



BIFGA NEWSLETTER 167

May 2024

36th BIFGA TECHNICAL DAY – THURSDAY 16TH MAY 2024

The 36th BIFGA Technical Day will take place on Thursday 16th May 2024, with visits to two farms in West Kent. Our very kind hosts for this event are: Mr and Mrs Teacher, of **Hadlow Place Farm**, Three Elms Lane, Hadlow, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 OBW; and, Mrs A Browning, **Moatlands Farm Ltd.**, Friars Farm, Maidstone Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 7LG – please see attached programme. A wide-range of topics will be covered by some very experienced speakers, representing our very generous sponsors. There is no charge for this event, but please let the BIFGA Secretary, Judi Perry, know if you plan to attend. Drinks will be provided, but delegates are asked to bring their own food for lunch. An application has been made for CPD and NROSO points for this event.

This should be a really great day out, meeting friends and colleagues, old and new, and picking up a lot of useful information “along the way”. Indoor areas will be available if it rains!

NEW MEMBERS

We are very pleased to welcome the following new members:

- 619A GP1 Jack Roberts, Avalon Fresh, The Apple Shed, Friday Street Farm, East Sutton, Maidstone, Kent ME17 3DD;
665A Andrew Clarke, Gullands Solicitors, 16 Mill Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6XT;
665A GP1 Catherine Lloyd, Gullands Solicitors, 16 Mill St, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6XT;

however, due to the inevitable retirement of some of our members without succession, coupled with some others deciding to cease top fruit growing, we need to urgently find more members. This is for a number of reasons, including helping to keep our membership fees as low as possible. Despite BIFGA having been around for over 35 years, we know that there are still some apple and pear growers who are not members, and we would very much like them to apply for membership. We would also like to increase our Associate membership, which is designed for allied companies/individuals working in the top fruit sector.

A larger membership would also help to strengthen BIFGA's voice, and enable it to continue speaking out on issues that individual members and others might feel unable to do. BIFGA also organises events for its members (often open to others in the top fruit sector) and is a long time exhibitor at the National Fruit Show. Accordingly, I would like to ask all members to make a very special effort please to try and recruit at least one new member. For example, please check if your fruit-growing neighbours are members of BIFGA; or, if you are an Associate member who visits fruit growers as part of your business, please would you kindly take a moment to ask them if they are BIFGA members, and, if not, encourage them to apply for membership.

There are two types of membership:

- Full Membership**, which is open to growers, including members of Producer Organisations who sell part of their crop independently; and,
Associate Membership, which is open to allied trades.

Currently, it costs “a one off” £25 to join BIFGA, with an annual membership fee of £50. Additional Group Members can be added to either of the above categories of membership at a cost of £10 per person per year (there is no joining fee for Additional Group Members).

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The subscription year runs from the 1st July until the 30th June, but for anyone joining between the date of this Newsletter and the 30th June 2024, their subscription will run through until the 30th June 2025. Further details can be obtained from the BIFGA Secretary, Judi Perry, Tel: 01892 724540 Email: secretary@bifga.org.uk.

With our industry still reducing in size, this has become an urgent matter. Please do not “leave it to others”, please make a special point of trying to recruit at least one new member. It would also be very helpful if any Associate Members, who have an email list of their customers who grow top fruit, would kindly forward this Newsletter to them. Thank you.

OTHER ORGANISATIONS SEEKING NEW MEMBERS

With the current “contraction” in the top fruit industry, other organisations in the sector are also wanting to recruit new members, and we are pleased to print their contact details below:

THE MARDEN FRUIT SHOW SOCIETY (NATIONAL FRUIT SHOW) Contact: Eileen Haffenden Tel: 07983 534442
Email: Eileen@nationalfruitshow.org.uk

EAST KENT FRUIT SOCIETY Contact: Mrs Tracey Rose Tel: 01795 530335 Email: traceyrose7@btinternet.com
Please see attached, their 2024/25 programme.

THE WEST MIDLANDS TOP FRUIT DISCUSSION GROUP Contact: Chris Nicholson Tel: 07774 112198
Email: chris.nicholson@adas.co.uk

BIFGA SUMMER FARM WALK – 17th JULY 2024

Our Summer Farm Walk will take place at New House Farm, near Canterbury, Kent, on Wednesday 17th July, by kind permission of John and David Hinchliff. The farm has stunning views over Canterbury and the Cathedral in the distance. It is only 3 miles from the City Centre, with good road/rail connections with London.

New House Farm grows apples, pears, cherries, and blackcurrants. The cherries and blackcurrants should be at, or near, harvest at the time of the walk. There will be short presentations from: British Apples and Pears Ltd; the National Fruit Show; NIAB/EMR; also, from Oxbury Bank plc, who are the very generous main sponsors of this event. As in previous years, we have also extended an invitation to the 14 leading UK grocery retailers to join us as our guests.

NATIONAL FRUIT SHOW 2024

The 2024 National Fruit Show will be a one day event this year, to be held on Wednesday 6th November, at Detling, in Kent. As usual, BIFGA plans to have a stand at the Show, but it may be in a slightly different position. We also plan to run our Photography competition again, so do please keep looking for that special photo opportunity!

GRAND COALITION TO SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN FOR “GREATER FAIRNESS FOR FARMERS AND GROWERS IN BRITISH FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS”

The list of supporters of the Grand Coalition continues to grow, and its effectiveness has already been clearly demonstrated, e.g. by “spreading the word” about the Riverford Petition: “Reform the Grocery Supply Code of Practice to better protect farmers”; and, by helping to publicise the recent Save British Farming Tractor Rally in London. Obviously, the larger the Coalition becomes, the more effective it will be, so please encourage more organisations/companies to join. Joining should help to bring each organisation, and perhaps some of its activities, to the attention of a new and larger audience. If you know of an organisation that might like to be added to the Supporters List, please ask them to send BIFGA: the name of their organisation, a contact name, and a contact email – thank you!

J R Breach,
BIFGA Chairman

BRITISH INDEPENDENT FRUIT GROWERS’ ASSOCIATION

Secretary: Judi Perry Email: secretary@bifga.org.uk