



A Story  
of the  
Cateran Trail  
in 100  
Objects



*"If you're going to have a story,  
have a big story, or none at all."*  
Joseph Campbell



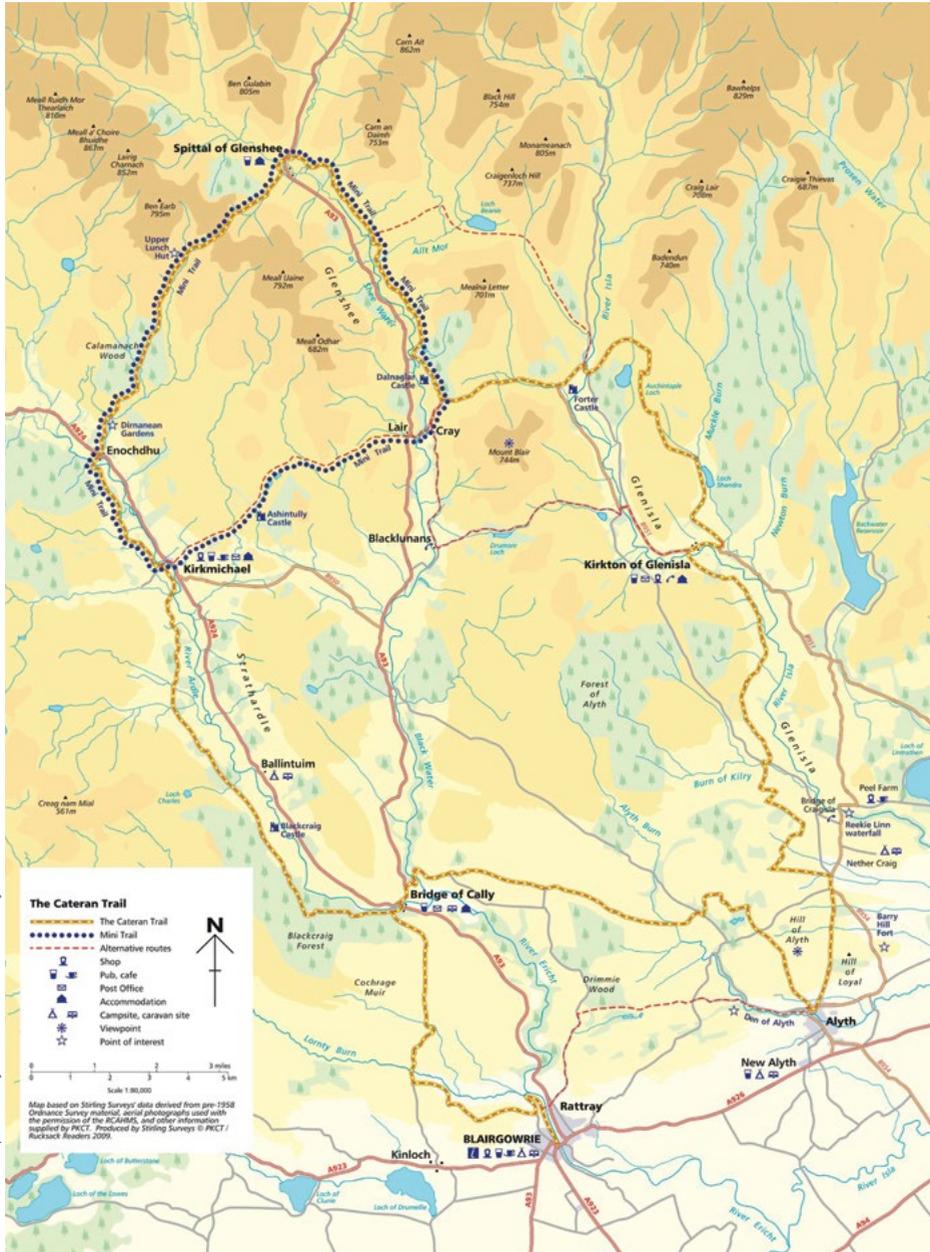
cateran's  
commonwealth

# Introduction

The CATERAN TRAIL is one of Scotland's great long-distance footpaths. Fully waymarked, its circular 64-mile (103 km) route through Eastern Perthshire and the Angus Glens follows old drove roads and ancient tracks across a varied terrain of farmland, forests and moors. Some of the routes follow those used by the Caterans, the name given to the Highland cattle raiders who were the scourge of Strathardle, Glenshee and Glen Isla from the Middle Ages to the 17th century, and after whom the trail is named.

A Story of the CATERAN TRAIL in 100 Objects is the culmination of a project that invited people who live and work around the trail and visitors to propose objects that they believe tell an important part of the story of this area of Scotland through history up to the present. Typically, an object is a material thing that can be seen and touched, but that definition has been broadened to include people, places and landscapes, as well as objects relating to them. Suggestions were collected online through a public campaign over the winter of 2016/2017, and in April 2017, an advisory panel chaired by one of the founders of the CATERAN TRAIL, Bob Ellis, selected the final 100 objects, which are described in this booklet.

The project formed part of the launch programme of a bigger initiative called CATERAN'S COMMON WEALTH, which is using the CATERAN TRAIL as a stage for a multi-year programme of diverse arts, cultural and heritage activities and events aimed at inspiring people to think about and celebrate our 'common wealth'. In addition to publishing the final list through this booklet and displaying of some of the objects in Alyth Museum, walks, talks and online resources relating to the history, heritage and archaeology of the CATERAN TRAIL have been developed, including digitised lesson plans designed for primary schools around the CATERAN TRAIL.



The story of a place is also the story of its people, and equally, the story of a people is also partly the story of their place. From the settlers who lived in the late Bronze Age or early Iron Age Pitcarmick houses near Glenshee to the fearsome Cateran cattle raiders, after whom the trail is named, from Donald Cargill the covenanter to cultural icons Hamish Henderson and Belle and Sheila Stewart, their names and stories are as evocative as the landscape and places in which they lived, loved and laughed. But as well as the more weel-kent names and faces, there are the other less familiar folk whose stories are just as intertwined with the landscape and place as those of their more well-known neighbours. Here is the list of people and the objects relating to them that were chosen to be part of the final 100.

### Alyth Family History Project

Open every Sunday from Easter to Remembrance Day in Alyth Parish Church, this remarkable volunteer-led archive houses publications and memorabilia from over 150 years, including 6,500 photographs of local people, schools, businesses, events, views and weddings, Parish records from 1623–1854, baptismal records from the 1900s to the present day, and 6,500 burial records and headstone photographs for Alyth's three cemeteries.

### Ballads and Songs of the Cateran Trail (various)

The public campaign for suggestions as to what should be included in 'A Story of the Cateran Trail in 100 Objects' attracted a number of entries about ballads, songs and tunes from the area. Amongst the most famous is Belle Stewart's 'The Berry Fields o' Blair' and 'The Valley of Strathmore' by Alyth-born Andy Stewart (former front man of Silly Wizard and also a member of the Stewart family). Also proposed were 'The Lass of Glenshee' and the 'Braes o' Mount Blair', both of which tell poignant love stories; the Reekie Linn dance tune, named after the area's most dramatic waterfall; and the music of Jimmy Ritchie, known as 'the Fiddler of Glenshee', who played with Bobby MacLeod and Jimmy Shand during the period when Scottish dance music reached the peak of its popularity.



Photo courtesy of the Laing Photographic Collection

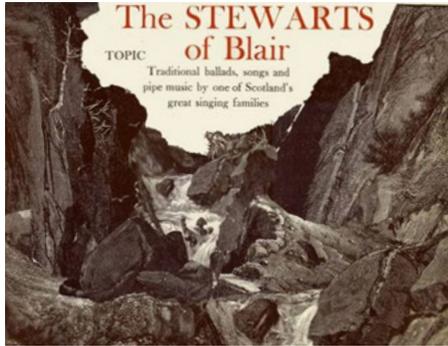
Alyth Parish Church, home of the Alyth Family History Project, photo Clare Cooper



Photo, courtesy of Christopher Dingwall

### Belle and Sheila Stewart

Belle and her daughter Sheila were Scottish traditional singers and storytellers. Their roots were in the Scottish Traveller community and both were born in the Blairgowrie area. Famous for their songs and tales from the Perthshire berry fields, their artistry was made world famous by another local, Hamish Henderson, a key figure in the post-World War II folk revival.



Record Cover, the Stewarts of Blair

### Blairgowrie Drunks Cart

One of Alyth Museum's most treasured objects, this cart was used to haul drunks off the streets in Blairgowrie at the end of the 19th century. Considering the state of the roads and the wooden headrest inside the cart, it would not have been a comfortable ride! Those found to be drunk and incapable were sentenced to either a fine of five shillings or 24 hours in a police cell, and they were named and shamed in the local newspaper.



Blairgowrie Drunks Cart, photo Clare Cooper

### Chalmers of Morganstoune

During the 18th century, a man named Chalmers, who lived at Morganstoune, was prepared to protect his property fiercely from the Caterans who plotted to murder him in his sleep. While out tending his cattle, Chalmers spotted some Caterans lying in wait. Pretending not having seen them, he went about the rest of his business, but that night stayed up to beat them at their own game. Eventually, a Cateran stealthily tried to enter the house and was killed by Chalmers, who then killed a second Cateran. The surviving Caterans crept away and never troubled Chalmers again.



Chalmers of Morganstoune by Ian Kirkwood

### Clan MacThomas

Dating back to the 15th century, the clan takes its name from a Gaelic speaking Highlander, known as Tomaidh Mor ("Great Tommy"), who settled his kinsman and followers in Glenshee. The early chiefs of the Clan MacThomas were seated at the Thom, on the east bank of the Shee Water opposite the Spittal of Glenshee. This location is thought to be the site of the tomb of the legendary Diarmuid of the Fionn mac Cumhaill sagas, with which Glenshee has so many associations.



Clach na Cailleach or Cackstone, the gathering place of the Clan MacThomas by Kevin Greig, stateswinames.org

### Curling Stones

Curling was a popular winter sport around the Cateran Trail area whenever the ponds developed sufficiently thick ice, which was more common during 1300–1850 AD when Scotland experienced the effects of the Little Ice Age. In the Blairgowrie entry in the Statistical Account of 1795, Rev Mr James Johnston ended his description of the lakes of the parish with these words: “Curling is an exercise at which the inhabitants of this district excel.” So popular was the game in the area that when the railway line was constructed between Coupar Angus and Blairgowrie, a special halt for curlers was constructed at the side of Stormont Loch, complete with platform.

Curling Competition, photo, courtesy of the Laing Photographic Collection



### Donald McCoull

As you cross the River Ardlie by Enochdhu, the hillside immediately to the west is known to locals as Cnoc Donald Mor, and one of the streams as Donald McCoull’s Burn. Tradition has it that ‘Big Donald’ was a notorious sheep rustler in the glen around 1700, although for a long time no one could track him down. His underground hideout was eventually given away when smoke was seen rising from a hole in the ground, where his daughters were roasting one of the stolen sheep. As recorded in the Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness, there was no escape for Donald “...as the circle of his foes closed closer and closer around him, till he hanged himself with a rope he had used so long for tying his stolen sheep. This he did on top of Cnoc Donald Mor”. It is said that Donald’s ghost continues to haunt that part of the glen.



Donald McCoull by Kevin Grieg, [stoneswinames.org](http://stoneswinames.org)

### Duff Memorial Church

Born in the parish of Moulin in 1806, Alexander Duff was first educated in what is now the Kirkmichael Session House. He went on to St. Andrews University where he studied theology, before being chosen as the Church of Scotland’s first missionary in India. After an initial spell in India, during which he had an important part to play in changing and modernising the country’s educational system, he returned to Scotland, where he rose to become moderator of the Free Church of Scotland. During further visits to India, Duff also played a part in establishing the University of Calcutta. The Cateran Trail passes by the Duff Memorial Free Church in Kirkmichael, designed by L & J G Falconer in 1890, but which is now disused and sadly dilapidated.

Duff Memorial Church, photo courtesy of Christopher Dingwall



### Fionn mac Cumhail

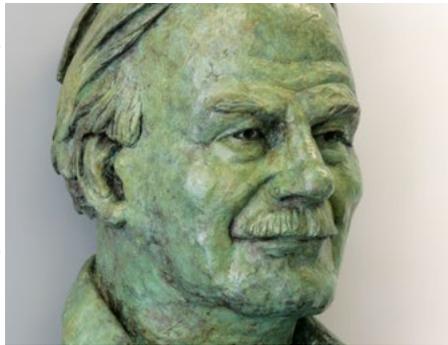
The legends of Fionn mac Cumhail, the famous Irish Giant, and his band of warriors, the Fianna, loom large in Glenshee. Indeed, new research has found evidence that the density of place names connected to this great myth is unprecedented here in Scotland. Two ballads in particular seem to locate Glenshee in the Fenian legends. One, ‘Laoidh Dhiarmaid’ (‘The Lay of Diarmuid’), tells how Diarmuid, a colleague of Fionn, dies on Ben Gulabin at the head of Glenshee, killed by a boar. Other place names include Creag nam Brataichean or ‘crag of the banners’ and Fèith nan Ceann, now known as the farming hamlet Finegand, meaning ‘bog of the heads’.



photo Fingal and Corban Cargla by Alexander Runciman © National Galleries Scotland

### Hamish Henderson

Born in Blairgowrie and brought up to speak Gaelic, Hamish spent his first five years in Glenshee, going on to be schooled in England at Dulwich College, and then at Downing College Cambridge. He has been called the most important Scots poet since Robert Burns and is considered to be the founding father of Scotland's 20th century folk renaissance. He was also an accomplished folk song collector and discovered such notable performers as the Stewarts of Blair, Jeannie Robertson, Flora MacNeil and Calum Johnston. An exceptional man in many ways, he served as an intelligence officer in Europe and North Africa; was a communist, linguist and intellectual; co-founded the School of Scottish Studies; and wrote songs in addition to poetry, one of his most famous lyrics being 'The Freedom Come-All-Ye'.



Bust of Hamish Henderson, photo courtesy of Perth Museum & Art Gallery

### Ian Kirkwood

Ian Kirkwood lives on the Cateran Trail in Kirkmichael, from where he works as an illustrator, graphic designer and beekeeper. He is also the creator of Strathardle Archers and the Enjukan Dojo (Japanese swordsmanship). When not sailing to the Faroes, he gets on his high horse as a Geogist blogger, pushing for Scottish tax reform. His work features on the many interpretation boards around the trail. Ian's illustrated story 'Rob and Bo Ban', set in Strathardle and Glenshee, tells the story of how the Caterans were outwitted by a young boy minding his family's cattle.



The Mount Blair Giants, Colly Camb and Smoutachantay, by Ian Kirkwood

### James Croll

Born the son of a stonemason in Cargill, James Croll had a limited education, yet was fascinated by the world around him from his boyhood. He suffered several failures as a millwright, joiner, shopkeeper, insurance salesman and temperance hotelier in Blairgowrie before a series of fortunate events introduced him first to the Andersonian Museum in Glasgow and later to the Geological Survey. Intrigued by the recent discovery that Scotland and much of the Northern Hemisphere had been buried by glaciers, Croll went on to join the Geological Survey. He developed revolutionary theories about climate change, which earned him the admiration of fellow scientists, such as naturalist Charles Darwin and astronomer William Herschel, and that are still relevant today. Though largely forgotten, Croll has recently had a memorial erected to his memory in a courtyard next to the Fair Maid's House in Perth, now the home of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society.



James Croll, photo wikimedia commons

### James Sandy

James Sandy was born in Alyth in about 1766. Crippled in both legs as a result of two separate accidents, he nevertheless went on to become known as 'the Alyth Genius' for his remarkable creativity and ingenuity. Among many other items, he made musical and fine optical instruments and clocks. He suggested improvements for flax spinning machinery and he even made artificial limbs and false teeth. He is most famous as the inventor of a special type of wooden-hinged snuff box. His concealed hinge did not get clogged with grains of snuff and when the box closed it was airtight. He became well known for his skill and inventive mind and his home was a meeting place for many distinguished people. His tombstone in the Alyth Arches graveyard was erected by public subscription.



Mauchlineware Box, Photo courtesy Perth Museum & Art Gallery

### Jane Spindler & The Blairgowrie Boys

Blairgowrie has been a quiet haven for artists since the early 1800s. It was the home of William Geddes, a self-taught artist who became well known as a painter of scenes from Scottish life and as a painter of fish. He became the central figure of a small group of painters who gathered in the town, known as 'The Blairgowrie Boys'. They included his two sons, Ewan and Robert Smith Geddes; Thomas Bromley Blacklock, a close friend of Ewan; James Michael Brown, a portrait painter; Thomas Stuart Burnett, a sculptor; William Dickson, a landscape and still-life painter; Adam Burnett

Fair-Weather; David Farquharson, another landscape painter; William Miller Frazer, who became known for his Corot-like landscapes; Robert Herdman, who gained a reputation as a painter of historical subjects and portraits; George Murray who specialised in decorative painting and mosaics; and the only woman in the group, Jane Elizabeth Spindler, a painter of landscape, rustic scenes and interiors in oil and watercolour, who came from a musical family in Dundee and established a studio in Blairgowrie during the late 1880s.



Two Salmon by William Geddes, photo courtesy Perth Museum & Art Gallery

### The Kirkmichael Plague Victims

There is a corner of Kirkmichael Parish churchyard where, despite the lack of space, there are no marked graves. This is because in 1350 AD, a terrible plague, the Galor Mor, better known as the Black Death, struck the glen and its victims were buried in unmarked graves. To ward off the plague, the Bishop of Dunkeld visited his surrounding parishes administering consecrated items, one of which was water into which the bones of St. Columba had been dipped. Those who drank the water lived; those who refused to drink died. The bishop declared that the bones of those who succumbed to the plague would retain the disease, and the corner of the churchyard where they were buried remains undisturbed.



Kirkmichael Churchyard, photo Clare Cooper

### The Lair Spindle-whorl

The Lair spindle-whorl was found in 2015 during the excavation of a Pictish turf longhouse (AD 700–900) by the Glenshee Archaeology Project. The spindle-whorl would have been used to add weight and momentum to the spindle during hand-spinning yarn. The Lair spindle-whorl features intricate graffiti-like marks carved into one side of the siltstone. Some marks look like the body of a stag with lines depicting antlers. Other groups of incisions may be crude attempts at rune-like script. This object is a fascinating representation of early medieval material culture, with the casual doodling quality of the inscriptions making it noteworthy in Scotland.



Lair Spindle Whorl, photo © Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust

### Major William Caulfeild

Major William Caulfeild was an officer in the British Army. He was made Inspector of Roads for Scotland in 1732, and after the departure of General Wade, became responsible for directing the British Government's construction of new roads and bridges in the Highlands aimed at bringing order to a part of the country that had rebelled in the Jacobite rising of 1715. Although he is not as well-known as Wade, Caulfeild oversaw the construction of many more roads than his predecessor. General Wade was responsible for 250 miles (400 km) of road, 40 bridges and two forts, whereas Caulfeild was responsible for 900 miles (1,400 km) of road and over 600 bridges. One of the main roads Caulfeild was responsible for constructing ran from Braemar to Blairgowrie and parts of it can still be seen along the CATERAN TRAIL, including the impressive 12-foot-wide humpback bridge at the Spittal of Glenshee, thought to have been constructed between 1749 and 1763.



Caulfeild Military Bridge Glenshee, photo George Logan

### Mrs Macdonald's Memorial

South of the trail from the Spittal of Glenshee to Glen Isla, walkers pass a memorial on top of a small hill. The inscription reads "To the beloved memory of Clara Anne Jane Chamberlayne Brownlow, Mrs Macdonald of St. Martins, who departed this life on Sunday 16th December 1883. This cross is erected by her many friends and neighbours". Mrs Macdonald had requested that when she died, there should be no display, or anyone asked to her funeral. However, she was held in such esteem that a great cortege processed from Perth via Mavisbank, Isla Bridge, Blairgowrie, Bridge of Cally and Persie until it reached Glenshee Lodge where she was buried in private.



Mrs Macdonald's memorial, photo Clare Cooper

### The Napoleonic Bell, Alyth Town Hall

This bell is displayed in the foyer of Alyth Town Hall. It was captured from the French frigate 'La Nécessité' during the Napoleonic Wars by HMS Horatio and presented to Alyth in 1810 by the ship's purser, John Warden, a native of the town. Cast at Quimper in Brittany in 1789, it was hung in the bell tower and was regularly rung until the millennium celebrations of 2000, after which it was discovered to be damaged.



Alyth's Napoleonic Bell, photo Clare Cooper

### Pictish Warriors

When the Romans came north to what is now modern Scotland, they encountered the fierce, proud warrior society known as the Picts. The CATERAN TRAIL lies in their heartlands. Known by the Romans as 'Picti' ('Painted Ones'), these northern tribes constituted the largest kingdom in Dark Age Scotland. Living in a series of loose tribal confederations, they were gradually brought together by external forces to create one of the earliest states in Europe. After fending off the Romans, Angles and Vikings, the Picts merged with their cousins, the Scots of Argyll, under the leadership of Kenneth MacAlpin, to create modern Scotland.



Pictish Warrior as imagined by the 16th artist John White, British Museum print

### The Poets of the Cateran Trail, William Pyott and James Geddes

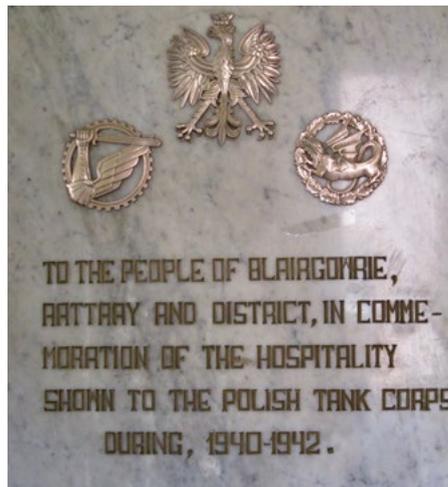
Two mid-Victorian poets of some distinction were associated with Eastern Perthshire. Born at Ruthven in Forfarshire, William Pyott lived nearly his whole life in Blairgowrie. His father, a native of Blairgowrie, was a mill overseer, and Pyott himself worked in the mills. Although no great scholar, he was a widely read man. One volume of his poems, published in 1869, was so popular that it was re-published three times. James Y. Geddes, a tailor and clothier, spent his life between Dundee and Alyth. He published several collections of poems, including 'The New Jerusalem and Other Verses', which were well received.



Alyth Parish Church, the subject of Geddes' poem 'The Spectre Clock of Alyth'; photo courtesy of the Laing Photographic Collection

### The Polish Army

After the German invasion of Poland in 1939, many Poles left their homeland to make their way first to France, and then, after France fell, to the UK to carry on the fight. Hundreds came to Blairgowrie and Alyth. The headquarters of the 1st Tank Regiment was in Blairgowrie, and the Signals Centre was in Alyth. The first soldiers and airmen came in 1941 and the last are thought to have left in 1947. Whilst many passed through or were stationed locally for short periods, some stayed and married local women. Indeed so many local people took the visitors to their hearts that plaques were left by the Polish army in both Blairgowrie and Alyth when they departed, in commemoration of the hospitality and affection shown to them.



Commemorative Plaque, Blairgowrie Town Hall, photo Ian Richards

### Queen Victoria's Plaque

The part of the Cateran Trail that links the Spittal of Glenshee to Enochdhu was a route taken by Queen Victoria on several occasions when travelling from Deeside to Dunkeld on horseback. As well as being recorded in her book 'More Leaves from the Journal of a Life in the Highlands', one such journey in 1866 involved a visit to Kindrogan, during which she paused for tea on the banks of the River Ardlie. This event is commemorated by a brass plaque beside the riverside path leading from Enochdhu to Kindrogan, a short distance from the trail.



Queen Victoria's Plaque, photo Christopher Dingwall

### Quern Stones

These were used throughout Scotland into the 20th century to grind grain into flour. A complete rotary quern consists of an upper and lower quern stone. The lower stone remains stationary and the upper stone is turned manually as the grain is fed down a central hole in the upper stone. Grain is crushed between the two stones, pushed to the edge of the stone, and caught on a cloth or table under the quern. The mixture of flour, grains and husk is often processed two or three times to achieve the required fineness. Querns require a hard stone, such as granite, because the constant grinding erodes softer stones.



Quern Stone, Photo courtesy of Perth Museum & Art Gallery

### The Caterans

‘Cateran’ derives from the Gaelic word ‘ceatharn’ meaning ‘warrior’, but usually one that is lightly armed. Despite the term historically referring to a band of fighting men of a Scottish Highland clan, in the Scottish Lowlands, Cateran came to epitomise Highland cattle raiding and is indicative of a Lowland perception of a particularly Gaelic Highland problem. Throughout the Middle Ages, and until shortly before the Jacobite risings of the 18th century, the records of the Scottish government bristle with complaints about the activities of the Caterans. In the 14th century, the problem became so acute that a council decided that Caterans should be arrested or killed on sight. But what gave rise to the Caterans and why did they attack places like Glenshee, Glen Isla and Strathardle? Given that the Cateran

raids began after the mid-14th century, one Scottish historian has highlighted reasons including the aftermath of the wars with England, plague, and environmental factors, such as climate change; it became wetter and colder from about 1315. These factors resulted in a fall in population and greater difficulty in raising crops in the Highlands, which was always marginal land. Thus, two alternative ways of making a living—herding cattle and raiding cattle—became more prevalent. Another historian offers evidence that in the 1740s and 1750s, scattered bands of Jacobite Highlanders refused to give up their battle with the British Army and relied on cattle raiding to survive, continuing inter-tribal activity that he believes had been part of clan life for many centuries and that may have had its origins as far back as the Iron Age.



A Cateran in Glenshee by Kevin Greig, [staneswines.org](http://staneswines.org)

### The Flemish of Glenshee

Intriguingly, there were many people of Flemish (modern-day Holland and Belgium) origin in Glenshee from early in the 17th century until the Industrial Revolution. In Scotland, the Industrial Revolution began in the late 18th century and early 19th century, and created an incentive for people to move from rural areas, such as Glenshee, to cities like Dundee that could offer better employment opportunities. If the local oral tradition is correct, the Flemish also left a major footprint on the slopes of the glen. There is the remnant of a settlement at Easter Bleaton in the south of Glenshee that local people believe to have been occupied by the Flemish, possibly in the 17th and 18th centuries, and documentary evidence suggests that there were Flemings and Spaldings (both families of Flemish origin) living in the south of Glenshee around the time that the settlement was inhabited.



Easter Bleaton, photo © Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust

### The Green Lady of Newton Castle

Green Lady myths are deep-rooted in Scottish folklore. Green Ladies are frequently involved in doomed love affairs, and are often associated with fresh water and portrayed as the spirits of women enchanted by fairies. The Green Lady who haunts Newton Castle, Blairgowrie, home of the Macpherson Clan since 1787, is said to be Lady Jean Drummond of Newton, who had fallen in love with one of the Blairs of Ardblair. The families had feuded and Lady Jean pined away with a broken heart, drowning herself after she was betrothed to another man. However, an old ballad tells it differently. It claims Lady Jean had consulted a local witch after her lover spurned her. She was given an enchanted green dress, which won him back, but she died shortly after marrying him.



The green Lady o' Newton, illustrated by Alyson Macneill, courtesy of Maurice Fleming

### The Small Monument, Kirkmichael

A substantial length of the CATERAN TRAIL runs over land that was once owned by James Small, an important 19th century Scottish Laird from Kirkmichael. As well as the local estate of Dirmanean, Mr Small owned as much as 20,000 acres of land in the surrounding area and played a prominent role in village life. Following his death on June 29, 1900 at the age of 65, an obituary in the Blairgowrie Advertiser read: "To a thorough practical knowledge of country life in all its aspects, he brought a soundness of judgement, a kindness of heart and a readiness to help, which made him a friend, and often the adviser, to all who knew him". Standing an imposing 18 foot high at the junction of the A924 and B950 on the outskirts of Kirkmichael, this Aberdeenshire granite structure commemorates his life.



The Small Monument, photo by Clare Cooper

Place names are an important part of our geographical and cultural environment and are a window through which we can glimpse our past. They identify geographical entities and represent cultural values of vital significance to people's sense of well-being and identity. They help to tell stories and reveal much about the history of language use. The Pictish, Gaelic, and Scots languages can be found in the place names along the CATERAN TRAIL and the names all reveal important information about past land use, especially in terms of agriculture, hunting, authority, justice, archaeology, and myths and legends. We list the places and objects relating to them that were chosen to be part of the final 100 objects.



Old Pack Bridge, Ayrth, photo by Clare Cooper

### Alyth

Alyth, from the Gaelic ‘aileach’ meaning ‘rocky place’, is situated on the Alyth Burn, a little over half an hour’s drive north-east of Perth and north-west of Dundee. It lies at the foot of the Hill of Alyth in the valley of Strathmore close to Perthshire’s Eastern boundary with Angus. Created a burgh with a market in 1488 by James III, Alyth developed in association with cattle droving and the wool, jute and linen trades. Its Market Cross dates from 1670, and by the early 1900s it was a thriving centre for retail and commercial enterprise with 100 shops along its bustling streets. Today, it has the only museum outside of Perth in Perthshire, a flourishing artistic community, and a growing tourism economy, which is building on the many natural and cultural heritage assets in and around the town. These assets include the Cateran Trail, the Den o’ Alyth and various sites of historical and archaeological interest, such as the Alyth Arches, the Pack Bridge, which dates to around 1500, the Pictish symbol stone in the parish church, and many other places nearby.



Alyth, looking up the Alyth Burn, photo, George Logan

### Alyth Arches

This ancient place in Alyth stands on the site of a 6th century Church dedicated to St. Moluag, a contemporary of St. Columba who evangelised the Picts. The Arches are made up of a three-arch structure with broad octagonal columns in the Romanesque style. It formed the North arcade separating the nave from the north aisle of the church and dates from around 1500, although the architecture of the arcade is similar to the St. Andrews Holy Trinity of around 1410, and records of a church on this site go back to 1352. The east section is the oldest part of the church and is notable in having three aumbries in the wall, in which the vessels of the sacraments were kept. Aumbries are triangular, square, or rectangular niches, which once would have had doors.



Alyth Arches, photo Clare Cooper

### Auchintaple Loch

Auchintaple Loch, in Glen Isla, which has a boat house on the far side, is often named as a favourite spot by walkers on the Cateran Trail. There are traces of an early chapel at Chapel Hillock on a low rise just above the loch, identifiable by a turf-covered stony bank enclosing a slight hollow containing several stones. Near to the chapel is the Lady Well or Virgin Mary’s Well, which is still supplied with a plentiful flow of clear water. The wells in the area were once known for their curative properties, and many people visited in search of a miracle cure. It was thought that the first Sabbath in May was a day on which the waters had their greatest effect, and drinking from the well before sunrise was considered even more propitious.



Auchintaple Loch, photo courtesy Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust

### Bamff Beaver Project

Hunted out in Scotland by the 16th century, beavers are one of the world’s best natural engineers, with an incredible ability to create new wetlands, restore native woodland and improve conditions for a wide range of species, including dragonflies, otters and fish. After successful beaver reintroductions all over mainland Europe, conservation organisations in the UK began to discuss bringing the beaver back in the 1990s. However, consultation led to years of disagreement and delay, so some environmentalists decided to start a number of private demonstration projects in large enclosures. The first of these took place at Bamff near Alyth in 2002, when Paul and Louise Ramsay brought in two Norwegian beavers. In November 2016, the beaver was officially designated as a native British species by the Scottish Secretary for Environment and given formal protection.



A beaver at Bamff, photo Paul Ramsay

### Blairgowrie and Rattray

The Cateran Trail's circular route runs through Blairgowrie and Rattray, the largest town outside of Perth City. It was created by an Act of Parliament in 1928, which united two burghs. Blairgowrie lies on the southwest side of the River Ericht, whereas Rattray is on the northeast side. Old Rattray, the area round Rattray Kirk, dates back to the 12th century and New Rattray from 1777 when the River was spanned by the Brig o' Blair. The town, referred to by locals as 'Blair', developed over the centuries at the crossroads of several historic routes to Perth, Coupar Angus, Alyth and Braemar. The roads to Coupar Angus and Braemar form part of General Wade's military road from Perth to Fort George. The population of the town expanded hugely in the 19th century because of the employment

provided by the many textile mills, which were built along the River Ericht. By 1870 there were 12 mills along the river employing nearly 2000 men and women, although all are now closed. Soft fruit growing, mainly of raspberries and strawberries, developed in the 20th century and became an important part of the town's economy with Smedley's opening a cannery and Adamson's opening a jam factory. Huge quantities of table berries and pulp were despatched to markets and jam factories throughout Britain and berry pickers were bussed in from Perth, Dundee and further afield, mainly from the Glasgow area. They were joined by the travelling community who congregated here for the berry season. The berries are now mostly picked by migrant labourers from Eastern Europe.



Blairgowrie Wellmeadow, photo © Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust

### Bridge of Cally

Bridge of Cally is small village just north of Blairgowrie through which the Cateran Trail runs. The village sits at the junction of the glens Glenshee and Strathardle where they combine to form a third, Glenericht, and is centred round the bridge over the River Ardle. The new Snow Road from Blairgowrie into the Cairngorm Mountains follows the line of the 18th century military road, crossing the River Ardle where the new road forms a junction with the A924 road to Kirkmichael and Pitlochry. The village is popular in winter as it is near the Glenshee Ski Centre and has a hotel, a post office/general store, an angling book shop, a village hall and a large holiday park. The Bridge of Cally Hotel, formerly known as the Invercauld Arms, was for a long time a temperance establishment with alcohol being served for the first time in the 1960s.



Bridge of Cally in 1927, photo courtesy of the Laing Photographic Collection

### Burnt Mounds

These elusive fire sites can be difficult to identify but there are several close to the Cateran Trail. Their purpose is unknown but because they are mostly near springs, it has been suggested that they were ancient cooking sites in which red hot stones were used to boil the cooking water. Alternatively they could be the site of religious ceremonies or a type of sauna.



Burnt Mound photo George Logan

### Cargill's Leap

Donald Cargill, born in Rattray, was a Presbyterian minister and Covenanter. The Covenanters pledged to maintain their own way of worship following the signing of the National Covenant in 1638, hence their name. However, during the latter half of Charles II's reign, Presbyterianism was outlawed by the Scottish Parliament. Ministers who resisted were evicted from the Church. Cargill, like many other ministers, was forced to hold illegal meetings called 'conventicles'. These meetings were often broken up by the military and those captured were cruelly treated. On one occasion Cargill managed to escape the troops by leaping a very narrow part of the River Ericht just above Blairgowrie. He was eventually captured in 1681 and taken to Edinburgh where he was found guilty of treason and executed.



Old postcard of Cargill's Leap

### Cateran Café

This excellent establishment in the centre of Blairgowrie is owned by George and June Gall. The welcome from them and their staff is warm and friendly and you can have anything from a cup of tea and a scone to a hearty meal. If you are heading off to walk the Cateran Trail from Blairgowrie, this is a great place to start your journey as they are open early. The café is busy, but you can reserve a table, and, if the weather is fine, you can sit outside.



Cateran Café, photo George Logan

### Clach a' Mhoid

The authority of local lords is expressed in a small number of place names, mostly in the form of court or habitation mounds. Clach a' Mhoid ('Stone of Justice') in Glenshee is a huge boulder where the local lords would have exerted their authority by adjudicating in small criminal trials not involving the four pleas of the Crown (murder, rape, treason, and robbery), and especially in local disputes over land and other rights. The evidence in place names has enabled historians and archaeologists to appreciate the extent of court hills in Scotland; otherwise the majority of these sites would have gone unrecorded.



Clach a' Mhoid, or the Stone of Justice by Kevin Greig, [stoneswithnames.org](http://stoneswithnames.org)

### Coupar Abbey

This Cistercian Abbey, one of Scotland's most important monasteries, was founded by Malcolm IV (1153–65) in 1162. It was an abbey of considerable size and wealth and it operated for more than four centuries before it was turned into a secular lordship for James Elphinstone by the Scottish Parliament in 1606 and by royal charter in 1607. Although slightly away from the Cateran Trail, the abbey was a substantial land owner in the 13th and 14th centuries, controlling more than 8,000 acres, some of which extended up through Bridge of Cally and Monks Cally into Strathardle. Today, there is almost no trace of the abbey, part of it having been wrecked by Protestant reformers, and the remainder having served as a source of building stone for the neighbouring town of Coupar Angus.



Remains of Coupar Abbey, photo Clare Cooper

### Den o' Alyth

The Den ('narrow valley' or 'gorge') o' Alyth is a wooded glen through which the Alyth Burn runs. Part of the geography of the Highland Boundary Fault, it is close to the trail on the outskirts of Alyth, and much of the stone quarried to build parts of Alyth in earlier times was quarried from here. Designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, the Den's ancient woodland is of semi-natural origin, comprising native species, such as ash, oak, birch and hazel, and non-native species, such as beech and sycamore. A variety of wildlife is regularly spotted among the oak, ash, beech and birch trees, including red squirrels, tree creepers and great tits, whereas dippers and grey wagtails live by the water.



Den o' Alyth, photo by George Logan

### Diarmuid's Grave

Diarmuid was a brave and handsome warrior who fell in love with Gráinne, the wife of Fionn mac Cumhail, the famous Irish giant. The king, hoping to get rid of Diarmuid, ordered him to kill a huge ferocious boar living in a ravine on Ben Gulabin ('The Boar's Snout') in Glenshee. Diarmuid, seeing this as an opportunity to appease Fionn, agreed, sought out the boar, and fought and killed it. Fionn then insisted that Diarmuid measure the length of the boar. Diarmuid measured the boar's back by using his feet; however, some of the bristles from the boar's back pierced his foot and the wounds became infected. Although there was a cure for the infection, Fionn poured it into the Shee Water and Diarmuid died within the day. On hearing of his death, Queen Gráinne killed herself by falling on an arrow. Legend has it that the burial place of Diarmuid and Gráinne lies close to the Cateran Trail in Glenshee.



Diarmuid's Grave, photo Clare Cooper

### Fermtouns

Old maps of the area show that from early times until the 18th century, the valley sides of Strathardle, Glenshee and Glen Isla were scattered with numerous 'fermtouns', consisting of small groups of thatched stone cottages and byres. The settlements were occupied by families who cultivated the surrounding land and grazed their sheep and cattle on the neighbouring hills. Although some of these settlements have been replaced by more modern houses and farmsteads, many were abandoned, with some surviving as ruins, as at East Lair in Glenshee, close to the Cateran Trail. Easter Bleaton is an exceptionally well-preserved example of a post-medieval rural farming settlement, offering a valuable insight into rural farming life in the Cateran Trail area at an important time of change.



Building remains of Invereddrie Fermtoun, Photo © Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust

### Glenshee Lodge

Between Westerton of Runavey and Invereddrie, the Cateran Trail passes around the grounds of Glenshee Lodge. Timothy Pont's map of ca.1595 marks an important house or settlement at this location by the name of Ruy na Vey. By the end of the 18th century, there was a substantial mansion or shooting lodge recorded on maps as Runavey. The present house, a shooting lodge probably built on the site of the earlier house, is one of the earliest houses in Scotland to have been built using concrete, rather than traditional building materials. Renamed Glenshee Lodge, the house is home to the Compass Christian Centre, founded in 1967, which provides outdoor activities.



Glenshee Lodge, photo Christopher Dingwall

## Kirkmichael

Located in Strathardle 13 miles north-west of Blairgowrie, the village dates back over 1,000 years and was once an important market in the cattle trade between the Highlands and Lowlands, with various drove roads converging on the village. The area became popular as a holiday resort after Balmoral Castle was built for Queen Victoria's in nearby Deeside, and many of the local shooting lodges, known as "big houses", were built at that time. Although the village is picturesque and peaceful place now, in the days of the Covenanters, who opposed the Stuart kings interfering in the affairs of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, rival armies caused much destruction in the area. Despite its small permanent population of around 150, Kirkmichael is a vibrant and lively community with Scottish Women's Institute meetings, a knitting group, a book club, a village bloom group, an annual flower festival, a Highland games, pub quiz nights, a pool team, a darts team, various youth groups, and more.



Kirkmichael Village painted by Andrew Hunter

## Kirkmichael Village Shop

As well as serving as a grocery store and post office for the folk of Strathardle and Glenshee, the well-stocked, community-run Kirkmichael Village Shop also offers a cosy café, well-known for its home baking. Walkers on the CATERAN TRAIL can be sure of a warm welcome, whether they are looking for rest and refreshment or for provisions for the next stage of their journey.



Kirkmichael Village Shop photo George Logan

## Lime Kilns

Many lime kilns can be seen along the trail as almost every farm and fermtoun had one. Working the kilns was a skilled task. The limestone (calcium carbonate) was heated to give quicklime (calcium oxide), which was mixed with water to produce slaked lime (calcium hydroxide). Adding slaked lime or quicklime to the land raised the soil pH and improved its fertility. The largest deposit of limestone in the area is between Kirkmichael in Strathardle and Blacklunans in Glenshee, with an active quarry at Wester Bleaton.



Balloch Kiln by Kevin Greig, staneswinames.org

## Memorial to Jubra the Dog

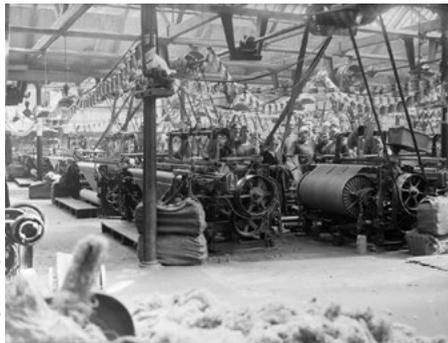
Several hundred metres uphill on the CATERAN path from the Spittal of Glenshee to Strathardle stands a stone memorial that would be quite at home in the nearby kirkyard. This memorial stone, erected just over a century ago, reads "In memory of Jubra, only a dog but loving friend of his master's mother and his master, faithful, obedient and affectionate companion for ten long years. Born in the NWP India, died at Caenlochan". The dog's name, Jubra, comes from a small area close to India's border with Nepal.



Memorial to Jubra the Dog, photo George Logan

### Oakbank Mill

The waters of the River Ericht at Blairgowrie once drove a remarkable series of 14 spinning mills. Originally working with flax, but later mostly spinning jute, these enterprises brought employment and prosperity to the area. Between 1801 and 1881, the population of Blairgowrie rose from less than 1,000 to over 7,000. This was a direct result of the growth of the spinning industry which, at its peak, employed about 2,500 people. Oakbank Mill was one of these spinning mills. It was built by James Grimond and was the first mill in Scotland to spin jute successfully. The jute was softened with whale oil; cut into lengths, heckled, where the fibres were drawn into straight, tangle-free lengths; spun into 3-lb yarn; and mixed with tow for the weft of osnaburg (a coarse, plain fabric) and hessian sheeting. The jute was a fine fibre and this tradition of producing fine jute threads was carried on in Blairgowrie into the 1940s.



Interior of a Blairgowrie Mill, photo courtesy of the Laing Photographic Collection

### Public Transport

Today, the only public transport available in the CATERAN TRAIL area is the Stagecoach bus service, numbers 57 and 71. These are lifeline services allowing people to access school, work, further education, shops, medical facilities and various daily activities. They also allow walkers and tourists to access the areas around the CATERAN TRAIL and they link this part of East Perthshire with the cities of Dundee and Perth. Between 1855 and 1965 there were branch line railways serving Alyth and Blairgowrie. Prior to that, the only public transport would have been the horse bus, which would have also carried the mail.



Alyth Railway Station, photo courtesy of the Laing Photographic Collection

### Rivers: River Isla, Alyth Burn, Shee Water, Blackwater, River Ardle, River Ericht, and Lornty Burn

The CATERAN TRAIL crosses seven rivers or burns. Furthest to the east is the River Isla, which flows south from Caenlochan Glen at the head of Glen Isla. In its course, just downstream of Bridge of Craigisla, is the Reekie Linn, one of Scotland's finest waterfalls. Further on, the River Isla is joined by the Alyth Burn which drains the Forest of Alyth between Glenshee and Glen Isla, passing close to Bamff and forming the Den o' Alyth. In Glenshee, the Shee Water becomes the Blackwater for a short distance before it joins the River Ardle near Bridge of Cally, at which point the two rivers combine to form the River Ericht. After flowing through the spectacular Craighall Gorge, the River Ericht divides the towns of Blairgowrie and Rattray before entering the Vale of Strathmore. Further to the west, the CATERAN TRAIL crosses the Lornty Burn, a tributary of the River Ericht, which drains Cochrage Muir and the Muir of Gormack.



The River Isla, photo © of Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust

### The Serpent Stane, Loch Beanie

The Serpent Stane is a large boulder on the north side of Loch Beanie. The stane can be accessed easily from the Compass Christian Centre just off the A93, or by the unclassified road from Forter to Auchavan and the Glen Beanie track by Dalvanie Farm. The stane bears a curious twisting hole and several deep slashes, which were reputedly made by the local laird, who blamed a witch for the death of his infant son. He came upon the witch one day and he drew his sword to kill her but was too slow and she changed into a viper and slid into the hole. In his frustration, the laird struck the stane with his sword. The witch taunted him from inside the stane "Laird! As long as you look at your empty cradle and I at my stone, we may meet and crack, but we can never be friends."



Clach na Nathrice or the Serpent Stane, by Kevin Greig, stanesinames.org

### The Shanzie Souterrain

Souterrain (from the French ‘sous terrain’, meaning ‘underground’) is the archaeological name for a type of underground structure associated mainly with the European Atlantic Iron Age that may have been used for storage. One of these can be found at Shanzie near Alyth where excavations unearthed a structure 35 metres long and roughly c-shaped. Finds during the excavation included several types of late prehistoric pottery; a fragment of Roman pottery; an amber ring, the amber of which probably originated in the Baltic; a pair of tweezers; a brooch or clasp; two copper alloy rings; and a fragment from a quern stone. The souterrain had been broken into during the medieval and Victorian periods.



Objects found at Shanzie Souterrain, Photo courtesy Perth Museum & Art Gallery

### Shooting Estates

From the late 18th century onwards, many of the scattered cottages and fermtouns in the glens were abandoned as the land was purchased by wealthy families from the Lowlands who wished to possess estates in the Highlands to which they could retreat in summer to indulge in field sports such as deer stalking, grouse shooting and fishing. As these estates were not occupied by the family throughout the year, many were advertised in guide books as being available for rent by shooting parties. Many Highland estates still derive their income from a combination of shooting and fishing with extensive sheep farming. Two estates crossed by or seen from the trail still advertise as shooting estates: Brewlands, near Kirkton of Glen Isla, and Glencally at the northern end of Glen Isla.



Image, courtesy of Christopher Dingwall

### The Bannerfield, Kirkmichael

A large area of open ground on the west bank of the River Ardle, just south of the village of Kirkmichael, is known as the Bannerfield. It was here in September 1715 that John Erskine, 6th Earl of Mar raised a flag in support of the exiled Stuart King James VIII, known as the Old Pretender, and gathered many Highlanders at the start of the 1715 Jacobite rising. The rising came to an end two months later with the defeat of Mar’s hastily assembled army at the Battle of Sheriffmuir. Tradition has it that a gilt ball on top of the flagstaff was dislodged by a high wind and fell to the ground, seen by many as an ill omen and recorded in the old verse “But when the standard was set up, Sae fierce the wind did blaw, man, The golden nit, upon the tap, Down to the ground did fa’, man. The Hielandmen looked unca glam, They didna’ like’t at a’ man, And second-sichted Sandy said, We’d do nae good at a’ man”. In more recent times, the Bannerfield has become the venue for the annual Strathardle Highland Gathering, now celebrating its 136th year.



The Bannerfield, Kirkmichael, photo © Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust

### Ardle’s Grave

Near the former gate lodge of Dirnanean House, close to the hamlet of Enochdhu, lies what is reputed to be the grave of a Pictish warrior named Ard-fhuil who is said to have given his name to the surrounding area of Strathardle. He was believed to have been a Caledonian of noble blood who was slain fighting a Danish invasion. The length of the grave mound appears to confirm his reputation as a giant, but cynics believe that one of his henchmen is buried at his feet. Local lore has it that during Victorian times, the Laird of Dirnanean buried his horse at the spot as a garden amusement.



The Grave of Ardle, photo George Logan

### The Laing Photographic Collection

This archive of 15,000 images taken between 1927 and 1993 from D. Wilson Laing Photographers, Blairgowrie, was acquired by Perth Museum and Art Gallery in 1997, and includes the 11 original photographer's ledgers together with prints and other objects. Most of the plates collected by the museum are of places in East Perthshire and were either commissioned by the public or local businesses, or produced for the press. The photographers were also employed to document important national projects, such as the building of the Forth and Tay Road Bridges and the construction of hydroelectric schemes. The business finally closed on July 5, 1993 when David Constable Laing (David Mitchell Laing's grandson) and his wife Dorothy retired.



A basket of puppies, photo courtesy of the Laing Photographic Collection

### The Silver Ball of Rattray

The silver ball of Rattray dates from the early 1600s. It is a unique example of a Scottish hand ball trophy. The game was played in a field behind the Old Parish Kirk, and though the actual nature of the ball game is unclear, it was probably played with teams of six players, each representing a village or parish. The winners were required to present a small shield containing their initials within six weeks of the game taking place and the shield was attached to the silver ball. The last known shield is dated 1766. The silver ball was almost certainly donated by Sylvester Rattray of Nether Persie who became minister of Rattray in 1591 and continued there until his death in 1623.



The Silver Ball of Rattray, photo courtesy of Perth Museum & Art Gallery

### The Upper Lunch Hut

The Upper Lunch Hut on the Dirnanean Estate can be found high on the Cateran Trail between Enochdhu in Strathardle and the Spittal of Glenshee. Queen Victoria stopped here in 1865 and signed the visitor's book. The royal progress was delayed when her party realised that they had forgotten to pack a kettle to make tea, and someone was despatched to fetch one from the bottom of the hill. Today the notice on the door reads "Footpath walkers are welcome to take shelter".



The Upper Lunch Hut, photo George Logan

### Trail Markers

The Cateran Trail is fully waymarked along its 64-mile (103-km) circular route through the Perthshire and the Angus glens. The trail markers have a distinctive red heart on a white background circled in green and a large yellow arrow in a green circle.



Trail Marker, photo courtesy Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust

### Whisky

Small-scale whisky distilling was a traditional part of Highland life. In farming communities, many turned to making whisky as it became harder to survive as farmers, and there were undoubtedly many illicit stills in the CATERAN TRAIL region. These are difficult to find as they were well hidden to evade the excisemen. Making whisky involves first malting the barley by soaking it in water and heating it under specific conditions to create the mash, which is put in a copper pot and boiled. The vapour containing the alcohol is cooled in a coiled pipe, called a worm, attached to the pot, and the whisky is collected.



Old Whisky Still, photo Bob Ellis

### Tower Houses

Tower houses are a traditional type of late-medieval building, intended primarily as dwellings, but constructed so that they could be made secure and defended in times of trouble. Consequently, they have few windows and doors close to their base, and the principal rooms are at least one storey above ground level. They are sometimes classified according to their footprint, as L-plan or Z-plan. Some in the glens, like Glaslune Castle (16th century Z-plan) or Whitefield Castle (16th century L-plan), have fallen into ruin, whereas others, such as Bamff House (16th century), Blackcraig Castle (16th century) and Ashintully Castle (16th century), have been added to over the centuries and remain in use. Yet another example is Forter Castle (16th century L-plan) in Glen Isla, an impressive four-storey tower with a garret, which had fallen into ruin, but which was restored around 1990.



Forter Castle, photo Clare Cooper

### Pitcarmick Long Houses

The CATERAN TRAIL has some great archaeological sites, and the rarest are the stone/turf and timber longhouses of the early medieval period (late first millennium AD), deemed important because rural early medieval buildings are rarely found elsewhere in Scotland. These sites were first identified in the uplands of north-east Perthshire in the late 1980s, but only two sites have been excavated. The sites are at Pitcarmick in Strathardle, and at Lair in Glenshee, where Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust have been excavating over the last five years.



Lair Pictish Longhouse Reconstruction Artwork by Alan Braby & Gill McSwan, image courtesy of PKHT

### Pitcarmick Round Houses

The Pitcarmick area has been farmed for millennia. In the Bronze Age around 2000 BC, people lived here in round houses, which are dwellings with low stone sides and low conical roofs made of thatched heather. Round house remains are often difficult to see, with the only evidence being slightly raised circular mounds of earth. Summers in the Bronze Age were warmer, and upland soils were more fertile, making it possible to grow early forms of barley and wheat. People bred cattle and sheep and supplemented their diets with wild berries. By the Pictish era, buildings in this area were more rectangular in shape.



Pitcarmick Roundhouse, image courtesy of Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust

### Reekie Linn Waterfall

The Reekie Linn is one of Scotland's most spectacular waterfalls and one of the easiest to access. It is a pair of linked falls on the River Isla at Bridge of Craigisla, about 4 miles north of Alyth. The waterfalls cascade through a natural wooded gorge, churning up the smoky ('reekie') spume that gives it its name. The two falls have drops of 6 metres and 18 metres, but when the River Isla is in spate the falls merge to create a single drop of 24 metres. Near the pool at the base of the falls is a cave called Black Dub, which is not visible from the path. Local legend says that an outlaw hid in the cave, but the devil appeared in the shape of a huge black dog and frightened the outlaw so much that he gave himself up to the authorities.



Reekie Linn Waterfall, photo George Logan

### Barry Hill Fort

Barry Hill near Alyth is crested by a small, strong vitrified Pictish fort, dated to the Roman period and defended from the south by two sturdy rampart walls. Still unexcavated, it is one of Scotland's best-preserved Iron Age forts, although its occupation probably spanned many periods. In addition to offering a defensive position against attacks, hill forts had multiple functions, including centres of political power, places where goods were produced, stored and traded through fairs and markets, and as centres for religious rituals. Myths and legends often develop around such sites and Barry Hill is no exception with its links to the legend of Vanora, the Scottish name for King Arthur's Queen Guinevere.



Barry Hill Fort, photo © Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust

### Glenshee Kirk

Glenshee Kirk was built on the site of an old standing stone at the Spittal of Glenshee, though it was originally planned to be built slightly further down the glen at Runavey. It is a good example of an old-fashioned parish church typical of the remoter parts of Scotland, bare and simple with the honest austerity of its time. Services are still held at the church, including a Christmas Day service and its scenic setting makes it a popular wedding venue.



Glenshee Kirk, photo Clare Cooper

### The Buzzart Dykes

The Buzzart Dykes, a short distance to the west of the Cateran Trail, were originally thought to be defensive earthworks associated with the Roman occupation of the area in the first century AD. The dykes are now understood to be the remains of a medieval hunting park, possibly associated with nearby Glasclune Castle. Hunting parks, often found in conjunction with high-status houses, were generally surrounded by a ditch and embankment topped with fence, known as the park pale. The Buzzart Dykes pale is clearly visible in aerial photographs where it has not been destroyed by ploughing or obscured by vegetation.



Buzzart Dykes, photo © Crown Copyright HES



Kirk at Kirkton of Glen Isla, photo Clare Cooper

## Kirkton of Glen Isla

Kirkton of Glenisla is a village in Glen Isla, one of the most picturesque valleys in the Angus glens. Situated on the River Isla, 10 miles north of Blairgowrie it is the only settlement on the CATERAN TRAIL in Angus and consists of a church and graveyard, a hotel which dates back to before 1750, and several holiday cottages.

Behind the tranquil landscape of Strathmore and the spectacular northern glens traversed by the CATERAN TRAIL is a dramatic story, stretching back millions of years, which can be read in the rocks, landforms and natural and cultivated vegetation through which the trail passes, in the animals that live there, and in the complex web of interactions among these elements. The physical landscape has a profound effect on patterns of settlement, cultivation and transport. Here is the list of landscapes and plants, animals and objects relating to them that were chosen to be part of the final 100.



Photo Clare Cooper

### Bitter Vetch

There are many historical references to the use of bitter vetch, for flavouring, warding off hunger and thirst, preventing drunkenness and even stimulating the mind. There are references to the plant being an important part of the diet of the Caterans and the tubers enabled them to ward off hunger and thirst for a long time. In 'Flora Celtica' (2013), William Milliken and Sam Bridgewater write "They have a sweet taste, something like the roots of liquorice, and when boiled we are told, 'are well flavour'd and nutritive, and in times of scarcity have serv'd as a substitute for bread', J. Lightfoot, 1777, Flora Scotica".



Bitter Vetch, photo Clare Cooper

### Blaeberries

Blaeberries, known as bilberries in England, are a summer treat from the Cateran Trail. Loosely related to the commercial American blueberry, they are sweeter, more luscious and turn your tongue red. Blaeberries are particularly rich in chemicals called anthocyanins, which have been linked to the prevention of cancers and heart disease. They also contain antioxidant, antiviral, antibacterial and anti-inflammatory compounds and are high in potassium, phosphates and a range of vitamins.



Blaeberries, Photo, Wikimedia Commons

### Blairgowrie Berries and Cherries Tartan

A tartan inspired by Perthshire's berries and cherries was created by Blairgowrie-based master craftsman and weaver Ashleigh Slater of Warpweftweave Studio in 2015. Encouraged by Melanie Thomson of local fruit growers Thomas Thomson, he registered the new tartan with the intent of using it to promote the town.



Blairgowrie Berries & Cherries Tartan, photo Clare Cooper

### Buzzards

The buzzard is the most common bird of prey around the Cateran Trail. Its large size, with a wingspan of over a metre, distinguishes it from other hawks. However, it is considerably smaller than an eagle, with which it is often confused. The buzzard is a slow flier and is often seen circling lazily or sitting on trees and telegraph poles, searching for its mostly ground-based prey of small mammals and insects, or for carrion. Its distinctive ‘pee-ay’ call resembles the mewling of a cat.



Common Buzzard, photo wikimedia commons

### Dalradian Schist

This is the main rock type found on the upland portion of the Cateran Trail and is the oldest thing you will see on the trail. It was laid down about 750 million years ago as sediment from an eroding mountain chain on the margins of a long lost continent. Millions of years later, due to earth movements that peaked about 470 million years ago, the sediment was compressed and metamorphosed to form a massive new mountain chain. In turn, this mountain range has been mostly eroded away and the schist once hidden deep within it is now exposed. The name ‘Dalradian’ for this rock group comes from the Celtic region of Dalriada.



Schist, photo by Christopher Dingwall

### Red, Roe, and Fallow Deer

Red deer and roe deer are native to Scotland, and both species can often be seen around the Cateran Trail. The majestic red deer is our largest terrestrial mammal, and undoubtedly one of the most impressive wildlife spectacles of Scotland, enjoyed by locals, tourists and Autumnwatch viewers alike. The delicate and secretive roe deer, with its striking russet-brown coat and white rump, is found wherever there is cover where it can hide by day. Groups of darker-coloured fallow deer, introduced to Scotland through deliberate releases and escapes from private parks, can sometimes be seen grazing in the fields alongside domestic animals.



Red Deer Stag, photo wikimedia commons

### Dirnanean Gardens

Dirnanean House is part of a private, traditional Highland estate adjacent to the Cateran Trail near Enochdhu. The estate’s garden area includes one and a half hectares of garden planting with seven hectares of policy grounds. The garden features a summer house, a walled garden, a burn walk with cascades, a traditional estate kitchen garden with an orchard, a greenhouse and potager, and a small museum of garden tools that were discovered during the refurbishment of the garden and the grounds. The refurbished summer house stands on a turntable that allows the entire structure to be turned as the sun moves across the front lawn. Peacocks and guinea fowl roam the grounds and a Wellingtonia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) specimen tree, thought to have been planted around 1870, borders the front lawn. The garden is accessible by the public for a small fee.



Peonie in Dirnanean Gardens, photo Clare Cooper

### Drove Roads

Because the upland soils are ill-suited to growing crops, cattle-rearing was a vital part of the Highlander's life and economy. Consequently, cattle drovers were regarded as important members of the community. Hardy Highland cattle were gathered from settlements and farmsteads across the northern glens and driven south along traditional routes to markets, where they could be fattened and sold for slaughter. Cattle from the North East of Scotland, Morayshire, Aberdeenshire, and Angus, passed through Alyth and Blairgowrie, whereas those from further north

and west converged on Kirkmichael on their way south towards Dunkeld and the great cattle fairs at Crieff and Falkirk. There was an annual cattle fair at Kirkmichael in September, where, during the evenings around the fire, the drovers would tell stories linked to their journeys, folk and fairy stories, cow and horse tales, legends explaining ancient features in the landscape, and stories of place names spanning centuries. Many of these stories are now forgotten or are only remembered by a handful of local people who recall living and working on the land.



Old Drove Road Alyth, photo Clare Cooper

### Drumderg Wind Farm

Drumderg wind farm is situated on Drumderg hill on the site of a World War II artillery firing range and close to the CATERAN Trail. Wind power is Scotland's fastest growing renewable energy technology, and on Sunday August 7, 2016, a combination of high wind and low consumption resulted in wind power generation (106%) exceeding consumption in Scotland. Through the Drumderg Wind Farm Fund, owners SSE provide around £79,000 per year to community and charitable projects in the Mount Blair and Alyth areas, which are traversed by the CATERAN Trail. Over the life of the fund they expect to invest £1.6 million in local projects.



Drumderg Windfarm, photo © Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust

### Drystane Dykes

Drystane dykes, many of which date back to Victorian times, are a characteristic feature of the CATERAN Trail area. The different styles of dyke depend on the type of stone available, the purpose of the dyke, and the skill of the dyker. Modern post-and-wire fences have to be replaced regularly, whereas a well-built dyke can last for hundreds of years. The gaps between the stones make dykes important wildlife habitats.



Argyles Reed Drystane Dyke, Glen Isla by Kevin Greig, staneswinames.org

### Fishing

Since the time of Robert the Bruce, the River Ericht has enjoyed abundant runs of salmon. Even though these were much reduced during the 19th century by the burgeoning textile mills along its banks, it is still possible to fish for salmon at several locations today and its upper waters provide good trout fishing as well, as do the River Ardle, Blackwater, River Isla, and Shee Water.



Photo, courtesy of the Laing Photographic Collection

### Red Foxes

The red fox is the most widespread and abundant land-dwelling carnivore in the world and it roams widely through the Cateran Trail area. Its success partly comes from its ability to survive on a wide range of food and live in a huge variety of habitats. Intelligent, inquisitive and charismatic the fox could be everybody's favourite animal, were it not for its taste for lambs, chickens and game birds.



Red Fox, photo wikimedia commons

### Garry Drums

Between West Gormack and the Muir of Drumlochy, the Cateran trail crosses a series of ridges and shallow valleys running south-east from Middleton Muir, an area known as Garry Drums. Although you might expect to find a series of streams in the valleys, some of them are dry. These dry valleys are understood by geologists to be glacial meltwater channels that formed near the end of the last Ice Age when water running off the hills to the north created streams along the edge of a large mass of stagnant ice that filled Strathmore. However, the streams ran dry as the ice disappeared.



Garry Drums, photo © Crown Copyright: HES

## Glen Beag

Looking down from Ben Earb and Meall Uaine to the Spittal of Glenshee is Glen Beag ('small valley'), which joins Glenshee from the north. In the Ice Age, Scotland's landscape was filled with glaciers. When these glaciers disappeared about 20,000 years ago, they carved out the classic U-shaped valleys, flanked by rocky spurs and slopes of scree, with mounds and terraces of sand and gravel deposited by the ice as it melted or washed along the valley sides by meltwater streams. Glen Beag is a reminder of how dramatic the effects of climate change can be.

Glen Beag, photo © Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust



## Gorse

Along the Cateran Trail in May and June, there is a striking display of bright yellow gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), sometimes known as whin or furze. Gorse is generally regarded as a weed that readily colonises uncultivated ground, so is often seen on roadsides and where ground has been disturbed. Its spiky leaves and dense habit mean that it was sometimes used as a hedging plant, and could even be fed to livestock if bruised beforehand. Gorse is a valuable plant for wildlife, providing dense thorny cover ideal for nesting birds. The leaf buds have been used as a substitute for tea, and the flowers, which have a distinctive coconut scent, yield a beautiful yellow dye. There is an old saying that "when gorse is out of blossom, kissing is out of fashion".



Gorse along the Cateran Trail, photo by Christopher Dingwal

## Heather

Heather is perhaps as much a botanical symbol of Scotland as the famous thistle and there is no shortage of it around the Cateran Trail. Over the centuries, heather has been used in all sorts of practical ways, including for thatching, as a yellow dye, and for making brooms and rope. Heather was used to treat coughs, consumption, arthritis, and rheumatism and to soothe the nerves. Moorland tea made from heather flowers was reputed to be a favourite of Robert Burns, and the soporific aroma from the dried flowers was put to use in heather mattresses. Some claim that Scottish heather honey is as good for healing as manuka honey.

Heather alongside the Military Road in Glenshee, photo Clare Cooper



## Highland Cattle

Highland cattle (Scottish Gaelic, 'bò ghàidhealach'; Scots, 'heilan coo') are a native Scottish cattle breed. A common sight around the Cateran Trail, their long horns and long wavy coats can be black, brindle, red, yellow, white, or silver, and they are raised primarily for their meat. They originated in the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland and were first mentioned in the 6th century AD, although the breed has since been exported worldwide. Highland cattle are hardy due to their native environment, and their meat, regarded as the highest quality, is gaining mainstream recognition as it is lower in cholesterol than beef from other breeds.



Highland Cow just outside Alyth, photo Clare Cooper

### Lichens

Along the Cateran trail, many of the trunks and branches of older trees beside the paths are heavily encrusted with lichens. It is a misconception that lichens are parasitic and that they weaken the tree, or, like fungi, indicate the tree's poor health. Rather, the majority of lichens only use trees for support and are the product of a symbiotic relationship between algae and fungi, in which one provides nutrients for the other, assisted by rainwater and minerals from the surrounding environment. Lichens come in a variety of shapes, generally described as foliose (leaf-like), fruticose (with branching stems), or crustose (flaky incrustation). Most lichens are sensitive to pollution, so are much rarer in urban areas and beside busy roads. The abundance of lichens in the glens is a result of the clean air of the Highlands.



Red Crest Lichen at Easter Bleaton, photo Clare Cooper

### Mount Blair

Mount Blair, which is 744 metres high and located between Glenshee and Glen Isla, is a dominant feature on the Cateran Trail. On its slopes, there are prehistoric sites, famous wells and a suicide grave under the summit cairn. There are legends associated with Mount Blair, telling the story of Colly Camb who was a giant who lived in a cave on the south slope of Mount Blair. Colly's wife was the giantess Smoutachanty, and her cave was further up the Isla at Auchintaple. People believed that Colly would fly into rages and pick up large rocks and throw them at the people and dwellings in the glen below. Two of these rocks are the Gled Stane and Sow Stane. Colly was finally stoned to death by a band of locals for repeatedly stealing from their corn mill. Nobody went near the cave for years, and then two brave men ventured in to explore it. A while later their voices were heard from underground near the Alrick Burn almost two miles away, but the men were never seen again.



Mount Blair, photo Clare Cooper

### Native Scottish Trees

The native Scottish trees that can be seen around the Cateran Trail include birch, which were among the earliest trees to colonise Scotland after the end of the last Ice Age; the venerated oak; willow, which thrives close to water and was prized for its medicinal properties and its use in house building, coracle frames, and charcoal manufacture; rowan, with its beautiful autumnal display of red berries; and Scots pine, the only native pine in the UK.



Scotch Pines, photo Clare Cooper

### Pine Martens

This elusive, mostly nocturnal protected animal is found in most of the larger areas of mature woodland around the Cateran Trail. Pine martens are agile tree climbers and formidable hunters, and, although they are omnivores, their diet includes voles and other small mammals. It remains to be seen how the major tree felling operations currently taking place in the local forests will affect their distribution.



Pine Martin, photo wikimedia commons

### Red Squirrels

The native red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) is rare in the Lowlands of Scotland, having been driven out by the American grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*). However, red squirrels are commonly seen in around the Cateran Trail, especially where there is mixed coniferous and broadleaved woodland, which provides the hazelnuts, acorns and pine nuts preferred by the species.

Red Squirrel, photo wikimedia commons



### Scottish Blackface Sheep

The Scottish Blackface sheep is the commonest sheep in the glens and uplands of Highland Perthshire, so it can be regarded as part of the landscape. The species is thought to have originated in the Scottish Borders where it was bred by monks in medieval times, being prized for both its fleece and meat. Though smaller than some other sheep breeds, the Scottish Blackface is noted for its hardiness, enabling it to survive and thrive on poor upland grazing. Together with the Cheviot, another sturdy Borders breed with which it is sometimes crossed, the Scottish Blackface played a major part in the Highland Clearances of the 18th and 19th centuries.



Scottish Blackfaced Sheep, photo Clare Cooper

### Shielings

Until the end of the of the 19th century, most Highlanders depended on a subsistence economy based on growing grain crops, such as wheat and barley, on unenclosed fields in the glens, and on the grazing of sheep and cattle on the surrounding hills. During the spring and summer, the grazing animals were moved to high ground to keep them away from the growing crops and to graze the fresh growth on the upland pastures. These upland pastures were known as 'airidhs', where those tending the flocks would build simple huts called 'shielings'. The remains of these shelters can still be found on the high ground around the Cateran Trail.

A Shieling in the Glens, photo by Kevin Greig, stameswinames.org



### Sphagnum Moss

Sphagnum moss can hold large amounts of water and is an essential part of peat bogs. A surface layer of live sphagnum seals in dead plant matter beneath, and in this low-oxygen environment, plant matter turns to peat. Under favourable conditions, the peat deposit, with its surface layer of living sphagnum, can grow to form hummocks and raised bogs, such as Dun Moss on the Muir of Alyth. The absorbent, antibacterial properties of the moss meant that it was used in enormous quantities as a wound dressing in World Wars I and II in the trenches and field hospitals.



Sphagnum Moss, Photo Wikimedia Commons

## Standing Stones

Amongst the more mysterious features of the landscape of the Cateran Trail are standing stones, which are monolithic blocks that are often located in the middle of fields or by the roadside. We know little about their history or purpose, whether they were erected as boundary markers or as objects with ritual significance. Some have had stories woven around them, whereas others, such as that at Balnabroich in Strathardle, serve as useful scratching posts for cattle. Examples of some of the larger stones around the trail include the Pitcrocknie Stone at Glen Isla Golf Course, Alyth, and the Park Neuk Stone Circle at Tullymurdoch.



Park Neuk Stone Circle, photo Ron McGill



Potato Harvest, photo courtesy Laing Photographic Collection

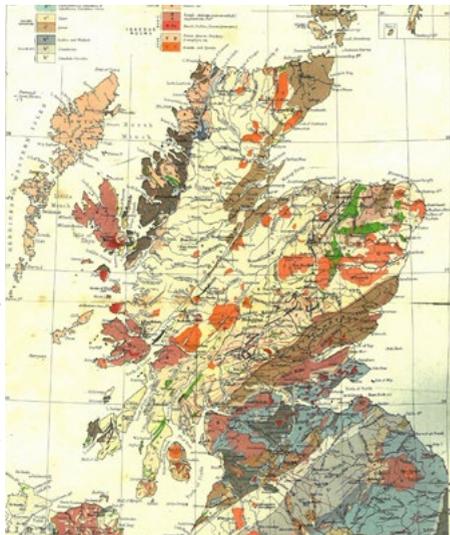
## Tattie Creel

Potatoes were first introduced to Scotland in 1739, and since then, they have been an important cash crop for generations of farmers in Strathmore's fertile soils close to the Cateran Trail. 'Tattie howking' ('potato digging') was the name given to the annual potato harvest. Up to the middle of the 20th century, the school half-term in October was called the 'Tattie Holiday', when schoolchildren took part in the harvest. As well as being an institutional custom, these holidays were also a rite of passage for many children across Scotland, providing them with their

first wage and experience of paid work. The money was an important part of household income, paying for essential items, such as boots and coats, or even Christmas celebrations. Tattie creels, the baskets used to collect the potatoes, were traditionally made from willow, hazel, or split steamed oak, until these were replaced by metal or plastic containers in the 20th century. The creels were treated roughly and did not last, but they were made everywhere, often by travelling folk who also took part in the potato harvest.

### The Highland Boundary Fault

The Highland Boundary Fault is a major geological feature that divides the Scottish Lowlands from the Highlands. The fault line is where the rocks of the Highlands collided with those of the Lowlands millions of years ago to create Scotland. It runs from the south-west to the north-east right across the country, passing just north of Blairgowrie and Alyth, separating the softer rocks underlying the fertile Vale of Strathmore to the south from the harder rocks of the foothills of the Grampian Mountains and the Cairngorms to the north. This fault, which is crossed by the CATERAN TRAIL in several places, was also a cultural boundary, influencing patterns of settlement and land use, and dividing the English-speaking Lowlands from the Gaelic-speaking Highlands.



Photo, courtesy of Christopher Dingwall

### Tormentil

Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), a plant with characteristic yellow flowers, thrives on upland heaths and is found throughout the CATERAN TRAIL area. Its root has been used boiled in milk as a medicine, as a dye, for tanning leather, and as an emergency food in times of famine.



Tormentil, photo wikimedia commons

### Wild Raspberries

Scottish wild red raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*) can be found in many of the hedgerows and rocky woods along the trail. A slender shrub with unbranched, arching stems growing to about 6-foot high, it is usually the first soft fruit to ripen. According to folklore, raspberry leaf tea relieves the discomforts of pregnancy and the juice of the berries was drunk for its cooling effect.



Wild Raspberries, photo Clare Cooper

### Wolves

Wolves used to be ubiquitous in Scotland. David Ogilvy and Margaret Campbell, the tenants of Freuchies by Kirkton of Isla, where the lands were held by the Abbey of Coupar Angus, were required in 1552 to "...nwrice ane leiche of gud howndis, with ane cuppill of rachis, for tod and wolf, and be reddy at all tymes quhene we cherge thame to pas with ws or our bailzeis to the hountis", that is "...to have ready at all times a pack of hounds and a couple of sleuth-hounds for the hunting of wolves and foxes". Stories of the killing of the last wolf of Scotland vary. Although wolves had disappeared from the Lowlands by the 15th century, most records tell of the last Scottish wolf being killed by Sir Ewen Cameron at Killiecrankie in Perthshire in 1680. However, it has been claimed that wolves survived in Scotland up until the 18th century, and there is even a tale of one being seen as late as 1888.



Grey Wolf, photo wikimedia commons



## Acknowledgements

As well as being extraordinarily rich in history, archaeology and cultural and natural heritage, the CATERAN TRAIL has a thriving and diverse community of living artists and makers. We are especially grateful to the following members of that community for generously sharing their creativity and imagination through this exhibition:

**Kevin Greig**, illustrator and historian, Glen Isla, [www.staneswinames.org](http://www.staneswinames.org)  
**Andrew Hunter**, graphic designer and artist, Kirkmichael, [www.silverhunter.co.uk](http://www.silverhunter.co.uk)  
**Martin McGuinness**, fine artist and painter, Alyth, [www.martinmcguinness.co.uk](http://www.martinmcguinness.co.uk)  
**Ashleigh Slater**, master weaver, Blairgowrie, [www.warpweftweavestudio.co.uk](http://www.warpweftweavestudio.co.uk)  
**Jane Wilkinson**, willow weaver, Alyth, [www.specialbranchbaskets.com](http://www.specialbranchbaskets.com)

Many of the objects in the display have been made available from the collection of Perth Museum & Art Gallery, Perth & Kinross Council, for which we are extremely grateful. The following objects have been kindly loaned: 'Springtime' by Jane Spindler, courtesy of Dundee City Council, (Dundee Art Galleries and Museums); Jane Spindler's name plate, courtesy of Linda Cullis; the Mauchline ware box, courtesy of Ian Smith; the Lair spindle-whorl, courtesy of Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust; the piece of Dalradian schist, courtesy of Christopher Dingwall; the Blairgowrie Berries and Cherries Tartan, courtesy of Ashleigh Slater; and the painting of Kirkmichael Church, courtesy of Andrew Hunter.

**Booklet Text:** The descriptive text for the 100 objects has been drawn from entries made by the many contributors via the project website, [www.cateranstory.org.uk](http://www.cateranstory.org.uk). The project organisers are happy to receive any amendments or suggested additions, which may be incorporated into future materials.

**Booklet Photographs and Images:** credits/sources appear with each entry, all Wikimedia images have creative commons attribution, all Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust and HES photos are copyright.

**Booklet Design:** Andrew Hunter.

**Advisory Panel Members:** Bob Ellis (Chair), Anthea Deane, Christopher Dingwall, John Manning, Peter Morris and Ian Richards.

**CULTURE** PERTH & KINROSS With thanks to the staff at Culture Perth & Kinross for their support and assistance in curating and designing the exhibition.

## Funders and Supporters

The launch phase of the CATERAN'S COMMON WEALTH programme has been financially supported by Creative Scotland, the Drumderg Windfarm Fund, the Gannochy Trust, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Perth & Kinross Council, Scotmid, the Postcode Lottery Fund, the St. James Place Foundation, Vanora's Cottages and the citizens of Alyth.



Supported by Rural Perth & Kinross LEADER Programme 2014-2020:  
 The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas



The 2017 CATERAN'S COMMON WEALTH programme has been enabled by North East of North (NEoN) and the Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust



A CATERAN'S COMMON WEALTH publication 2017 [www.commonculture.org.uk](http://www.commonculture.org.uk)

Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>





Borby Hill Fort, photo © Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust