

Chatelherault



Country Park

# Green Bridge Trail





The

# Trail

The Green Bridge Trail takes you through a variety of beautiful riverside and woodland habitats that are rich in wildlife and human history. The peace and quiet which you can enjoy while walking this trail is also appreciated by badgers, otters and birds. This trail is 8km long, and the average time taken is 3 hours. There are a couple of steep sections, and places where the path can be wet and muddy after rain.



Start your walk at the visitor centre, leave by the main entrance facing the woodland. Go through the gate straight ahead, take the track to your right, and then immediately to the left. This is sign posted to

Green Bridge, which will be reached in about an hour and a half.

In the woods directly behind the lodge you can see tall redwood trees. These were planted as part of the great landscape design that linked the hunting lodge at Chatelherault and the now demolished palace in Hamilton. Impressive as these trees are, they are babies compared to the ancient redwoods in their native USA, which are the largest trees in the world.



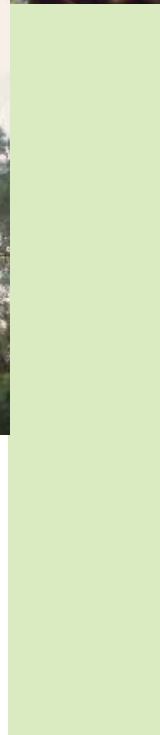
On your right is a dense dark plantation of trees. Large areas of these exotic conifers were planted on the upper slopes of the gorge during the 1950's and 1960's as part of a drive to increase UK timber production. The plan is to improve the park for wildlife and recreation by gradually removing these conifers



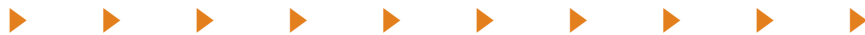
to make way for regeneration of native broadleaf woodland.



After 1.9k there is a junction and a bench where you can rest and look around. The Green Bridge Trail continues straight ahead, and not down into the gorge below. In 20 metres you will emerge into a clearing created for electricity pylons.



You will notice how the river has cut a deep gap, which is filled with forest, in contrast to the flat agricultural land. Trees have remained here because the steep banks are difficult to develop and also because it was a Forest in the original sense of the word - a hunting ground protected for nobles. In the 13th Century you may have encountered the fearsome wild white cattle in these woods. In the 18th Century, the lodge at Chatelherault was built as dog kennels, because hunting with hounds was in fashion.



The path eventually takes you steeply down steps to the river side and then on to the Green Bridge which you will notice is not green.

The water here is very clean but is stained a rich brown colour by the peat in the upper catchment of the river. Clean water is indicated by the diversity of river invertebrates and animals it supports. Birds such as dippers and wagtails feed on insects under and over the water, and the bright blue flash of a kingfisher is sometimes seen. Fish are plentiful in the Avon including salmon, brown trout and the otters favourite, eels. Otters have been threatened by river pollution, disturbance and habitat loss, but the gorge woodland provides a place for them to thrive.



After crossing the bridge follow the track steadily up and away from the river into the deciduous woods.



There has been forest cover here for thousands of years, enough time for a rich community of wildlife to develop, relatively unaffected by human activity. The native trees typical of this lowland forest are ash, elm and oak. Shaded damp areas favour a luxuriant growth of ferns and mosses. Old trees provide nesting holes for birds, such as Great Tits and Blue Tits,



and roosting sites for bats. The ancient forest soils are full of earthworms, and you will often see signs of badgers digging for them with their snouts.



# The Countryside Code

## A few tips to help you enjoy your walk:

- You should have a better chance of spotting our wildlife if you go quietly;
- Show courtesy and respect to other visitors;
- Take care of our wildlife and cultural heritage;
- Keep your dog under control and in sight at all times;
- Guard against the risk of fire;
- Keep to paths where possible;
- Please take your litter home and avoid polluting watercourses.
- Cyclists are welcome to use the tarmac routes to and from the visitor centre, where there is a sturdy cycle rack beside the main entrance. For the safety of all visitors, we cannot allow cycling on the woodland trails.
- Car parking and entrance to all facilities is free.



For further information, please contact the Visitor Centre, Chatelherault, Carlisle Road, Hamilton ML3 7UE.  
Phone: 01698 426213 Fax: 01698 421532

**“Let no-one say, and say it to my shame, that all was beauty here before I came.”**



One and a half kilometres beyond the bridge you will come to a seat and viewpoint. Keep to the gorge top, and you will come into an open meadow.



There is a pond here, sometimes hidden by damp loving plants. Meadowsweet with its red stems, antiseptic smelling leaves and a profusion of tiny cream white flowers has been used since the Bronze Age for its medicinal properties and for brewing beer and mead. Next the path goes steeply in and out of Divoty Glen. In the spring time bluebells and wild garlic bloom. In summer look up to see a closed canopy of leaves as the trees reach for light.

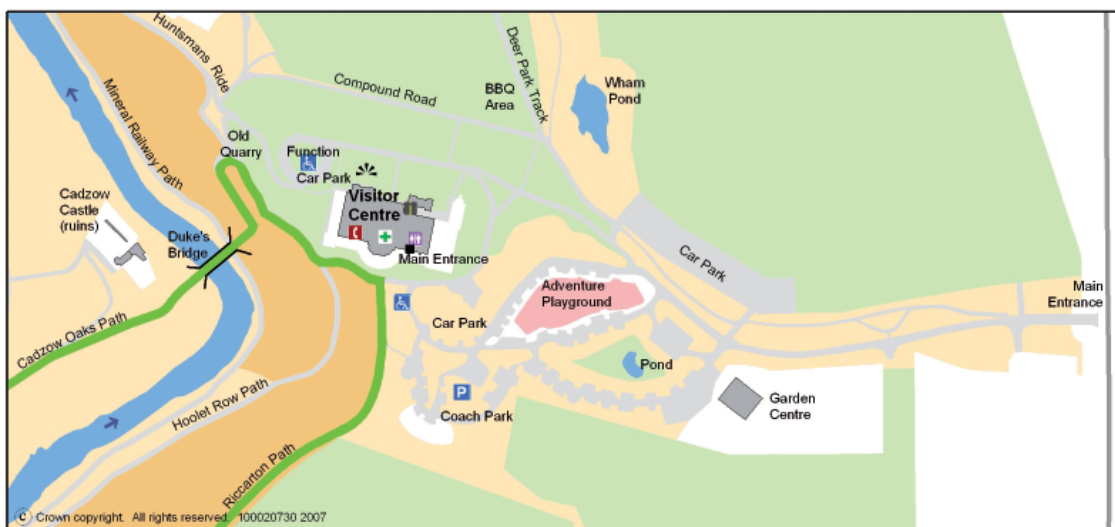


Continue through conifer plantation, and beside hedgerows and fields.

Winter visiting birds, such as fieldfare and redwing arrive from the North and can be seen feeding here on hawthorn berries. In the autumn fungi show their bright colours and strange shapes. The mushrooms that pop up are only designed to spread spores, the hidden mass has vital roles recycling dead wood and helping plant roots absorb nutrients.

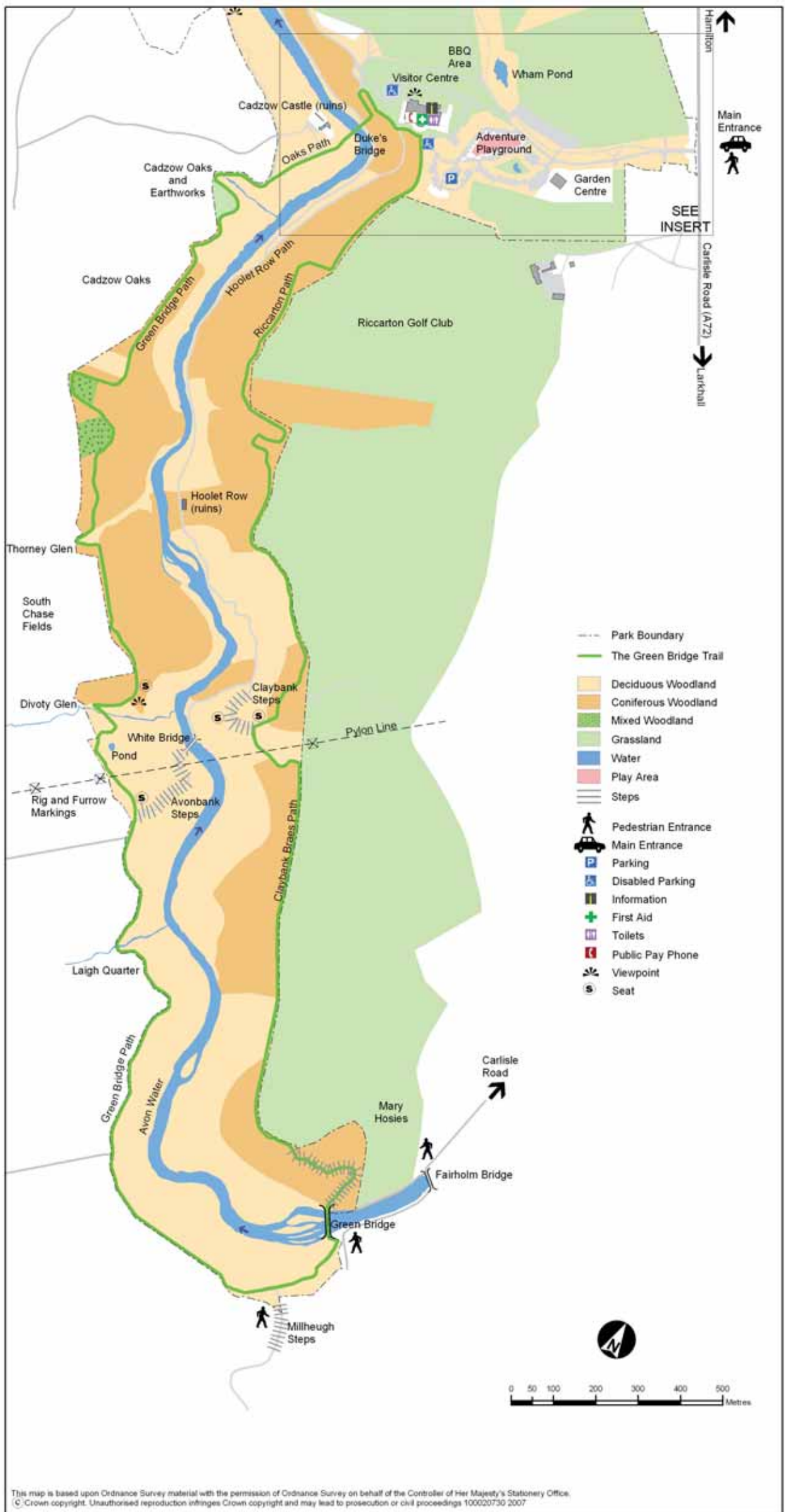


The final stretch takes you to the Ancient Oaks, and the ruined Cadzow Castle perched above the gorge. Crossing the Duke's Bridge you can peer down to the river thirty metres below or look out to the trees clinging to the gorge sides. To return to Chatelherault Visitor Centre follow the path up and round to the right.



The map data included within this leaflet is provided by South Lanarkshire Council under licence from the Ordnance Survey in order to publicise Council facilities.

For more information or if you want this information in a different format or language, please phone 01698 426213 or email [alan.newberry@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:alan.newberry@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)



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Community Resources

