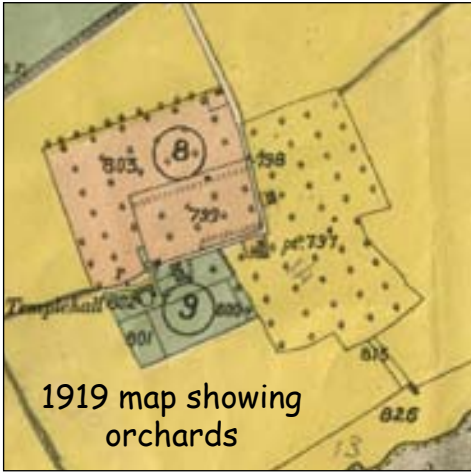


# Historic Orchards of the Carse of Gowrie

## Summary of 2007 Survey



### What We Found

The survey found that most historic orchards of the Carse no longer exist. They have been in decline for over a century, but have mainly been lost during the last 50 years. Reasons for loss were found to be; clearance for agriculture, benign neglect, and housing development. 28 orchards were verified to no longer exist.



### Remaining Orchards

The remaining orchards were categorised according to their cultural heritage, economic potential, and biodiversity value. Of the 17 remaining, there are 9 orchards of particular value. These are:

- Barnhill Toll (West Oaks)
- Carse Grange (The Retreat)
- Fingask
- Flatfield
- Grange
- Megginch
- Monorgan
- Port Allen
- Wester Ballindean (West)

It is recommended that the owners of these orchards be engaged, incentivised and supported to retain and actively manage them. New trees of appropriate varieties should be planted in order to secure the long term future of these orchards.

There are a further 5 orchards that were found to be considerably diminished in tree numbers, but are still of heritage interest and could potentially be revitalised. These are: Bogmiln, Inchyra Farm, Muirhouses, Newbigging, Templehall. It is also recommended that the owners of these are engaged with.

### Condition

Very few of the remaining orchards are in good condition. Most have been neglected for at least 4 decades, commercial cropping appeared to cease around 1970.



Wester Ballindean (West) orchard is overgrown but still has a good number of sound trees

However fruit trees are long lived – those of the greatest longevity being pears that typically live to 200 years old. Therefore many of the old orchards were found to still produce a considerable amount of fruit. However the fruit of the unmanaged trees was now often small, and varietal knowledge was poor. Thus utilisation of fruit was, with a few exceptions, found not to be great.

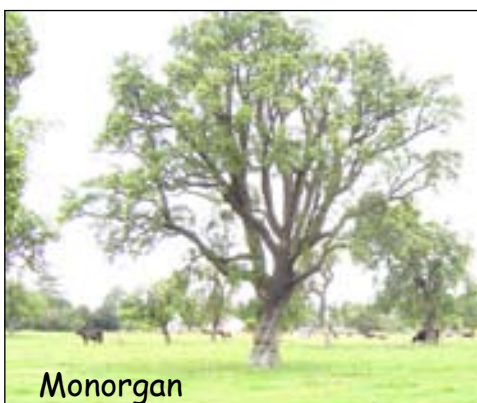
### Varieties

The varietal heritage of the orchards of the Carse should not be underestimated. Previous work on the

This timely survey of historic orchards in the Carse of Gowrie was initiated by Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust with support from Forestry Commission Scotland and Tayside Biodiversity Partnership. The Carse has been well known for its orchards since monastic settlement in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century.

### What We Surveyed

A list of historic orchards in the Carse of Gowrie was developed from the historic and contemporary literature. This formed the basis for investigation. A total of 51 sites were visited to determine the presence, condition and extent of the historic orchards. Survey data including tree types, numbers, condition, and biodiversity indicators was collected together with a record of the orchard keeper and anecdotal evidence. Numerous photographs were taken to complete this contemporary snapshot.



Monorgan

south side of the Tay has shown that some rare pear varieties exist and it is considered likely that this is also the case in the Carse. The area has already been shown to be notable for its heritage varieties of apples (including Bloody Ploughman, Tower of Glamis, etc).



## Biodiversity

Biodiversity indicators such as trunk cavities and bark fissures on veteran trees (typically over 100 years old) showed that the remaining orchards were of high biodiversity value. Traditional orchards with veteran trees are now an uncommon habitat in Scotland. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan Review has added "Traditional Orchards" to the list of habitats that need focussed attention, because orchard losses have exceeded 90% in the past 30 years. In response the Tayside Biodiversity Action Partnership has prepared a draft "Community Gardens, Orchards and Allotments" Habitat Action Plan and it is proposing a "Tayside Traditional Orchards Habitat Action Plan".



**Biodiversity features: trunk cracks and bark fissures**

Location ID	Orchard	Location	Holes in branches	Crevices in bark	Loose bark	Trunk cavities	Dead wood in canopy	Dead wood on ground	Water pools	Fungal fruiting bodies	Aerial roots	Sap runs
L0030	Bogmiln	Orchard to south of farm	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes					
L0018	Carse Grange	The Retreat	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes					
L0019	Carse Grange	Orchard of Carse Grange	yes	yes	yes	yes		yes				
L0021	Carse Grange	Carse Grange	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes					
L0049	Clashbenny	Clashbenny Farm	yes	yes	yes	yes		yes				
L0042	Fingask	Fingask Castle	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes				
L0038	Flatfield	Flatfield	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes			
L0003	Friaton/ Barnhill Toll	Orchard at Barnhill Toll or Friaton	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes				
L0020	Grange	Orchard at Grange on southside of road	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes				
L0012	Megginch	Megginch Castle	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes				
L0032	Muirhouses	Muirhouses Farm	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes			
L0034	Newbigging	Newbigging Farm	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes					
L0005	Newtown of Glencarse	St Magnus		yes	yes	yes						
L0048	Port Allen	Port Allen Orchard	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes			
L0016	Templehall/Monorgan	West of road	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes				
L0017	Templehall/Monorgan	East of road	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes			
L0023	Wester Ballingdean	Casa Gedzi	yes	yes	yes							
L0024	Wester Ballingdean	Carse View	yes	yes	yes							
L0022	Wester Ballingdean	West orchard at Wester Ballindean	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes			
L0010		Inchyra Farm	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes				

## Biodiversity indicators of veteran trees



**Windblow gradually reduces numbers of old trees**

Evidence collected during the survey leads to the conclusion that all the remaining orchards are liable to continuing degradation or total loss for the same reasons as those that no longer exist. Pressure from housing development was found to be a particular contemporary threat.

Port Allen orchard still yields a considerable amount of fruit. Local people come and pick it.



## Recommendations

- Raise awareness of heritage assets
- Create enhanced status for historic orchards
- Engage with owners
- Put on Fruit & Blossom events
- Provide management advice & training
- Foster an organisation for Carse Orchards
- Survey varieties
- Create local nursery for heritage varieties
- Assess economic opportunities

The survey was carried out in August and September 2007 on behalf of Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust by Dr Crispin W. Hayes of CW Hayes Associates:Eco-Consultancy. [www.eco-consultancy.co.uk](http://www.eco-consultancy.co.uk) Summary written and produced by CW Hayes Associates Copyright 2007

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