

**HORSMONDEN 99TH ANNUAL HARD FRUIT SALE
FRIDAY 25TH JULY 2008****Auctioneer: John Butler**

£4300 per acre for Gala & Egremont Russett	£5.50 per bushel for Gala & Egremont Russett
£2700 per acre for Bramley	£3.80 per bushel for Bramley
£2800 per acre for Pears	£6.66 per bushel for Conference Pears

Sale Averages:

Culinary	£1246 per acre and £2.23 per bushel
Dessert	£1744 per acre and £3.21 per bushel
Pears	£1882 per acre and £4.20 per bushel

Entry was gained to this year's Horsmonden Hard Fruit Sale despite building contractors working on the main entrance. The intrepid buyers, vendors and auctioneers crept along the side alley determined that the 99th Sale should take place!

They were all rewarded with a strong demand and trade for all well grown top fruit to an increased number of major buyers – including one old friend from Northern Ireland.

As anticipated the sharpest demand was for good quality pears with one lot at Boughton topping the sale at £6.66 per bushel (£370 per ton) with Gala and Egremont Russett at Pembury reaching £5.50 per bushel (£308 per ton) and Bramley at Harbledown peaking at £3.80 per bushel (£212 per ton) ON THE TREE, with all harvesting costs and future risks at the expense of the Purchaser on the fall of the hammer – AND Auctioneers' cheque for proceeds banked by Vendors by mid-August! A very encouraging and solid start to this year's top fruit marketing season.

TOP ORCHARD AVERAGES

	2008		2007	2006
Top 10 Culinary	£1764 pa	Top 3 Culinary	£1510 pa	£1077 pa
Top 10 Dessert	£2280 pa	Top 6 Dessert	£2740 pa	£1111 pa
Top 6 Pears	£2380 pa	Top 6 Pears	£1626 pa	£1320 pa

This Sale probably produced the highest financial result and sale success rate for many years – 52 Lots sold under the hammer out of 69 Lots catalogued, delivering a 75% clearance (46% 2006, 65% 2007). This was achieved on the smallest acreage catalogued for many years – just 380 acres.

We all look forward with interest to a refurbished Hall and the 100th Horsmonden Hard Fruit sale in July 2009! Let us hope the positive start continues throughout the 2008 marketing season.

2008 TOP LOT AVERAGES

	PER ACRE			PER BUSHEL		
	From	To	Average	From	To	Average
TOP 10 CULINARY ORCHARDS	£1400	£2700	£1764	£1.74	£3.80	£2.70
TOP 10 DESSERT ORCHARDS	£1400	£4300	£2280	£2.33	£5.50	£3.80
TOP 6 PEAR ORCHARDS	£1700	£2857	£2380	£4.00	£6.66	£4.80

OVERALL 2008 SALE AVERAGES						
	PER ACRE			PER BUSHEL		
	From	To	Average	From	To	Average
CULINARY	£500	£2700	£1246	£1.45	£3.80	£2.23
DESSERT	£823	£4300	£1744	£1.67	£5.50	£3.21
PEARS	£666	£2857	£1882	£1.90	£6.66	£4.20
PLUMS (LIGHT)	£220	£320				

NOTE: All Averages based on Auctioneer's crop estimate.

A BUSHEL = 40 LB - 56 BUSHEL TO A TON

It is usual practice to give the 10 year old figures to provide a record of financial progress or otherwise!

1998 HARD FRUIT SALE REPORT

**£2,700 PER ACRE PAID FOR BRAMLEY CROP
£5.25 PER BUSHEL PAID FOR BRAMLEY CROPS TWICE
OVERALL SALE AVERAGE £1,474 PER ACRE
AND £3.25 PER BUSHEL FOR BRAMLEY CROPS**

Last year's record Sale results born from severe frost affected crops were not expected to be repeated, but the demand for quality crops of Bramley in this year's Hard Fruit Sale was almost as keen. The estimated English crop of Bramley this year is taken to be 87,000 tons, compared to a final Bramley crop last year of 50,000 tons (was it really that high?) – and the average sale prices for Bramley this year of £3.25 per bushel (£180 per ton) relates proportionally to last year's average sale prices for Bramley of £5.32 per bushel (£290 per ton). This relationship must indicate continued confidence by buyers in Bramleys repeating the performance throughout the coming marketing season experienced over the last 12 months. At the end of the day the Bramley apple has no peer as a cooking apple – and clearly the buying public acknowledge this in the best possible way!

Again it was standing room only at this year's Hard Fruit Sale – buyers, vendors and interested observers from the fruit trade gathered for what has become an important barometer of the coming season's prices. The £1,500 per acre barrier was exceeded on no less than 15 separate occasions – this year all for Bramley crops bar one orchard of Queen Cox at Boughton Monchelsea. The strong demand for best quality Bramley is reflected in the attached Sale Averages – suffice to note the Top Ten Bramley orchards averaged £2,056 per acre and £3.81 per bushel (£209 per ton) ON THE TREE with all future risks and costs at the purchaser's expense on the fall of the hammer!

After the frost damage of 1997 it was a great relief and pleasure to be inspecting many full and quality crops of Bramley, Cox and Pears – a good year for Comice pears this year. Mother Nature has had a hand (as ever!) and this year hail damage has occurred throughout the Weald and East Kent through June and early July.

Sale highlights this year were the £2,700 per acre paid for Bramley at Cousley Wood, the £4.48 per bushel paid for Flanders Cox and Gala at Wadhurst, the £2,857 per acre for a new vendor of Bramley at Upper Harbledown and £5.25 per bushel paid for Bramley at Boughton Monchelsea. Of the 125 Lots in the catalogue 62 were sold under the hammer or on the following Saturday morning. As last year the strong prices achieved have resulted in a Supplementary Catalogue of fresh crops of Bramley, Cox and Pear being circulated to our fruit buyers' register inviting Best Offers by 12 noon on Wednesday 12th August.

The Paddock Wood Watchdog's monitoring of the uplift in the Bramley price last year proved interesting – the £200 per ton increase in processing Bramley prices throughout the season moved the end product baby food, tinned apple and apple sauce price upwards by £300 per ton – draw your own conclusions!

1998 SALE AVERAGES						
	PER ACRE			PER BUSHEL		
	From	To	Average	From	To	Average
TOP 10 CULINARY ORCHARDS	£1642	£2857	£2056	£2.05	£5.60	£3.81
TOP 10 DESSERT ORCHARDS	£888	£1600	£1121	£1.87	£5.14	£2.76
TOP SIX PEAR ORCHARDS	£842	£1233	£1033	£2.00	£3.63	£2.86

OVERALL SALE AVERAGES						
	PER ACRE			PER BUSHEL		
	From	To	Average	From	To	Average
CULINARY	£571	£2857	£1474	£1.73	£5.60	£3.25
DESSERT	£444	£1600	£908	£1.42	£5.14	£2.66
PEARS	£400	£1233	£725	£1.53	£3.63	£2.31
COBNUTS	£180	£480	£330			
PLUMS			£375			

NOTE: All averages based on the Auctioneer's crop estimates

For complete "Anoracks" Sale Averages from the 1988 Sale:-

1988 SALE AVERAGES						
	PER ACRE			PER BUSHEL		
	From	To	Average	From	To	Average
TOP 10 CULINARY ORCHARDS	£125	£1800	£860	£1.00	£3.60	£2.25
TOP 10 DESSERT ORCHARDS	£34!	£1538	£483	£0.57	£4.00	£2.28
TOP THREE PEAR ORCHARDS	£213	£1333	£794	£1.60	£4.33	£2.77

