

Plean Audio

Look out for the Audio markers along the trail to hear more information.

Each board is numbered, with each number corresponding to an audio guide which you can access on your smart-phone.



The audio is indicated by this marker

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Information Hub | 10 South Bing |
| 2 Wildlife Ponds | 10a South Bing ecology |
| 2a Plean Colliery | 11 Food for Thought |
| 3 Plean House | 11a WW1 cooking |
| 4 Gates to the House | 12 Woodland of Luckiness |
| 4a Plean House kitchen | 13 Ice House |
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This leaflet is intended to help you explore Plean Country Park as part of the Xplore Stirling Heritage Trails. The trail can be carried out in any order and the directional arrows provide only a suggested route.

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[0871 200 22 33](tel:08712002233)
 calls from landlines cost 10p per minute
www.traveline.info
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Visit walkit.com to help you plan your way around Stirling on foot.

Remember to follow the **Scottish Outdoor Access Code** while exploring the Stirling Heritage Trails.

Enjoy Scotland's outdoors responsibly

- take responsibility for your own actions
- respect the interests of other people
- care for the environment.

KNOW THE CODE BEFORE YOU GO

SCOTTISH OUTDOOR ACCESS CODE outdooraccess-scotland.com

This leaflet is one of many produced in partnership with Stirling's communities to help you explore the rich and varied heritage of our wonderful city. You'll find them at www.stirlingheritagetrails.co.uk

For led walks in the area see the Stirling Walking Network at www.activestirling.org.uk

Designed by www.artisanoption.co.uk

Plean Country Park Heritage Trail

Xplore Stirling

HERITAGE TRAILS



www.pleanaudio.co.uk



Welcome to the Plean Country Park Heritage Trail

Plean Country Park is situated immediately to the south of Plean village, some six miles south east of Stirling.

Plean Country Park extends to approx. 89 hectares of which 75 are woodland with the remainder being meadows and watercourses.

The Main entrance into the Country Park is from Cadgers Loan, a former Drovers route which links the Country Park with Plean village. The south of the park is bounded by the Roman Road which was part of a network of roads built by the Romans about 2000 years ago. This road provided the main thoroughfare between the regal powerhouses of Stirling and Perth. It was the motorway of the day.

Plean Country Park was once an area quarried for sandstone and became a working Victorian estate landscaped in the early 1800s and later became a significant part of the coal and coke production in the local area.



Quarrying of sandstone

Before the age of man Plean and the surrounding area would have been under water and as the water receded over time the sand which remained hardened to form sandstone. Under the soils of Plean Country Park lies part of the Upper Limestone Formation which was extracted from Blackcraig Quarry in Plean. This quarry was one of three in Plean known as Catscraig, Craigbeg and Blackcraig. Blackcraig produced the Plean White Freestone considered to be high quality, fine-graded white sandstone. It was one of the last quarries to close having been worked from around 1841 and finally abandoned by 1913.

The sandstone produced at Blackcraigs was used to build the School and Church Extension at Plean, in bridges on the Plean branch of the mineral railway, also in the chief post offices at Falkirk and Stirling, Cowane's Hospital and in Stirling Public Library. It was also used in a number of buildings in Glasgow and Edinburgh and the Bass Rock lighthouse in the Firth of Forth.

- 1 Aerial view by drone of Plean House © Daniel Tetstall
- 2 Lighthouse on the Bass Rock
- 3 Typical Quarry face



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Victorian Estate

1750 - 1799 In the mid 1750s Robert Haldane of Gleneagles purchased Plean Estate from the Earl of Dunmore and also purchased Airthrey Estate as a means of securing the right to vote in parliament. The estate passed upon his death in 1767 to his nephew George who accrued a mountain of debt which was cleared by the sale of the estate in 1799.



1820 - 1833 This land was then purchased by Francis Simpson, the son of a clerk of the Carron Company who amassed his fortune as a ship's captain with the Honourable East India Company. He commissioned the design of the formal Victorian landscape which included Plean House and Stables together with other associated buildings, which formed Plean Estate. Francis had a tragic life losing his first born child in infancy, then his wife a year after the birth of his son William, who suffered poor health and died at the age of 22. In memory of William a home for indigent old men known as the William Simpson Asylum was founded in the village of Plean where it still stands today.

William Simpsons is now a residential care home for both men and women and provides respite and day care facilities.

1833 - 1922 Plean Estate was owned by the Trustees of William Simpson Asylum and occupied by a variety of tenants including the Plean Colliery Company.

1922 - 1929 The Trustees, with the agreement of the Plean Colliery Company, sold the house and grounds to Wallace Thorneycroft who was the mine manager and had lived in the house for a number of years.

1929 - 1970 Following the relocation of Wallace Thorneycroft to Devon, Plean Estate was then purchased by his relatives brother and sister Tam and Jessie Thorneycroft who ran the estate until it was sold in 1970 to the National Coal Board. Shortly afterwards vandals set fire to the unoccupied house which has been derelict ever since.

Coal Mining

As well as sandstone below the ground in Plean there was also a coal seam which was exploited and led to the opening of many pits all working the upper seams. As this coal was of poor quality the number of pits reduced and Wallace Thorneycroft switched the focus of the business to coke production to be transported

and used for smelting in the steel industry. An excellent example of beehive style coke ovens can still be seen today to the south west of the park and visible from the Roman Road.

Originally there were two distinct settlements, the old village which is situated to the east of Plean House, depicted on the OS 1860 Plan, and the colliery village of East Plean. The colliery village was built to house the families of the mining community working locally. East Plean was developed from the late 19th Century about half a mile to the north on the A9. By the late 20th Century the two had merged to form Plean village. The village of Plean now comprises both Old Plean and Plean.

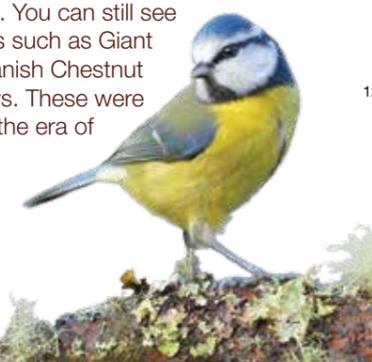
Mining was dirty dangerous work and in order to improve this the Miners' Welfare Scheme was introduced providing baths and other facilities for the workers as many of the houses did not have a bathroom and in fact had no indoor toilet. The miners' accommodation was known as 'Rows.'

In 1922 twelve men were killed and seven were injured in an explosion in the No.4 shaft of the colliery. Shortly after this in 1931 the No.5 shaft was sunk a mile from shaft No.4 in order to increase efficiency by decreasing the distance of haulage. By 1959 the demand for coke was shrinking and the colliery closed in 1962.

Today's Estate

Whilst the layout of the Country Park today resembles that of the former working Victorian estate the land use has changed to focus upon the conservation of wildlife and the provision of access for the visiting public to enjoy. Little can be seen today of the industrial past unless you know where to look. This leaflet provides a guide to the lost heritage and the audio trail can unlock further secrets of the past.

The estate is still managed for its flora and fauna such as the extensive woodland much of which was planted in the Victorian era. You can still see exotic mature trees such as Giant Redwood and Spanish Chestnut along the driveways. These were introduced during the era of the Scottish Plant



One unwelcome introduction is the purple flowered Rhododendron ponticum which has become a highly invasive pest not only in Plean Country Park but in the countryside as a whole.



The wildflower meadows are also managed to encourage our celebrity species which is the Greater Butterfly Orchid, *Platanthera chlorantha* which can be seen in large numbers in June and July. The lovely vanilla aroma released by these plants in the evening attracts the moth species which pollinate the flowers.



Bees are drawn to the blossom of the fruit trees in the park some of which have grown there since Victorian times.

You can marvel at the dazzling bejewelled Southern Hawker dragonflies as they hunt up and down the drives and lay their eggs in the ponds in the summer.

These are just a few of the fantastic species to be found on your visit to the park where you can experience something different with the changing of the seasons.



4| Plean House early 1900s, © Unknown origin

5| Stable Block 1972, © Stirling Council

6| Beehive Coke Oven, © Stirling Council

7| Coal Waggon on the Plean Line, © Daniel Tetstall

8| Miner's Bust, © Fran Barr

9| Reconstructed Miner's Row, © Daniel Tetstall

10| Owl Carving, © Fran Barr

11| Otter

12| Blue Tit

13| Tawny Owl

14| Rhododendron, © Fran Barr

15| Azaleas, © Fran Barr

16| Greater Butterfly Orchid, © Fran Barr

17| Southern Hawker Dragonfly, © James Aikman

18| Roe Deer