



DEMONSTRATION FARM

## Gilston Mains



**Farmer:** Edward Baxter

**Address:** Leven, Fife, KY8 5QP

**Website:** <http://www.eastneukestates.co.uk/the-estates/gilston-11.aspx>

Gilston is a predominately arable farm on rolling ground in North East Fife. The farm, which is mostly South lying, is reasonably well wooded with plantations and strips laid out for shooting in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Field sizes are around the 30 acre mark with a good network of hedges, stone walls, grass margins, beetle banks and conservation headlands. Good farm practice, managed alongside wildlife and landscape features is evident not just in conserving but also greatly enhancing the biodiversity of the farm.



### The Farm

Gilston Mains is a 1,110-acre farm forming part of the Gilston estate situated near Leven in the heart of the Fife countryside. It has been in the Baxter family for six generations. The family have always been active environmentalists, farming in an integrated way that is both economically and environmentally sustainable.

### Livestock

The grassland is let to neighbours and they run their cattle on the herb-rich pastures over the summer. Sheep are grazed on the pastures through the winter into early spring after the cattle have gone and before the grass is raked and rolled in preparation for the summer season.

### Crops for food

We are a predominantly arable farm following a rotation of combinable crops. Winter wheat is grown for the local distilling market [the grain in grain whisky], alongside spring barley for Malt whisky. Break crops include oilseed rape and oats used by Quaker's mill in Cupar for their porridge. This varied rotation reduces the risk of weed and disease problems as well as benefiting wildlife on the farm.



## Conservation

Wildlife abounds at Gilston Mains - it was the home of Scotland's first ever beetle bank and is supported by a matrix of grass field margins, wildlife corridors and wild headlands. We now have over two miles of beetle banks making a home for an abundance of wildlife. In recognition of its conservation work, Gilston was awarded the prestigious Purdey Game and Conservation Award in 1999. In the last 10 years 75,000 trees have been planted and 56 acres have been converted to bog and marsh, now rich in wading birds and rare marsh plants. Hedges are managed for wildlife, providing a valuable food source in winter and a nesting place in the spring and summer months.

## Visits

We welcome visitors to Gilston Mains throughout the year. Call the LEAF Office to make a booking.



## About LEAF Demonstration Farms

LEAF Demonstration Farms are commercial farms, which show the beneficial practices of Integrated Farm Management (IFM) to a broad range of audiences, through organised visits. They communicate an understanding of IFM in order to encourage uptake by farmers, support from the industry and political awareness of sustainable food and farming. For more information, visit [www.leafuk.org](http://www.leafuk.org).