

Anthony Snell new IBA president



It is an honour to be elected as the first British President of the IBA. My election occurred at an interesting political time, when the UK has democratically chosen to take the route to leave (Brexit) the European Union. It is impossible for me to comment on whether this is the right decision for the UK and/or Europe.

Objective and evolution

Despite all political circumstances, I can confirm my objectives to all member countries of the IBA: **My primary objective is to promote the consumption of our affordable (not cheap!) superfruit throughout the World.**

At a time of challenging world supply of labour for horticulture, it is encouraging to be able to mechanically harvest our blackcurrants. This is a positive, that many other world fruits cannot achieve. We must not, however, abuse the mechanical advantages by producing any fruit that doesn't have a **planned market**. This may lead to a potentially unsustainable future. This is my **second, but probably even more important objective!**

I have been involved with blackcurrants all my life. And I can clearly remember, as a young child, having to pick blackcurrants during our summer holidays from school! My father thought (rightly!), that it would be good for my brothers and sister to have to pick two buckets in the morning. We picked another two buckets in the afternoon, working alongside our experienced staff. He had collected them in the farm tractor and trailer from the local village. The experienced staff earned a reasonable wage, but we earned £1/bucket, and an icecream from the visiting icecream van! All good experience!

The summer holiday blackcurrant work progressed to helping operate a Bruff static mechanical harvester. This is where we fed in cut branches laden with blackcurrants. Later, in our late teens, it progressed to driving our first Smallford half row harvester. This machine was mounted around a small tractor with a reduction gearbox. Things have all thankfully moved on a lot since then. The

modern mechanically harvested blackcurrant crops are now at a much higher harvest quality than in the old days of handpicking.

2017 project and wishes

Our summer 2017 IBA presidential mission is to visit the world's biggest blackcurrant nation, Poland, during the harvest. Stefanie Sharma and I are working with Vice Presidents Piotr Baryla and Jens Pedersen to make the trip a success for the IBA. We would appreciate your thoughts and ideas for this project.

Finally, on behalf of the IBA, I would like to thank Stefanie for all her work this year. I also want to thank those of you who attended our successful UK Ashford IBA conference in the summer.

For those of us in the Northern hemisphere, let's hope for successful and profitable marketing plans, and winter chill for the growers! And for our friend down under in New Zealand: we wish you a successful 2016 harvest!

Happy Christmas, and best wishes for 2017, leading onto to our next conference in France in 2018.