

Conservation management

Timber production may have been an important feature of woodland management in the past, but there has been no active management for many years. The beech trees, now over 150 years old, are in their old age, and they are beginning to collapse as decay sets in. As a tree collapses, it leaves a space in the tree canopy, and these gaps are planted with native species such as oak, rowan, hazel and birch. Beech and sycamore seedlings are also removed to prevent the establishment of a new generation of these trees. After many years of hard work by SWT members in the Falkirk area, the wood is now almost free of Rhododendron. At one time, this invasive shrub formed dense, impenetrable thickets, which shaded out native plants and shrubs. The bushes were cut down and burnt, and in their place there is now space for the growth of native trees.

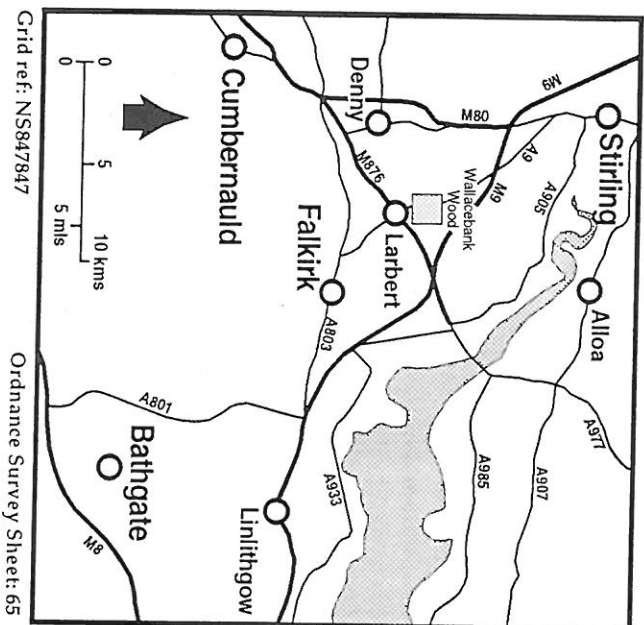
Access to the reserve

Visitors to the reserve may park in the car park of the Glenherve Golf Club, in the area furthest from the club house. Foot access only is then possible from the western end of the club house, northwards down a steep slope across a fairway then along a length of semi-rough grassland between fairways to the southernmost end of the wood. A waymarked path has been established within the wood. **NB this access must be adhered to so as to avoid crossing other fairways. Always be alert for flying golf balls!**



Purple Hairstreak

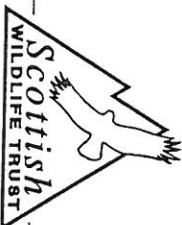
How to get there:



The Scottish Wildlife Trust is the leading charity conserving wildlife and natural environment in Scotland. It is a partner in The Wildlife Trusts, a network of 47 Wildlife Trusts covering the UK and managing over 2000 wildlife reserves. The SWT relies heavily on donations, legacies and membership income. Please join us and support our work – the need is urgent.

For further information and details of membership, please contact:

Scottish Wildlife Trust, Cramond House,
Cramond Glebe Road, Edinburgh EH4 6NS
Tel: 0131 312 7765 Fax: 0131 312 8705



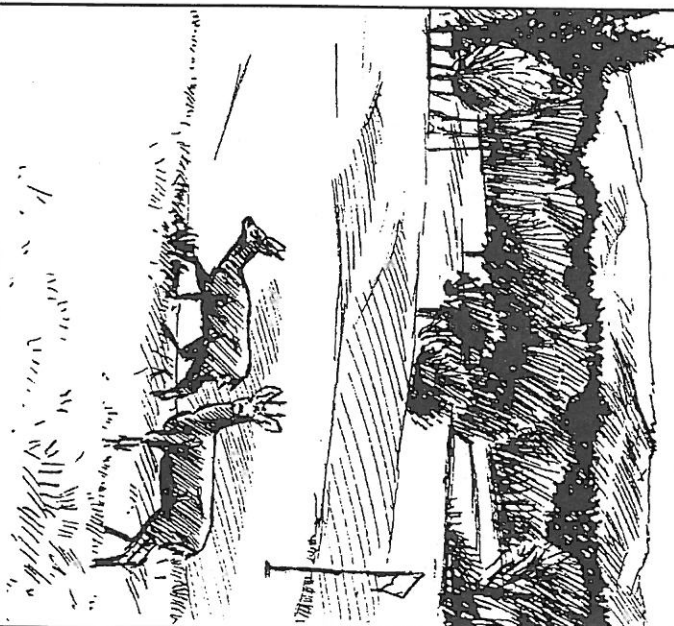
Scottish Wildlife Trust Charity
Registration No. SC 005792



Designed by H Scott (Pica Design)
Illustrations by D Powell

Welcome to
Wallacebank Wood
Wildlife Reserve

FALKIRK



SCOTTISH
WILDLIFE TRUST

Welcome to Wallacebank Wood Wildlife Reserve

Wallacebank Wood lies in the heart of Glenbervie Golf Course and the reserve is managed by the Scottish Wildlife Trust on behalf of the Golf Club. This fine lowland oak wood was the site of the fabled "Wallace Oak", a hollow tree 4 metres (13 feet) in diameter in which the Scottish patriot is reputed to have hidden after a defeat during the Scottish Wars of Independence over 700 years ago. Although the original tree was cut down in the late 18th Century, it is still part of local folklore.

Woodland History

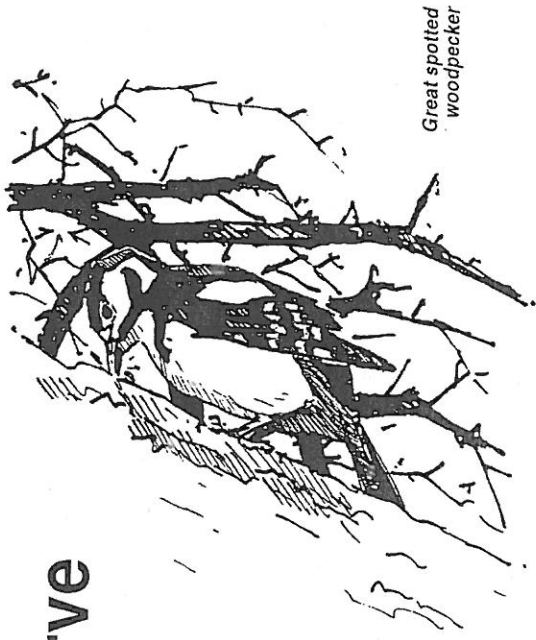
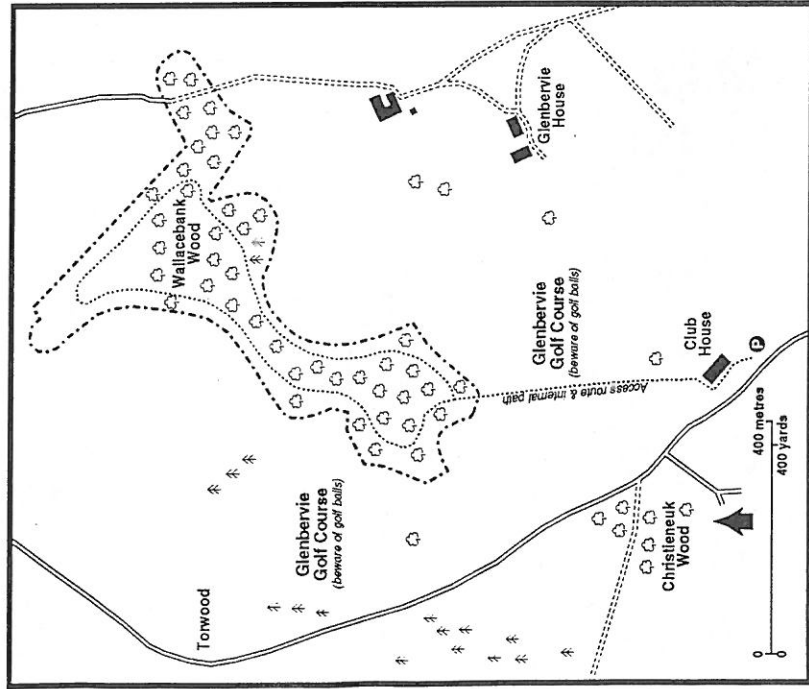
The reserve, which covers 16 ha (40 acres) is an ancient semi-natural woodland of a type which once covered large areas of the lowland plain in the Forth-Clyde Valley.

The predominance of oak and the uniform age of the trees suggests a period of intensive planting, perhaps between 150 and 170 years ago, when spruce and larch may have been used as a "nurse" crop, planted between the young slower growing broadleaved trees such as beech and oak to give them shelter. Another indication of intensive management is the existence in places of a stone embankment and ditch, or ha-ha, a structure typical of the management of woodlands for landscaping and ornamental purposes. At one time, the wood formed an important part of the designed landscape, or policies, surrounding Glenbervie House.

Wildlife

Wallacebank Wood is one of the largest remnants of native deciduous woodland in the Falkirk area. It forms a haven for wildlife in an otherwise intensively managed agricultural landscape. The long grass areas of the golf course fairways add further habitat diversity to this area.

As well as oak, the wood includes several other tree and shrub species, including alder, rowan, hazel, holly and a few Scots pines. In places the ground is covered with woodland flowers, and wood anemone and bluebell make a spectacular display in late spring. Into the summer, lesser stitchwort, wood sage and common figwort become obvious, but by mid summer, when the trees are casting heavy shade, the flowers have



Great spotted woodpecker

largely completed their flowering cycle and are beginning to decline. Grasses then dominate, and one of the most obvious is the uncommon wood millet, which may grow to over 1.5m high. In the autumn, the ground flora is dominated by ferns, including bracken, male fern and broad buckler fern.

The rather scarce shrub layer under the tree canopy offers relatively few opportunities for nesting birds, but 25 species have been recorded. These include green and great spotted woodpecker, treecreeper, goldcrest and the dashing sparrowhawk which flies at great speed through the trees hunting smaller birds.

Roe deer are resident in the wood, and you may catch a glimpse of a white tail as one bounds away from your approach. Weasel, stoat, fox and bank vole have all been found.

The purple hairstreak butterfly has recently been found in substantial numbers inhabiting the upper oak canopy and other invertebrate species are abundant under it. Although there are no particularly rare species, 70 species of moths occur, and 77 species of spiders, one of which had not previously been found in Scotland.