

KNOCKMAN WOOD

Circular forest and woodland walk

5km/3miles

Allow 2 hours

Hard surface track and paths, grass paths and beaten earth, all soft in places. Kissing gate and wicket gate.

Moderate

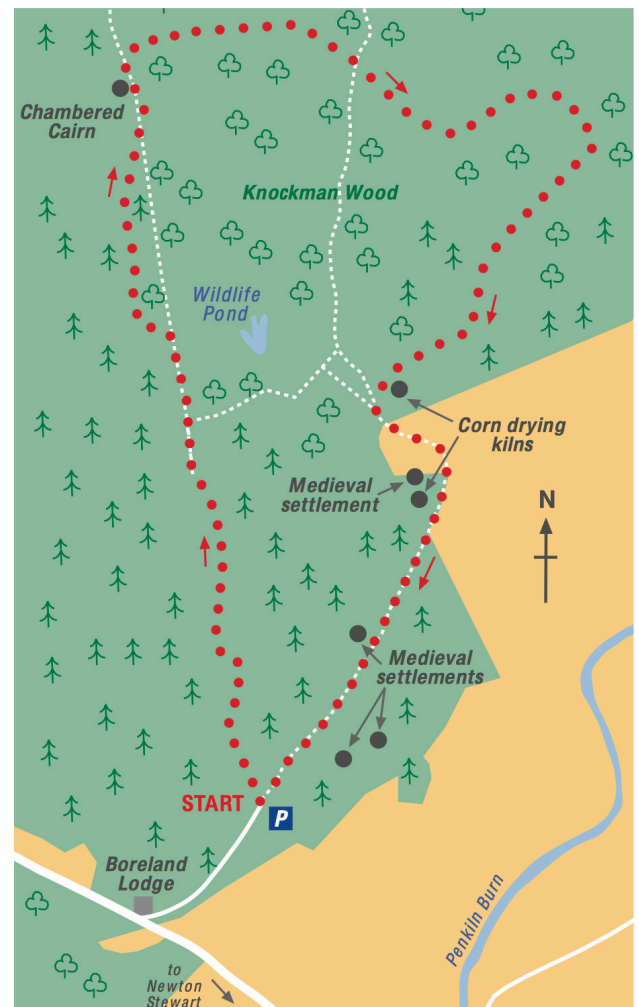
Stout shoes recommended

PARKING is available at the start of the trails, in Knockman Wood. The wood is managed by Cree Valley Community Woodlands Trust (CVCWT) in partnership with Forest Enterprise. From Newton Stewart, head towards Minnigaff then follow signs for the Wood of Cree for about a mile and a half. At the sign for Knockman Wood turn right, go through the gate and along the track to the car parking area. There is an interpretation board here with a map.

START From the car park, follow the red waymarkers. After a while, you reach a junction where you bear left. Follow the path through the wood, back to the start. Knockman Wood contains both conifer and semi-natural oak woodland. After both World Wars, timber was in great demand and much of the natural woodland was felled. Trees were cut close to the ground by a method known as coppicing, leaving the root system and base intact. This allows re-growth in a characteristic way, with many smaller trunks growing out from the base. There are several areas of the ancient oak wood that have now been deer fenced and left to regenerate naturally. These support a wide variety of plant and animal life such as mosses and lichens which flourish in the clean air and several species of rare birds and butterflies.

The wood is steeped in history and there are various reminders of its agricultural past. Look out for a chambered cairn on your left, an ancient burial site dating from the Neolithic period between 6000 and 4000 years ago. Much later, you pass on your left a well-preserved corn drying kiln, used to dry the grain before milling. Further on, in the forest clearings are the remains of medieval settlements.

In the past the wood has been used for pasture, a rare practice in Scotland, and in the 19th Century it was also a deer park. Nowadays, resident fallow deer and the occasional red or roe deer may be seen in the unfenced areas of this walk. They are shy creatures but can sometimes be spotted if you are quiet. Along the way, enjoy the stunning views to Cairnmore of Fleet and the surrounding countryside.



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Leave gates as you find them - Keep dogs under close control at all times - Keep to paths across farmland - Take care on country roads
Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls - Respect farm livestock, crops and machinery - Take your litter home with you
Protect wildlife, plants and trees - Guard against risk of fire - Make no unnecessary noise.