

WOOD OF CREE

- **Circular woodland walk**
- **3.5km/2 miles**
- **Allow 1½ hours**
- **Beaten earth and hard surface path and track. Steps.**
- **Moderate**
- **Stout shoes or boots recommended**

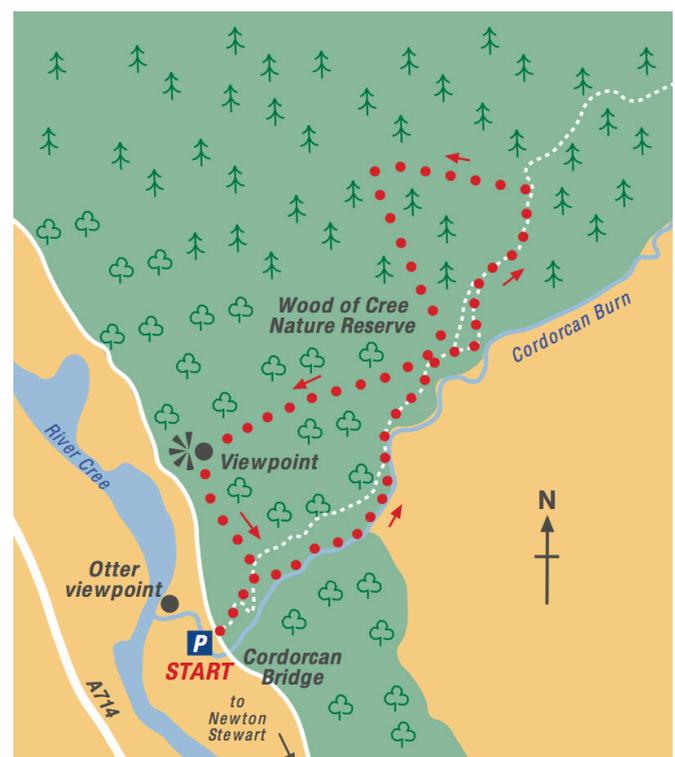
PARKING From Newton Stewart, follow signs to Minnigaff then to the Wood of Cree RSPB Nature Reserve. The car park is on your left after 6.5km/4miles. There is an interpretation board with a map here.

START From the car park, cross the road to reach the start of the walks. The Scrubland Trail, described here, incorporates most of the shorter Woodland Trail.

From the interpretation board, follow the path uphill to reach a waymarker for the Woodland Trail. Follow the Cordorcan Burn past a series of waterfalls rushing down through steep gorges they have created over thousands of years. The Wood of Cree, thought to date back over 5000 years to the last ice age, is the largest remaining ancient woodland in southern Scotland. It is home to a wide variety of wildlife and particular specialities are pied flycatcher, redstart and wood warbler.

Continue to follow signs for the Woodland Trail until you come to a junction where the two trails split. From here, follow signs for the Scrubland Trail through more varied woodland with open scrub and stands of mature trees. Since the establishment of the reserve in 1984, some conifers have been removed and natural regeneration of the woodland has been encouraged. The resulting diversity encourages a host of plants and animals including Scotch argus butterflies in summer. In springtime the woodland floor shimmers with a thick carpet of bluebells. These are characteristic of old woodlands and flourish particularly well in the damp woodlands of western Galloway.

Following the path, you soon come to a viewpoint, giving you good views of the waterfall and over the River Cree and its marshes. The river and marshes are part of the nature reserve and attract waterfowl such as teal and mallard. Otters may be seen on the river and, if you are very patient they can be viewed at dusk from the otter platform near to the car park. From the viewpoint follow the path back to the start.



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