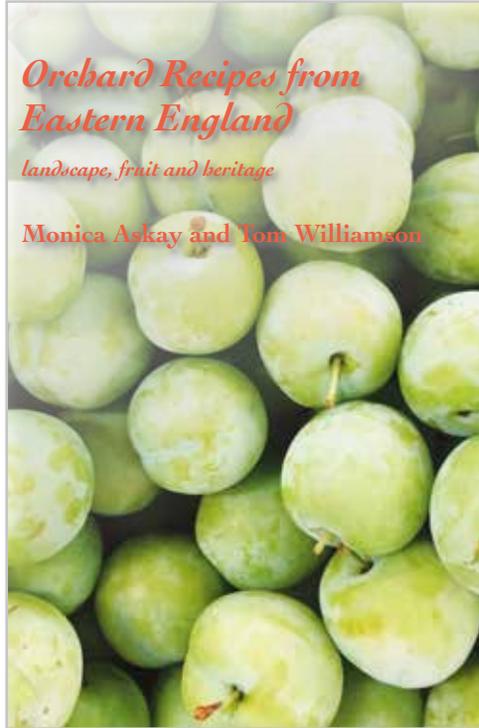


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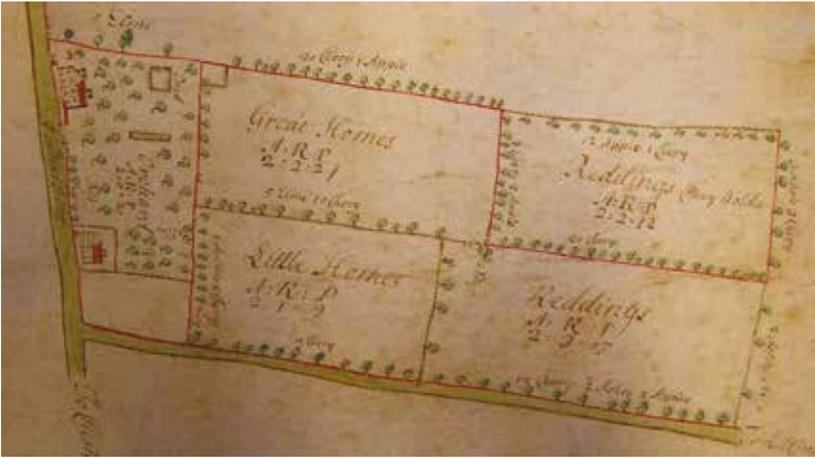


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*A map of a farm at Flaunden in west Hertfordshire, surveyed around 1700, showing the local custom of growing apples and cherries as hedgerow trees.*



*Workers in the orchards of Wilkin and Son's jam company, Tiptree, in c. 1910.*

Bridge Publishing is pleased to announce *Orchard Recipes of Eastern England: landscape, fruit and heritage* by Monica Askay and Tom Williamson.

The East of England is one of the most prolific fruit growing areas of the United Kingdom. Often overlooked in favour of The South East, West Midlands or the West Country, the region has a rich history of fruit growing with orchards being a familiar part of the landscape.

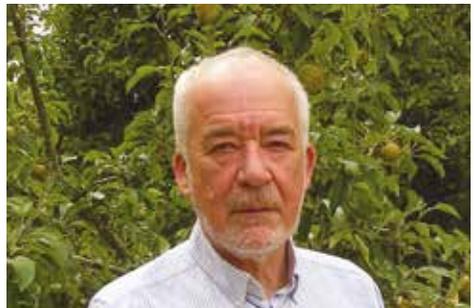
This short book not only looks at the history of orchards in eastern England, and of the fruit grown within them, but is also a recipe book, providing examples of how different kinds of fruit typical of the eastern counties, varieties of apple, pear, plum and cherry, can be used and eaten. The authors present a mixture of historic recipes, long-established 'traditional' recipes, and also new ones specially devised to make the best use of the fruit most closely associated with the old counties of Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. The book is one of the outcomes of 'Orchards East', a project supported by the Heritage Fund.

### **About the Authors**

Monica Askay is a Cook and Food Historian with a particular interest in heritage orchards. Her involvement in orchard groups and projects in the Eastern Counties over many years has given her an in-depth knowledge of heritage fruits and their culinary properties. She provides cookery demonstrations with tastings, and hands-on cookery workshops.



Tom Williamson was born in Hertfordshire but has lived in Norfolk since 1984. He is Professor of Landscape History at the University of East Anglia and has written widely on landscape archaeology, agricultural history and the history of landscape design.





*'Biffins'—the most famous apple dish associated with the county of Norfolk.*



*Greengages with Flaked Almonds and Amaretto, an excellent way of using a fruit with close associations with Suffolk.*

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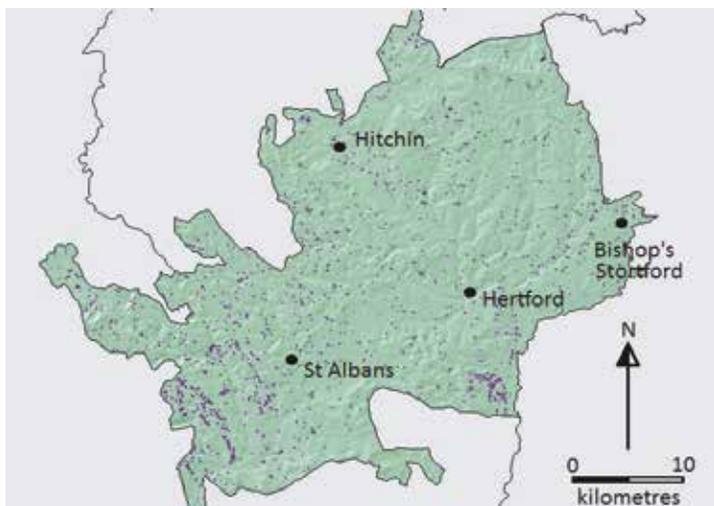
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## Hertfordshire

# Down in the Cherry Orchards

HERTFORDSHIRE'S countryside is almost everywhere characterised by winding lanes, villages of timber-framed houses, scattered farms and old hedgerows. But there are subtle variations in this landscape from one part of the county to another. In the west, for example, we find the dramatic wooded hills of the Chilterns with their long, gentle dip slope extending to the south, cut by chalky valleys. In the east of the county, in contrast, the terrain is more gently rolling, with clay uplands which, while often well-wooded, have wider arable fields and fewer hedges. Yet much more dramatic and obvious are the variations in the degree of urbanisation within the county. By 1941 it could already be said that Watford and Barnet in the far south were 'largely dormitory areas for London', while other market towns in the south and west had 'entered a new phase: fast and efficient transport to London and to the Midlands combined with a local labour supply have attracted many light industries and much of south-west Hertfordshire has thus become greatly industrialised'. Over the following decades the establishment of 'New Towns' at Stevenage and Hatfield, and the expansion of the existing 'Garden Cities' at Letchworth and Welwyn, created a further band of urbanised land running north-south through the centre of the county, along the line of the A1. Today, pockets of countryside still exist in the west and south of Hertfordshire, some very attractive, but they give way abruptly to more built-up areas. It is in the east and the north-east of the county that the most extensive and continuous tracts of rural landscape survive.

At the start of the twentieth century there were well over 2,700 orchards in the county (Figure 2.1). Most were small and attached to farmhouses, providing fruit for the family and a small surplus for sale. Early documents suggest that such domestic orchards could be found almost everywhere, and that they were carefully managed. Trees were regularly replaced, and the grass beneath them was cut for hay and grazed with geese and sheep (leases for orchards, such as one for a farm in St Paul's Walden, dating to 1687, sometimes instructed the tenant not to keep cows there, presumably because they might damage the trees). Orchards were densely clustered in villages and market towns. When a property in Hoddesdon ('formerly "The Feathers" alehouse') was sold in 1882 it was described as being bounded by an orchard on its southern side and by



2.1. The distribution of orchards in Hertfordshire in c. 1900. The dense concentration in the west includes the cherry orchards which were already a feature of the county by the start of the eighteenth century. County boundary as it was in the nineteenth century.

another on its northern; it contained an orchard, and it included a small piece of land which was rented out as part of the orchard of Cherry Trees Farm! Some examples were short-lived features of the landscape but others survived for centuries. An orchard shown on a map of 1596 beside the farm called Clintons in Little Hadham was still in existence as late as the 1980s.

Some parts of the county were specialising in fruit production from an early date. In particular, orchards were particularly large and numerous in the area of countryside lying between St Albans, Berkhamsted, Rickmansworth and Watford. As early as 1797 the agriculturalist Arthur Young described how, in the 'south-west corner of the county ... there are many orchards: apples and cherries are their principal produce'. One notable feature of this district, although one that was in decline by the time that Young was writing, was the practise of planting cherry and apple trees not only in orchards but also in the hedges around fields. The farmer and author William Ellis from Little Gaddesden recorded it as standard practice in the 1740s, and an undated map of a farm in Flaunden, drawn up around 1700, shows that most of the hedgerow trees were either cherries or apples (Figure 2.2). The loamy soils of the Chiltern dipslope were good for growing fruit, and London—less than 20 miles (30 kilometres) to the south-east—provided a ready market. Cherries were a particular speciality

Chorleywood, Codicote, Northaw, Oxhey and elsewhere. The town of St Albans may be unique in having four such orchards! All these wonderful places, maintained by volunteers, are doing much to keep Hertfordshire's rich orchard heritage alive.

## Recipes

### Baked Apple Dumplings (serves four)

William Ellis, who lived at Great Gaddesden in west Hertfordshire, described in his *Modern Husbandman* of 1744 how the large Catshead apple was 'a very useful apple to the farmer, because one of them pared and wrapped up in dough, serves with little trouble for making an apple-dumpling', for which purpose 'it has now got into such reputation in Hertfordshire . . . that it is become the most common food with a piece of bacon or pickle-pork for families'. There are, in fact, several types of traditional dishes referred to as 'Apple Dumplings'. They vary in the type of pastry used, in whether the apples are used whole or sliced, and in how they are cooked. The pastry used can be suet, shortcrust or puff and the dumplings can be boiled, steamed or baked. There are many variations and related recipes, some with local names. Several can be found in the works of Hannah Glasse (writing in 1747) and Eliza Acton (writing in 1845).



2.10 Baked Apple Dumplings. Accounted a delicacy in Hertfordshire in the eighteenth century, and known throughout England. Lane's Prince Albert is ideal for this dish.

Lane's Prince Albert, which as described above originated in Berkhamsted in the mid nineteenth century, is ideal for this recipe but a Cox-type apple like Ribston Pippin or Orleans Reinette will do just as well. The Catshead apple so praised by Ellis is also suitable, if you can get hold of it! What is now the most popular English cooking apple, Bramley, is not suitable as it does not hold its shape when cooked.

#### *Ingredients*

Shortcrust Pastry made with 8 oz / 250 g plain flour, 2 oz / 130 g butter, 2 oz / 130 g lard (or vegetarian alternative), a pinch of salt, and a small amount of cold water to mix

4 medium sized apples, peeled and cored

A filling of your choice—choose from butter mashed with brown sugar and cinnamon, a mixture of dried fruit with sugar and lemon zest, mixed candied peel and lemon zest, mincemeat, quince jelly, or marmalade

#### *Method*

Make the pastry and leave to one side for at least 30 minutes (this prevents shrinkage during cooking).

Preheat the oven to 190°C / Gas Mark 5.

Peel, core and stuff the apples with your chosen filling.

Divide the pastry into four. Roll out each piece fairly thinly to form a circle large enough to wrap the apple in. Place each apple in the middle of its pastry circle. Dampen the edges of the pastry and draw it up around the apple. Pinch the pastry edges together to seal, and trim off any excess. Place on a greased baking sheet, with the join underneath. Use the pastry trimmings to make leaves to decorate the dumplings. Brush with beaten egg. Bake for 30 minutes until golden brown. Serve hot with custard or cream.



### **Black Cherry Turnovers**

William Hone described in 1857 how in certain parts of Hertfordshire—he presumably had the west of the county in mind—people had for centuries made cherry pasties ‘which are by them highly esteemed for their delicious flavour’.

Entertainments called “the pastry feasts,” in which the above mentioned “niceties” shine conspicuous, are always duly observed, and constitute a seasonal attraction “for all ages,” but more particularly for the “juveniles”, whose laughter-

teeming visages, begrimed with the exuberant juice, present unmistakable evidence of their “having a finger in the pie”.

In her 1977 book *The Folklore of Hertfordshire*, Doris Jones-Baker suggested that the inhabitants of Frithsden in the Chilterns claimed to have invented ‘the black cherry pasty and the cherry turnover’, but whether or not this is true both were part of the traditional cuisine of Hertfordshire’s cherry-growing district. Unfortunately, the recipes for both delicacies appear to have been lost. This recipe for ‘Buckinghamshire Cherry Bumpers’, included in the collections of both Mary Norwak and Sheila Hutchins, is probably close. Frithsden lies a short distance from the border with Buckinghamshire, and the west Hertfordshire cherry-growing district extended into that county.

#### *Ingredients*

450 g / 1 lb black cherries, preferably Bailey’s Early Black if available

75 g / 3 oz caster sugar

250 g / 8 oz shortcrust pastry (see the Baked Apple Dumpling recipe above)

#### *Method*

Stone the cherries, place in a bowl and sprinkle with the sugar.

Preheat the oven to 200°C / 180°C Fan / Gas Mark 6.



2.11 Black Cherry Turnovers were widely eaten in west Hertfordshire in the past.

Order this title from your nearest East Anglian bookshop.

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