

Reviews

Scottish National Forest Park Guide (Argyll). His Majesty's Stationery Office. Price 1/6.

This is an unusual guide book. It takes the reader by the hand and leads him to a fascinating region of mountain, lake and glen lying northwards of the city of Glasgow and the Firth of Clyde and tells its inspiring story.

The National Park of Argyll covers 58,000 acres and includes some of the finest mountains of the Western Highlands. It belongs to the Forestry Commission who have set aside for tree planting about 21,000 acres. The remainder, too high or too poor for profitable afforestation, has been opened to the public and here the nature student and the hiker, the mountaineer and the camper are free to enjoy themselves.

It is the purpose of this guide book to instruct the visitors so that they may make full use of the park with all its potentialities for interest and recreation. It is written by a team of experts who have contributed chapters on its history and folklore, botany, wild life, geology and mountains. The section on forestry describes in non-technical language the why and the wherefore of cultural operations in nursery and plantation. It lists the species used in the park and gives pointers to their identification and explains the ultimate aim of this part of the national afforestation scheme.

The value of the publication is enhanced by the photographs and the maps. There are views of mountain crag and wooded lake shore and vistas of extensive tracts of the park. A picture of the Benmore School Nursery shows the students, stripped to the waist, busy sprinkling pinches of tree seed in drills. Their sparse clothing indicates a spring time warmth that must be a rare occurrence in Scotland. The maps are hand drawn and are the least satisfactory part of the whole guide book. They show the approaches to the park by road, and in large scale, the lay-out of the park itself and trace roads and paths and indicate youth hostels and camp sites.

The chief interest of this guide book to Irish readers is that it is an example of what might be done in this country. Already we have the site for a National Forest Park in the State-owned property of Muckcross, Killarney. It is a place of enchanting beauty and its flora and fauna are of abiding interest to the student and nature lover. Information such as is given in this Scottish publication is available and it would be a simple matter to compile in handy pocket form. The first step, however, is the dedication by the Government of the land for the formation of the first Irish Forest Park, a purpose for which it is admirably suited.

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