

Fuel for the fiery furnace

Richard Ford and Company began operating an iron furnace at Bonawe in 1753. To make 700 tonnes of iron annually, it needed 1,400 tonnes of charcoal to fuel the furnace. This meant sustainably harvesting 30 hectares of woodland in Glen Nant (that's similar to 60 football pitches!). After cutting down the tree, the stumps grew shoots that could be harvested again 20 years later. This process is called coppicing. Glen Nant was a busy industrial site with hundreds of people working in the forest - a very different scene to the tranquility of the woods today.

Charcoal was made by burning 'kilns' of stacked timber on 'hearths' or platforms. It was packed in huge sacks and carried by ponies to Bonawe. In addition the bark from oak trees was essential to the tanning industry which turned cowhide into leather.

However, after the furnace closed, work stopped and the coppiced trees have been growing uncut for the last 100 years. This now creates a dense tree canopy in the summer giving the appearance of a natural woodland, untouched by man.

Bonawe Furnace

For nearly 150 years, charcoal from Glen Nant fuelled the smelting of iron at Bonawe near Taynuilt. Historic Scotland has

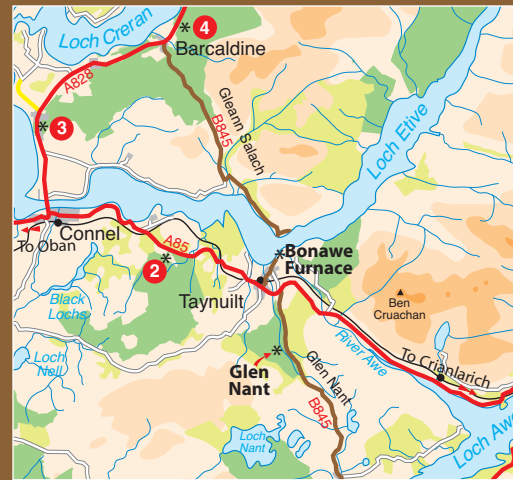
conserved the furnace buildings, built in 1753. You can visit the site from April to September.



Contact 1

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For information on other Forestry Commission Scotland sites you can visit in the area see below



- 2 Fearnoch Forest**
Against the dramatic backdrop of Ben Cruachan, two trails in Fearnoch Forest provide you with another opportunity to spot wood ants and their nests.
- 3 Beinn Lora**
A steep but rewarding climb through the woods at Benderloch gives you stunning panoramic views across to the islands
- 4 Sutherland's Grove**
Several trails start at the car park and follow the river through an impressive gorge. There is also a picnic area set in a majestic grove of Douglas Fir.

For information on public transport services contact:
Traveline Scotland, 0871 200 2233 or
www.travelinescotland.com

Glen Nant

National Nature Reserve

Explore | Discover | Enjoy



Woodlands with a long history

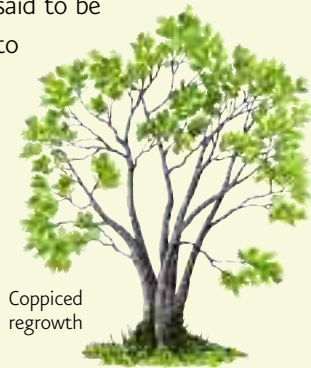
It is thought that the name of the river, and therefore of Glen Nant, comes from an old Gaelic word for nettles. It is also linked to a medieval Christian site, Cladh-na h-Annait. This is reflected in the historical name of the wood, Coille Braigh na Cille (wood of the brae of the church).

There is a long history of human influence in the woods - 166 archaeological sites have been recorded. Many are charcoal hearths from the era of Bonawe Furnace, although several hearths are thought to be much older. Domestic smelting of iron and active management of the woods had started by at least the 17th Century.

It is also thought that some of the archaeological sites are much earlier foundations for round timber dwellings probably from the Norse period (between the 7th & 15th Centuries). At this time wood had many and varied uses - elm for instance was used for both Norse longbows and for Dalriadic crannogs (stilt houses) in Loch Awe.

The ruins of Larach a'Chrotail (the lichen house) once housed a tailor. Within living memory, villagers brought their cloths here to be dyed using lichens. The same tailor is reported to have had an illicit whisky still - 'Tailor's Leap' is said to be where he dashed across the river to escape the excise men!

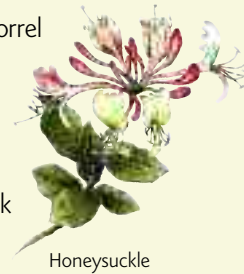
Forestry Commission Scotland is working together with Scottish Natural Heritage to manage and restore this valuable remnant of semi-natural woodland which is designated as a National Nature Reserve.



Coppiced regrowth

What grows in the woodlands?

Glaciers and rivers carved Glen Nant and surrounding glens out of solid basalt rock. The peaty ground is home to blaeberry, heather, bluebell, wood sorrel and wild honeysuckle. There are also areas of lime-rich soil with ash and hazel trees, primrose, wild garlic and wood anemone.

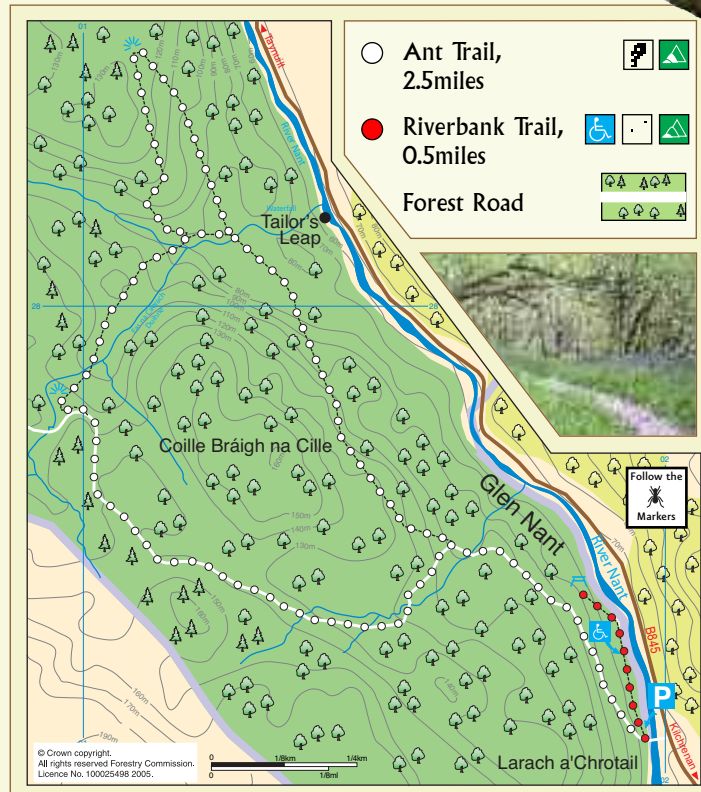


Honeysuckle

These lush Atlantic Oakwoods are a patchwork of oak and birch, with a scattering of hazel, ash, willow and holly. Work has begun on removing conifers from the reserve allowing native trees and ground flora to flourish. This special place is internationally important not only for its impressive trees, but also for the abundance of non-flowering plants such as lichens, mosses, ferns and liverworts.

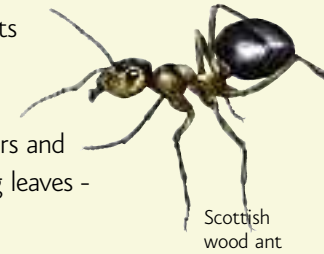


Great tit



On the trail of the ants

Spot the ant trails and their nests along the trail. Wood ants live in highly-organised colonies, hunting and killing the caterpillars and aphids that otherwise eat young leaves - nature's pest control!



Scottish wood ant

The nest is built from woodland debris and given a thatch of tiny twigs. These ant hills, with controlled temperature and humidity, are fortress, foodstore, maternity hospital and crèche all in one. The ants tenaciously defend their nests by spraying intruders with formic acid.

You can also listen for warblers, redstarts and woodpeckers and watch tits, jays and treecreepers. Sunny glades attract many butterflies and moths and you may see signs of deer, pine marten and red squirrels.



Red squirrel



When you are in the outdoors:







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

Know the Code before you go

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

Grades of Walking

Forestry Commission walks are graded according to the degree of difficulty and type of conditions visitors can expect.

	Easy Sensible Footwear		Moderate Waterproof Footwear		Strenuous Hillwalking Boots
	Easy Muscle Loosener		Moderate Muscle Stretcher		Strenuous Muscle Builder
	Easy Access Trail				

