

Upper hillside 1,000 feet above sea level

Recommended Walks through the Arboretum

THE RED ROUTE (40 mins)

climbs through a "bowl" planted with forms of Cypress and passes into Scotland's finest collection of Australian Eucalyptus trees. It continues through Southern Beeches from South America and Silver Firs from Western North America, returning towards the entrance by the side of a burn overhung with native Oaks.

THE BLUE ROUTE (2 hours)

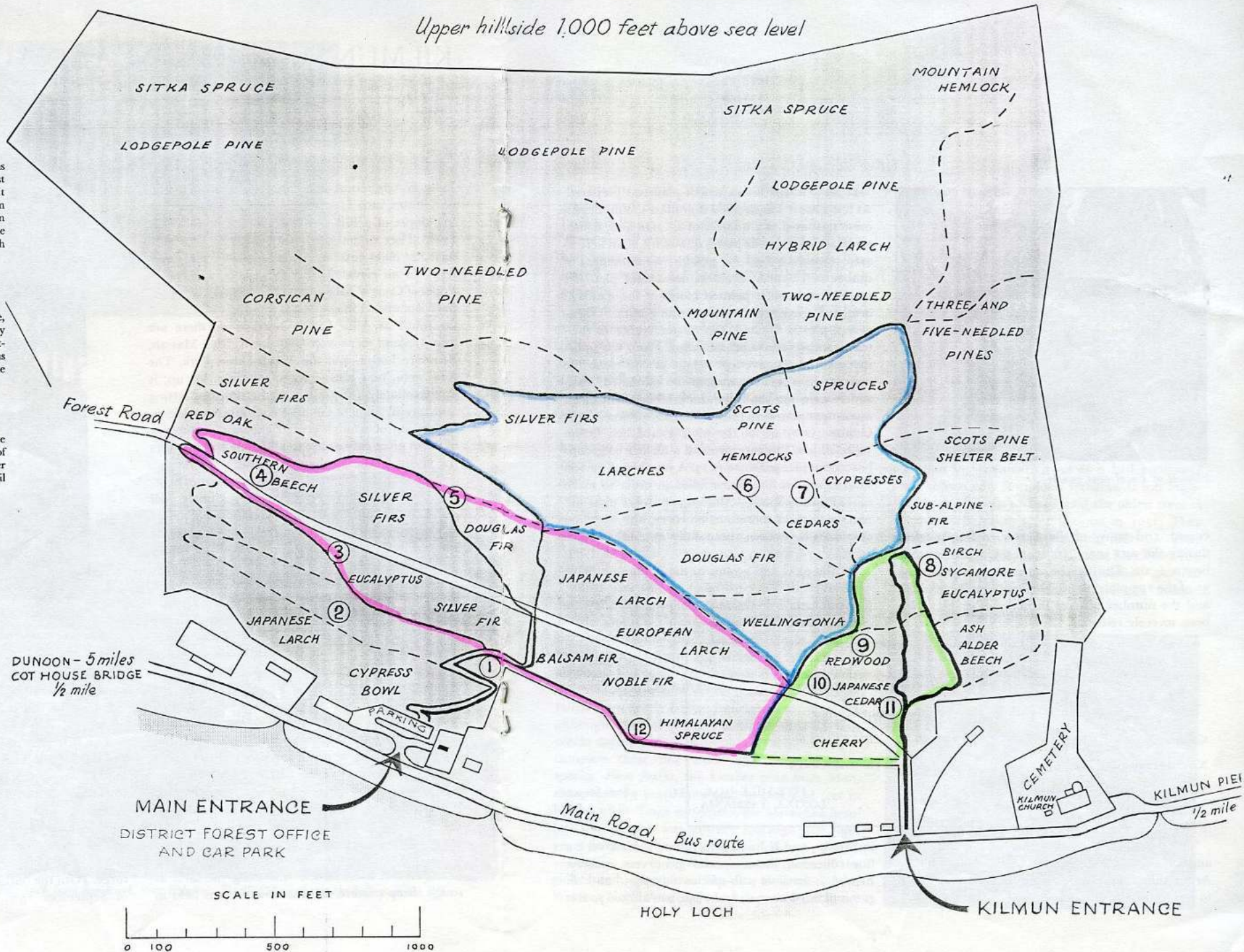
which also starts at the main entrance, involves hard walking and is primarily intended for the more active visitor. Interesting features on this route are the collections of Silver Firs, Pines and Spruces, while the view on a clear day is outstanding.

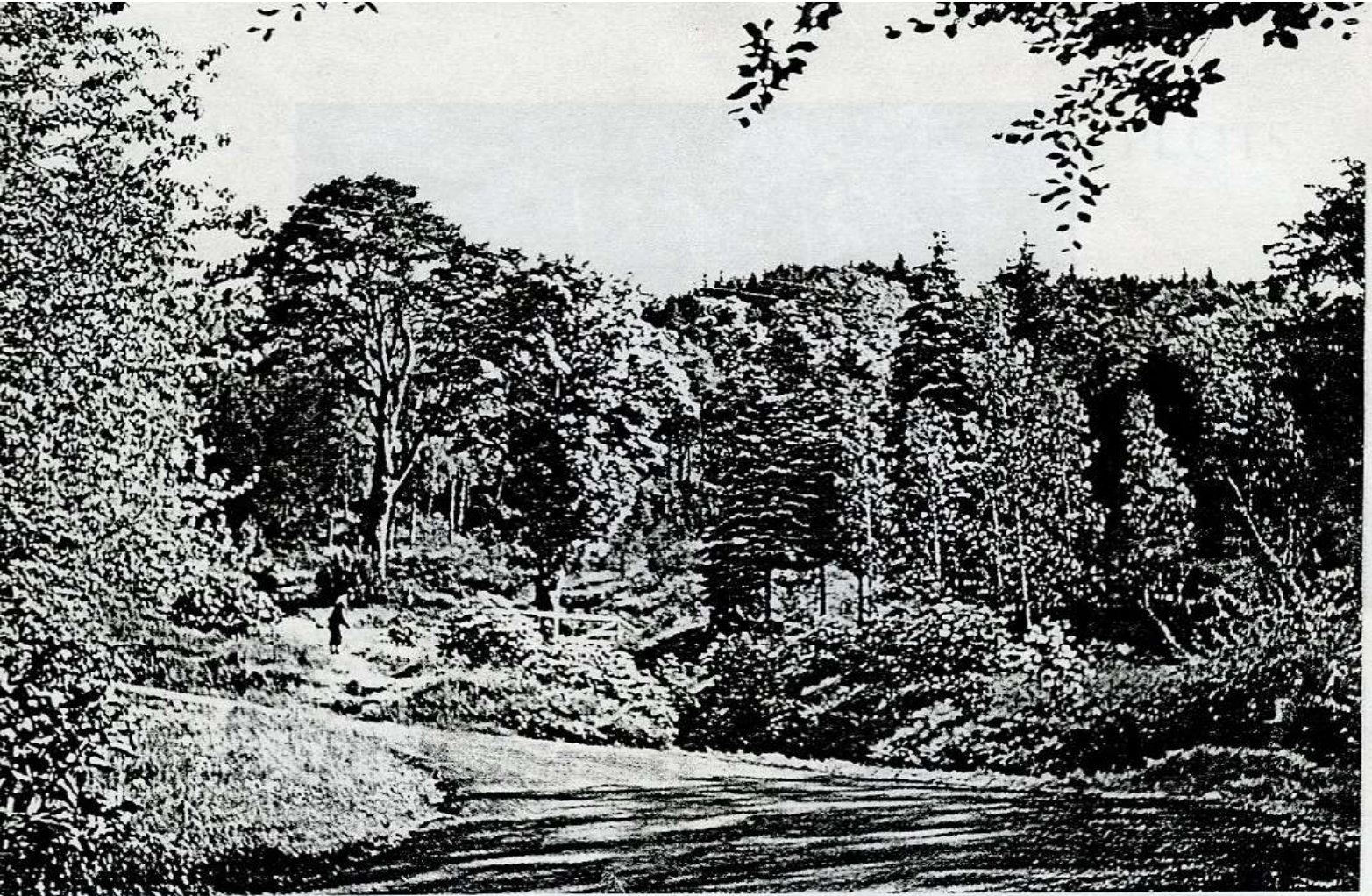
THE GREEN ROUTE (1 hour)

is a short walk from the Kilmun Entrance and includes recently planted groups of Eucalyptus, tall Douglas Fir, native Silver Birch and the Dawn Redwood, until recently only known from fossil remains.

Seats are indicated by numbers, thus 1

---- Other major paths.



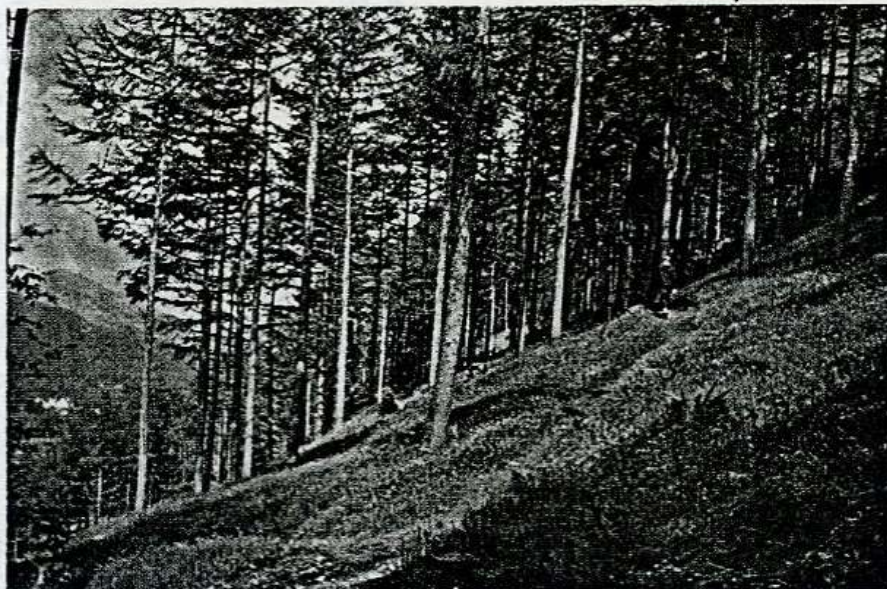


Kilmun Arboretum and Forest Plots

Near Dunoon, Argyll

Forestry Commission Guide

HMSO 2s od net



Bluebells below the larches



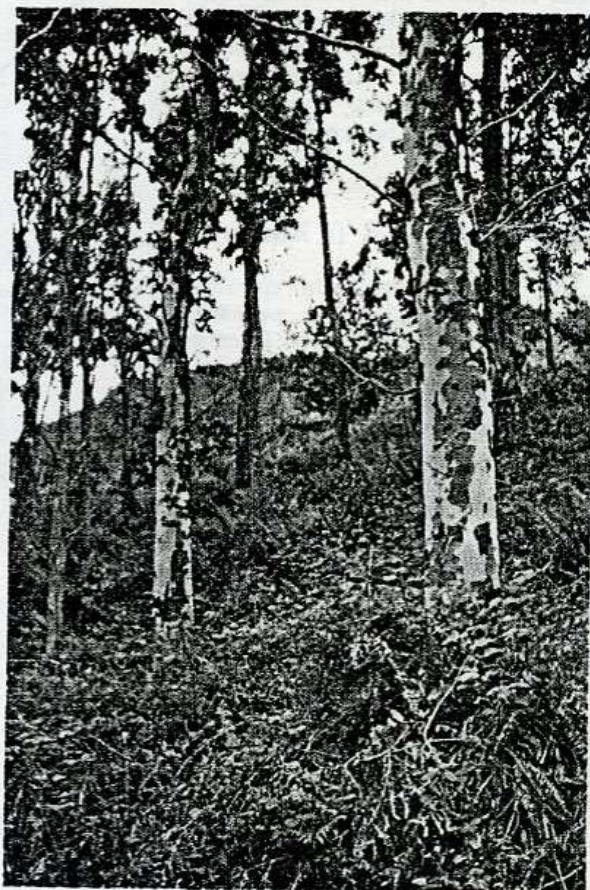
Kilmun Arboretum, seen across the Holy Loch from Sandbank, near Dunoon. Strath Echaig forms the hollow on the left

KILMUN ARBORETUM AND FOREST PLOTS

Kilmun Arboretum and Forest Plots, in the parish of Kilmun, near Dunoon in Argyll, are situated on the slopes of a hill to the north-east of the Holy Loch. They extend upwards from the low ground near the main entrance, only a few feet above sea-level, to an elevation of almost 1,000 feet on the slopes of Cnoc a' Mhadaidh (1,542 feet). The upper parts command fine views of the Firth of Clyde as far south as Ailsa Craig. Northwards there are grand inland views over Glen Lean, Glen Massan, Benmore Lodge, and the Argyll Forest Park. The total area, now almost completely planted up, is approximately 180 acres, but the spacious setting and careful siting of the plots combine to create an impression of a much greater expanse. A network of paths gives easy access to all parts, and provides the visitor with ever-changing vistas.

Because of its situation on the west coast of Scotland, Kilmun enjoys a mild oceanic climate well suited for the successful growing of a wide range of tree species from the north and south temperate zones. The rainfall is high (approximately 85 inches per annum) but the spring and early summer months are often dry and warm; severe frosts and very cold winters are rare. The favourable climate was in fact one of the principal reasons why Kilmun was selected as the site for an arboretum where trees from many parts of the world could be grown and studied side by side.

Long before the ground was acquired by the Forestry Commission, a small croft was situated fairly close to what is now the Kilmun Entrance. Some of the land may have been cultivated, but the old field dykes and shieling sites still to be seen in the Arboretum suggest that much of the area was grazed by Highland cattle. Later, charcoal burners worked in the area, converting alder logs into charcoal for the gunpowder mills in nearby Glen Lean, and possibly for iron furnaces elsewhere. When it was decided to establish an arboretum, a local farmer was using the land as rough sheep pasture. All this country was held in



Plantation of Eucalyptus simmondsii

the past by the Campbells, and Kilmun churchyard, which adjoins the Arboretum, is the traditional burying place of their leaders, the Dukes of Argyll.

The first plot was planted in January 1930, by the staff of the Forestry Commission's West Scotland Conservancy, who were responsible for all the work done in the Arboretum until 1948 when the Research Division took over its management. By 1939, a total of 173 plots had been planted. The size of each plot varied enormously: some contained over 1,000 trees, while others had as few as three. With the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939, all work in the Arboretum



Flowers of *Eucalyptus gunnii*

ceased, and many of the trees died from neglect during the war years. In 1947, maintenance work began again. During the intervening eight years, 37 of the 173 plots planted before the war had died, and the number of trees in many other plots had been severely reduced.

In 1950 a new management plan was prepared. At this time it was decided that plots should have a minimum area of a quarter of an acre and, within each, an "assessment plot", one-tenth of an acre in area, would be used for periodic measurement of timber production. Trees in assessment plots are marked with white painted bands at the standard height of 4 feet 3 inches above the ground. Whenever a plot is thinned, the circumference of each tree is measured round the band. From this information and the average height of the trees, the increase in wood volume can be estimated. Plots which were too small for the establishment of an assessment plot were re-classified as Specimen Tree Groups. Over 60 of the plots established before 1939 fell into this category and a further 80 groups have been planted since 1949. A number of the less successful plots have been felled in order to make room for rarer species. Almost 50 pre-war plots still remain in the Arboretum, however, and over 100 new ones have been successfully established since 1949.

All the plots and groups in the Arboretum have been labelled. A typical label is illustrated below, to demonstrate how much information may be obtained from them.

Group Number (G) ▶	G.113	1962	◀ Year of Planting
or Plot Number (P)			
	EUCALYPTUS VERNICOSA		Scientific Name
	SUB SP. COLUMNARIS		
Common Name ▶	VARNISHED-LEAVED GUM		
Natural Distribution ▶	MOUNTAINS OF TASMANIA		
Seed Identity Number ▶	60/946/500	FIVE-MILE HILL, LORINA, TASMANIA	◀ Seed Source

The label above refers to one of the 27 species and varieties of *Eucalyptus* to be found in Kilmun Arboretum. Of the many species of *Eucalyptus* native to Australia and Tasmania, only a few are hardy

in Britain, and Kilmun is fortunate to have such a fine collection. Some species grow very quickly. *Eucalyptus vernicosa* sub-species *columnaris* and *E. gunnii* planted in 1949 and 1950, are almost 70 feet

in height, while recently planted *Eucalyptus gigantea* and *E. nitens*, which has leaves almost 12 inches in length, grew 25 feet in the first five years. These are all evergreen trees, with deciduous bark, and leaves of many sizes, shapes and colours. The leaves contain *Eucalyptus* oil, and many are beautifully scented.

Also outstanding among the broad-leaved species are the two Southern beeches from Chile, *Nothofagus procera* and *N. obliqua*, whose common names, *rauli* and *roble*, are Spanish in origin. An unusual prostrate form of *Nothofagus antarctica*, or Antarctic beech, from Tierra del Fuego, has been planted by the steps leading up to the Main Entrance.

Some of the other broad-leaved trees produce beautiful autumn colours. *Quercus rubra*, the Northern Red oak from Canada, and *Acer platanoides*, the Norway maple, are outstanding in this respect, while *Betula papyrifera*, the Paper birch, is of interest not only for its autumn colouring, but also for its very white bark, which the North American Indians use in making their birch-bark canoes.

Many of the outstanding conifers or cone-bearing trees in the Arboretum are from Western North America. Tallest among these is the Douglas fir, *Pseudotsuga menziesii*, followed closely by Sitka spruce, *Picea sitchensis*, and Grand fir, *Abies grandis*, all planted in 1930. The roadside plot of Noble fir, *Abies procera*, is one of the most imposing, with the tallest trees nearly 80 feet in height, but the stems, although very straight, sometimes develop long cracks during periods of drought. It is interesting to compare these fine trees with slower-growing species. *Pinus flexilis*, the Limber pine from Montana, took 13 years from seed to reach 1½ feet in height, while *Tsuga mertensiana*, the Mountain hemlock from Alaska, was only one foot high after eight years from seed.

Conifers are to be found in many parts of the globe, and apart from the fine collection from Western North America, the Arboretum has many

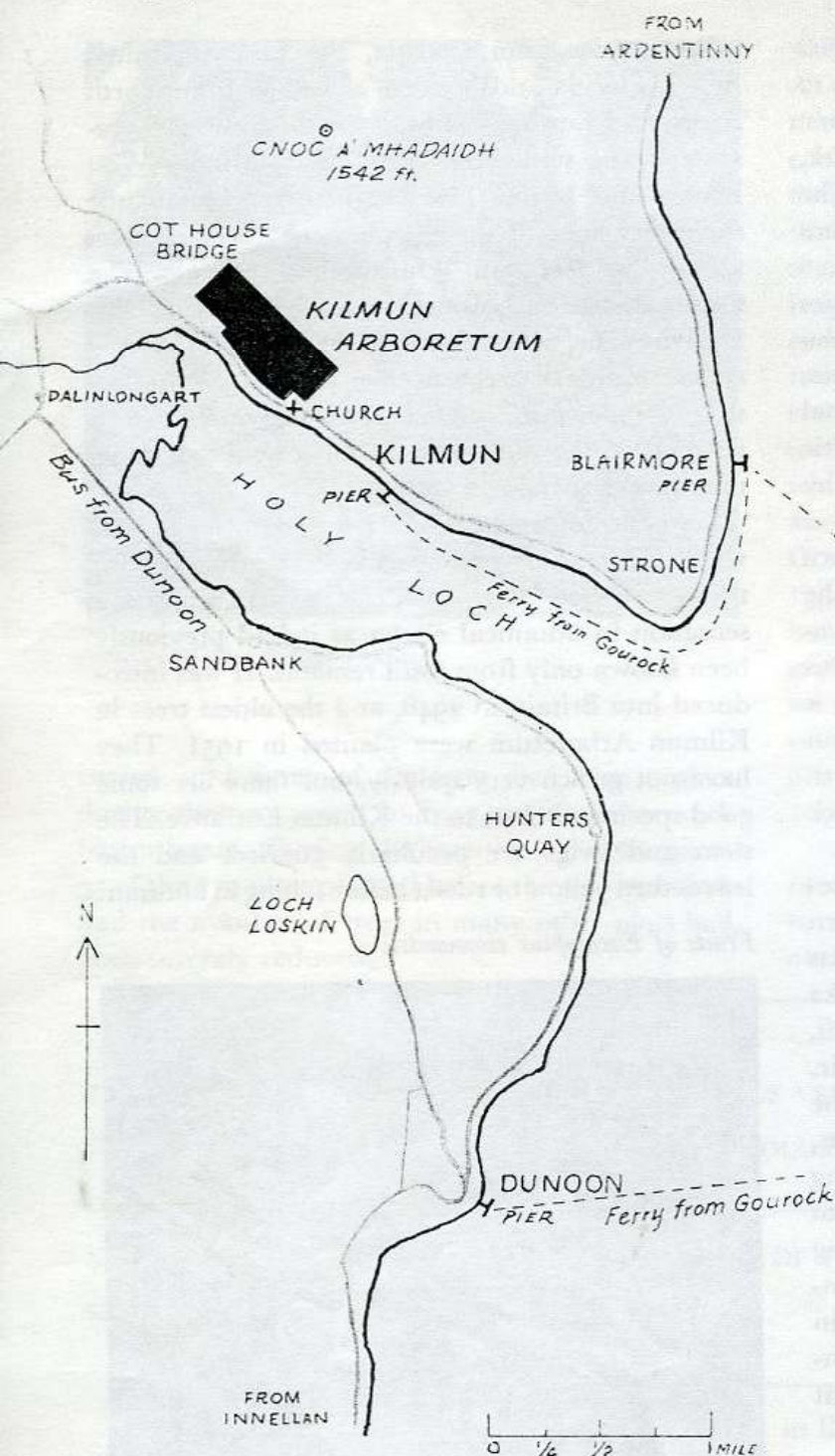
other species from Canada, the Eastern United States, Florida and Mexico, as well as from North Africa and Europe. Oriental species are well represented too, with trees from Asia Minor, West Russia and India. The Japanese species include some very fine Japanese larch, *Larix kaempferi*, now almost 70 feet tall. Outstanding amongst the Oriental species, however, are those from China. Delavay's fir, *Abies delavayi*, has beautiful purple cones, and dark green needles with silvery undersides, while *Picea asperata* has extremely sharp needles, which may account for its unusual common name of Dragon spruce.

Another remarkable species is the Dawn redwood, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*. The discovery of this species in Central China, in 1945, caused a sensation in botanical circles as it had previously been known only from fossil remains. It was introduced into Britain in 1948, and the oldest trees in Kilmun Arboretum were planted in 1951. They have not grown very quickly, but there are some good specimens close to the Kilmun Entrance. The stem and twigs are peculiarly gnarled, and the leaves turn yellow or russet before falling in autumn.

Fruits of Eucalyptus simmondsii



FROM STRACHUR
AND GLASGOW



Sketch map to show approaches

In addition to the many forest tree species, Kilmun Arboretum has a fine collection of ornamental trees and flowering shrubs. The *Rhododendron* collection is at its best in early June, while the Chilean Fire-bush, *Embothrium lanceolatum*, with masses of scarlet flowers, comes into bloom in mid-July. The dwarf Japanese maples, *Acer palmatum*, and its allies, produce their wonderful autumn colours in October, when the fruits of *Cotoneaster bullata* and the *Sorbus* collection by the Main Entrance are also at their best.

The locations of the more important species are shown on the map in this leaflet. The map also shows the system of footpaths, together with three recommended walks of differing duration.

The Arboretum is open to the public from sunrise to sunset on weekdays and Sundays throughout the year, and there is no charge for admission. Cars may be parked in the car park beside the Main Entrance, and there is currently no charge for this facility. Visitors are asked to leave no litter and to refrain from damaging trees and shrubs by picking foliage or flowers. Because of the risk of starting a serious fire, all cigarette ends and matches should be carefully extinguished; no picnic fires are permitted.

Kilmun Arboretum lies within the Argyll Forest Park, established by the Forestry Commission in 1935 to give greater public access to these wonderful afforested hills, threaded by sea-lochs. An illustrated guide to the Argyll Forest Park is available from the forest office, or from H.M. Stationery Office, at 7s. (7s. 8d. post free). The well-known Younger Benmore gardens are situated about 3 miles north of the Arboretum: they are open to visitors during the summer months at a small charge.

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