

GARTMORN DAM COUNTRY PARK



Industry Created It



Nature Reclaimed It



People Enjoy It

KNOW THE CODE BEFORE YOU GO ...

Enjoy Scotland's outdoors. Everyone has the right to be on most land and inland water for recreation, education and for going from place to place providing they act responsibly. These access rights and responsibilities are explained in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. The key things are:



**SCOTTISH
OUTDOOR ACCESS CODE**

When you're **in the outdoors**:

- ▲ take personal responsibility for your own actions and act safely;
- ▲ respect people's privacy and peace of mind;
- ▲ help land managers and others to work safely and effectively;
- ▲ care for your environment and take your litter home;
- ▲ keep your dog under proper control;
- ▲ take extra care if you're organising an event or running a business.

If you're **managing the outdoors**:

- ▲ respect access rights;
- ▲ act reasonably when asking people to avoid land management operations;
- ▲ work with your local authority and other bodies to help integrate access and land management;
- ▲ respect rights of way and customary access.

Find out more by visiting www.outdooraccess-scotland.com or phoning Scottish Natural Heritage office on 01738 444177.



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WELCOME

Welcome to Gartmorn Dam Country Park and Local Nature Reserve.

From industrial beginnings, the 370 acre Park has become a haven for wildlife and a place of peaceful recreation for many people.

Here, we introduce you to 'the dam', as it is known locally. We hope that when you know a little of the Country Park's history and wildlife, you will join us in safeguarding its future.

THE RANGER SERVICE



Clackmannanshire Council Ranger Service is responsible for the management of the Country Park and a number of other sites throughout Clackmannanshire.

The Rangers organise a number of activities within the area and can be booked to lead guided walks or provide illustrated talks for schools and community groups.

Rangers are on patrol around the Country Park. Feel free to ask for any advice or information, or to pass on your comments. We are here to help you get the most from your visit!

INDUSTRY CREATED IT

When Sir John Erskine, the sixth Earl of Mar, inherited the Alloa Estate in 1689, many debts came with it. Sir John, an important statesman of the time, rose to meet the challenge!

In 1710 he secured a customs house for the port of Alloa and in doing so, began the boom in local industry. The demand for coal was fast increasing and Lord Mar took advantage of this by improving his mines in Sauchie.

As surface coal ran out and mines grew deeper, flooding became a problem. The famous Welsh engineer, George Sorocauld was brought in for advice and water pumps were built at the 'Holtone' pit in Sauchie. These pumps were driven by a huge water wheel which needed more water than could be found in the Sauchie or Brothie burns.

A weir was built on the river Black Devon at Forestmill and a lade dug out two miles to the marshy hollow that was then Gartmorn. An



Alloa Tower

earthen dam held back the water, providing a constant supply for the Sauchie pumps and creating the largest artificial body of water in Scotland at that time.

The Erskine family carried on improvements throughout Alloa during the 18th century. The sixth Earl developed his estate into one of the finest in Scotland but was unable to enjoy it fully as he was exiled to France after the Jacobite rebellion of 1715. In 1750 Lady Frances Erskine began Alloa Glassworks and later, her son John Francis created cast iron railed waggonways from the pits to the harbour.



Sir John Erskine

The tailrace from the water wheel, together with the flow from the local burns, provided a source of power that made the Brothie burn valley the industrial centre of Alloa. Industries such as tobacco, snuff and corn grinding were later replaced by distilling, brewing and spinning. Before steam power took over in the 1860s, the tailrace powered up to three colliery engines and nine mills.



A map of the tailrace flowing into the River Forth

In the early 19th century, the wells throughout Alloa could not supply enough water for the growing needs of an industrial town. The Earl of Mar first granted the Burgh the right to extract water from the tailrace in 1820 but by 1869 more water had to be taken directly from the reservoir. The Alloa Water Act was passed in 1891, the reservoir enlarged and a filter station built. The Dam could then supply water to the growing number of homes and businesses and continued to do so (with the later addition of a modern filter station at Jellyholme) for over 100 years.

There are many signs of the past around the Park



Old pump house

Pump House - From 1891 it housed the engines which pumped water to the filterbeds. Visitor Centre from 1980 to 1996

Sunken gardens - The shell of the 1891 filterbeds has been transformed. A filterhouse stood on the barbecue site. The holding pond is still nearby.

Run-rig system - The regular bumps on the path are thought to date back to this old way of farming, before the dam was built.

Bings - The spoil heaps on the South shore are what remains of old mines thought to have closed in 1870 after flooding and fires.



The former filter beds (above) were converted to a sunken garden (right)



Sherriffyards Colliery - From the late 1800s until 1921 the Alloa Coal Company worked this mine, transporting coal along the mineral railway to Alloa Harbour.

North shore path - This marks the route of the mineral railway.

To the north and west of the dam lie Gartmorn Hill Woodland and Cowpark Wood. These stand on land granted by King Robert the Bruce to his kinsman, Henri de Annand, in 1321. Just over a century later Mary de Annand married Sir James Schaw, whose family were governors of Stirling Castle and one of the most influential families in medieval Scotland. The estate then became known as Schawpark. An alternative name for the area - 'Coalpot Woods' - is testimony to the more recent, coalmining legacy.

The woodland itself dates from the 18th century and is home to a diverse variety of trees and wildlife, including roe deer, bullfinches, honeysuckle and a rich mix of woodland flowers. An extensive network of paths allow the area to be explored at a leisurely pace.

NATURE RECLAIMED IT

Plantlife kicks off the foodchain

The reservoir is fairly shallow, never reaching much over 7.5 metres (25ft). A large amount of sunlight can reach the nutrient rich water, allowing plantlife to thrive. Tiny algae float freely, sometimes very thickly. This is known as a 'bloom'. The variety of pondweeds in the dam are of national importance and it is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest. These plants are well suited to their aquatic lifestyle. Water crowfoot has feathery underwater leaves to help take in minerals, whereas it's surface leaves are flat to capture the sunlight.



Water Crowfoot

The next link - the invertebrates

The plants of the reservoir are eaten by many animals. Water fleas, such as daphnia, are part of the invertebrate community, along with shrimps, snails, and fly larvae. Invertebrates live at different

Freshwater Shrimp



levels in the water and



Pond Skater

show different behaviours. Pond skaters feed on the dead flies trapped on the surface film. Waterboatmen and beetles carry their own air supply as they dive for prey. Waterlouse scavenge on the reservoir bottom where groups of shrimps gather under stones. There are many fly larvae present including mayfly, caddis and damselflies.

These young flies may live in the water for years before emerging with wings for their short adult life.



Waterboatman

A thriving fish population comes from good natural feeding

The invertebrates are food for other animals such as fish. Stocked trout are added to the wild brown trout population. Shoals of young perch can often be seen, their high numbers helping them avoid the jaws of larger fish, such as pike. Anglers use artificial flies which mimic the invertebrate life of the reservoir.



Brown Trout

Birds flock to Gartmorn to feed

Many birds live at Gartmorn all year round and breed here in the summer time. The swans feed on pondweeds, whereas birds such as the tufted ducks dive to find invertebrate life. Great crested grebes have long, thin beaks for catching their prey of small fish. Look out for their courtship dance in the spring!

Wildfowl breeding in Northern Europe find it difficult to find food as winter sets in. Many migrate to spend the season at places like Gartmorn, where food is available throughout the year.



Wigeon

Wigeon can be seen in the Nature Reserve, dabbling in the lagoons or grazing in the field. Listen out for their whistling call.

Goldeneye dive for food out in the open water. Watch for the goldeneye drakes displaying in the spring, watched by a large number of ducks.

Occasionally the reservoir freezes over, forcing these visiting wildfowl to make a short feeding trip to the Forth Estuary.

Summer migrants visit Gartmorn to improve their chances of rearing young. Sand martins migrate from Africa in the summer to feed on the plentiful insects and to nest. View the Sand martin bank from the bird hide to enjoy the acrobatics of these birds.



The Sand Martin Bank



Common Toad

The amphibians show a link between the water and the land.

In Spring, toads, frogs and newts go to the reservoir, and the ponds around it, to spawn. Many eggs are produced to make sure that some reach adulthood. Young amphibians must avoid many hazards in their journey from the water to the woods. Once there, they feed on slugs and flies and hibernate through the winter.

The variety of habitats in and around the Country Park mean that many different creatures can live there.

Grazing land, surrounded by woodland is a favourite habitat of the brown hare. Although mostly seen on their own, you may see small groups 'boxing' in the spring to secure mates. They have distinctive black ear tips.



Roe Deer

In the deciduous Cowpark Wood look out for grey squirrel dreys, high in the birch trees. You may find acorns halved by squirrels or nibbled by wood mice. Groups of oval droppings or frayed tree bark may mean that roe deer are around. Greater spotted woodpeckers make holes in dead wood as they search out beetle grubs.



The Red Squirrel

In the quiet conifer woodlands the roe deer hide away during the day, sleeping on small scrapes on the bare earth.

Although grey squirrels are more common, you may still catch a glimpse of a rare red squirrel. Let us know if you do!

PEOPLE ENJOY IT

Although mining at Gartmorn carried on until the early 1980s, most of the pits, run by the Alloa Coal Company, were closed by 1921.

The area became less industrial and developed as a place of recreation, popular for picnics and local events. In the 1920s regattas were held on 'the dam' as well as on the River Forth.

Gartmorn is now ours to enjoy and to pass on for the benefit of future generations.

Facilities

Parking - Free parking near the Visitor Centre and main footpaths.

Wheelchair Access - There are a number of easily accessible areas. Other areas may be accessible with assistance, including the circular route around the dam.

Visitor Centre - Open daily from April -September. Toilets, displays, information, refreshments and permit sales.

Picnic Areas and Barbecue Site - Picnic areas throughout the park. Two barbecues for public use. Check availability at the Centre.



The Dam in the 1920's



A Mute Swan looking after her Cygnets

ACTIVITIES

All Users - Please follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. (Copy in Visitor Centre and local libraries)

Walks - Superb walks around the Country Park leading to local towns and path networks. See map for details.

Fishing - Clackmannanshire Council's Leisure Services operates a brown and rainbow trout fishery during the Summer. A leaflet is available and permits are required. Details from the Visitor Centre during April - September and from Leisure Services during October - March.



You can enjoy the countryside around the dam whether you are walking, cycling or horse riding



Discovering Wildlife - The reservoir is an important overwintering site for wildfowl. There is a bird hide and viewing screens. The hide requires a key which is available from the Centre. Woodland habitats are also worth investigating.

Orienteering - An orienteering course is available on the southern side of

the Dam. Please ask at the Visitor Centre or contact the Ranger Service for further details. There is a map of the course in the Visitor Centre.



Greater Spotted Woodpecker

OTHER PLACES TO VISIT

Ochil Hills Woodland Park - Wooded walks in what remains of the Alva Estate of Sir John Erskine. Free parking, play area, interpretation and picnic areas.



Mill Glen, Tillicoultry

Alva and Tillicoultry Glens - Pleasant walks following fast flowing burns and waterfalls. Boots and waterproofs recommended. Care needed on steep rocky paths.

Dollar Glen and Castle Campbell - Dramatic gorge owned by the National Trust for Scotland and Castle leased by Historic Scotland. Open to the public.



Castle Campbell, Dollar

Alloa Tower - Tower house of the sixth Earl of Mar, creator of Gartmorn Dam. Opened to the public by the National Trust for Scotland.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Clackmannanshire Council - Countryside Ranger Service.

Tel. 01259 450000. email: rangers@clacks.gov.uk

Gartmorn Dam - Country Park Visitor Centre. Tel. 01259 214319.

Clackmannanshire Council - Leisure Services. Tel. 01259 727740.

**Argyll, The Isles, Loch Lomond,
Stirling and The Trossachs Tourist Board.** Tel. 01786 445222.

Castle Campbell - Dollar. Tel. 01259 742408.

Alloa Tower - Alloa. Tel. 01259 211701.

Gartmorn Forest - Forestry Commission, Scotland Tel. 01555 660190.

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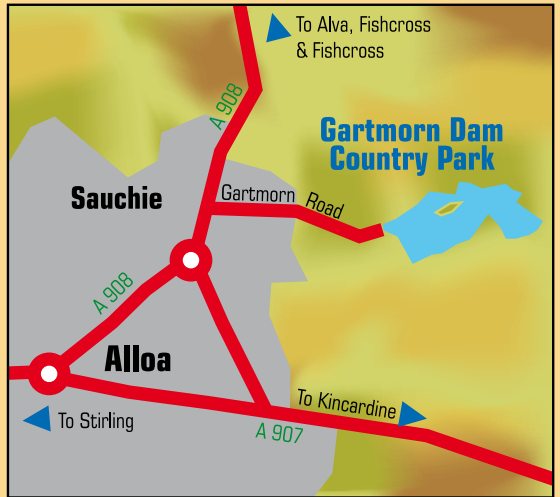
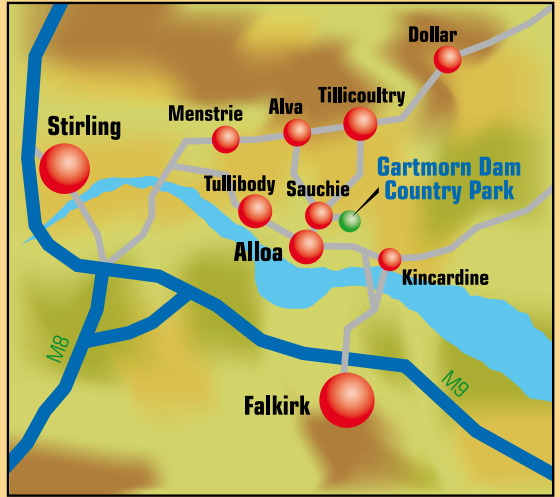


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RANGER SERVICE



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