

The woodland is now owned by the Highland Council Planning and Development Service and managed in partnership with the Sunart Community Council *Comhairle Choimhearsnachd Shunairt* for the benefit of the local community and visitors to the area. Enjoy!

More recently, the Community Council has encouraged the development of the network of paths *frith-roidean* that were originally carved out by the Riddell family in the early 1900s. The paths were completely overgrown and access round the woodland was impossible. A programme of clearing *Rhododendron ponticum* began and thanks to careful management, you can now take the same route that the Riddell family did over 100 years ago.

Touch the large exotic specimens of European Silver Fir, Grand Fir and Chilean Pine growing amongst native species such as Oak, Birch and Holly. Smell the aroma of the woodland and uncover the fantastic world amongst, above and below the trees. Look out for the tree labels, telling you about the different species.



Restored paths

Known as a "Policy Woodland", the woods here were originally planted by the Riddell family at the beginning of the 19th Century. Cultivating their own woodland was common practice amongst the landed gentry at that time. It was seen as a status symbol, as well as a recognition of their wealth, to have their own woodlands with exotic varieties of trees from all around the world.

The Strontian Community Woodland *Cille Choimhearsnachd Sòn an t-Sithein* is a very special place and home to over 60 different species of trees.

Experience the magic of the woodlands

Strontian Woodland Walk

Discover a thriving community living amongst the trees

Strontian Community Woodland

Coille Choimhearsnachd Sòn an t-Sithein

Home to plant life, wildlife and over 60 different species of trees.

Call into the tourist information centres for more information on how to get the most out of your visit to Ardnamurchan:

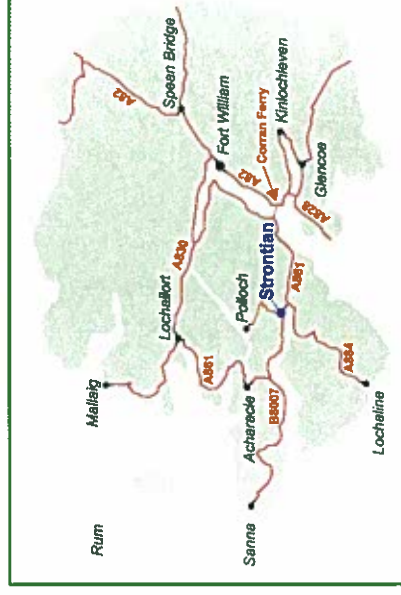
Strontian Tel: 01967 402382
Kilchoan Tel: 01972 510222

The Highland Council Countryside Ranger, Planning and Development Service, Highland Council, Forestry Office, Strontian Argyll PH36 4HZ Tel: 01967 402232
Email: planning@highland.gov.uk

Websites:

www.sunartoakwoods.org.uk
www.ardnamurchan.com
www.highland.gov.uk

This leaflet has been specially prepared to give you an insight into the life and times of the ancient woodlands at Strontian. You'll find out why the trees, plants, wildlife and history of these woodlands make them unique. The map overleaf will guide you through the network of paths that make up the community woodland.



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time to time. If you look above the trees and listen very carefully you'll see or hear chaffinches, owls, tree-creepers and buzzards. With a good pair of binoculars or first class eyesight you may be able to spot seals playing in the waters of Loch Sunart and possibly a sea eagle *Iolaire-mhara* soaring overhead from one of the woodland viewpoints.



Pine Marten

Rare Scottish wildlife make their homes here

Many native species of rare Scottish wildlife make their home here in the Community Woodland. If you've got time and patience you might be lucky enough to catch a glimpse of something really special! These woodlands are home to red and roe deer *feidh*, pine marten, and a red squirrel *feòrag* has even been seen from

Look out for the colourful mosses and silvery grey lichens in autumn and winter, the Snowdrops *gealagan-làir*, Primroses, Bluebells *Currachan cithaige*, and mauve coloured Ladysmock in the spring, and the Foxglove and bright yellow Iris *scalastair* in the summer. The woodland is also home to a profusion of Rhododendron, wild Orchids and Blaeberry.



Honeycuckle

The woodland floor is a natural, vibrant habitat for many species of lichens, forest flowers, and dozens of varieties of fungi. No matter what time of year you visit the woodland you'll find native Scottish flora thriving in the clean, pure Ardnamurchan air.

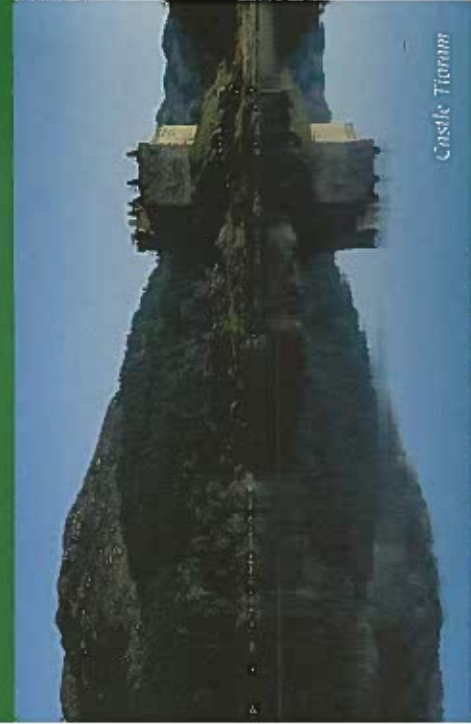
Plant life that thrives on the pure, clear air

Happily times are more tranquil now and you can talk *comhradh* as much or as little as you like on your way round the walk!

One of the access routes to the woodland walk is through the grounds of the Strontian Hotel. In the car park of the Strontian Hotel you can see a standing stone, the Pillory Stone *Clach a Bhrannagais*, that was later used as a means of punishment for villagers found guilty of gossiping. They would be attached by shackles to the ring on the top of the stone and made to stand for several hours with a "bit" in their mouths.

For such a small village *baille-bèig* Strontian has made a big impact on world events through the centuries. The village first became famous in the early 18th Century for its lead mines *meinnearan luaidhe*, and shells made from Strontian lead were used as artillery during the Napoleonic Wars. Even today material from the lead mine is still being used, and the new path that has been built round the woodland is made from the material taken from the site of the original mine.

The woodland and village through the ages...



Castle Tioram

Surrounding Area...

Welcome to the West Highlands and the Ardnamurchan peninsula. This is the most westerly part of the British mainland and spans some 50 miles of dramatic landscape.

It is worth taking time to discover this area and explore the history *eachdraidh*, heritage, sandy beaches, mountain peaks, seascapes, ancient oak woods and wildlife.

You can enjoy walking *coiseachd*, biking, fishing *iasgachd*, or boat trips as well as visiting the wildlife hide. Or you can simply take it easy and wander round one of the many craft shops, local fresh food producers and fascinating heritage displays that are located throughout the area.

SUNART OAKWOODS INITIATIVE

This project is part of a wider initiative bringing conservation, economic and amenity benefits to the local community. The Sunart Oakwoods Initiative is a partnership between the community and local agencies including Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, Lochaber Enterprise and the Highland Council

1 Game Keepers Cottage

Original cottage *bothan* attached to the estate sadly burnt down in the 1980's.

2 Yew Tree and Holly Tree

Planted on either side of the path, both the Yew and Holly *cuileann* trees have distinctive red berries. Although the Yew *iubhar* tree is poisonous to cattle, the berries are readily eaten by birds and these along with the berries on the Holly tree provide a valuable food supply for birds during the cold winter months.

3 Three Scots Pine

The Scots Pine *giuthas* is the most widely spread tree in the world. Its range stretches from Northern Scandinavia to Southern Spain and from Western Scotland to Eastern Siberia.

4 Willow Tree

A Willow *seileach* tree that has a distinctive "hairy" pale green lichen living and growing on it. The common name for this lichen is "old man's beard".

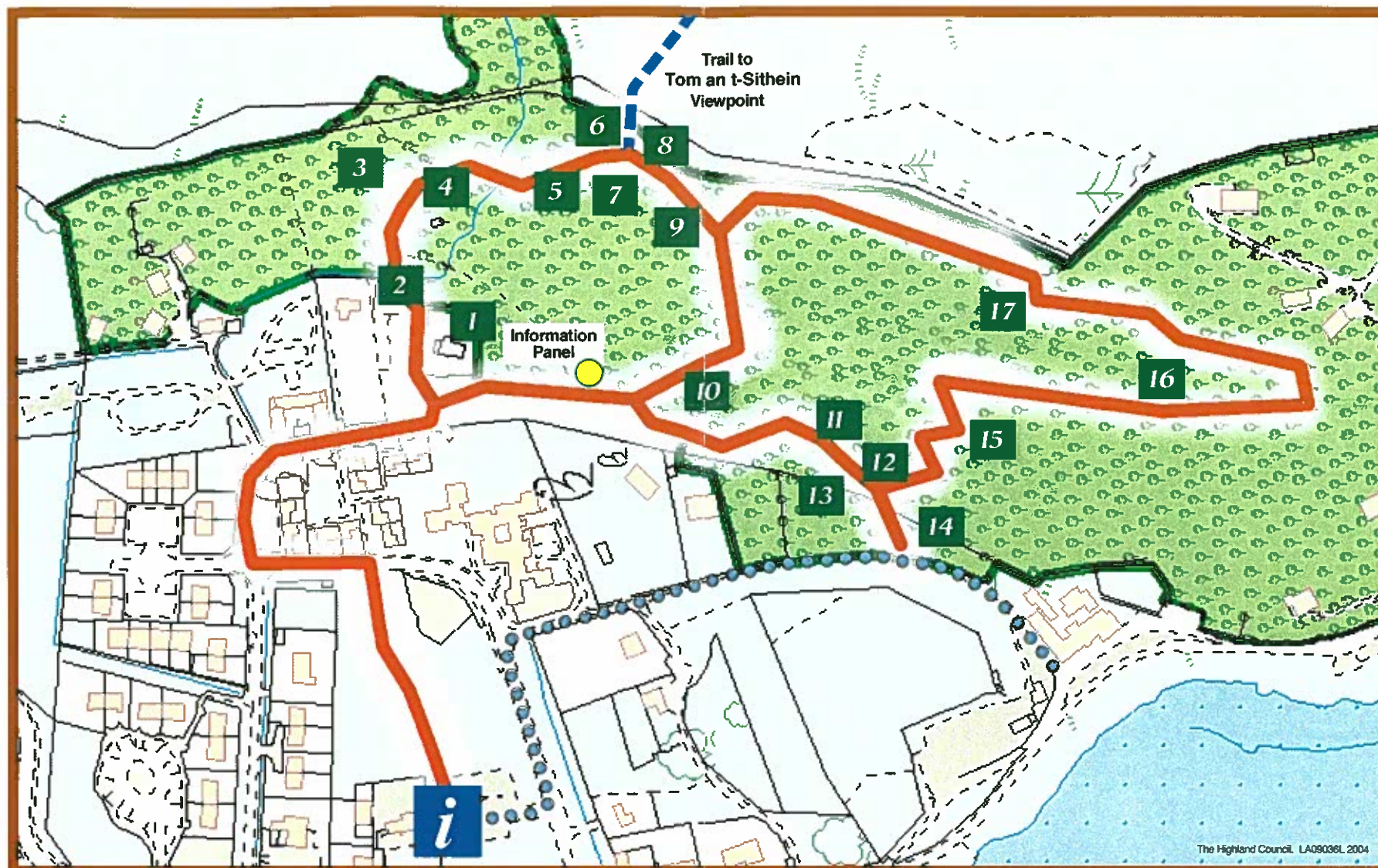
5 European Silver Fir

This giant specimen is native to the mountains of southern and central Europe and can grow up to 50 metres in height. The European Silver Fir has a very distinctive grey, scaly bark which cracks into small square plates on old trees. If you look closely at the underside of the blue-green needles, you will see two silvery bands which give the tree a distinctive silvery appearance when viewed from below.

6 Oak

Sunart is one of the few remaining areas in Scotland that retain their ancient Atlantic Oak woodlands *coilltean daraich à Chuan Shiar* and Oak *darach* is the predominant tree in most of the woodlands around Loch Sunart.

Sites of special interest in the woodland



7 Birch

Birch *beithe* is the most common native tree in Scotland and it plays a vital part in the Caledonian Forest. It is fast growing, has a life span of somewhere between 80 and 150 years and can grow up to 30 metres in height.

8 Viewpoint

Take time to enjoy the views of Loch Sunart, the village of Strontian and surrounding hills through the clearing in the trees.

9 Lawson Cypress

A long way from home, this beautiful tree is native to south-west Oregon and California. Planted essentially for its ornamental features, the Lawson Cypress is unique in the varying colours that the foliage produces. The scent of the tree is very distinctive so make sure you make time to take in the aroma as you walk past.

10 Chilean Pine or Monkey Puzzle

Native to a small area southwest of Argentina and parts of Chile this tree has been known to grow to over 45 metres. In Victorian times the tree became very popular as a garden plant. Spines *biorain* on branches make it very difficult to climb, even for a monkey - hence the name!

11 Evergreen Holm Oak

A young specimen of the evergreen *sior-uaine* Oak, a species native to Southern England, the young leaves are bright and shiny but as the tree ages the leaves will become dark, dull and eventually drop off.

12 European Silver Fir

It's hard to believe but this large tree has been blown over in a storm *stoirm* many years ago - notice the fascinating root system and the growth of the wild honeysuckle *Lus na Meala* and foxglove coming through the roots.

13 Hornbeam

Forms an overgrown hedge *callaid* along the bottom boundary wall of the woodland. The tassels of three-lobed fruiting bracts distinguish the Hornbeam from other trees in the woodland.

14 Boundary Wall

The wall *balla* and stream *sruth* formed a concealed boundary called a Ha-Ha between the gardens of the estate mansion, Horsey Hall and the Woodland.

15 Wellingtonia

A North American native, this Giant Redwood is definitely at home here in Strontian. Look closely at the tree and you'll see three hollows in the trunk. This is where "tree creepers" have burrowed into the soft bark *cairt* to roost overnight.

16 Granite Bedrock

The granite bedrock is home to many species of mosses, ferns and woodland flowers and you can clearly see the mineral composition in the white, black and pink colours of the rock *creag*. From this spot and further along the path you have a spectacular vista offering a panoramic view of Loch Sunart and the surrounding hills. There's a bench at the top of the hill where you can sit and take in the peace and tranquillity of the area.

17 Stone Wall

This stone wall was the original boundary between the woodland and the open hill above. Made of local granite, it is now difficult to see the stone in some places as many different species of moss, lichen and the common polypody fern cover the wall entirely. Many species of insect *biastag* also thrive here as the wall provides many dark, dry hiding places. Beyond the wall, the Forestry Commission plantation consists of a mixture of conifers including Western Hemlock, Douglas Fir and Lawson Cypress.

