

# Scotland's Woodlands and the Historic Environment



The landscape of Scotland tells the story of some 10,000 years of human history and the ways in which people have interacted with their environment



## Introduction

The landscape of Scotland tells the story of some 10,000 years of human history and the ways in which people have interacted with their environment.

Part of that story is under the canopy of Scotland's woodlands, evidence of past lives preserved below ground. An integral part of that story though is the history of the trees themselves and their relationship with Scotland's people. Over the centuries, that relationship has developed and matured through phases of exploitation, management and re-establishment. Today we recognise that the current stewards of Scotland's woodlands are a central part of our culture, economy and environment.

Those who care for Scotland's woodlands recognise that they have a duty to identify and protect heritage features, and to take due account of cultural, historic and designed landscapes when drawing up management plans (UK Forestry Standard). There is also encouragement for active management to secure and enhance its condition for future generations. Good interpretation, coupled with creating an appropriate setting for features, can also enhance the recreational interest of woodland. When carried out in an informed and sensitive way, such work can foster a better appreciation and understanding of the historic dimension and character of our essentially cultural landscape.

To place our woodland inheritance in historical context, a brief history of Scotland's woodlands and our recognition of their value to our cultural heritage runs as a parallel story through this document.

## Purpose

This policy statement is intended for all those with an interest in Scotland's trees, woodlands and forests, and their contribution towards the historic environment.

Fundamentally, the purpose of this document is to:

- Communicate the forestry sector's shared understanding of how forests and woodlands contribute towards Scotland's historic environment.

### A brief history of Scotland's woodlands

The history of tree cover in Scotland is intimately linked to both Scotland's changing climate and the activities of its people. It is generally considered that when people began to colonise Scotland some 10,000 years ago, probably about half of the land was wooded. Woodland cover continued to expand for the next 5,000 years, ultimately covering up to 80% of the land.

From then until the 18th century, the combination of a gradual change in the weather pattern to one less favourable to tree growth, and the various demands placed on those woodlands by a growing and developing population, steadily reduced tree cover down to about 4% of land area.



*Casteall Grugaig Iron Age broch overlooking Loch Duich*

- Promote the appreciation of the history of Scotland's forests and woodlands, and their contribution towards our cultural heritage.
- Confirm how the forestry sector will endeavour to deliver the required outcomes of Scottish Ministers' strategic policies for the historic environment.
- Outline what practical measures the forestry sector can take to ensure that all our activities enhance the stewardship of the historic environment.

## Forestry Commission Scotland's actions for the historic environment in Scotland's woodlands

The **Scottish Forestry Strategy** will contribute towards the delivery of all five of the Scottish Government's strategic objectives.

With regards the historic environment, the **Strategy** shows that the current objectives will primarily contribute within the 'Smarter' and 'Greener' strategic objectives, as illustrated in the table below:

| Scottish Government Strategic Objectives   | Scottish Forestry Strategic Outcomes                            | Scottish Forestry Strategic Objectives   |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Smarter</b><br>Expand opportunities for Scots to succeed from nurture through to life long learning, ensuring higher and more widely shared achievements. | Improved health and well-being of people and their communities. | Assist community participation.<br>Enhance opportunities for health and enjoyment.<br>Contribute to growth in learning and skills. |
| <b>Greener</b><br>Improve Scotland's natural and built environment and the sustainable use and enjoyment of it.  | High quality, robust and adaptable environment.                 | Protect and promote the historic environment and cultural heritage.<br>Contribute to landscape quality.                            |

### A brief history of Scotland's woodlands

Woodlands were cleared mainly for farming and other land-uses. Others gradually disappeared under the pressures of human exploitation and animal grazing. When readily available, wood had many everyday uses, such as for dwelling and boat construction, and also for fuel. Although this renewable natural resource was valued and cared for, exploitation eventually reached the point where the woodlands could no longer renew themselves through natural regeneration.



*Caledonian pine forest remnants in excess of 450 years old, North Scotland*

This decline in woodland cover and associated loss of a woodland management culture was exacerbated by the fact that alternatives to woodland products were readily available. Coal and peat were the primary energy source, and quality timber could be economically imported. Within a land management economy, without a strategic function that would warrant resources for positive management and conservation, woodlands fell into disuse and gradually disappeared.

Forestry Commission Scotland will:

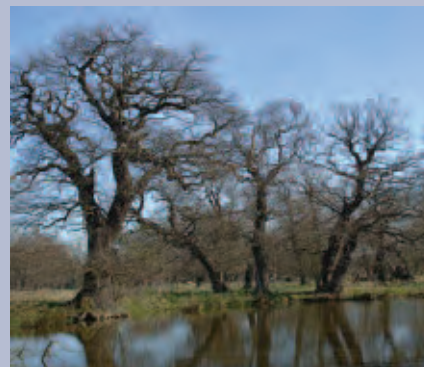
- Advise Scottish Ministers of the benefits to Scotland and its people of a sustained interest in developing and implementing forestry policy that recognises the value of the historic environment.
- Review and develop forestry policy for the historic environment in partnership with Scottish historic environment organisations and interests.

To contribute towards a **‘Smarter’** Scotland, Forestry Commission Scotland aims to:

- Promote and support continued effort to add to our knowledge base by seeking out, identifying, recording and researching to gain a better understanding of sites and areas of historic value.
- Promote and support the protection and conservation of significant evidence of the historic environment in Scotland’s woodlands, including historic landscapes and, where relevant, surrounding environs, all in partnership with Scottish historic environment organisations and interests.
- Promote and support the preparation, consultation and implementation of holistic management plans that ensure the conservation of features and areas of the historic environment.
- Develop and foster constructive partnerships with national organisations involved in the historic environment, and encourage the involvement of local historic environment groups and people in all aspects of the historical legacy of our woodlands.
- Promote and support activities that contribute towards the identification and protection of woods and trees of historic value, including research to help our understanding of the woodland history and contribute towards appropriate management.
- Promote culture and art opportunities associated with the historic features and landscapes of Scotland’s

### A brief history of Scotland’s woodlands

Although there was some significant planting of new woodlands during the 18th and 19th centuries by landowners such as the Dukes of Atholl and Earl of Seafield, it was the blockade on imports during the First World War that prompted a countrywide reforestation effort. Recognising the vulnerability of this country to any interruption of essential imports, policy and resources were focused on the establishment of new forests for a strategic reserve of timber.



*Ancient wood pasture oaks, Dalkeith Country Park, East Lothian*

Led by the Forestry Commission, tree planting throughout the 20th century on both publicly owned and private land took woodland cover in Scotland to around 17% of the land area. To establish a strategic resource of timber for industry in the shortest possible time, the vast majority of the new forest plantations were established with introduced tree species.

# Scotland's woodlands and the historic environment

woodlands, and their relevance to contemporary cultural values.

- Initiate and support research that furthers our understanding of our historic environment legacy in Scotland's woodlands, all in partnership and consultation with national and local historic environment interests.
- Carry out research and monitoring of our activities to ensure that what we do is beneficial for all aspects of the historic environment.

To contribute towards a **'Greener'** Scotland, Forestry Commission Scotland aims to:

- Help people to appreciate and enjoy the historic environment legacy in woodlands by promoting and supporting appropriate access to and settings for historic features, where this does not prejudice their protection and conservation.
- Promote the development of a visitor experience to woodland historic sites to help visitors understand the history of the area they are visiting and its sensitivity to damage.
- Promote the educational and lifelong learning potential for people in their understanding and appreciation of their woodland historic environment legacy, including measures required for their conservation for future generations.
- Develop and promote grant aid support measures for woodland owners that contribute towards their stewardship of the historic environment in their woodlands, and provision of appropriate public access and interpretation.
- Develop and promote appropriate advice and guidance to help woodland owners understand what they can do to add to their knowledge, protect and conserve the historic features, and satisfy public access requirements.

## A brief history of Scotland's woodlands

During the 19th century Scottish plant collectors discovered and brought back from North America fast growing conifers, such as Sitka spruce, Lodgepole pine and Douglas fir. Studies had shown that these would grow well in the relatively mild and wet oceanic climate of west Scotland.

During the latter part of the 20th century the strategic timber resource imperative was gradually supplanted by the appreciation that all woodlands had the potential to provide multiple benefits. More recently, policies have been put in place to continue that steady expansion of woodland cover, and manage the resource for all the sustainable benefits it can provide for people, the economy and the environment.



*View from Dun-da-lamh, the prehistoric hill fort near Laggan, Badenoch, Highland*



## The historic environment

The 'historic environment' is now the accepted term for describing the historic dimension of the whole environment, a definition of which is provided in the box below:

### Definition of the 'historic environment':

The historic environment goes beyond the definition of 'the built heritage' in the Stirling Charter and extends to the present day. Our whole environment, whether rural or urban, on land or under water, has a historic dimension that contributes to its quality and character. It has been shaped by human and natural processes over thousands of years. This is most obvious in our built heritage: ancient monuments; archaeological sites and landscapes; historic buildings; townscape; parks; gardens and designed landscapes; and our marine heritage, for example in the form of historic shipwrecks or underwater landscapes once dry land.

We can see it in the patterns in our landscape – the layout of fields and roads, and the remains of a wide range of past human activities. Importantly it also includes our buildings erected before 1919. Although the majority of older buildings are not listed, most provide flexible and often spacious domestic and office accommodation.

A huge investment of money, energy and materials went into these buildings – it would be poor stewardship of this inheritance to neglect it.

The context in which specific historic features sit and the patterns of past use are part of our historic environment. The historical, artistic, literary, linguistic, and scenic associations of places and landscapes are some of the less tangible elements of the historic environment. These elements make a fundamental contribution to our sense of place and cultural identity.

Source: SHEP 1: Scotland's Historic Environment (Historic Scotland)

In terms of Scotland's forests and woodlands, not only does the historic environment include all evidence within and associated outside a woodland, but it can also embrace wooded landscapes and the trees themselves.

## Scotland's new woodlands and the historic environment

Within a single century Scotland has established a new and vibrant rural industry that contributes in many ways to the economic, social and environmental health of the nation. Such rapid expansion of woodland cover though has at times been criticised for establishing some plantings without due regard for other interests and sensitivities.

It is recognised that all Scotland's woodlands contain a diverse and rich collection of features of archaeological interest. Some of this cultural heritage is evidence of past woodland use and management. The woods and trees themselves though may also be recognised as essential elements of an historic and designed landscape.



*Abandoned early 19th century settlement of Arichonan, West Argyll*

The vast majority of archaeological sites that are found within Scotland's new woodlands obviously pre-date their establishment. These features, both known and as yet unknown and unrecorded, have their origins in the prehistoric and historic landscapes within which people once lived.

## Contributing towards the conservation and appreciation of the historic environment

Historic Scotland's **Scottish Historic Environment** Policy series sets out Scottish Ministers' strategic policies for the historic environment.

**Scottish Historic Environment Policy 1** provides a framework for the day-to-day work of organisations that have a role and interest in managing the historic environment. Forestry Commission Scotland is one such organisation, recognised as having both policy responsibilities that impact on the historic environment, and direct responsibilities for the management of individual historic environment assets and areas of landscape.

To contribute towards the delivery of Scottish Ministers' policies for the historic environment, Forestry Commission Scotland will:

- Support the development and promotion of the Historic Scotland series of **Scottish Historic Environment Policy** papers, and when deemed necessary by Scottish Ministers, contribute to their review
- Enter into a formal agreement with Historic Scotland to clarify our respective roles and how we will engage to deliver the sustainable management of the historic environment
- Contribute towards the aspirations of Scottish Ministers for the historic environment articulated in **Scottish Historic Environment Policy 1** summarised in the box opposite.

The **Scottish Forestry Strategy 2006** is the Scottish Government's framework for taking forestry forward through the first half of this century, but focussing on the key priorities over the next decade.

In the current **Strategy**, a contributing part of the vision for achieving the outcome of a high quality, robust and adaptable environment, is the protection and promotion of the historic environment and cultural heritage of Scotland.

To deliver this outcome the long-term objectives for the historic environment are to:

- Manage the historic environment sensitively

### Scotland's new woodlands and the historic environment

Some features are relatively easy to recognise, such as the ramparts of an Iron Age fort, the upstanding stone walls of a deserted township or the impressive burial cairns and standing stones of the Bronze Age, but other features can be much less substantial. Indeed, there is often much further archaeological information lying hidden beneath the surface.

Individual sites and features also form cohesive groups within the landscape and should be considered in their wider contexts. For example, ancient settlements and farmsteads are often surrounded and linked by field systems, routes and trackways.



*Standing stones in forest clearing near Dervaig, Isle of Mull, Argyll*

During the 20th century when woodland cover was being rapidly expanded, such tree planting was considered a serious threat to Scotland's archaeological heritage, particularly in the uplands. Deep ploughing could disrupt ancient field systems and boundaries, destroy buried archaeological deposits and damage the vulnerable earthworks of prehistoric sites.



## Scottish Historic Environment Policy

Scottish Ministers want to:

- realise the full potential of the historic environment as a resource – cultural, educational, economic and social – across every part of Scotland and for all the people
- make the best use of the historic environment to achieve their wider aims of social and economic regeneration
- identify the many aspects of our historic environment and protect and manage them in a sustainable way to secure their long-term survival and preserve their embodied energy
- understand fully all aspects of the historic environment, and their condition and inter-relationships
- broaden access to the historic environment and break down intellectual, physical and economic barriers
- ensure that effective systems underpinned by appropriate legislation and information are in place to conserve and manage the historic environment

### Key Outcomes

The Scottish Government wants to achieve three key outcomes for Scotland's historic environment by putting in place a strategic policy framework for the historic environment, investing in its delivery and working in partnership with others.

**Key Outcome 1:** the historic environment is cared for, protected and enhanced for the benefit of our own and future generations.

**Key Outcome 2:** there is increased public appreciation and enjoyment of the historic environment amongst all the people of Scotland and visitors to our country.

**Key Outcome 3:** the historic environment's importance as a key asset in Scotland's economic, social and cultural success is recognised and skilfully harnessed.

Ministers believe that this bold vision is achievable. The historic environment can make a valuable contribution to Scottish Ministers' wider agenda to create an aspiring, confident country with sustainable economic growth, confident communities, a vibrant and dynamic cultural life, and offering unparalleled tourism opportunities.

Progress towards these outcomes will be measured by Scotland's Historic Environment Audit and by other targeted research.

## Scotland's new woodlands and the historic environment

Closely planted fast growing conifers altered the landscape context within which ancient funerary and ritual sites - such as chambered tombs, cup and ring mark rock art or stone circles - were originally intended to be set. As the trees matured and root systems developed, they could disturb buried archaeological features, deposits and artefacts.



*Kilmory Oib ruined village near Tayvallich, Argyll*

Over the years there has been a co-ordinated response to these concerns. More formal procedures for protecting archaeological sites in forest areas have been introduced, more recently in support of the UK Forestry Standard and woodland grant schemes. Also, in 1995 the Forestry Commission published its benchmark 'Forests & Archaeology Guidelines' (currently under review; to be supplanted by the 'Forests and the Historic Environment' Guideline, due for publication 2009). It should also be recognised that a more enlightened and positive response from foresters greatly improved the situation.

# Scotland's woodlands and the historic environment

- Value the cultural history and meaning of forests, woodlands, trees and the historic environment
- Recognise the tourism potential of the historic environment
- Encourage the development of living heritage and the arts in woodlands
- Encourage the use of Scottish timber and traditional construction techniques

During the first ten years of the **Strategy** the intention is to specifically focus on the following activities:

- Identify and safeguard significant evidence of the historic environment, including historic landscapes (see Historic Land-use Assessment Data), through the forest design planning process and by the sensitive management of forest operations.
- Encourage and support the active management, enhancement and interpretation of the most significant elements of the historic environment.
- Work with partners to integrate online historical, landscape and environmental data sources.

Scottish Ministers have also asked Forestry Commission Scotland to 'champion' strategy implementation. The **Strategy** makes a commitment to the publication of **Implementation Plans**, containing delivery milestones aligned to available resources.

In the preparation of implementation plans and development of delivery milestones for the historic environment, Forestry Commission Scotland has undertaken to:

- Consult all relevant stakeholders with an interest in the historic environment
- Develop SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timed) high-level actions that will help deliver historic environment objectives in the **Strategy** during the period of the Plan
- Identify and agree the appropriate lead organisation for each historic environment action
- Prepare an annual progress report.

## Scotland's new woodlands and the historic environment

In recent years, there has been increasing awareness and appreciation that the historic environment is of greater significance to society than the discovery and recognition of individual archaeological features. Groups of archaeological features, landscape features and types, ancient vegetation types and indicators all form part of and contribute towards our understanding of the wider historic environment.

Some types of features are typically associated with particular landscape settings. For example, saw pits and charcoal heaths are indicative of woodland environments, whereas burial mounds, hillforts and farmsteads would normally be expected to occur in more open landscapes. Beyond these features, entire hillsides, valleys, plains and similar regions can be reflective of past land-use within a certain area. They can be indicative of the local soil and geology, and therefore of agricultural or mining potential. These form part of the wider historic landscape and environment and should be taken into account when planning and managing woodland.



*House remains at Aoineadh Mor settlement, cleared of inhabitants in 1824*



## Forestry Commission Scotland's responsibilities towards the historic environment

In the delivery of sustainable management that fosters the conservation of the historic environment in Scotland's woodlands, there are two distinct areas in which Forestry Commission Scotland has responsibility:

1. **Management of the national forest lands owned by Scottish Ministers**
2. **Support for other woodland owners**

### 1. Forestry Commission Scotland and the National Forest Estate

Forest Enterprise Scotland, an executive agency of Forestry Commission Scotland, manages the 666,000 hectares of national forest lands owned by Scottish Ministers. The nation's forests are managed for multiple benefits, including nature conservation, public recreation, timber production, rural and community development.

Forest Enterprise Scotland recognises that many of its forests have been established over the last hundred years on land that had other uses for previous generations. Within the national forest estate the legacy of these past activities has been found representing the entire time depth of people's occupation of Scotland since the retreat of the last Ice Age.

To date, Forest Enterprise Scotland has responsibility for 328 **Scheduled Monuments**, 30 **Listed Buildings**, 16 **Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes** and around 8000 unscheduled monuments.

Protecting and enhancing these features is an important part of Forest Enterprise Scotland's work - as is the commitment to identifying and protecting unrecorded elements of the historic environment by archaeological field survey prior to any new planting programme.

For the woodlands in its care, Forest Enterprise Scotland will make tangible contributions towards Scottish Minister's strategic objectives, incorporating this within their broad aims to:

- Care for, protect and enhance the historic environment
- Secure greater rural development and economic benefit from the historic environment

## Recognising the value of the historic environment

People now recognise the historic value of the features found in woodlands and the landscapes they create. There is also a fundamental association between Scotland's culture and the wider landscape where woods have in the past played – and will continue to play – a significant role in our lives.

Considerable improvements have been made in the way that the historic environment is protected in Scottish woodlands, but there has been less progress in active management to secure and enhance its condition for future generations. Good interpretation, coupled with creating an appropriate setting for features, can also enhance the recreational interest of woodland and help develop a better appreciation and understanding of the historic dimension and character of the present landscape.



*View over Cardrona Tower, seat of the Govan family in the 16th Century, looking towards Cardrona Village, Scottish Borders*

# Scotland's woodlands and the historic environment

- Increase understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment

To help carry out its stewardship responsibilities, Forest Enterprise Scotland employs a full-time archaeologist. It has also committed resources to all aspects of identification, recording, conservation, access and interpretation, all in the context of partnership working and consultation with local people.

Forest Enterprise Scotland delivers its stewardship responsibilities for the historic environment through the Forest Districts, each of which is charged in its area to protect and maintain the public forest estate through planning, creating and management of woodlands.

## 2. Forestry Commission Scotland support for other woodland owners

Forestry Commission Scotland supports other woodland owners by promoting the benefits of all woodlands, and providing woodland grants for their establishment and management, felling licences, advice and regulation including **Environmental Impact Assessment** consent. All these activities are carried out with the aim of increasing the economic, environmental and social benefits of Scotland's forests and woodlands through implementation of the **Scottish Forestry Strategy 2006**.

A new **Scotland Rural Development Programme** has been introduced in 2008 with forestry grants being part of an integrated rural support system called **Rural Development Contracts**.

All establishment and management work carried out with the support of forest and woodland options within **Rural Development Contracts** will have to adhere to the **UK Forestry Standard** and other relevant Forestry Commission guidance. For the historic environment the Forestry Commission '**Forests & Archaeology Guidelines**' (currently under review; to be supplanted by the '**Forests and the Historic Environment**' Guideline, due for publication 2009) will be the most relevant reference document.

The suite of **Rural Development Contract** options shows two forest and woodland management options that will be of interest to those with responsibilities for woodlands that have identified features and/or areas of historic and cultural interest:

### Recognising the value of the historic environment

This can help to develop a 'sense of place', with economic spin-offs for tourism and rural development. The sensitive restoration of some buildings, using traditional materials, could also help stimulate local crafts and increase the demand for quality wood that is both stable and durable.

There is also scope to broaden the perception of the historic environment and cultural heritage. Historic routes (such as Roman roads and drove roads) and veteran, ancient or heritage trees (e.g. Perthshire Big Tree Country) attract considerable interest and can help to establish a link between people, places and woodland. The work of the famous plant collectors of previous centuries has continuing value for genetic conservation in other countries, and is also of special interest in terms of land use history.



*Veteran beech trees and boundary dyke to North Wood, Ballathie Estate, Perthshire*



- Sustainable management of forests and woodlands
- Woodland improvement grants

There are other options that will also be of interest to those with responsibilities for features and/or areas of the historic environment, such as:

- Active management to improve the condition of vernacular rural buildings, archaeological or historic sites and cultural landscapes
- Enhancing enjoyment and maintaining the character of rural landscapes

Implementing these options will contribute towards the achievement of the environmental objectives in the **Scottish Forestry Strategy 2006**, and specifically the commitment to 'Protect and promote the historic environment and cultural heritage'.

Forestry Commission Scotland's contribution to the successful delivery of the **Scotland Rural Development Programme** will be the development of technical guidance for the effective management of the forest and woodland **Rural Development Contract** options.

Those measures that can contribute towards the stewardship of the historic environment will be specifically promoted to woodland owners and managers with such responsibilities.

Forestry Commission Scotland will primarily deliver support and advice to woodland owners and their managers for the historic environment through the five **Conservancies**. Based throughout Scotland, each Conservancy carries out regulatory and grant support functions.

They promote sustainable forestry in their areas, balancing the needs of timber production with those of landscape, biodiversity and people.

Forestry Commission Scotland's Conservancy staff work alongside Scottish Government's Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate and Scottish Natural Heritage within each of Scotland's 11 Regional Proposal Assessment Committee (RPAC) areas.

They give advice and information on all woodland issues, and provide grant aid to woodland owners to support the establishment of new woodlands and management of existing woodlands.

## Recognising the value of the historic environment

Some of our finest views are founded on historic land uses, gardens and designed landscapes. Our heritage woodlands, including pasture woodlands, can tell us a great deal about the past - and perhaps also the future.

Our concept of cultural heritage need not be constrained by age. 'Living culture', such as the performing arts or woodland sculpture, enhances visitor experiences as well as creating a link between communities and their local woodlands. This cultural engagement can help to develop familiarity with forestry, with woodlands becoming an even greater source of local pride and income. It can also contribute towards a renewed awareness, understanding, respect and care for them.



*Swiss cottage near Fochabers, Moray, built around 1834 by the Duke of Gordon. Constructed of locally native Scots pine, the cottage is considered to be the oldest surviving timber framed and clad structure in Scotland.*

# Appendix 1: Maps

## Scotland's ancient woodlands

Key

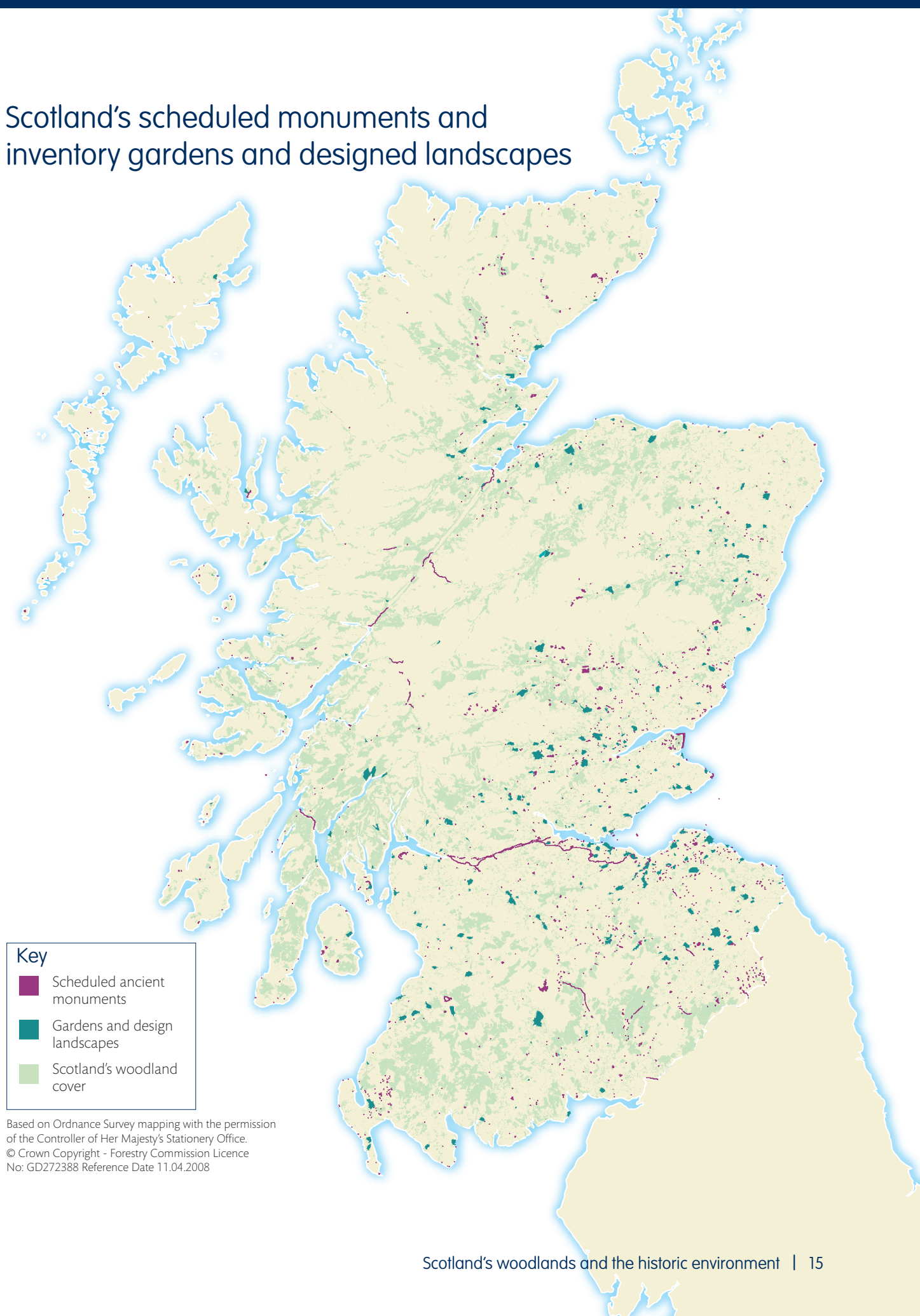
Ancient woodland

Scotland's woodland cover

Based on Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.  
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No: GD272388 Reference Date 11.04.2008



## Scotland's scheduled monuments and inventory gardens and designed landscapes



# Appendix 2: Historical environmental casework

The following two short case-studies are included as illustrations of recent conservation work that has been carried out on two national treasures. Both features have a dramatic waterside setting within a woodland landscape.

## Little Garve Bridge

### History and background

Little Garve Bridge is a double arched bridge over the River Black Water, Strathconon, Invernesshire, and is part of the military road from Contin to Poolewe. It is thought to have been built in 1767 by Major William Caulfield, one of General Wade's successors.

Situated within the Government forest estate, the bridge is under the stewardship of Forest Enterprise Scotland. It was designated a Scheduled Monument in 1968 and was additionally designated as a Listed Building (Category A) in 1971. In 1987 the bridge was closed to vehicular traffic.



### Restoration works

It is thought that in the early 1940's the Newfoundland Timber Corps shored up one side of the bridge; this was removed in August 2007.

Inverness Forest District began the process of developing acceptable proposals for the restoration of the bridge by commissioning a report on its condition in 1987. Over the next ten years the proposed restoration works were developed in liaison with Historic Scotland, who granted Scheduled Monument Consent for the agreed works to proceed in 2006.

The bridge restoration contract commenced August 2007 and was completed early 2008. All restoration works were carried out by Laing Traditional Masonry Ltd at a cost of around £130,000.

Little Garve Bridge has been restored for pedestrian traffic only, and is now an integral part of the local community and forest path network. To maintain the setting of the bridge the adjacent woodland is being managed for the long-term retention of the trees.



© Highland Archaeology Services Ltd

*Timber supports thought to have been erected by the Newfoundland Timber Corps in the early 1940s*



© Highland Archaeology Services Ltd

*Bridge wall after restoration*



# Ossian's Hall

## History and background

Ossian's Hall is a single storey gazebo situated on a rocky outcrop overlooking the Black Linn Falls on the River Braan. The Hall is the focal point of the Hermitage, recorded in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland, part of Scotland's 'Big Tree Country' and situated within the River Tay National Scenic Area near Dunkeld, Perthshire.



© National Trust for Scotland

The pavilion was originally built as The Hermitage by the nephew of the 2nd Duke of Atholl in 1757 to exploit the natural picturesque landscape as part of an eighteenth century 'sublime' experience. In 1783 the 4th Duke of Atholl commissioned a major extension and transformation of the pavilion; externally as a classically inspired temple, internally with a Romantic Ossianic theme. Later, the 4th Duke renamed the pavilion Ossian's Hall after Ossian, the hero and bard of James MacPherson's poems of the mid-eighteenth century.

Ossian's Hall was designated a Listed Building (Category B) in 1971.

The Hall was gifted to The National Trust for Scotland (NTS) in 1943 by the 8th Duchess of Atholl, along with 13ha of woodland along the banks of the River Braan. During its 250 year lifetime the Hall has had at least seven phases of activity that have affected its use and appearance

## Restoration works

In 1952, NTS commissioned Basil Spence to develop a programme of works to restore the fabric of the building. This work included removing what remained of the bow window and replacing it with an open viewing platform as seen today.

In 1986 the interior of the main chamber was redecorated in the style and colours evocative of the eighteenth century.

In 2007 NTS completed a further programme of restoration works designed to both conserve and protect the building's surviving original features, and revitalise the visitor experience. This work was undertaken following detailed historical research and archaeological investigations.

Restoration works were carried out by skilled craftsmen under the supervision of architect Ben Tindall, and were financed by public contributions to an NTS appeal. The surrounding woodlands are managed by NTS to diversify their structure and age class, and specifically to encourage a higher proportion of broadleaf species.

With the completion of an art installation by Scottish artist Callum Colvin, Ossian's Hall was reopened to the public December 2007.



*Ossian's Hall overlooking the Black Linn Falls on the River Braan*

© National Trust for Scotland

# Appendix 3 and 4

## Appendix 3: Historic environment organisations

Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO) - [www.algao.org.uk](http://www.algao.org.uk)

Council for Scottish Archaeology (CSA) - [www.scottisharchaeology.org.uk](http://www.scottisharchaeology.org.uk)

Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) - [www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland)

Garden History Society (GHS) - [www.gardenhistorysociety.org](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org)

Historic Environment Advisory Council for Scotland (HEACS) - [www.heacs.org.uk](http://www.heacs.org.uk)

Historic Scotland (HS) - [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk)

National Trust for Scotland (NTS) - [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk)

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) - [www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk)

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) - [www.snh.org.uk](http://www.snh.org.uk)

Woodland Trust Scotland (WTS) - [www.woodland-trust.org.uk](http://www.woodland-trust.org.uk)

## Appendix 4: References

A History of the Native Woodlands of Scotland 1500-1920 (T C Smout, A R MacDonald, F Watson, 2005)

Forests & Archaeology Guidelines (FC, 1995)

Historic Scotland's Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) 1

Ossian's Hall, The Hermitage Conservation Plan (NTS, 2003)

People and Woods in Scotland (Edited by T C Smout, 2003)

The Landscape of Scotland – A Hidden History (C R Wickham-Jones, 2001)

The Scottish Forestry Strategy 2006



Forestry Commission Scotland serves as the forestry directorate of the Scottish Government and is responsible to Scottish Ministers

Please contact the address below if you would like to request this document in large print or other format and for information on language translations.

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