

ROON THE WATER AND CARSTRAMON WOOD

Circular countryside and woodland walk

11km/7miles

Allow 4 hours

Roadside pavement, minor roads, beaten earth, grass and hard surface paths. Kissing gates.

Moderate to strenuous

Stout shoes or boots recommended.

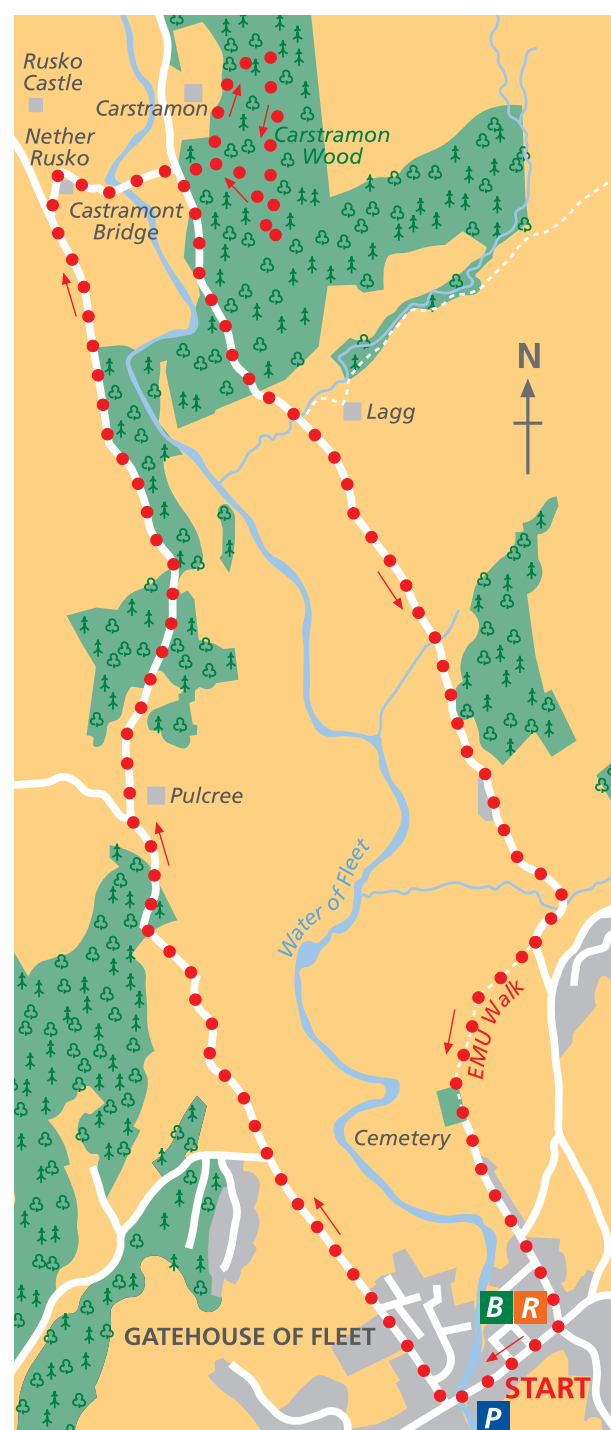
PARKING is available at the car park in the centre of Gatehouse of Fleet. There is also parking for four or five cars available at the entrance to Carstramon Wood if you wish to do the woodland walk only.

START From the main car park, turn left over the River Fleet bridge, then first right. Follow this pleasant country road for approximately 4km/2 1/2 miles, enjoying views to the surrounding hills and woodland.

Turn right when you reach signs for 'weak bridge' and follow the road downhill towards Castramont Bridge. To the left there are magnificent views of Rusko Castle, a fine early 16th Century restored tower house. It may be rewarding to spend a moment or two at the bridge which crosses the River Fleet as views of grey wagtail and dippers may be had. A hundred metres downstream you can still make out the stepping-stones that the postman used before the present bridge was built.

Continue along the road to the T-junction where the sign for Carstramon Wood is straight ahead. Turn right and the entrance to the wood is on your left. An interpretation board at the entrance shows the network of paths within. To do a short loop, bear left at the first waymarker then right at the next three. Continue downhill past the next waymarker and back to the start. In the past, charcoal-burning platforms in Carstramon Wood converted oak to charcoal for the smelting of iron, brass and copper. Timber was also used to supply a bobbin mill in Gatehouse until 1931. In 1990, Carstramon Wood was gifted to the Scottish Wildlife Trust by the late Mrs Murray Usher and is now being managed as a nature reserve. Roe deer are plentiful and keep your eyes open for pied flycatchers and wood warblers. The woods are particularly beautiful in spring with masses of bluebells covering the ground.

As you exit the wood, turn left onto the road and follow it for about 2.5km/1 1/2 miles until you reach a sign on your right for the EMU Walk named after Elizabeth Murray Usher. Follow the path through several kissing gates, past the cemetery and back on to the High Street.



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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.