

Ancient woodlands, modern management *Seann Choilltean, stiùireadh ùr*

Pronounced: Shan choylteen, stewra oor



Pine marten: a secretive animal with a strong smell!

There have been woodlands in this area for thousands of years. Patches of ancient woodland with oak darach, birch beithe, ash, elm, holly cuileann, rowan and hazel can still be found among the more modern conifer plantations.

The woods at the back of the Clunes forest classroom are ancient wood pasture seann choillteach ionaltraidh. Traditionally the lower branches were lopped during the winter months to feed cattle.

Hut platforms, like the one below, dating back to the Iron Age (500BC-500AD) are some of the earliest traces of human activity in the woods. The platforms were later used for charcoal-burning a' losgadh gual-fhiodh, producing fuel for the growing industries of the 1800s onwards.

Did you know...?

Pine marten Taghan are common around here, although you don't often see them. On forest roads keep a look-out for droppings full of berries - a tell-tale sign, as berries are their favourite food.

Today Forestry Commission Scotland is working to restore and expand the remaining sections of ancient woodland within its forests. Grazing by sheep caoraich and deer fiadh is carefully controlled and a programme to remove non-native conifers has been underway since the early 1990s.



Rowan: its distinctive red berries are a favourite food for many birds and mammals, such as foxes.



Birch: widespread in Scotland - this is the preferred home of the biting midge!



Oak: easy to recognize by its distinctive leaves and acorns.



Holly: a familiar species - see if you can spot one in the woods.

