



A History of Irish Forestry

Eoin Neeson

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This comprehensive study, with a foreword by Lord Killanin, looks at Irish forestry from the migration of the first wood species some 10,000 years ago to the present day. Part One, The Historical Background, examines the primeval forest and early settlers, woodlands, land title and tenure under the Celts, codified with Brehon law; Norman forest law imposed in the early medieval period; the Tudor conquest and plantations; and the development of estate and 'scientific' forestry during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It also considers the political dimension of Irish forestry, and socio-economic factors such as land hunger and agrarian reform. Part Two, Forestry in Modern Ireland, chronicles the twentieth century, beginning with the Irish Forestry Committee of 1907. In the struggle for independence, replenishing the country's forestry stock was placed high on the list of national objectives. State afforestation schemes laid foundations gradually built upon during the mid-century as the techniques and role of forestry were debated, policies defined and planting programmes instituted. With Coillte established in 1989 and EC-aided expansion plans for the 1990s, private and state interests converge in a major national enterprise. The husbanding of Ireland's natural resources and its documentation are now part of a broader environmental awareness. Forests are of inestimable importance. They provide and protect. They sustain the biosphere, regulate climate, nurture diversity, serve recreation, and yield wood: a commodity which contributes more than any other to society, as fuel, as industrial timber and - in the form of paper - they key medium of civilization. A History of Irish Forestry will be of interest to all concerned with Ireland's past, and future.

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