

GUAGAN BARRA FOREST PARK—Páirc Foraoise Guagan Barra.
Forest and Wildlife Service. John Augustine Ltd. 25p.

FOREST Park booklets have created a new standard with this issue on Guagan Barra Forest Park. Eminently readable, it has an introduction in Irish, which is, thankfully, not a direct translation of the English version which follows, while conveying the same type of information. On the other hand the descriptive requirement of the stops on the nature trail dictate that both the Irish and English versions should be similar if not direct translations.

The booklet gives an outline of the geology of the area in and around Guagan, traces the development of its plant ecology after the ice age and follows with a brief description of the wildlife one may expect to see in the Forest Park. The principal tree species are adequately documented and serve as a reminder to us that forest production rather than recreation was the dominant theme in the years following 1938 when the property was acquired. The dominant feature of the presentation, however, which permeates throughout the booklet, is the authoritative description of the local scene and the original Irish forms of the placenames are used extensively in support of this endeavour. For the foreigner (Irish or other nationality) a short chapter listing a number of these placenames, together with their meaning in English, is provided. A route map of the walks available completes the presentation and it is here that the newcomer without an elementary knowledge of Irish may have some difficulty in deciding which walk to select. A reference to pages 14 and 15 would have been helpful at this point.

The assistance of the Geological Survey, the Placenames Commission and Mr. Lucey of Guagan Barra is acknowledged and it is obvious that the ground has been well studied and researched. The Forest and Wildlife Service are to be complimented on this multi-disciplinary approach while the authors deserve a bouquet for their sensitive use of the poetry and prose of writers like Merriman, Callanan and Gibbings to emphasise the beauty of Guagan and explain the harvesting of forest produce.

The booklet is printed on matt art white paper interleaved with moss green and fawn-grey cartridge paper. It is tastefully designed by Bernardini, Birket and Gardner Ltd. in the three colours, black, brown and green. The front page carries a half-tone drawing in brown of the entrance to the Forest Park, while numerous line illustrations, in black and brown, of animals, plants and scenic views illuminate the entire booklet. At 25p it is excellent value for the visitor to Guagan Barra.

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