

## BOOK OF THE WEEK

### The Wind At My Back: A Cycling Life

Author Paul Maunder explores the link between cycling, the landscape and creativity in his latest book, *The Wind at my Back*.

The book reveals a personal view on what it means to ride a bicycle, looking at how our memories have a dialogue with landscape and how cycling and creativity are connected.

Taking a journey through the places that have shaped him, readers join him in a ride across wild moorland, through suburbia and city streets, into quintessentially English pastoral scenes.

The book is published by Bloomsbury, priced £16.99 in hardback and £14.99 as an e-book. Buy from book stores and online retailers.



## JOIN DRAM FINE WALK

An outdoor company are offering an alternative to the Dramathon running races.

Taking place on the same day, October 20, as the marathon and half-marathon races, Wild Alba Tours will lead a circular walk of around 15 miles from Glenfarclas distillery on Speyside.

Walkers follow the same route as the marathon to Blacksboat, before crossing the Spey River and returning to Ballindalloch castle and then back to Glenfarclas. A picnic lunch will be provided and walkers will also get a dram and certificate.

It costs £45 per person and places are limited so booking is required.

■ To book, see [wildalbatours.com](http://wildalbatours.com), email [info@wildalbatours.com](mailto:info@wildalbatours.com) or call 07493 251419.

## GEAR OF THE WEEK

### Merrell MQM Flex Gore-Tex Hybrid Trail Shoe

Merrell have launched the MQM Flex Gore-Tex Hybrid Trail Shoe for "people who like to move quickly in the mountains".

They are of the fastest lightest hiker shoes on the market but also strong and protective.

Features include Gore-Tex Invisible Fit waterproofing and a firm sole with added grooves that is "reactive and responsive".

Upper is durable yet breathable.

■ The Merrell MQM Flex shoes, £115, from [sportshoes.com](http://sportshoes.com)



**CALMING** Bruce's Stone is in the heart of Galloway Forest Park, overlooking Loch Trool

# Bathing beauties

## Known in Japan as shinrin-yoku, forest bathing means to "take in the forest atmosphere".

First developed in the 1980s, forest bathing is the activity of being in nature and connecting with the forest through our senses of sight, hearing, taste and touch.

You could sit and drink in the forest atmosphere or take a walk through the woodlands.

Being amid nature can help reduce stress and anxiety, alleviate depression and promote a feeling of wellbeing. While forest bathing is a great activity year-round, autumn offers the added benefit of a fabulous display of colourful foliage.

Here are 10 great places for forest bathing:

### 1 Cally Woods

**Where:** Near Gatehouse of Fleet in Galloway Forest Park

**Why:** Lucy, a ranger at the park, recommends Cally Woods as "lovely for autumn colour". She added: "Just a couple of minutes into the walks at Cally, you'll find two benches that are art installations designed for visitors to sit or lie on and take in the peaceful sounds of the forest."

### 2 Yair Forest

**Where:** Near Selkirk, Borders  
**Why:** Lynne, from Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS), recommends the Raelees Trail in Yair forest, where you can find "exquisite ancient woodlands". Yair is a quiet forest of mature trees and boast some of the best views of the Tweed valley, especially in autumn.

### 3 Glentool

**Where:** Galloway Forest Park, Dumfries & Galloway  
**Why:** With the rushing waters of Buchan Burn and the Waters of Minnoch lead you through the



**SERENE** There's so much to explore in Glentool, Galloway Forest Park

woods to stunning views of the Galloway Hills. Nearby, visit Bruce's Stone, and the stunningly beautiful Knockman Wood.

### 4 Uath Lochans

**Where:** South of Aviemore

**Why:** Lucy, a recreation ranger at Glenmore Forest Park, recommends Uath Lochans, known locally as Badenochs. The woodlands is along a narrow and winding road but well worth the effort to reach. Lucy said: "Take in the peacefulness of these reflective lochans, and explore stunning wetland areas."

### 5 Devilla Forest

**Where:** Near Kincardine, Fife  
**Why:** Catherine, a FCS ranger, says Devilla Forest which is "quiet, calm and easily accessible".

### 6 Glenbranter Forest

**Where:** Strachur, Argyll  
**Why:** Argyll-based FCS ranger Steve said: "Glenbranter Forest offers a variety of woodland, with majestic specimens of spruce and fir near the meeting of two small rivers, as well as native broadleaves like oak, hazel and alder lining the waterfalls."

### 7 Queen Elizabeth Forest Park

**Where:** Near Aberfoyle, Stirlingshire

**Why:** Enjoy fabulous views of lochs, wooded hills and rugged mountains, or take to the trails on foot or by bike to discover the park's magical atmosphere.

### 8 Cardrona Forest

**Where:** Tweed Valley Forest Park, Borders

**Why:** One of the park's larger forests, Cardrona's trails are tranquil and less visited. The gentle cross-country trails are great for strolling and many lead to beautiful hilltop views. There are plenty of spots to rest and take in the calmness.

### 9 Faskally

**Where:** Tay Forest Park, Perthshire.

**Why:** You'll find secluded spots beneath majestic oak trees where you can relax for a spot of forest bathing. In October, it also hosts outdoor spectacular, The Enchanted Forest, [www.enchantedforest.org.uk](http://www.enchantedforest.org.uk)

### 10 Cademuir

**Where:** Tweed Valley Forest Park, Borders

**Why:** The smallest forest in the park offers a peaceful spot perfect for meditation and relaxation with views over the valley.

■ For further details, see [Scotland.forestry.gov.uk/](http://Scotland.forestry.gov.uk/)