

W E L C O M E T O

Maspie Den

Falkland Stewardship Trust

Woodland and gorge footpath

Did you know how old the Maspie Den is?

The bedrock was formed in a vast desert **350 million years ago**. The gorge was formed at the end of the last ice age around **13,000 years ago** when the bare ground began to be colonised by plants.

The current woodland was planted as part of the designed landscape **150 years ago**.

For the past **30 years** Maspie Den and Falkland Estate have been open to the public.

KEEP TO PATHS

Do not climb on the banks



SOIL EROSION

The soils here are very sandy, due to the bedrock, and therefore very fragile. Climbing up and down banks and walking off the paths has killed off the ground plants and is causing erosion. Please keep to the paths to protect the ground. In badly effected areas we have put up barriers to keep people off and try to restore the habitat. Seeds of native wildflowers and transplanted trees and ferns will be put in place to hold the soil again.

Dogs contribute to erosion if let off the lead to scramble up and down banks...

Natural Processes

Water

Heavy rain washes away the loose soil and erodes the steep banks into the Maspie Burn

Wind

The tall trees here are easily blown over as the soil is thin and loose

Animals

Wild animals create narrow eroded paths as they climb up steep banks

Restoration of Paths

Path and bridge repair is ongoing to keep the access safe but some areas are going to take time. Please take care on your visit. Any problems can be reported to: info@centreforstewardship.org.uk

Removal of Fallen Trees

Deadwood habitat is essential for a healthy woodland ecosystem, but some of the trees are a potential risk if you climb on them. Please stick to the paths and do not climb on fallen trees. Estate staff will be monitoring and removing unsafe trees throughout the year. Any fresh fallen trees can be reported to the office: 01337 858838

Some path closures are to be expected. This is to ensure visitor safety and to allow work to commence undisturbed.

Restoration of Ground Flora

Together with the trees, the small plants hold the soil together. Mosses, grasses, ferns, flowers, and shrubs create an absorbing blanket on the woodland floor. These plants in turn support all the other animal life, from millipedes and bees, to snails and voles. These are all easily destroyed by trampling.

Habitat Piles

Fallen trees and branches left in piles make excellent shelter for many of the small organisms. Birds can nest protected, toads and hedgehogs can hibernate underneath and hunt for insects to eat. The rotting wood is shelter and food for decomposer bugs, and fungi can carry on the process. A habitat pile, if left alone, will home and feed many animals and allow the natural processes of decay to recycle the nutrients to the forest.





Keep to the Paths to Help Protect the Forest

Please remember to stick to the paths and heed any signs when you visit Falkland Estate. High numbers of visitors are now causing path wear and environmental damage that must be managed and repaired when conditions allow.

There are many alternative routes to explore here. For example:

- Temple of Decision and Tyndall Bruce Monument
- Kilgour Crags

Find out more at the Stables Information Hub, and Centre For Stewardship website.

Erosion causes risk to humans! Avoid this site if:

- Windy conditions are causing trees to sway. As some will drop branches or fall over.
- Very heavy rain or rain that has persisted for days. The sodden ground can give way in a landslip or debris flow.
- Icy conditions and snow thaw. Slippery steep slopes are best avoided.
- Heavy snowfall. Sudden drops may be concealed and small avalanches are possible.



It's a Big Task

Our conservation volunteers assist estate staff in the general upkeep of all the paths

But some of the repair work up Maspie den will need to be carried out by specialists.

Falkland Stewardship Trust is in the process of raising funds to pay for contractors to fully repair bridges and walkways.

Please be aware that maintenance work and visitor management are ongoing to prevent further site damage.