

Welcome to the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute. As you will see we have beautiful grounds dating back from the 1800s, the former gardens of the Manor House, the remains of which form part of the Institute's administration offices and we now call Craigiebuckler House.

TREE WALK

One of the previous owners of Craigiebuckler House exercised good taste in planting the estate with a rich variety of trees and we consider ourselves privileged to work in the environment that his forethought has provided. We are left with quite a responsibility in maintaining such a collection of trees, and we take this seriously, employing a professional arborist to monitor the trees' condition and advise us on their care.

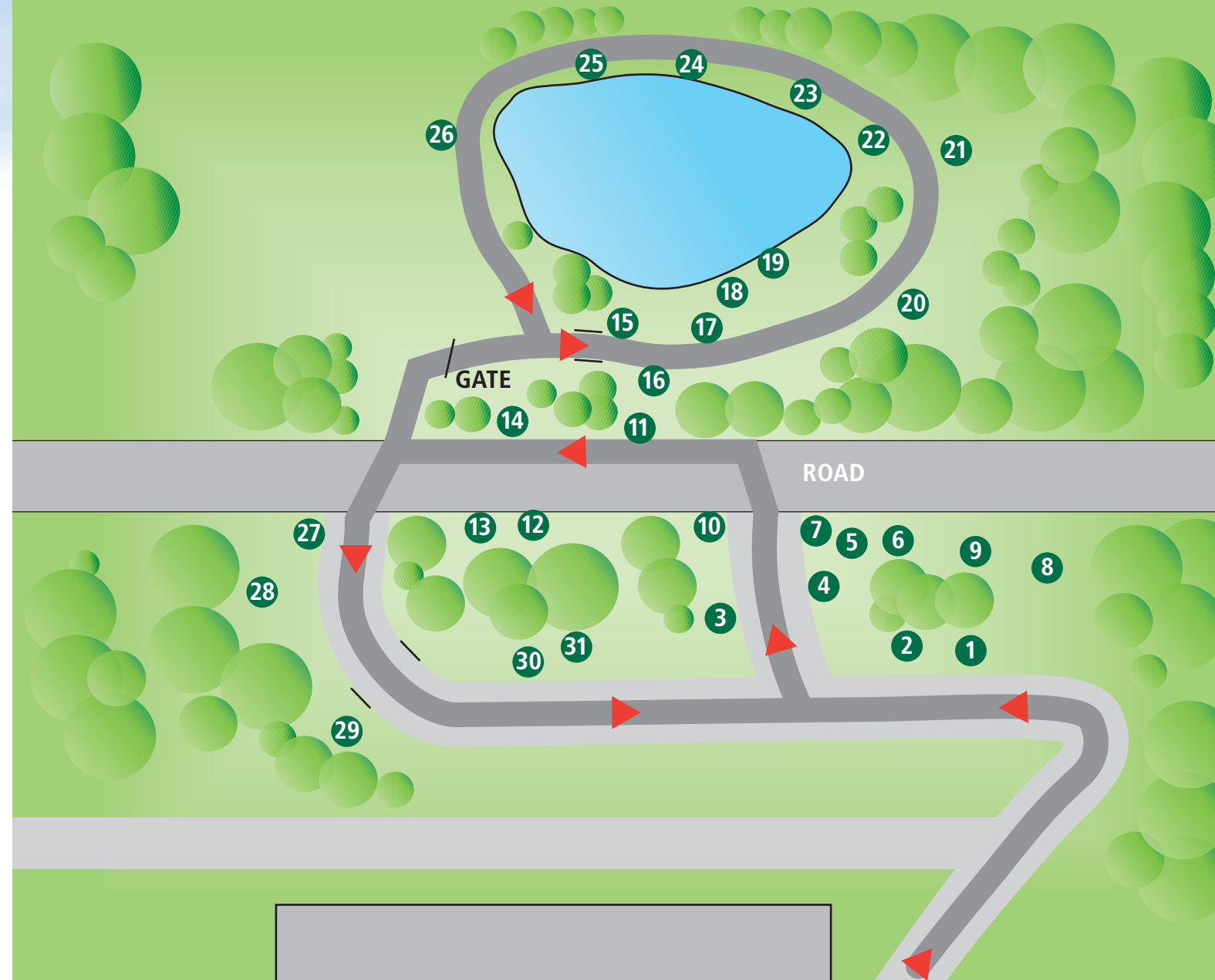


We hope to conserve the character of the grounds by using good husbandry to maintain what we have, and by planting young trees to replace losses to either age or storm damage. We select species for planting that will add to and complement the mixture of species that we already have. We are guided in this by a small committee comprising staff with professional horticultural and arboricultural experience.

Commence the tree walk at the point indicated, near the main entrance. Walk down the curved pathway past the terraced lawns. At the bottom of the slope you will pass a Deodar tree (*Cedrus deodara*) **1**. These are native to the Himalayas and are often mentioned in literature on northern India (eg works of Rudyard Kipling).

Shortly after this there is a small Sessile Oak sapling (*Quercus petraea*) **2** that was planted in memory of Andrew Raven, a former Chairman of our Board of Governors. This species of tree was selected because it is common in the Sunart woods, an area of which he was very fond.

Turn right at the next path junction. On your left hand is a Japanese Red Cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica*) **3**, native to Japan and China, and on your right is one of the estate's Giant Sequoias (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) **4**, a native to California, America. Follow the path towards the road way, and turn right onto the grass at the point indicated. You will pass a Black Poplar (*Populus nigra*) **5**, a Beech tree (*Fagus sylvatica*) **6** and a Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) **7**.



After reaching the old dovecot **8**, turn back to the path, passing a Grand Fir (*Abies grandis*) **9**. Just beyond the path is an Oregon or Red Alder (*Alnus rubra*) **10**. This tree is regarded as a Specimen Tree (ie, one that is remarkable for its size or age) and is thought to be one of the tallest Red Alders in the country.

Pass through the gate and (with care!) cross Macaulay Drive and turn left onto the footway on the far side. Notice the mixed-species hedge **11** (hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel) that was planted at the suggestion of staff members with a view to introducing traditional hedge species. After a short distance you will notice an Atlas Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica 'Glauca'*) **12** on the left-hand side of the road, followed by another Giant Sequoia **13**. On your right hand is a Sweet Chestnut tree (*Castanea sativa*) **14**. Turn right onto a small path, then right again through a small gate.

POND AREA

The pond area has suffered quite a bit of neglect over the years and we recognise that it is not in a very attractive state. However, we are in the middle of a programme of works to improve the area, both from an aesthetic viewpoint and as a habitat for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. Quite a bit of work has already been done in cutting back undergrowth, mostly rhododendrons and laurels. We now propose to dredge part of the pond, re-form the footways and carry out some tree planting.

Walk down the slope towards a bridge over the Buckler Burn. Just after the bridge on your left hand is a pile of stones which is what remains of a water feature **15** – a favourite device of garden planners during Victorian times. Water from the Bucker Burn was diverted to cascade from within the stone formation.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1** Deodar tree (*Cedrus deodara*)
- 2** Sessile Oak sapling (*Quercus petraea*)
- 3** Japanese Red Cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica*)
- 4** Giant Sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*)
- 5** Black Poplar (*Populus nigra*)
- 6** Beech tree (*Fagus sylvatica*)
- 7** Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*)
- 8** Old dovecot
- 9** Grand Fir (*Abies grandis*)
- 10** Oregon or Red Alder (*Alnus rubra*)
- 11** Mixed-species hedge
- 12** Atlas Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica 'Glauca'*)
- 13** Giant Sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*)
- 14** Sweet Chestnut tree (*Castanea sativa*)
- 15** Water feature
- 16** Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)
- 17** Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia Glyptostrobooides*)
- 18** Camperdown elm (*Ulmus glabra 'Camperdownii'*)
- 19** Former Ornamental 'pagoda' structure
- 20** Wild Cherry or Gean (*Prunus avium*)
- 21** Hedgehog Holly (*Ilex aquifolium 'ferox'*)
- 22** Monkey Puzzle (*Araucaria araucana*)
- 23** Black Poplar (*Populus nigra*)
- 24** Former Boat house canopy
- 25** Yew (*Taxus baccata*)
- 26** Former walled garden
- 27** Mature Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)
- 28** Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)
- 29** Western Hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*)
- 30** Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*)
- 31** Hybrid Fir (*Abies spp*)



Notice the mature Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) **16** on your right hand. Just beyond the water feature, a temporary track leads down past a Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia Glyptostroboides*) **17**, native to China. These trees are 'living fossils', and were first described from fossilised remains in 1941, but living specimens were discovered the same year.



You are now in an area that once formed an island, and which was reached by a bridge from the pond's north bank. Just beside a clump of bamboo is a Camperdown elm (*Ulmus glabra 'Camperdownii'*) **18**. Trees with this unusual, contorted, form are now fairly common throughout Britain in parks and gardens. They have all been raised from cuttings from a freak sapling that the head gardener of the Camperdown House estate, Dundee, found growing wild. He transplanted the sapling to the grounds of his employer's house; the original tree is still alive and can be seen in what is now Camperdown Park. Beyond the elm, an ornamental 'pagoda' structure **19** used to be sited at the water's edge.

Return to the footpath and turn left to continue round the pond. You will pass quite an old Wild Cherry or Gean (*Prunus avium*) **20**. Continue along the path and notice the Hedgehog Holly (*Ilex aquifolium 'ferox'*) **21** with spines coming from the leaf surfaces as well as the edges. Beyond this, on your left hand, is a mature Monkey Puzzle (*Araucaria araucana*) **22**.

Follow the path around the head of the pond, past one of several Black Poplars (*Populus nigra*) **23**. Just where the pond flows out over a weir, you will notice concrete footings in the water that used to support a boat house canopy **24**. Follow the path round to the left, past a Yew (*Taxus baccata*) **25**. On your right is what remains of the former walled garden **26**. Older members of staff still remember the formal, geometrical layout with neatly-clipped Box hedges being used to define the edges of flower beds, and an old glasshouse which contained a vine.

Continue on to rejoin the path leading back to the entrance gate. Turn left and cross the road to re-enter the main part of the grounds. You will pass another mature Beech **27** and, away from the path on your right, a Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) **28**. Cross the bridge over the burn and, noticing the Western Hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*) **29** on your right, continue along the path in front of the building. On your left are examples of Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*) **30** and a hybrid Fir (*Abies spp*) **31**.

This ends the walk, follow the path ahead and up to the right taking you back to the front of the building.

CONTINUING THE TRADITION

There is an active programme of planting of new spring bulbs, trees and climbing plants by staff who are keen to ensure the grounds are at their best all year round. We have also built bird boxes to accommodate lots of sizes of birds from blue tits to owls.

LIVING HISTORY

In 1319 'Craigiebuckler' was part of what was known as the 'freedom lands' and were given to Aberdeen City by Robert the Bruce. Aberdeen City subsequently sold off the lands to pay for the construction of the city's main shopping street – Union Street. James Blaikie built the 'Mansion House' in 1826 as a summer residence for his large family. His permanent home was in Aberdeen, and in 1833, he became the first Lord Provost of Aberdeen, dying in the vestibule of the Old Town House in 1836. A statue and portrait of James can be seen there today.

In the 1850s a relative of James Blaikie, comb manufacturer John Stewart, owned The Mansion House. Due to his company (Highland Railways) shares depreciating, he had to relinquish it all. In the 1860s the estate passed to John Couper, who worked as an engineer in China and returned determined to own all the estates from Deeside to Hazlehead. He bought Burnieboozle, Craigiebuckler, Slopefield and Viewfield. His son John lived at Craigiebuckler with his other son, Sydney, living in Viewfield House - now the Hilton Treetops Hotel. His daughter married the minister of Craigiebuckler Church. The Couper family was probably the family responsible for laying out the grounds as they remain to this day, including the planting of exotic conifers. As was the trend of the day, overseas influences spread to garden design, and the introduction of the pagoda and boat house (now fallen into disrepair and removed for safety reasons) clearly depicted the Chinese influence favoured by John Couper.

The estate was acquired in 1930 with a benefaction by Thomas Bassett Macaulay on behalf of the newly formed Institute, The Macaulay Institute for Soil Research (MISR), following the advice of the Director designate and Sir Robert Greig, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture of Scotland.

The Institute was established with the aim of improving the productivity of Scottish agriculture. In 1987 MISR was merged with the Hill Farming Research Organisation (HRFO) in Edinburgh. The Macaulay Land Use Research Institute was formed to carry out research in support of the agricultural industry, taking into account the interactions between the industry and other land users, and set in the context of the environmental objectives of the UK Government and the European Union.



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The Macaulay Land Use Research Institute Estate and Grounds

