



Cashel

Cashel Forest Paths

Whether you are a woodland expert or a casual visitor looking for a pleasant walk in the woods, we know you will find plenty to explore and enjoy at Cashel Forest



Cashel Forest Paths

Cashel Forest's Path network has something for everyone, from a largely level, 500m burnside wander to a moderately challenging 5.7km hike to the peatland at the top of the path network. Each of these well-made, waymarked footpaths include beautiful viewpoints which offer unique views across Cashel forest, the islands of Loch Lomond and beyond. Cashel's footpaths, listed from shortest to longest, are:

Alder Path: Burnside Wander ● ● ● ●

Grade: Easy

Distance: 500m / 1/3 mile

Time: 10 mins

Birch Path: Memorial & Pond ● ● ● ●

Grade: Easy

Distance: 1km / 2/3 mile

Time: 30 mins

Oak Path: Red Squirrel Woodland ● ● ● ●

Grade: Easy

Distance: 1.7 km / 1 mile

Time: 45 mins

Aspen Path: Forest and Loch View ● ● ● ●

Grade: Moderate

Distance: 4.2 km / 2 1/2 miles

Time: 2 hrs

Pine Path: Grand Lomond View ● ● ● ●

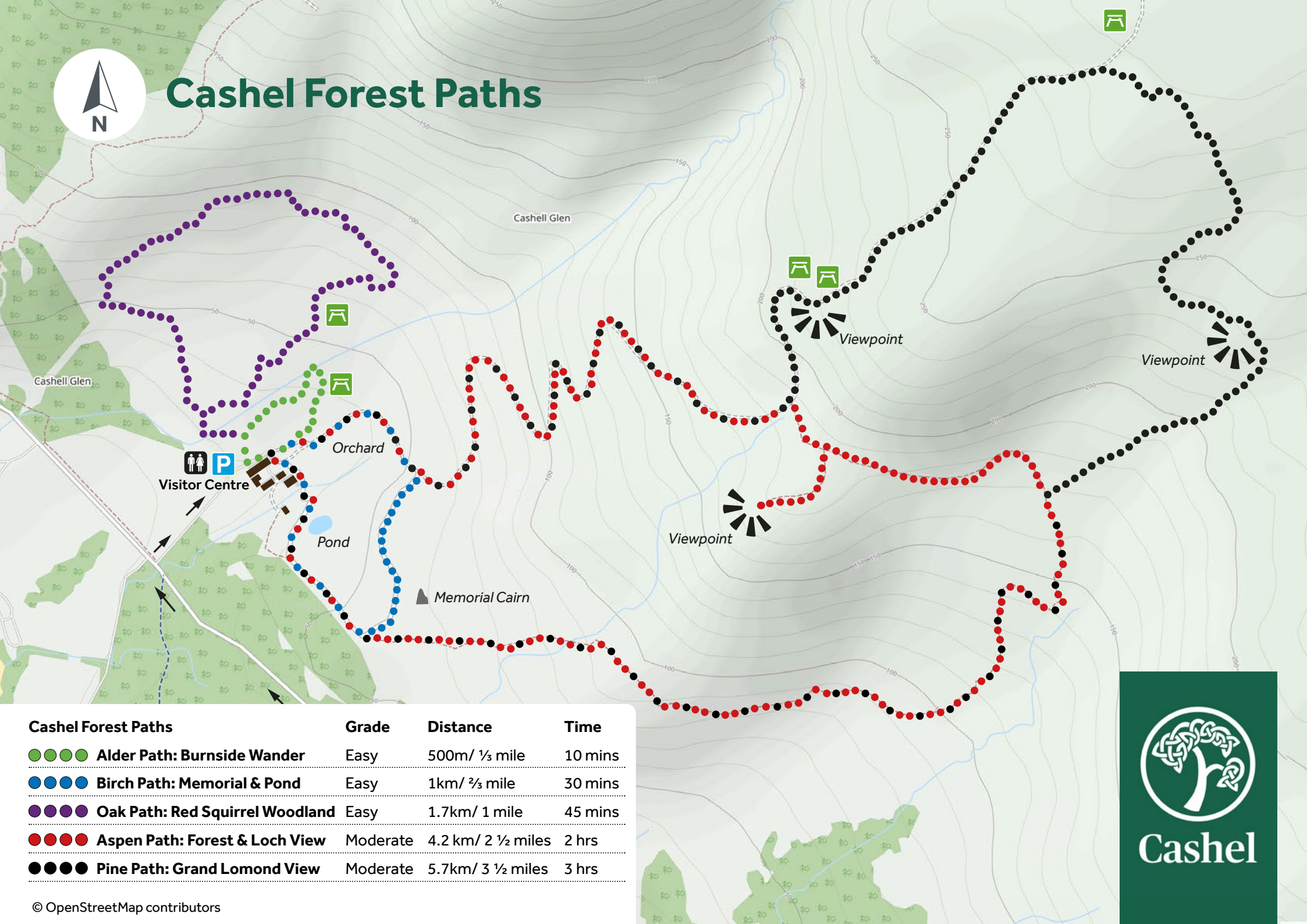
Grade: Moderate

Distance: 5.7 km / 3 1/2 miles

Time: 3 hrs



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	Grade	Distance	Time
●●●● Alder Path: Burnside Wander	Easy	500m/ 1/3 mile	10 mins
●●●● Birch Path: Memorial & Pond	Easy	1km/ 2/3 mile	30 mins
●●●● Oak Path: Red Squirrel Woodland	Easy	1.7km/ 1 mile	45 mins
●●●● Aspen Path: Forest & Loch View	Moderate	4.2 km/ 2 1/2 miles	2 hrs
●●●● Pine Path: Grand Lomond View	Moderate	5.7km/ 3 1/2 miles	3 hrs





Alder Path

Burnside wander

This gently winding, burnside wander begins to the right of the large Centennial Stone within the grassy, welcome area. It is an accessible path that is suitable for all, including those using buggies and manually propelled wheelchairs. An adult of average fitness could complete the walk in around 10 minutes, but with plenty of opportunities to sit and enjoy the wildlife and views along the route, it is likely to take you much longer!



Route colour



Distance

1/3 mile (500m)

Start point

Centennial Stone

Grade

Easy



The Alder Path runs alongside the Cashell Burn for much of its length and the burn is home to many special Scottish species, including extraordinary wee diving birds called dippers, elusive European otters and water voles, making their plucky return after previous over-predation by American mink. The burn is also used to produce sustainable electricity for the national grid and the outflow can be seen from the 'hidden' picnic spot.



Tree species that can be seen from the path include oak, rowan, birch, alder, ash, hazel and hawthorn. There are benches and resting places at regular intervals along the route, as well as a perfect wee picnic spot,

surrounded by alder trees, right beside the water. Take your time, settle down, relax and wait to see what you will find as you begin to blend into this diverse riverbank community - you might not want to leave!





Birch Path

Memorial & Pond

The Birch Path – offers a gentle walk through mixed, native woodland. There are several benches and resting places along the route, providing lots of opportunity to pause and take it all in. The path is dedicated to Scotland's inaugural First Minister, Donald Dewar and features a memorial cairn in tribute to him. It also passes by Cashel's wildlife pond, which is a great place for a nature encounter.

The Birch path starts at the metal gate just beyond the visitor centre. Head through the gap and on to the wide forestry track. Keep an eye out for adders on the grassy verges here – Adders



are the UK's only venomous snake and are protected by law. Although they are extremely unlikely to bite, they are very easily scared. Please keep dogs on a lead and under close control until you're further into the woodland to avoid any risk of adder bites.

There are some beautiful trees along this path, as the route curves to the right, look out for the fabulously gnarled old birch trees with their boughs full of clusters of twigs called witches' brooms. As we go trip-trapping across two wooden bridges we pass by an area of deep-green, mossy, wet woodland.



Wet woodland habitats are rare in the UK, and are home to an abundance of wildlife that has adapted to thrive in these extremely soggy conditions.



Our route continues, giving views towards the afforested Cashel hills. A side-path on the left, flanked by rowan trees, curves along a gentle incline towards the Donald Dewar memorial cairn. Feel free to add your own stone to the pile.

The path ends beside Cashel's meadow and large picnic barn – perfect if the weather is dreich!

The Birch Path is accessible for most but does include some bumpy forestry track surfaces and inclines of up to 11%.



Route colour



Distance

$\frac{2}{3}$ mile (1 km)

Start point

Centennial Stone

Grade

Easy



Oak Path

Squirrel Woodland

The Oak Path offers a scenic, accessible walk through woodland that is home to some of Scotland's much loved mammal species, including badgers, pine martins and red squirrels. In the spring you will find a gorgeous carpet of bluebells, wood sorrel and stitchwort beneath the trees. Slightly longer than the green and blue walks, but not as challenging as the red and black paths, the Oak Path covers 1.7km and takes around 45 minutes. It has a firm, even surfacing and is free from steps and other obstacles. There are benches and resting places at regular intervals.



Route colour



Distance

1 mile (1.7 Km)

Start point

Centennial Stone

Grade

Easy



The Oak Path passes through the Ardyle Wood, an ancient Oakwood which appears on the oldest maps we have of the area. Oakwoods have been managed in the Loch Lomond area since at least the 17th Century, usually on a coppice system, being cut every 24 years or so.

The main woodland is dominated by oak but birch, alder, rowan, holly, ash and hazel can also be found within this area. Look out for the juniper bushes, the berries of these aromatic trees are traditionally used to flavour gin



Keep an eye out for signs of the resident badgers, small, round 'snuffle-holes' in the forest floor and scratch marks on the fallen trees show where they have been foraging. This path is more accessible than many routes in the Loch Lomond area. There is however a 10m section with an incline of about 11%, which manual wheelchair users may wish assistance with.



Aspen Path

Forest & Loch view

The Aspen Path is a middle-distance route of around 4.2km which involves some rougher surfaces and short stretches with very steep inclines. If you choose this route, your efforts will be rewarded with panoramic views over Loch Lomond and the surrounding countryside. The Aspen Path will take you around two hours to complete and is clearly marked by red bands on wooden posts throughout the circuit.



Route colour



Distance

2.6 mile (4.2 Km)

Start point

Visitor Centre

Grade

Moderate



To begin the route from the car park, walk past the visitor centre towards the hill, turning right at the end of the building before the metal gate. From here, head towards the barn and join the way-marked path at the wooden fence.



The Aspen, Birch and Pine paths run along together for a while, before the Aspen and Pine routes turn off onto a grassier track, headed towards the hill. As you walk along here, before the path begins to climb, look to your left beyond the ditch to see the largest wild crab apple

tree in the UK and Ireland. This venerable grandmother tree is worth a closer look, but be gentle with her, at around 300years old, she is getting on a bit!

From here, the path ascends the sweeping hillside, with views towards Conic Hill and out across Loch Lomond and its islands. At the next fork in the path keep left and follow the red markers. After a short rise, the path becomes more level and is flanked by 'quaking' aspen trees, whose leaves tremble and shimmer with the slightest breath of wind. look out for an old wooden marker on the left, beside a narrow path – this leads to a spot with exceptional views over the forest and the Loch beyond which is highly recommended.

Returning to the main path, continue across the scenic hillside, before turning left on to the broad forestry track which zigzags gently back down to the visitor centre and car park.



Pine Path

Grand Lomond view

The Pine Path is the longest of the five loops at Cashel and reaches a similar altitude to the ever-popular Conic Hill at Balmaha. The path is clearly marked by black bands on wooden posts throughout the circuit. At 5.7km, and with steep inclines, it will take around three hours to complete. Despite the steep sections, a person of average fitness should manage the route comfortably, so long as they take their time on the way up.

The Pine (black) and Aspen (red) paths run together for some distance before diverging halfway up the hill. Folks who decide they've had enough at this point can always choose to switch paths and avoid the remaining climb.

To begin the route from the car park, walk past the visitor centre towards the hill, turning right at the end of the building before the metal gate. From here, head towards the barn and join the way-marked path at the wooden fence. This route takes in the same features that can be enjoyed from the Aspen path as they ascend the hillside together.



When the red path cuts off the left, the Pine Path continues to the right climbing roughly 100 meters before turning to the North and levelling off, offering a pleasant, relatively flat stretch through native pine woods and peatland at the top of Cashel's path network.

The views here are incredible – similar to those seen from nearby Conic Hill – and on a clear day you will be presented with some of the best scenery Scotland has to offer. Viewpoint areas have been created on the route that allow you to rest and enjoy the spectacular vista.

The peatland to the east is full of life and harbours many fascinating species.

Vehicle access to the Pine Path's stunning picnic viewpoint can be granted for those with restricted mobility. Please contact Cashel Forest Ranger Service via email at ranger@cashel.org.uk to arrange.



Route colour



Distance

3.5 mile (5.7 Km)

Start point

Visitor Centre

Grade

Moderate/
includes strenuous
hill climb





Cashel


Opening Times

Cashel Forest, including the car park, is open year-round during daylight hours.

The Visitor Centre is open from the 1st of April until the 31st of October, with access to toilets between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Sunday.

Getting to Cashel

Cashel Forest is located on the east side of Loch Lomond, 4.5 km / 3 miles north of Balmaha (11 km / 6.6 miles from Drymen village) on the B837.

 2 hour walk  40 min bike ride  10 min drive

Latitude: 56.120792; Longitude -4.5916256

Ordnance Survey: E:00238985; N:00695032

Grid Reference: NS 400 940

What 3 Words: ///uplifting.steps.spells
(welcome area outside of visitor centre)

Accessibility

Cashel's car park, visitor centre and toilets are suitable for all abilities. Several of the picnic areas include wheelchair and buggy accessible benches. The Alder, Oak and Birch paths have firm, even surfacing and are free from steps and other obstacles. All three of these paths also provide benches and resting places at regular intervals.

**LOCH
LOMOND
& THE TROSSACHS
NATIONAL PARK**



This leaflet has been produced in partnership with Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority. Responsibility for the content and guidance offered within it lies with Cashel Forest Trust.