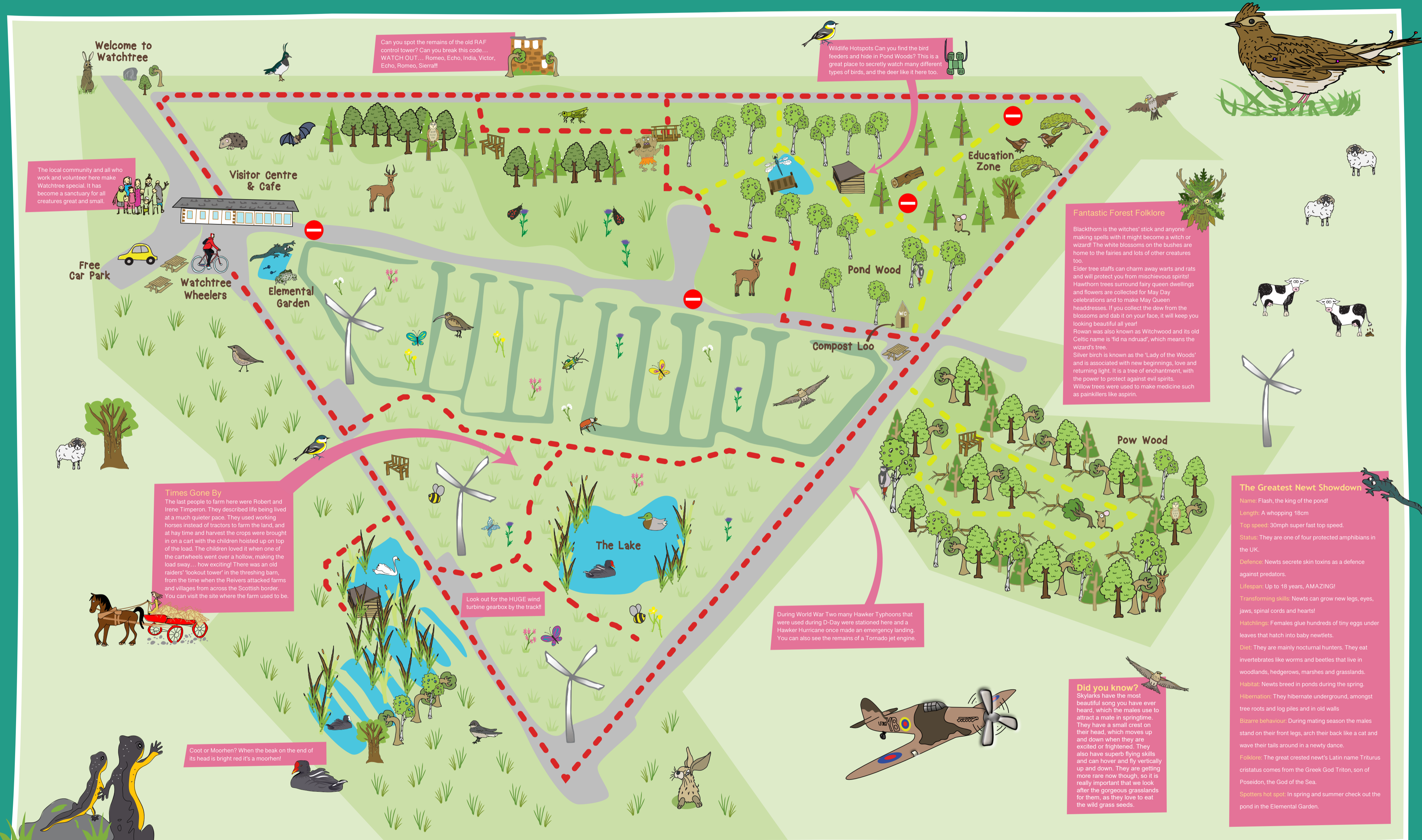


Watchtree - The Adventures of Flash and Iris



Welcome to Watchtree

The local community and all who work and volunteer here make Watchtree special. It has become a sanctuary for all creatures great and small.

Can you spot the remains of the old RAF control tower? Can you break this code... WATCH OUT... Romeo, Echo, India, Victor, Echo, Romeo, Sierra!!

Wildlife Hotspots Can you find the bird feeders and hide in Pond Woods? This is a great place to secretly watch many different types of birds, and the deer like it here too.

Fantastic Forest Folklore

Blackthorn is the witches' stick and anyone making spells with it might become a witch or wizard! The white blossoms on the bushes are home to the fairies and lots of other creatures too.

Elder tree staves can charm away warts and rats and will protect you from mischievous spirits! Hawthorn trees surround fairy queen dwellings and flowers are collected for May Day celebrations and to make May Queen headdresses. If you collect the dew from the blossoms and dab it on your face, it will keep you looking beautiful all year!

Rowan was also known as Witchwood and its old Celtic name is 'fid na ndruid', which means the wizard's tree.

Silver birch is known as the 'Lady of the Woods' and is associated with new beginnings, love and returning light. It is a tree of enchantment, with the power to protect against evil spirits.

Willow trees were used to make medicine such as painkillers like aspirin.

Times Gone By

The last people to farm here were Robert and Irene Timperon. They described life being lived at a much quieter pace. They used working horses instead of tractors to farm the land, and at hay time and harvest the crops were brought in on a cart with the children hoisted up on top of the load. The children loved it when one of the cartwheels went over a hollow, making the load sway... how exciting! There was an old raiders' 'lookout tower' in the threshing barn, from the time when the Reivers attacked farms and villages from across the Scottish border. You can visit the site where the farm used to be.

Look out for the HUGE wind turbine gearbox by the track!!

During World War Two many Hawker Typhoons that were used during D-Day were stationed here and a Hawker Hurricane once made an emergency landing. You can also see the remains of a Tornado jet engine.

Coot or Moorhen? When the beak on the end of its head is bright red it's a moorhen!

Did you know?

Skylarks have the most beautiful song you have ever heard, which the males use to attract a mate in springtime. They have a small crest on their head, which moves up and down when they are excited or frightened. They also have superb flying skills and can hover and fly vertically up and down. They are getting more rare now though, so it is really important that we look after the gorgeous grasslands for them, as they love to eat the wild grass seeds.

The Greatest Newt Showdown

Name: Flash, the king of the pond!

Length: A whopping 18cm

Top speed: 30mph super fast top speed.

Status: They are one of four protected amphibians in the UK.

Defence: Newts secrete skin toxins as a defence against predators.

Lifespan: Up to 18 years, AMAZING!

Transforming skills: Newts can grow new legs, eyes, jaws, spinal cords and hearts!

Hatchlings: Females glue hundreds of tiny eggs under leaves that hatch into baby newtlets.

Diet: They are mainly nocturnal hunters. They eat invertebrates like worms and beetles that live in woodlands, hedgerows, marshes and grasslands.

Habitat: Newts breed in ponds during the spring.

Hibernation: They hibernate underground, amongst tree roots and log piles and in old walls

Bizarre behaviour: During mating season the males stand on their front legs, arch their back like a cat and wave their tails around in a newty dance.

Folklore: The great crested newt's Latin name Triturus cristatus comes from the Greek God Triton, son of Poseidon, the God of the Sea.

Spotters hot spot: In spring and summer check out the pond in the Elemental Garden.

Some Simple Rules

Dogs must be kept on a short lead, and please pick up after your dog - bins are located around the reserve. No smoking or fires on the reserve, and please - no littering. Please keep to the trails, and be courteous to other reserve users. Please be aware other vehicles operate across the reserve and all children must be accompanied by an adult. No unauthorised use of motor powered scooters, quadbikes, segways and other toys (excluding mobility aids) and no remote-controlled toys including drones.

Key

Cyclists & Pedestrians

Pedestrians Only

Discover more at www.taletrails.co.uk

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