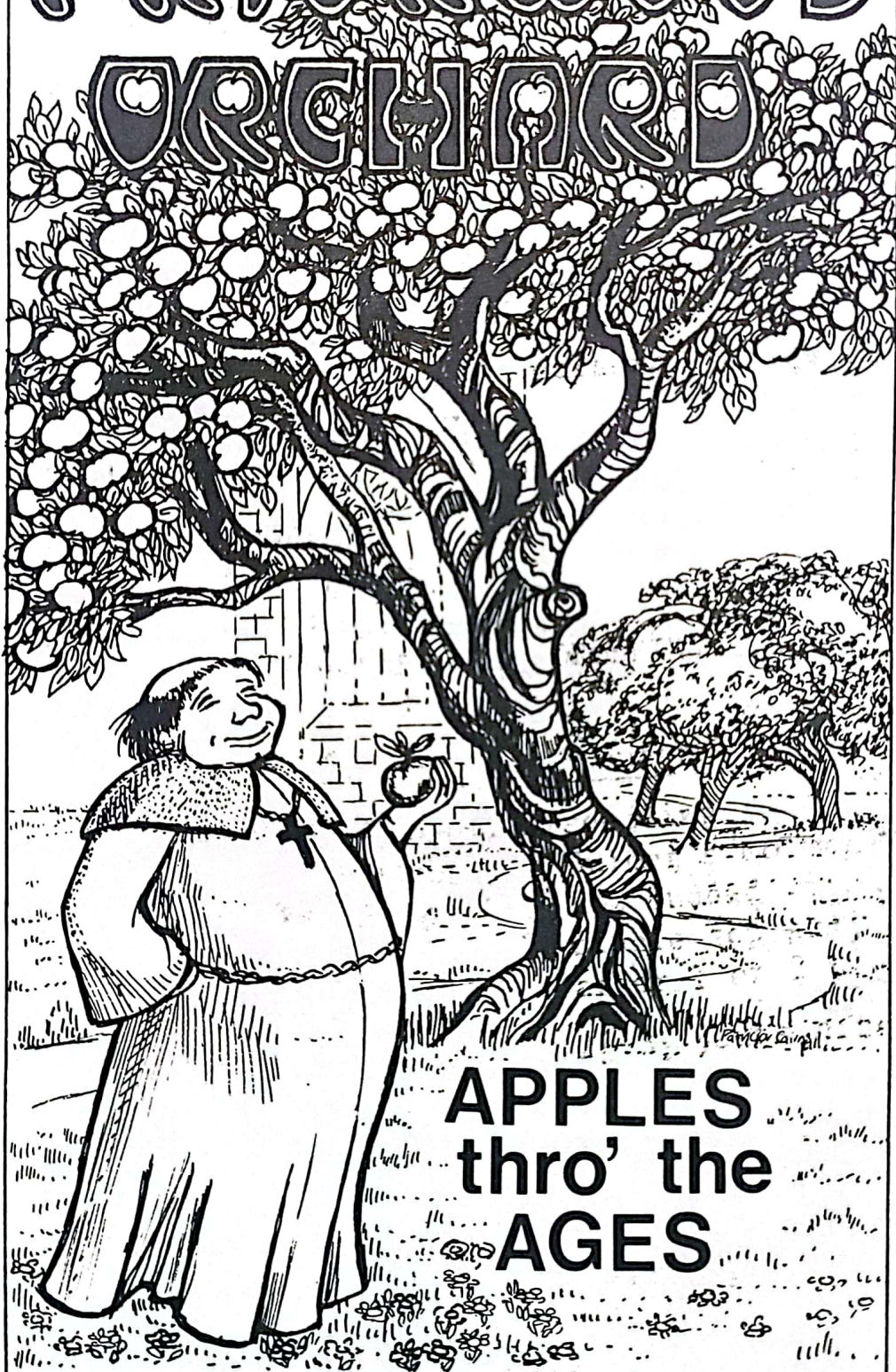


NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND
FOR PLACES OF HISTORIC INTEREST OR NATURAL BEAUTY



PRIORWOOD ORCHARD



**APPLES
thro' the
AGES**

AN ORCHARD WALK

GROUP I

Roman Times

Till 11th Century

The Romans probably brought the first cultivated apples to Britain. The apples were superior to the wizened Crab and bitter wild apples which grew in the woodlands covering much of Britain at that time. The Romans despised such miserable fruit, for they were accustomed to eating the best of table apples, and to drinking excellent cider from their orchards, which they had developed both at home and in conquered France. They had learned how to bud and graft fruit trees, so it was not difficult for them to bring apple stock of their favourite varieties into England.

POMME d'API It has been asserted that this apple was brought from the Peleponessus to Rome by Appius Claudius and then to Britain. Writing in Paris in 1689 an author says "the Pomme d'Api which is served here is more for show than for use, being a small, flat apple, very beautiful and very red on one side and pale or white on the other and may serve the ladies at their toilet as a pattern to paint by."

COURT PENDU PLAT Brought to Britain by the Romans and still in use today. The name signifies "suspended stalk", the stalk being so short the fruit sits upon it as it were on a branch.

CRAB APPLE This tree comes from a very old Crab Apple tree growing at the edge of a wood near Traquair.

"SCROG" APPLE An old Scottish wild apple from a hedgerow in Berwickshire.



GROUP II

Monastery Days

11th – 16th Century

The Monks establishing their monasteries and cultivating their vast tracts of land were keen gardeners. They grew the best of the old Roman varieties, but also experimented with many new grafts and produced the first named English apple. Melrose Abbey, established about 1136, grew fruit in the rich surrounding pastures, and the present Priorwood orchard may well have carried apples even in these far off days. The frequent visits of the monks to the great religious houses abroad kept them up to date with all the latest developments in fruit culture, and their early writings show how highly they esteemed the apple and its virtues, whether as drink, as food, as medicine or as cosmetics for the skin and hair.

OLD PEARMAIN 1200 The first named English apple mentioned in a deed of 1204 when 200 Pearmains had to be paid to the exchequer on St Michael's Feast Day by the Manor of Runham in Norfolk.

COSTARD 1292 This apple was called "Poma Costard" in the fruiterers bills of Edward I. A hundred cooking apples 12d. It was extensively grown and the retailers were called costard mongers, from which comes the present day derivation costermonger or barrow boy.

CARLISLE CODLIN Codlings were coddled or par boiled and were favourite cooking apples of the period. This apple was fit for use when no larger than a walnut.

OSLIN A very old Scotch apple thought to have originated at the Abbey in Arbroath. Supposedly the first apple to be grown from pips and sometimes called the Original Pippin.

ROYAL RUSSET A favourite old English variety mentioned as early as 1597 and to-day still a favourite table apple.

RIBSTON PIPPIN Some apple pips were brought from Rouen and planted at Ribston Hall near Knaresborough. "This apple is thought to have come from one of these pips. The original tree stood till 1810, when it was blown down by a violent gale. It was supported by stakes and continued to produce fruit, lying in a horizontal position, till 1835 when it died. A young shoot growing beneath the surface was raised to preserve the original of this favourite old apple." It was also called Glory of York.

GROUP III

The Golden Age

16th – 18th Century

A tremendous interest in apple growing prevailed throughout Britain at the time. Almost every country dweller – nobleman and peasant alike – had his apple tree, his store and his cider press. Cider was drunk extensively and servants and labourers were frequently paid in cider, which had become quite a common currency. Everyone experimented with raising new varieties from apple seeds and pips and gardeners vied with one and other to produce a bigger and better apple than his neighbour. Great confusion was caused by the many odd and fanciful names chosen for their favourite fruits. A few of these apples remain in cultivation to-day, but many failed to survive, the poetic name alone a charming reminder of a long forgotten English apple – Pignout, Woodcock, Musk, Foxwelp and many others – over 500 of them.

MARGIL 1750 Probably of French origin and introduced to England by George London, who worked for many years in the gardens at Versailles. Said to be one of the finest dessert apples.

WYKEN PIPPIN 1700 This grew from a seed saved from an apple which Lord Craven had eaten while on his travels from France to Holland. The seed was planted at Wyken near Coventry. It is also called the Warwickshire Pippin or Gukin Pippin.

ADAMS PEARMAINS The name is derived from the pearlike shape of the apple and it is richly flavoured. Also called the Norfolk Pippin.

DEVONSHIRE QUARRENDEN 1790 This apple is still popular to-day. It will thrive in almost any soil and situation, from Devon to the Moray Firth, producing fruit as sweet in the north as in the south.

GOLDEN NOBLE This apple was shown to the Horticultural Society of London in 1820 by Sir Thomas Harr of Stone Hall, Norfolk. His gardener produced it from a tree growing in an old orchard at Downham.

GROUP IV

Present Day Apples

19th & 20th Century

The late 1700s and early 1800s saw the decline of many orchards, and for a time the apples of England fell into disfavour. Canker and American blight were blamed, but proper methods of husbandry had often been neglected. However the painstaking work of a few dedicated apple growers, such as Knight and later Laxton, followed by the establishment of the Research Stations, heralded a new scientific approach to apple growing and the decline was halted. The introduction of fertilisers, increased information on pest and disease control, together with new methods of grafting, planting and cultivation, led to a renewed interest in apples. To-day apples are big business, and the aim of commercial growers is to introduce apples that are disease free, easy to harvest, and above all attractive to the customer, but foreign competition remains keen.

ASHMEAD KERNAL An example of an old apple still in general cultivation to-day. Raised originally by Dr Ashmead of Gloucester it first fruited in 1776 and was a favourite apple in all the gardens of Gloucestershire. It is a dessert apple, aromatic, with a sugary juice.

GAVIN A recent introduction from the John Innes Research Station and named after one of its raisers. Its great merit is that it is immune to apple scab and is particularly useful in areas in the south where scab is a problem.

SUNTAN Bred from Cox and the old Court Pendu Plat. It is said to outcrop Cox by 50% and to have a more aromatic flavour than its ever popular parent.

GOLDEN DELICIOUS First discovered in America as a chance seedling in a farm in West Virginia. Originally called Mullens Yellow Seedling after its discoverer. Now second in production in the U.S. to the favourite Red Delicious it is also popular in England and on the Continent. Recently much in the public eye because of the French attempt to flood the English market with the variety.

DISCOVERY From an open pollinated Worcester Pearmain. Ripens early and has replaced Beauty of Bath.

GROUP V

Regional Apples

In the old days transporting of apples from one part of the country to another was a problem. Fruit did not keep too well after being jolted over rough country roads, so gardeners in the more remote areas raised their own apple trees. These apples were frequently named after the region in which they were raised.

Most are unknown to-day, though a few trees may still survive in very old gardens.

TOWER OF GLAMMIS Described by Robert Hogg in 1875 as a "first rate culinary apple, very juicy, crisp, brisk and perfumed". It was peculiar to the orchards of Clydesdale and the Carse of Gowrie.

STIRLING CASTLE Said to be similar in character to the Hawthornden apple.

GALLOWAY PIPPIN Cultivated in Wigtown in Galloway from very early times, sometimes called Croft en Reich.

WHITE MELROSE The old tree standing in Priorwood garden has been there for a long time, possibly a descendant of the original Melrose White, which may have been grown by the monks in the adjoining abbey. Its cultivation was confined exclusively to the Melrose area. It is the largest and one of the most useful of the Scotch apples and as Hogg wrote in 1875 "Even in the south it is not disregarded as both in size and quality it is one of the most attractive market apples". It used to be sold at 2/- for 12.

KESWICK CODLIN First discovered growing among the rubbish behind a wall at Gleaston Castle, Ulverston, by a nurseryman who propagated it and distributed it under the name of Keswick Codlin. Planted in the Episcopal garden at Rose Castle, Carlisle, Sir John Sinclair wrote that it never failed to bear a crop each year. The tree is a copious bearer.

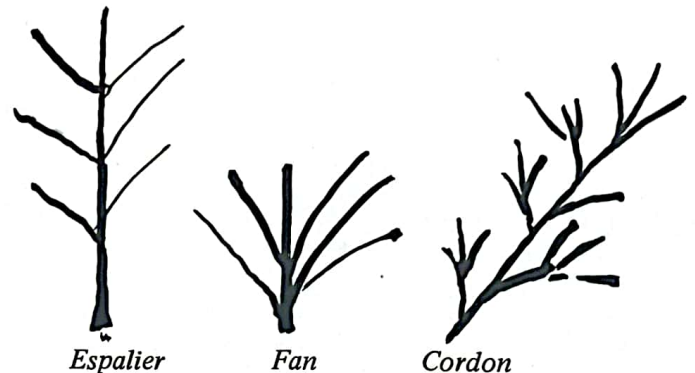
FLOWER OF KENT Sir Issac Newton is reputed to have seen an apple fall from this tree in his mother's orchard at Woolsthorpe in 1666. Which led him into the train of thought which resulted in his theory of the law of gravitation.

GROUP VI

Apple Tree Training

There are many ways of growing and training apples. Left to nature they grow into standard trees, ideal for farmers in bygone days who allowed their stock to graze in the orchard. The apples were out of reach of the animals but picking was difficult. As early as 1660 growers were experimenting with dwarfing root stocks and half standard, bush and pyramids became popular. They cropped early, were easily harvested and took up much less space. To-day experiments are being conducted at Long Ashton and other Research Stations growing the apples close together on a single stem. They are cut to the ground after cropping and two years later fruit again, having been sprayed to crop in this way. All designed to make harvesting even simpler for commercial growers.

Apples may also be trained to fit special positions, on a wall as cordons, espaliers, fans and many other forms. Priorwood has several very old standard trees throughout the orchard and some other training methods can be seen in this group and also around the garden.



Espalier

Fan

Cordon



“Stay me with flagons, Comfort me with apples!”

Apples are not the only fruit in Priorwood Orchard. There are pears, plums, gages, damsons, cherries and a medlar. Almost all of them past their prime; but still beautiful in old age.

The Trust have left them undisturbed, illustrating the enduring past when 700 years ago the monks of Melrose Abbey peacefully dug and tilled the soil. The apple walk has been planted to tell a little of the story of the development of the apple in Britain.