

The Longest Hedge on Earth



Towering over the A93 main road four miles south of Blairgowrie and ten miles north of Perth is what has, since 1966, been officially recognized as the tallest and longest hedge on Earth.

The Meikleour Beech Hedge is 580 yards (or 530m) long and ranges in height from 120ft (36m) at its northern end to 80ft (24m) at its southern end. The average height is over 100ft (30m). The hedge is made of Beech, (*Fagus sylvatica*) and is cut and measured by the Meikleour Trust once every ten years, a process that takes four men six weeks using a hydraulic lift and hand-held cutting equipment. The photo below left, taken in 2000, seems to show the hedge not long after it had been cut.

The story of the hedge is closely associated with the story of Meikleour House, which lies half a mile to the west and whose eastern boundary it defines. The house was built by Robert Murray Nairne and his wife Jean Mercer of Meikleour, heiress of the estates of Aldie and Meikleour, who had married in 1720. The house itself was remodeled into the form of a French château in 1870, but by then its most outstanding feature was already well established.

The Meikleour Hedge was planted by Robert and Jean in the autumn of 1745. However, as Jacobites sympathisers, they would never see it grow to maturity. By the time the hedge was planted, Bonnie Prince Charlie had been on Scottish soil for over a month. The 1745 Jacobite uprising came to a decisive end at the Battle of Culloden on 16 April 1746. Amongst the Jacobites killed in at Culloden was Robert Murray Nairne, and following the battle Jean Mercer left Meikleour to seek refuge and anonymity in Edinburgh.

I hate trimming the little hedge that I have. Can you imagine...