

### U3A 'How Things Work' Group Trip to East Malling Research Organisation

Fourteen members of the How Things Work group (plus two other Meopham U3A members), visited the East Malling Research organisation on Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> July. The tour and discussion lasted just under two hours and covered the history of the organisation, the scope of the research they do as well as the science involved in crop development and optimisation.

Whilst historically, they concentrated purely on fruit trees (mainly apples), they now are involved with pears, cherries, strawberries and grapes and provide a vital service to growers which benefits the UK economy. It was fascinating to learn of the detailed science currently used in their work (DNA analysis and biotechnology) together with the work to increase crop yields, control pests and diseases as well as developing apple root stocks that are better able to grow in either areas liable to flooding and drought.

The 2 guides, Carole and Pete gave us the tour with a great deal of information and Ross Newham (the Operations Director met us at the end to answer our remaining questions about the organisation.

