



BIFGA NEWSLETTER 171

August 2026

As the contents of this Newsletter clearly show, the past 6 months have been particularly busy for BIFGA, and I would like to thank everyone who has supplied some of the photographs and information that I have used below.

THE 38TH BIFGA TECHNICAL DAY

The 38th consecutive annual BIFGA Technical Day, which was held on Wednesday 25th February 2026, at The Weald of Kent Golf Course and Hotel (please see photos below), was a “sell-out”! Situated approximately 8 miles south of Maidstone, Kent, the venue proved to be convenient, not only for people from Kent and Sussex, but also, thanks to good connectivity with the M25/M20, for those who travelled from areas further afield, including the West Midlands, East Anglia, and even Lincolnshire! Some of those travelling long-distance took advantage of the competitive room rates, and stayed at the hotel at the venue. There was much praise, not only for the venue, but also for the excellent speakers, who gave us such a wide-range of interesting talks, which were well-reported in the trade press. Our grateful thanks are also due to the sponsors of the event: Agrii; Agrovista UK Ltd; Azets UK; The Fruit Grower (ACT Publishing); Gullands Solicitors LLP; Hortifeeds Ltd; HL Hutchinson Ltd; Lambert and Foster Ltd/Bloomfields; Landseer Ltd; and, Mobitech Lift Trucks.

The same venue has been booked for the next BIFGA Technical Day, to be held on Wednesday 24th February 2027. Further details will be sent-out in due course, but any Associate Members, who would like to secure one of the limited number of “speaking slots” available, should contact Katherine Seaman, the new BIFGA Secretary. Priority-booking will be offered to (in-turn): companies who sponsored the 2026 BIFGA Technical Day; companies who sponsored the 2026 BIFGA Summer Farm Walk; BIFGA Members; and, finally, to non-BIFGA Members. The delegate rate will be kept at £38 per person for BIFGA Members, the same rate as it was for the 2026 Technical Day. For non-BIFGA Members, the delegate rate will be £48.00 per person. Further details and delegate booking forms will be sent-out in due course. Places are limited and will be reserved on a first-come – first-served basis.



BIFGA AT THE ROYAL BATH & WEST SHOW, AND AT FRUIT FOCUS

Thanks to the initiative of the BIFGA Vice-Chairman, Alastair Large, we took up the offer of free stand space at the Royal Bath & West Show, and he manned a stand there (please see photo on right) on Friday 29th and Saturday 30th of May 2026. Alastair was pleased to make some very interesting new contacts. Likewise, we took up the offer of free stand space at Fruit Focus, held at Bradbourne House, East Malling, Maidstone, Kent, on Wednesday 8th July 2026. Here again, Alastair made some very useful contacts.



2026 BIFGA AGM

The 2026 BIFGA AGM was held via Zoom at 7pm on Thursday 9th July 2026. In addition to the usual AGM matters, most of the Committee Members were re-elected “en-bloc” as follows: Tom Barnes; John Breach; David Budd; Charnee Butcher; Alex Charrington; Reuben Collingwood; Colin Corfield; John Dench; Nicholas Dunsby; Jon Hatch; Jessica Kedge; Peter Kedge; David Knight; Alastair Large; Alex Radu; Ian Scaman; Richard Stogdon; Nick Swatland; Mark Tully; Stephen Tully; and, Ryan Williams.

Grateful thanks were expressed to the existing General Committee Members, and to the following Members, who retired from the BIFGA General Committee, for all the support that they had given to BIFGA over the years: Fokian Chatziavgerinos, Judith Perry; Viv Tanna; and, Edward Wheeler. Thank you all very much. We were also very pleased to welcome 3 new Members to the Committee: Jon Booth; Stella Cubison; and, John Downey. If there are any other Members who would be interested in serving on the BIFGA General Committee, please get in touch with the BIFGA Secretary, Katherine Seaman.

ELECTION OF BIFGA OFFICE HOLDERS

At the BIFGA General Committee Meeting held at 7.30pm on Thursday 9th July 2026, BIFGA Office Holders were re-elected as follows: Chairman, John Breach; Vice-Chairman, Alastair Large; Deputy Vice-Chairman, John Dench; and, Treasurer, David Budd. A full list of Office Holders and Members of the BIFGA General Committee will be sent to Members in due course.

THE BIFGA SUMMER FARM WALK, HELD AT HADLOW, KENT, ON TUESDAY 14TH JULY 2026

This was a double-venue event, kindly co-hosted by Hadlow College, and G, P, and J Kedge, and Simon Saunders, of Boormans Farm. The event, which was attended by growers, representatives from allied companies, also some supermarket representatives, and other guests, began at Hadlow College (please see photos below and overleaf), where we split into 3 groups to visit, in turn, 3 areas of their Centre of Excellence.



This is a joint venture between Hadlow College, Thanet Earth, and Growing Kent and Medway. As well as being able to see, and learn about the new, state-of-the-art tomato greenhouse, which is used to train students, and test new tomato varieties, we were also able to taste some of these varieties. We also saw Hadlow's Plant Nursery, which sells plants to the public, along with Hadlow's Apple Juice, which is made from fruit grown in the college's own orchards. We were also able to try the apple juice. Tea and coffee was provided in the new Design Studio, where we were told



about the courses on offer at Hadlow. It was a really great visit, and our grateful thanks are due to Alan

Harvey, the Head of Curriculum for Horticulture and Floristry, and his team, who all made this such an enjoyable, and worthwhile visit.



After the visit to the Centre of Excellence, we drove to the other side of Hadlow, to visit Boormans Farm, where Gina, Peter, and Jessica Kedge, and Simon Saunders, were our very kind hosts. Thanks to a very welcome breeze, the weather was very nearly perfect, unlike some of the bad weather Boormans Farm had suffered from in the weeks leading up to the event. This included frosts, hail, and then drought. Despite all of this, some of the orchards were still carrying a crop, which we can only hope will be much better than originally feared. The farm walk was led by Peter Kedge (far right in left hand photo below), backed-up by Jessica Kedge, and Simon Saunders.



During the walk, we had short presentations from the sponsors: Smart CIG Ltd, who had constructed a very impressive barn; Trellex/Stilmer, who manufactured the metal support posts/poles (supplied by Desindo) used to support the trees in a new Magic Star orchard; Fargro Ltd, who spoke about ways to improve crop resilience to pests; HL Hutchinson Ltd/Landseer Ltd, who reported on trials designed to help growers manage pest control challenges in a sustainable way; NP Seymour Ltd, who told us about some features of the 2 new Fendt tractors recently acquired by the farm; and, Castle Refrigeration Ltd, who showed us one of the new storage rooms that they have built at Boormans Farm.

Following the farm walk there was a very special moment for BIFGA, when we were very pleased to mark the occasion of Judi Perry's retirement from the post of BIFGA Secretary. Judi retired at the end of May, following over 34 years of service to BIFGA. Judi has always gone about her work in a most enthusiastic, thoughtful and cheerful manner, and everyone present was delighted to raise a glass of Biddenden Sparkling Rose (or Biddenden Sparkling Apple & Grape Juice) to wish her a very long and happy retirement. Judi was also presented with a special bottle of Sparkling Wine by Richard Ball of Biddenden Vineyards, as well as flowers and a cheque, by Katherine Seaman, our new BIFGA Secretary – please see photos below. In her

speech, Judi reflected warmly on her time working for BIFGA, and included some amusing comments, such as comparing the challenge of running BIFGA with that of being a Beavers Scout Leader!

At the last BIFGA General Committee meeting, we were delighted to make Judi an Honorary Member of BIFGA, and we hope that she will keep in touch.



Following the presentation, Richard Stogdon, a long-serving member of the BIFGA General Committee, gave an excellent vote of thanks, and a really delightful event was rounded-off with a delicious hog roast, followed by strawberries and cream, and Kentish cherries.

YET MORE NEW MEMBERS!

We are delighted to welcome the following new Members:

679A	Trevor Heathcote - FGS Agri Ltd- Stanford Bridge Farm, Station Road, Pluckley, Kent, TN27 0RU
680F	Artur Swakon – Greenway Fruit Farm Ltd, Stunts Green, Herstmonceux, BN27 4PP
179A	Jon Booth – Lambert & Foster, 77 Commercial Road, Paddock Wood, Kent, TN12 6DS
269A G2	Joe Harvey – c/o Worldwide Fruit, Apple Way, Pinchbeck, Spalding, PE11 3BB
269A G3	Simon Devanny – c/o Worldwide Fruit, Apple Way, Pinchbeck, Spalding, PE11 3BB
269A G4	Helen Slaughter – c/o Worldwide Fruit, Apple Way, Pinchbeck, Spalding, PE11 3BB
520A G1	Nickolaj Kennett - UKCA Ltd – Unit 4, Hoads Farm, Moat Lane, Horsmonden, Kent, TN33 0RY
529A G1	Stuart Renders - Koppert Ltd – 8 Tudor Rose Court, 53 Hollands Rd, Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 8PJ
529A G2	Caroline Davis - Koppert Ltd – 8 Tudor Rose Court, 53 Hollands Rd, Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 8PJ
541A G2	Louise Wilson - Allied Growers, BGA House, Nottingham Road, Louth, Lincs, LN11 0WB
594A G1	Piers Byrne - Kent Fruit Services, Old Walnut Tree, Chapel Lane, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 9HE
657A G1	William Underdown - Controlled Atmosphere Services, Unit 1, Hayle Farm, Marle Place Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 8DZ

657A G2 Andrew Cottam - Controlled Atmosphere Services, Unit 1, Hayle Farm, Marle Place Road,
Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 8DZ
676A G1 Mike Wainwright – Hortifeeds, Park Farm, Park Farm Road, Kettlethorpe, Lincoln, LN1 2LD
676A G2 Paul Wright – Hortifeeds, Park Farm, Park Farm Road, Kettlethorpe, Lincoln, LN1 2LD

We are always keen to find new members (Full, Associate, and Group), and we would appreciate any help that existing members can give in encouraging more to join. This will not only spread our overheads across a larger membership, but will also help to strengthen BIFGA's voice.

Please remember that we now have a new category of Membership, which allows additional, Group Membership to be attached to existing Full and Associate Membership. If you have family members, colleagues, or members of staff, who would like to join BIFGA (at the much-reduced rate of £10 per annum) as part of your "team", please ask them to complete and return an application form, available from the BIFGA Secretary. There is no joining fee for a Group Member, who will (usually) receive all general communications sent to other BIFGA Members. A Group Member will not have voting rights unless elected, or co-opted, to serve on the BIFGA General Committee, or its sub-committees.

BIFGA QUIZGO

The BIFGA Quiz, which will be held on Saturday 21st November 2026, will take on a new format this year. Basically, there will still be 8 rounds, but 4 will be the usual quiz rounds, and these will alternate with 4 rounds of Team Bingo. The first round will be a quiz round with a maximum of 10 points available, the 2nd round will be a Team Bingo round (only 1 ticket per team), with a maximum of 15 points available, the 3rd round will be a Quiz round, and so on, with the last round being a Bingo round. Each team can choose when to play their Joker, so this means that, with their Joker, a team could (if they get a "full house"), score 30 points on the last round. We are hoping, therefore, that most teams could be in with a chance of winning right up to the final round! If you like quizzes and/or Bingo, this could be the ideal event for you, so please think about getting a team together. It is open to non-members – please contact the BIFGA Secretary for more information.

Best wishes

John Breach
BIFGA Chairman

BRITISH INDEPENDENT FRUIT GROWERS' ASSOCIATION

Secretary: Katherine Seaman Tel: 07517 809 219 Email: secretary@bifga.org.uk Web: www.bifga.org.uk