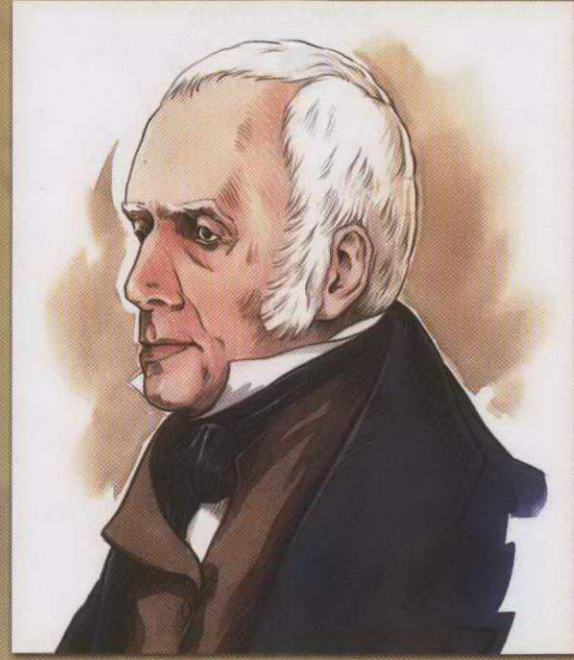


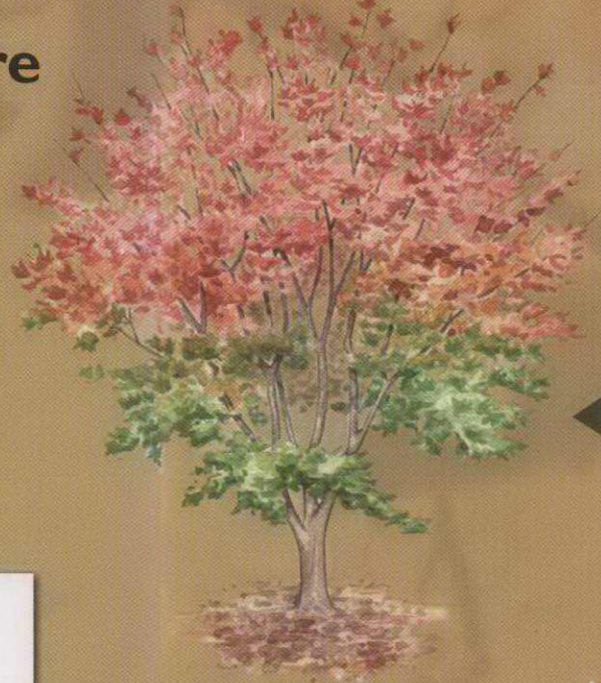
Planting for profit and pleasure

The late 18th and early 19th centuries saw a tree planting revival in Scotland. This was fuelled by new discoveries made by plant collectors like Perthshire-born Archibald Menzies of Weem and David Douglas of Scone, and by landowners who wanted to plant forests for profit and specimen trees for pleasure.



Archibald Menzies (1754 - 1842)

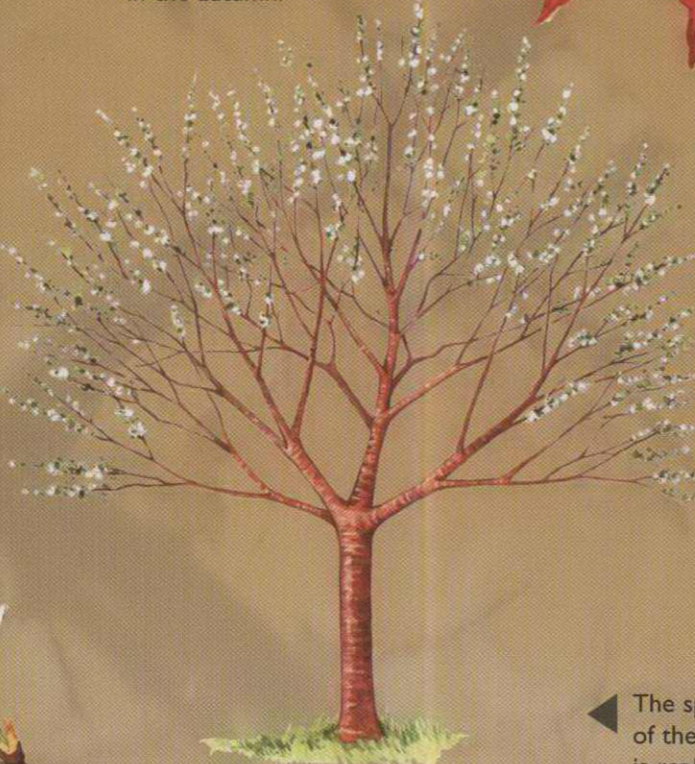
Creating woodland gardens was all the rage and beech trees were introduced here in the 1780s to enhance the landscape and supplement the native ash, birch, hazel and willow.



These distinctively-shaped pointed leaves of the Japanese Maple turn a glorious bright red before falling in the autumn.



During the 1960s, a collection of exotic trees was planted by a local horticulturalist with a particular interest in Himalayan and North American species. The collection can still be enjoyed by following the path through the Lower Birks to the start of the circular route.



Look for the striking colours of the Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*) or the sweet smelling blossom of the Tibetan Cherry (*Prunus serrula*) as you wander through the Tree Collection.



The springtime blossom of the Tibetan Cherry is replaced by small, red berries in the autumn, whilst the glossy brown peeling bark lasts throughout the year.

It's all in the name

The Birks are famed for their natural beauty and for their connection with Scotland's national bard Robert Burns. He visited the spot in 1787, when it was called the Den of Moness, and was inspired to write a song called the *Birks of Aberfeldy* ('birk' is the Scots word for a birch tree). Discover the place where he is believed to have rested, and find verses of the song along the route.



The Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) prefers to grow in the drier areas of the Birks woodland.

The Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) prefers wetter conditions and can be spotted along the edges of the Moness Burn.

SCOTTISH OUTDOOR ACCESS CODE

Know the Code before you go...

Everyone has the right to be on most land and inland water providing they act responsibly. Your access rights and responsibilities are explained fully in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Whether you're in the outdoors or managing the outdoors, the key things are to:

- take responsibility for your own actions
- respect the interests of other people
- care for the environment

Find out more by visiting www.outdooraccess-scotland.com or contacting your local Scottish Natural Heritage office.

Contact Perth and Kinross Council Ranger Service on 01738 475000



The Birks of Aberfeldy is one of the sites included in the Perthshire Big Tree Country Heritage and Access project, celebrating the amazing woodland heritage in the area, and co-ordinated by the Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust.

Other Big Tree Country sites in this cluster are:

- Cluny House Gardens
- Drummond Hill
- The Fortingall Yew
- Weem Wood

www.perthshirebigtreecountry.co.uk

Cover image © Perthshire Picture Agency

This project is funded and supported by:



Explore the Birks of Aberfeldy



Welcome to this beautiful woodland area, where tumbling waterfalls are flanked by a variety of trees hosting a wealth of wildlife.



Enjoy a stroll through the Birks @ PKCT

The 4 km (2.5 mi) circular route is in two sections. The first path starts in the centre of Aberfeldy and follows the burn through the Lower Birks. The upper path, through the gorge beside the Moness Burn, rises to a height of 250 m (820 ft) at a bridge directly above the spectacular Falls of Moness. There are seats and viewpoints along the route. The map on the inside of this leaflet shows details of these and other routes in the local area.

A wealth of wildlife

The gorge is a fault in the rock exploited by melting glacial ice about 10,000 years ago.



The Birks is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its conservation value.

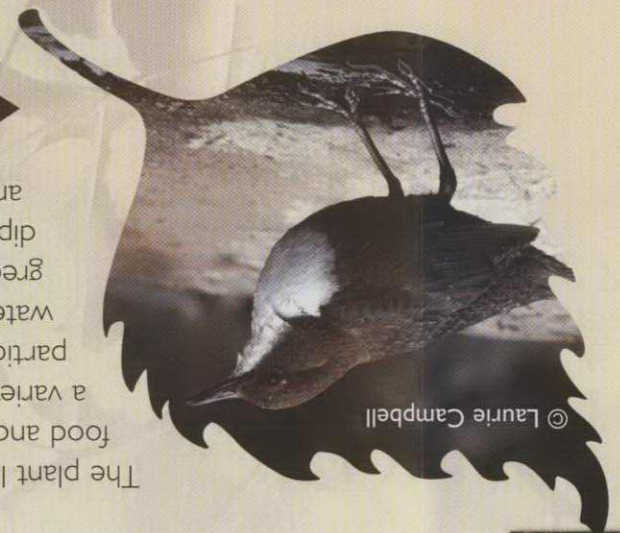
Hair moss (*Polytrichum piliferum*) grows well in the damp woodlands, although you will have to look closely for this moss as it is only 1-4 cm tall.

Small Cow-wheat (*Melampyrum sylvaticum*) thrives in the high levels of humidity found near to the waterfalls.

As the climate became milder plants began to grow. Pockets of this original woodland still survive in inaccessible parts of the gorge. These undisturbed areas and rocky outcrops, dappled shade and rich moist soil have allowed a wide range of wild flowers, mosses, ferns and trees to flourish.

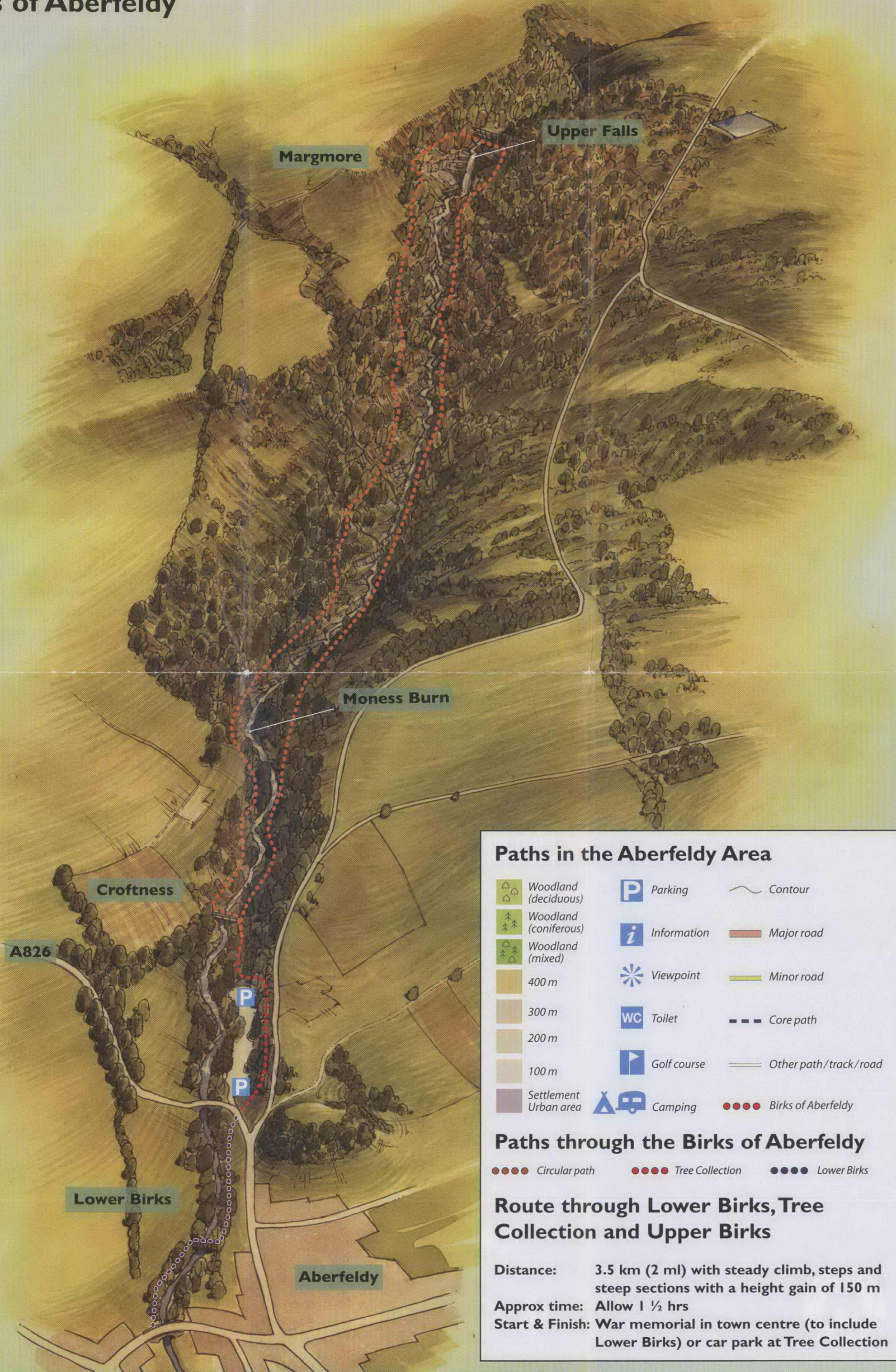
The plant life provides food and shelter for a variety of wildlife, particularly woodland and waterside birds, including green woodpecker, dipper, tree creeper and redpoll.

Dippers are unique for their ability to wade, swim and dive in running water. They are always found near to the water's edge.



© Laurie Campbell

Birks of Aberfeldy



Paths in the Aberfeldy Area

	Woodland (deciduous)		Parking		Contour
	Woodland (coniferous)		Information		Major road
	Woodland (mixed)		Viewpoint		Minor road
	400 m		Toilet		Core path
	300 m		Golf course		Other path/track/road
	200 m		Camping		Birks of Aberfeldy
	100 m				
	Settlement				
	Urban area				

Paths through the Birks of Aberfeldy

	Circular path		Tree Collection		Lower Birks
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Route through Lower Birks, Tree Collection and Upper Birks

Distance: 3.5 km (2 ml) with steady climb, steps and steep sections with a height gain of 150 m

Approx time: Allow 1 1/2 hrs

Start & Finish: War memorial in town centre (to include Lower Birks) or car park at Tree Collection

Aberfeldy Area

