippin* was in full bloom on 22<sup>nd</sup> April (day 113)

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whereas 45yrs ago it was always early-mid May (day 125-135). Also last year a damaging frost occurred in early-mid May at petal fall, wrecking the fruit set – and this is the problem with early blossoming – it significantly increases the risk of frost damage. The consequence of this as we have seen in the last two years now, is a disappointingly variable and reduced harvest. Although blossom was later this year than last, the blossom buds were at a susceptible stage in April when we had a series of frosty nights after Easter. This frost damage was widespread over the entire country, and was the main factor in the English apple crop being reduced by 25% this year.



This is likely to be a continuing problem in future years, so what can be done about it? Commercial growers use Frost Candles, and water spray. That option is not realistic for SLOG members but there are some steps we can take to reduce frost risk. For example, ensure cold air can roll away down any slope and not be retained by solid features such as walls or evergreen hedges, also ensure the orchard floor vegetation in spring is not so long that it would hold the cold air and stop it rolling away. If planning a new orchard, avoid sheltered hollows because they are likely to be frost pockets. Also try to avoid valley bottoms, this is why the orchards in the Lyth Valley are on the hillsides, not in the valley bottom. Logic says that varieties which open their blossom later than others may be at less risk of frost damage. Examples are *Edward VII*, *Annie Elizabeth*, *Newton Wonder*, *Royal Jubilee* & *Crawley*

*Beauty*. Also, various writers e.g. Raymond Bush have accorded “frost resistance” to some varieties such as *Worcester Pearmain*, *Ellison’s Orange*, *Lord Lambourne*, *Forge*, *James Grieve*, *Laxton’s Superb*, *Wagener & Court Pendu Plat*. “Frost resistant” varieties listed by other writers include: *Bess Pool*, *Jester*, *Howgate Wonder*, *Merton Knave*, *Suntan*, *Discovery*, *Red Windsor*, *Falstaff*, *Scrumptious*, *Fiesta*, *Greensleeves*.

## FEATURED APPLE VARIETY: THE GOLDEN APPLES OF GREEK MYTH

The 50<sup>th</sup> edition of the SLOG Newsletter marks the golden anniversary of “The Apple of Your Eye” so it is appropriate to review the legends of golden apples in three Greek myths.

**1. The Labours of Hercules:** For his eleventh labour, Hercules (Heracles in Greek, the greatest of the Greek heroes) was instructed by King Eurystheus to steal three of the golden apples of the Hesperides. He first caught the Old Man of the Sea, to learn where the Garden of the Hesperides was located. In some variations, Hercules, either at the start or at the end of this task, meets Antaeus, who was invincible as long as he touched his mother, Gaia, the Earth. Hercules killed Antaeus by holding him aloft and crushing him in a bear hug.

Hercules then made his way to the garden of the Hesperides, where he encountered Atlas holding up the heavens on his shoulders. Hercules persuaded Atlas to get the three golden Apples for him by offering to hold up the heavens in his place for a little while. Atlas could get the apples because, in this version, he was the father or otherwise related to the Hesperides. This would have made the labour – like the Hydra and the Augean stables – void because Hercules had received help. When Atlas returned, he decided that he did not want to take the heavens back, and instead offered to deliver the apples himself, but Hercules tricked him by agreeing to remain in place of Atlas on the condition that Atlas relieve him temporarily while Hercules adjusted his cloak. Atlas agreed, but Hercules reneged and walked away with the apples.



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Pennsylvania. He purchased 42 acres overlooking the city on which he built Peel Hall. It is said that he brought over fruit trees from Cumberland. This huge rambling country house (actually on the edge of the city) was burned by the British troops in 1777 due to the Revolution and its use as a Rebel hideout, so what is known about this mansion and its estate are rather limited. Anyway, to return to his daughter Grace, she visited her father's family in Cumberland in 1769 when it is believed she collected her recipe for Penrith Pudding.



Grace Peel (1737-1814) was painted by Benjamin West in 1758 (see above, copyright the Winterthur Museum in Delaware). She married Captain William Dowell, a notorious privateer who raided Spanish shipping. He too was fabulously rich (all that Spanish booty). Her wedding dowry in 1762 was £3,500 plus Peel Hall but since her husband owned several well-armed ships, that was pennies. He and she inherited Peel Hall, so by the time she visited Penrith she was worth several hundred thousand pounds which today would be many millions. She eventually sold Peel Hall to Richard Penn, Jr. who was Lt. Governor of colonial Pennsylvania. So here is her 1782 recipe for Penrith Pudding: "Lay a layer of grated bread, cover it with sugar, put over your spices - cinnamon and nutmeg - put over some lumps of butter and a layer of apples cut a quarter of an inch thick. Then a layer of grated bread, sugar, spices, lumps of butter and apples. When your

pan is full, bake it well." Dr Weaver's question to SLOG was "What apple varieties might Cumberland folk have used in this recipe in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century?"

Does anybody have any suggestions?

I am grateful to Dr. William Woys Weaver for the material for this fascinating article. For more information, see his website:

[Home | William Woys Weaver](#)  
([williamwoysweaverepicurewithhoe.com](http://williamwoysweaverepicurewithhoe.com))

## BARRIE JUNIPER

It is almost five years to the day since our best attended talk, given by Emeritus Professor Barrie Juniper, on 29.11.16 on "The Origin of the Apple" followed by "The even stranger origin and spread of grafting". Barrie still lives at Wytham near Oxford and has around fifty different apple varieties in his orchard, many of them heritage varieties such as *Brownlee's Russet*, *Royal Russet* and *Leathercoat* which he describes as "Shakespeare's apple" because it was offered by Davy to Bardolph in Henry IV.



He even has some varieties (shown above) that he brought back from his forays in the Tien Shan mountains where apples originated. His personal favourite variety though is *Ashmead's Kernel*. We have fond memories of Barrie's talk and wish him well as he approaches his 90<sup>th</sup> year.

*Barrie E. Juniper, University of Oxford, is a pioneer in the study of plant surfaces, including the specialised ones of insect-catching carnivorous plants. His research interests also include the interaction between people, their animals, and the evolution of crop plants.*

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## FEATURES INDEX

The twelve years of SLOG Newsletters have featured three regular items: “Apple Variety” (ancient & modern), “Fruit Focus”, and “Plagues & Pestilence”. These are a useful resource so here is an index to enable members to dip into the Newsletter archive page on the SLOG website: [www.slorchards.com/newsletter](http://www.slorchards.com/newsletter) to retrieve a particular article of interest.

### APPLE VARIETY (New/Heritage)

2. *Bramley's Seedling*
10. *Altess*
11. *Pink Lady (Cripps Pink)*
12. *Rubens*
13. *Redlove*
14. *Jazz (Scifresh)*
15. *Tentation (Delblush)*
16. *Elstar*
17. *Kanzi*
18. *Christmas Pippin*
19. *Alant*
20. *Decio*
21. *Margil*
22. *Scotch Bridget*
23. *Court Pendu Plat & Envy*
24. *Isaac Newton's Tree*
25. *Lady Henniker*
26. *Dr. Harvey*
27. *Isaac Newton's Tree (again)*
28. *Black Gillyflower*
29. *Api*
30. *Bloody Ploughman*
31. *Fillingham Pippin*
32. *Catshead*
33. *Blenheim Orange*
35. *Santana*
36. *Malus niedzwetskyana*
37. *Rajka*
38. *Sunburst*
40. *Costard*
42. *Eden*
43. *Cosmic Crisp*
44. *Magic Star*
45. *Flanders Pink*
46. *Trinity*
47. *Tarnside Red*
48. *Bladon Pippin*
49. *Hidden Rose*

### MY FAVOURITE APPLE

11. *Grenadier* (Adam Rubinstein)
13. *Lord Lambourne* (Jill McDonald)
14. *Ribston Pippin* (Hilary Wilson)
15. *Bradley's Beauty* (Bob Bradley)
16. *Norfolk Beauty* (Ros Taylor)

17. *Fiesta* (Andy Gilchrist)
18. *Lady's Finger of Bledington* (Phil Rainford)

### FRUIT FOCUS

3. Blackcurrant
4. Gooseberry
5. Quince
6. Mistletoe
7. Crab Apple
8. Red & White Currants
9. Raspberry
10. Blueberry
13. Medlar
14. Cherry
16. Strawberry
17. Apricot
19. Lingonberry
21. Mulberry
23. Nashi Pear
24. Walnut
26. Greengage
27. Hybrid Berries
31. Siberian Honeyberry
34. Hybrid Blueberry
35. Plum Hybrids
36. Cherry
39. Pear Hybrids
40. Kiwi
44. Fig

### PLAGUES & PESTILENCE

11. Scab
12. Aphids
13. Caterpillars
14. Sooty Blotch & Fly Speck
15. Canker
16. Capsids
17. Pear Rust
18. Storage Rot
19. Honey Fungus
20. Currant Blister Aphid
21. Brown Rot
22. Apple Mosaic Virus
23. Moles
24. Stink Bug
25. Blossom Wilt
26. Bitter Pit
27. Biennial Bearing
28. Nutrient Deficiency & Apple Mildew
29. Blossom Vigour
30. Blotches
32. Fireblight
33. Bacterial & Fungal Canker
34. Frost Ring
35. Pear Weevil
36. Himalayan Balsam
37. Spotted Wing Drosophila
38. Mussel Scale
39. Specific Apple Replant Disease (SARD)

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40. Pear Midge
41. Xylella fastidiosa
42. Damson Bent Banana Disease
43. Asian Stink Bug
44. Plum Moth.
45. Watercore
46. Collar Rot
48. Asian Hornet

## SCION WOOD ORDERS

Scion wood from a multitude of varieties of apples and pears will be available at our grafting workshop next year. However if there is a particular variety you want, it can be ordered from Brogdale. SLOG will consolidate all such requests (£5 per variety) into a single order to save on carriage & handling charges. Send your orders to Hilary at [overmoor@btinternet.com](mailto:overmoor@btinternet.com) by December 31<sup>st</sup> for delivery in February 2022 for our grafting workshop.

## GRAFTING TO ORDER

The SLOG grafting to order service is again available this winter. If you want a particular variety on a particular rootstock, it can, subject to availability, be grafted for you. Price is £15 per tree, buyer collects. Call Andy Gilchrist on 01539 727772 for enquiries & orders.

## SLOG SHOP

1. SLOG's range of container grown maiden apple trees for sale at £15.00 each, comprising traditional varieties suitable for our Northern climate are almost sold out this season. Since demand is increasing, we plan to graft twice as many trees next spring to meet the demand.



2. Wells & Winter labels are the most cost-

effective permanent solution for recording tree variety identity. They are rigid black plastic labels measuring 2 x 3½" (5x9cm), giving a permanent and very visible result.

They are available at 15p each along with a deposit for the silver pen (if taken away)

3. Apple Notelet cards £2 per pack of 5 different cards each featuring a different apple variety.

4. Recipe books: 28 full colour pages detailing 45 recipes for a wide range of fruits only £2.50.

5. The Apples & Orchards of Cumbria: Lavishly illustrated with over 100 full colour photos describing the twenty or so Cumbrian apple varieties and the fifteen orchards open to the public. Judged runner-up in the "Landscape & Tradition" category of the Lakeland Book of the Year Awards, 2014. £9

All the above items are available at SLOG events such as Shows, Apple Days and the Winter Meeting.

## SLOG Discount at Suppliers: Rogers & Beetham Nursery

SLOG has negotiated a 10% discount at Rogers of Pickering for SLOG members. When you place an order for any kind of fruit: trees, bushes, etc., quote your SLOG membership number and Rogers will apply 10% discount to your purchases. For mail orders go to: <http://www.rvroger.co.uk/?linksource=frontpage> We also have a 5% discount at Beetham Nursery applicable to all items (except in the café). Just show your SLOG membership card at the checkout. [www.beethamnurseries.co.uk/](http://www.beethamnurseries.co.uk/)

## TAILPIECE

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