



Man-made Eden: Historic Orchards of Somerset and Gloucestershire

JAMES RUSSELL

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ADVANCE INFORMATION

The West Country is famed for its orchards, but why are they here? As the campaign to save and celebrate English orchards gathers momentum, this book explores their fascinating and – until now – neglected history.

Why is Glastonbury known as Avalon, the Isle of Apples? What made Redstreak Cyder the most popular drink of the seventeenth century?

Who was Dr Ashmead, cultivator of the connoisseur's favourite apple, Ashmead's Kernel? How did a Somerset vicar come to make cider for Queen Victoria?

This rich, wide-ranging book takes a long historic look at changing fashions and fortunes – asking why thirteenth-century monks and Edwardian landowners planted orchards, and why post-war governments paid farmers to destroy them.

The author argues that Apple Day (October 21) should be made our national autumn holiday. He examines the role of Common Ground, the National Trust and other organisations in preserving and restoring orchards, and asks: what can we do to make our orchards as profitable as they were in centuries past?

James Russell has written for the Daily Telegraph, the Guardian, Countryman Magazine, BBC History Magazine, British Heritage, Somerset Life, the Bristol and Bath Magazines, Venue and many other publications.

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