

John Muir was born in Dunbar on 21 April 1838, and emigrated with his parents to the United States when he was 11. He went on to become the founding father of the national parks movement and campaigned for the preservation of natural environments through his writing and advocacy.

The John Muir Trust in the UK perpetuates his legacy and he remains a celebrated figure in the United States.

This new route, combined with Scotland's recognition of his achievements on April 21 each year, will give opportunities to develop a growing recognition of Muir in his homeland and remind ourselves that his inspirational work is even more relevant today than it ever was during his lifetime. We want to bring John Muir home.



The John Muir Way runs from Helensburgh (*a special bench and art work on the promenade marks the starting point*) on the Firth of Clyde to Dunbar (*John Muir's birthplace*) on the Firth of Forth, a distance of 134miles/215km. It is fully way-marked and passes through or close to 6 country parks, 2 canals, 5 castles and 4 local nature reserves, including Duchess Wood. Both the Firth of Clyde and the Firth of Forth support multitudes of wintering birds. The work on the route delivery was led by Scottish Natural Heritage, with assistance by 9 local authorities and Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park as part of the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) initiative. The route (see: www.johnmuirway.org) was opened in 2014 to coincide with the 100th anniversary of John Muir's death. It provides an accessible and varied route, through the finest landscapes, countryside and places of interest, for anyone to use. The route links core paths, other promoted routes, trails and cycleways, including the original John Muir Way in East Lothian. It can be cycled from end to end, and there are some opportunities for horse-riding. Its development will encourage many people to become more active through doing the route either as a single journey, or sampled by day trips, and thus improve their health and wellbeing and their enjoyment of nature. The Way should raise peoples' awareness of John Muir whilst giving local economies a boost. This is one of CSGN's flagship projects demonstrating what can be achieved by effective partnership working.

• This leaflet, describing the spring flowers of Duchess Wood, reflects John Muir's love of and expertise in botany and the relationships between flowering plants and the wider ecological systems.



Friends of Duchess Wood

Situated at the western edge of Helensburgh, **Duchess Wood** is a long established community woodland and is set within the greenbelt of Helensburgh. Open to the public, it has excellent paths and a car park. There are four main entry points. Duchess Wood is a Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

What is a Local Nature Reserve?








Scotland has over 70 LNRs and Duchess Wood is one of only two in Argyll and Bute.

LNRs are areas of special natural value and beauty protected for wildlife conservation, public access, informal recreation and education.

Luss Estates owns Duchess Wood, but by agreement its management is the responsibility of Argyll and Bute Council. The Council's agents are Lower Clyde Greenspace.

Local Community Involvement

The **Friends of Duchess Wood** represents the local community on the Council's Duchess Wood LNR Committee. But it does a lot more besides. Other roles include:

-  Publishing maps, booklets, information sheets and newsletters about the Wood for its members
-  Carrying out practical work in the Wood
-  Seeking external grants to improve the Wood
-  Liaising with official bodies for the benefit of the Wood
-  Providing a safeguarding function; linked to police, fire and other services
-  Informing the public about Duchess Wood
-  Carrying out research and facilitating educational activities

Other local groups, such as the Community Payback Team, the Conservation Volunteers Helensburgh & District Access Forum, the Employability Team and the Green Belt Group, have also done much valued work for and in the Wood.

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www.duchesswood.org.uk

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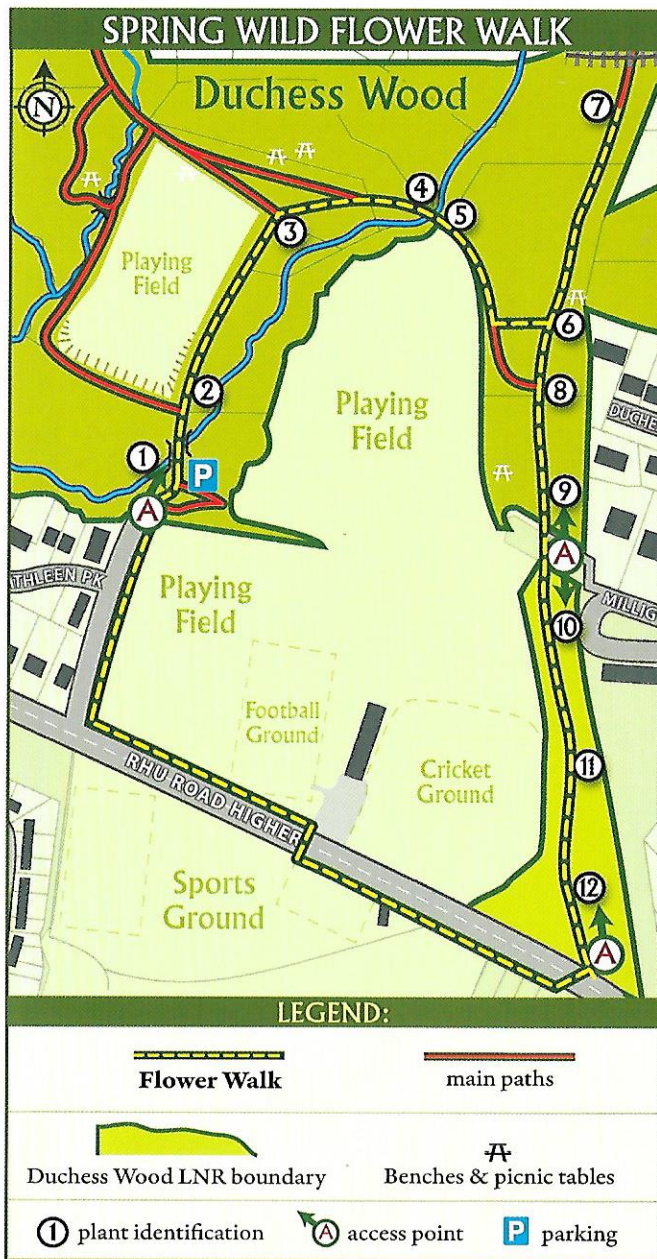
SPRING WILD FLOWER WALK



Scottish Natural Heritage
Dualchas Nàdar na h-Alba
All of nature for all of Scotland
Nàdar air fad airson Alba air fad

Friends of
Duchess Wood

www.duchesswood.org.uk



This walk was devised by Alison Rutherford for the Friends of Duchess Wood. It largely follows the route of the Wood's all-abilities path and the flowers mentioned are mainly visible in May and June each year. Duchess Wood has a great variety of wild flowers, and many flowers that have escaped from gardens. Photographs by Fiona Du Boulay.

Start in Duchess Wood car park, accessible from Rhu Road Higher via Kathleen Park. The walk is clockwise following numbered wooden waymarkers with green arrows.

- ① Woodruff to left of marker, Dog's Mercury behind fence.
 - Follow main path north out of the car park and cross culvert.
- ② Tuberos comfrey on south bank of rugby pitch.
 - Continue north on main path.

Bluebells, Red Campion, Silverweed, Greater Stitchwort in grass to right of path. Kingcups (*Marsh Marigolds*) by burn on right

 - Entrance to grass area
- ③ Many Bluebells to west of grass area along with Greater Stitchwort. Straight ahead beyond LNR commemorative stone is a rare Bramble of the cane type and Broom and Gorse.
 - Carry on main path going right.
- ④ Greater woodrush on right. Just before bridge, Wild Angelica and Redcurrant on right.
 - Carry on over bridge.

Figwort just to left over bridge.
- ⑤ An old Lime Tree on left and two others beyond, probably from mid-19th century plantings. Common Dog-violet and Wood Dock on left.
 - Carry on main path bending right to a fork, and take the left hand fork over a culvert to a stone seat.

Dogs Mercury on right; Bugle, both pink and blue on left.
- ⑥ Many interesting garden escapes near the eastern path. Beyond the marker, close to house fence, Pick-a-back plant
 - Go left uphill on main path (not all-abilities) for 200m.

Tricoloured or Aluminium Archangel an invasive non-native. Wood on right has no constructed paths and is a rich floral area with maybe Scotland's only escaped *Hoheria* (a New Zealand native). On low banks on right: Golden Saxifrage, Birds-eye Speedwell, Pignut, Herb Robert, Wood Sorrel and Bluebells on both sides of path.
- ⑦ Before marker, on right Himalayan Honeysuckle with Cotoneaster, Wilson's honeysuckle, Fuchsia, Kerria.
 - Return downhill from marker 7 to marker 8 (passing 6).
- ⑧ Unusual Purple-leaved Sycamore (small specimen – larger tree near marker 11).
 - Carry on towards garages.



- ⑨ Just before garages; Ivy-leaved Speedwell and Welsh Poppies on left and on right; Cherry Laurel. On roof of right-hand block of garages: White Stonecrop.
 - Go through garage opening then right to end of garages to boggy area.

On left beyond sycamore; Sachalin Willow a north-cast Asia native.

 - Return to gap in garages and go south through gate on main path.
- ⑩ On right, on both sides of burn, uncommon form of London Pride. Towards Strathclyde Court boundary; Triple-cross Crocosmia – only British record of this in the wild. Irish Ivy on ground.
 - Carry on south on main path.

Several clumps of Red-berried Elder first noted about 1923, on left, Sanicle, Enchanters Nightshade, Bishop's-weed (*Ground Elder*), Altaclere Holly.
- ⑪ Opposite the gabled-end of Strathclyde Court, on right; unusual Wych Elm with triple-pointed leaf; on left, Whitebeam.
 - Carry on south on the main path (there is a large rookery above your head in the Scots Pines which form the canopy in this part of the Wood).

Within sight of the road, on the right; Lesser Periwinkle, then a clump of unusual Mouse Tail Arum, with Wood Anemone behind. Solomon's Seal and on left, clump of Wild Garlic.

 - Carry on towards road.
- ⑫ Possible garden form of Wood Anemone. Very large leaves of Bulbilled Lesser Celandine. Tuberos Comfrey. On left Philadelphus, then Russian Comfrey.
 - Retrace your steps, or go east to the exit from the Wood, and return to car park by following remainder of all-abilities path along Rhu Road Higher then onto the path round the rugby pitches. The Rugby Club has planted a bank with a wide variety of wild flowers.

