CARSHAMON WOOD

Access to the Reserve

How to get there:

Conservation Management

One consequence of past management is that oak...
Welcome to Carstramon Wood Wildlife Reserve

Welcome to Carstramon Wood Wildlife Reserve which, at 83ha, is one of the largest of the Fleet Valley oak woodlands. There has been woodland on this site for at least two hundred years, a fact well known to local people who found many uses for the timber. Today the wood is owned by the Scottish Wildlife Trust.

Wildlife

Although there have been trees at Carstramon Wood for a long time many of the oaks were planted using English acorns some 200 years ago. However, as far as the wildlife is concerned an English oak is pretty similar to a Scottish oak! In spring the wood comes alive with the sound of summer migrant birds. Pied flycatcher, redstart, wood warbler and willow warbler all winter in Africa beyond the Sahara desert, and each year make the incredible journey north to breed in Carstramon Wood.

In May the woodland floor is carpeted with bluebells, and visitors come from far and wide just to experience this heady scent and spectacle. Notice the great abundance of ferns and lichens, which benefit from the humid conditions that arise from the woods western location and unbroken tree cover.

Human impact

In 1747 Roy’s map shows that woodland was restricted to the Doon Hill and this is supported by the remnants of field boundary walls within the present wood. However, by about 1800 most of the present woodland had been planted.

From about 1830, maybe for a hundred years, oak was cut in the wood and converted to charcoal for use in the smelting of iron, brass and copper.

Below the Doon Hill there are at least five platforms, which were at one time used for making charcoal. The nearby track was used to extract charcoal and timber to the road.

Until 1931 oak was used from the wood to supply a small bobbin mill and wood products business in the nearby Gatehouse of Fleet. Bobbins were supplied to the local cotton mills.

A large oak tree above the road by the layby is known as the “Parliament Oak”. Tradition has it that this was a meeting place for local people.

Charcoal burning.