

FORESTRY COMMISSION
BRITAIN'S FORESTS



GLENTRESS

ONE SHILLING NET



The forest road through the 1903 plantations, with Douglas fir on the left, and Sitka spruce on the right; both species grew 81 feet tall in 49 years.

The cover picture overleaf shows a general view of Glentress Forest from the west, with Peebles and the Tweed in the foreground, and the Moorfoot Hills beyond



Weeding Sitka spruce in the forest nursery; transplant lines in the foreground, seedbeds beyond

GLENTRESS FOREST

GLENTRESS Forest, close to the old Border town of Peebles, is the oldest of a series of new State forests which will eventually extend along the valley of the great river Tweed. Work began here in 1920, and Glentress, which now includes over two thousand acres of the hill slopes, is thus one of the first forests to have been established by the Forestry Commission in Scotland. At the same time, the Department of Agriculture for Scotland took over the adjacent lower ground for smallholdings, and consequently the Glentress estate as a whole presents a good picture of one way in which both forestry and agriculture can fit into the scheme of land use in a typical valley of the Southern Uplands. In 1946, when the Government began an expanded programme for the restoration and extension of Scotland's woodlands, a Forester Training School was set up at Glentress. From this school about thirty young men went out each year to take Forestry posts in various parts of the country, but in 1953 the school was moved to Faskally, near Pitlochry.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOREST

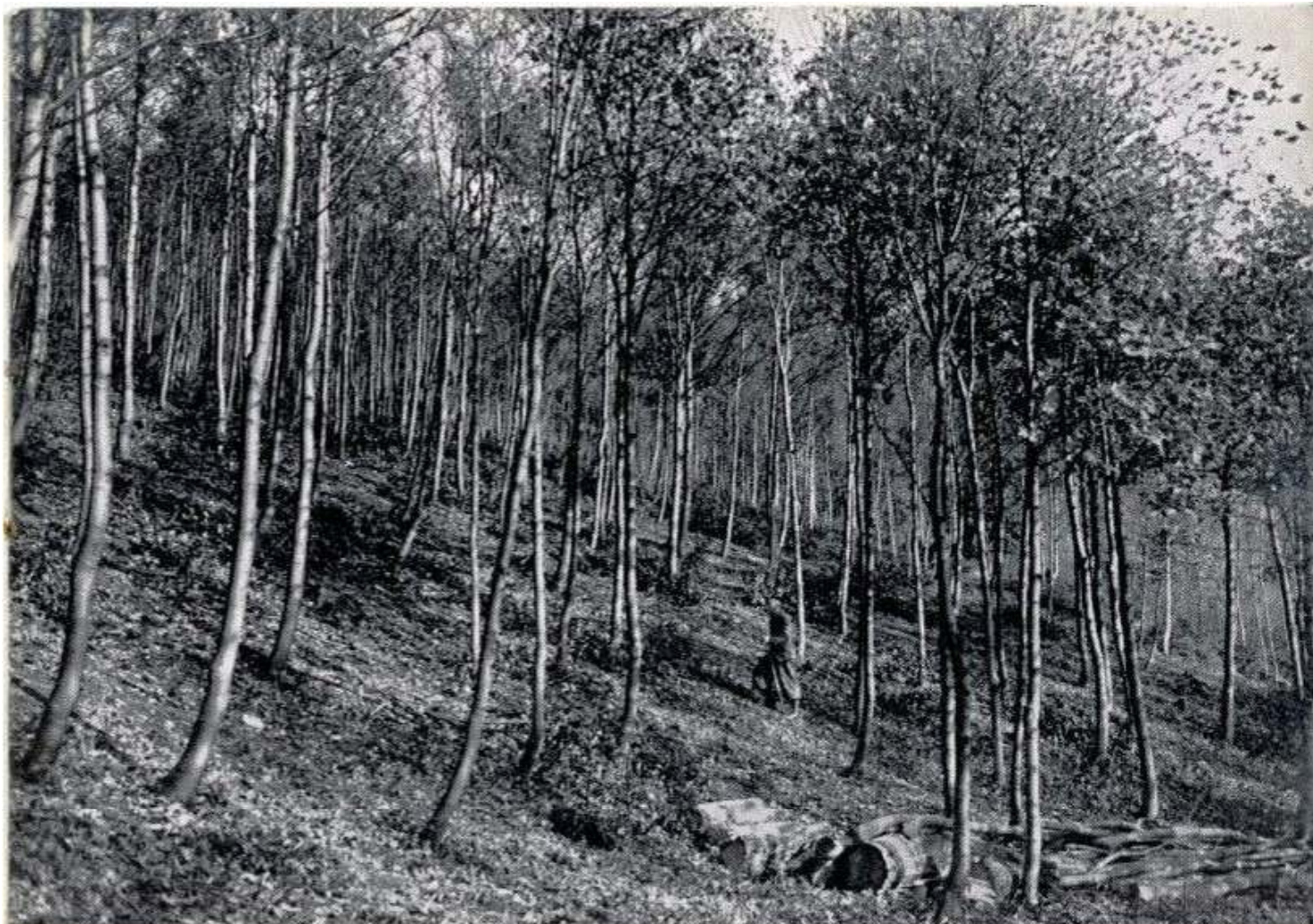
Historical records show that the Ettrick Forest district of the

upper Tweed valley was once well wooded, and the kings of Scotland, down to the times of the early Stewarts, delighted to hunt in its hilly wastes. But grazing, felling, and muirburning eventually destroyed the forest cover, and in the early seventeenth century, Peebles-shire was one of the most treeless regions of Britain. Dr. Pennecuik in his *Description of Tweeddale*, written in 1715, says of the inhabitants:

"Their greatest want is of timber, little planting to be seen in Tweeddale, except it be some few bushes of trees about the houses of the gentry, and not one wood worth the naming in all this open and windy county; so that this unhappy want of foresight in their forefathers necessitates them to be obliged to the sheriffdom of Lanrick for most part of the timber necessary for their houses and husbandry".

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, the principal landowners of the valley did a great deal to remedy its treeless state, and proved that excellent timber could be grown along the upper reaches of the Tweed. On nearly every estate fine policy woods now surround the mansion house; while a European larch tree at Kailzie, planted by Sir James Naesmyth of Posso in 1725, is reputed to be the oldest in Scotland. In such open uplands, the provision of shelter from the wind was a major consideration, and the pattern of shelterbelts that breaks up the agricultural land beside Glentress Forest was laid out about the year 1830 by Sir John Hay of Haystoun. The woodlands of these estates, together with those of Neidpath, Kingsmeadows, and Horsburgh Castle close by, contribute largely to the sylvan aspect of the dale, and they have also contributed substantially to the country's timber supplies, especially in time of war.

In 1919, when the heavy fellings during the first World War had made it plain that the work of private owners must be supplemented by State action to increase our reserves of growing timber, the Forestry Commission was set up. One of its first projects in Scotland was the acquisition from the Haystoun Estate of what is now the oldest portion of Glentress Forest, in co-operation with the Department of Agriculture, which was then setting up a land settlement scheme for ex-servicemen. The more fertile ground at the lower levels was naturally reserved for agriculture, and thirteen smallholdings, which have continued to be well-farmed and prosperous, were established. The old woodlands and upper hillslopes, amounting to 873 acres in all, were taken over by the Forestry Commission. Most of these lands lie in the Eshiels or Glentress valley at the eastern end of the forest, extending down to the banks of the Tweed, but the braes of Ven Law, just behind the town of Peebles, were also included. At that date about 300 acres carried woodland, mostly European larch planted between 1903 and 1906, while the rest was either former woodland that had been cleared of trees, or hill ground suitable for afforestation. When a new forest is being created, the work is not done in a single season, even where that is possible, but the planting is spread over a number of



Twenty year old stand of naturally regenerated sycamore on Janet's Brae

years so as to keep a trained staff continuously employed; the formation of the new Eshiels plantations therefore went on steadily from 1922 to 1934.

In 1932 the forest was extended by the addition of about one thousand acres of ground on the north-west, in the glen known as Soonhope or Shielgreen. This enabled planting to go forward until 1941, by which time nearly 600 acres had been afforested, leaving the highest ground unplanted. Then, with wartime demands for timber reaching their peak, a hundred acres of the older (1903) larch plantations around Eshiels had to be sacrificed, which explains the large gaps cut in the taller woods of that valley; all this ground has since been replanted. In 1949 there were added to Glentress Forest a further 373 acres of land away from the main centre. This lies on the hill of Cademuir, two miles to the south of Peebles and on the southern side of the Tweed. Planting is still proceeding there, but there has not been time for the young trees to grow tall enough to catch the eye. (The positions of the various sections of the forest are shown on the map). Meanwhile the older plantations formed in the nineteen-twenties had reached the size when thinning out was necessary, to give the better trees more growing space. The annual planting programmes are now less than they used to be, but the thinning of the older woods, and the

preparation of produce from them, have become important operations; this has ensured continuous employment for the forest workers.

By 1937, the quantity of poles and pitprops coming out of the forest was increasing to such an extent that additional roads had to be constructed to aid their removal. This work was begun under a Ministry of Labour scheme for the rehabilitation of the unemployed, and to house the workers—most of whom came from the industrial areas of central Scotland—a hutted camp was built at Eshiels. During the 1939 to 1945 war this camp was occupied by the Military, and in 1946 it was converted to a Forester Training School. About the same time a forest nursery was formed beside the main Peebles-Galashiels high road, while not far away a sawmill and creosoting plant were established. Finally, the network of forest roads, begun before the war, has been completed, using modern mechanical equipment, and a small quarry has been opened to provide whinstone for road metal.

GLENTRESS FOREST TODAY

This brief history explains why the visitor will find plantations of varied ages and sizes when he goes round the forest today. Starting at the Eshiels end in the Glentress valley he soon comes to the tallest trees in the forest, which are the Douglas fir, Norway spruce, and Sitka spruce illustrated on the inside front cover. These were all planted in 1903, at an elevation of 900 feet above sea level; and by 1952 the Douglas fir were eighty-one feet in height and—at an age of only forty-nine years—had produced 6,805 cubic feet of timber per acre; Sitka spruce of the same age were equally tall, but had a smaller volume, 6,203 cubic feet per acre; while Norway spruce, seventy feet tall, had produced 5,276 cubic feet per acre. Beyond these plantations, there is a large area of European larch, but as the growth of this species has not been entirely satisfactory, most of it has been underplanted with other trees that will eventually take its place. Some of this underplanting has been done with Norway spruce, as shown on page 17, some with beech, and some with the grand silver fir (*Abies grandis*) a handsome tree that comes from the western seaboard of North America. At the head of the glen, on Caresman Hill, where European larch is growing at the exceptional height of 1,700 feet above sea level, strips were cut through it during the war-time fellings, and these have now been planted up with Sitka spruce.

The younger plantations in this valley, which have been planted by the Forestry Commission since 1922, are composed of Scots and Corsican pines, Norway and Sitka spruces, Douglas fir, and both European and Japanese larches. They vary in height from forty feet down to the latest plantings only a few feet tall, and make up a pleasantly varied pattern, which is continued over the slopes of the prominent hill called Janet's Brae. At the foot of this hill, close to the railway line, there is an interesting patch of a hardwood

tree, sycamore, established by natural regeneration; this means that the forester, instead of planting out young trees, has encouraged seedlings to grow from the seed that falls naturally from an older crop, so forming a wood with less expense; this young sycamore, now about twenty years old, is illustrated on page 5.

Over in the Soonhope glen, which runs far into the Moorfoot Hills to the north-west of the older Glentress section (which it borders for a short stretch on the slopes of Caresman Hill) the plantations present a more uniform appearance, for they have all been planted within the space of ten years. But actually five kinds of forest trees are represented there, and each has been chosen to suit local variations of soil, drainage, or exposure. European larch accounts for nearly a third of this planting and has been used along the lower slopes of the valleys; this species, however, is not growing really well, although the allied Japanese larch, planted on a smaller scale, is thriving. The spruces—Norway and Sitka—have been used for the wetter and more rushy ground in the valley bottoms, the Sitka being kept further up the hill where the risk of frost damage in spring is less; these two trees cover about a quarter of the ground. The remainder, being mainly the upper slopes and exposed ridges that bore a heathery vegetation before they were planted, carries the hardy native Scots pine. These woods as a whole present a most pleasing picture when viewed from the distant Janet's Brae, for they are grouped around the solitary white cottage of Shielgreen, with the grassy fields of Soonhope before them and the rounded Moorfoot summits—Makeness Kipps and Dunslair Heights—rising to nearly two thousand feet beyond.

Felling a spruce in the Eshiels valley. In the background stand the larchwoods of Caresman Hill, which at 1,700 feet are the highest plantation at Glentress



The Ven Law, above Peebles, is the most prominent portion of Glentress Forest, for it rises steeply from the outskirts of the town. The clump of Scots pine that caps the summit of this hill is all that remains of the earlier plantings made in 1903. The rest was cleared during the war, and most of the younger plantations were made in 1943. They include Scots and Corsican pines, Norway spruce and three kinds of larches—European, Japanese and hybrid. The Eshiels and Shielgreen portions, lying respectively in the Glentress and Soonhope valleys, are less easily seen from the north bank of the Tweed nearby, but from the minor road along the south bank they present an impressive sight, reaching up in a verdant pattern over the foothills of the Moorfoots. The Cademuir plantations, to the south of the town, will eventually add a woodland note to the prevailing moorland scenery of the Ettrick Forest hills.

THE TWEED VALLEY FORESTS

Anyone who visits Glentress is likely to see something of the Commission's forests nearby and the extensive estate woodlands of the upper Tweed, as he travels up or down its winding dale. Turning downstream first, Cardrona Forest, with its 1,384 acres of pine, larch, and spruce plantations clothing a ridge that fills a bend of the river, comes prominently into view. Beyond this, and opposite the little town of Walkerburn, something may be seen of the new planting at Elibank Forest, which will eventually include 2,048 acres of woodland. Then, near Clovenfords, one gets a view of the new Yair Hill Forest, which runs up over the braes towards the town of Selkirk, and will eventually have 1,800 acres of plantations.

Going upstream from Glentress, beyond Peebles the road winds through the narrow pass beside the grim old tower of Neidpath Castle, where the woodlands of the Neidpath estate extend up the steep slopes on either hand. A little further on is the Dawyck estate, which has many fine woodlands and a world-famous arboretum, or collection of forest trees drawn from all over the world. Beyond this, at Stobo, Dreva and Rachan, on the north side of the Tweed, the Forestry Commission is undertaking the replanting of extensive areas of woodlands that were cleared in the recent war. In this way, a stretch of some twenty-five miles of the Tweed valley, above and below Peebles, is gradually assuming a well-wooded appearance and becoming an important storehouse of growing timber.

FOREST WORK AND TRAINING

One of the reasons why Glentress Forest contains so much to interest the visitor is that nearly every aspect of forest work may be found in progress there; let us see what this work is.

Most forest trees are raised from seed, and many of the Glentress plantations are now large enough to produce fertile cones which are gathered during the autumn and winter months. Seed is extracted



Two ways of bringing out thinnings, tushing with the horse and hauling on tractor-drawn trailer.

from these cones and sown in the forest nursery. In this nursery, which occupies two acres of level ground beside the Peebles-Galashiels main road, the young trees are raised for planting out in this and other forests. For the first few years forest trees grow very slowly, as compared with common garden plants. The seedlings rarely reach more than six inches high in their first season, and often they have to remain for two years in the seedbeds, where they are carefully tended, so that they are not overgrown by weeds. When they are six or nine inches high they are transplanted, during autumn, winter, or early spring, to another bed in the nursery, to give them more room to grow. Here they remain for another summer, or sometimes two summers; once again they are carefully weeded, and the photo on page 3 shows men engaged in this work.

Before the young trees can be planted out in the forest, the ground has to be made ready for them, and this work goes on steadily throughout the summer. Fencing to exclude rabbits and farm stock is most important. Much hill land has to be drained to fit it for tree planting, and on peaty ground this is done with special tools, which also cut out turves in which the young trees may be planted later on. Although little ploughing has been carried out at Glentress, there are many forests in the Borders—Yair Hill is one of them—where a massive tractor-drawn plough is used to do,

in one operation, the two jobs of draining and turf-cutting, over most of the planting area.

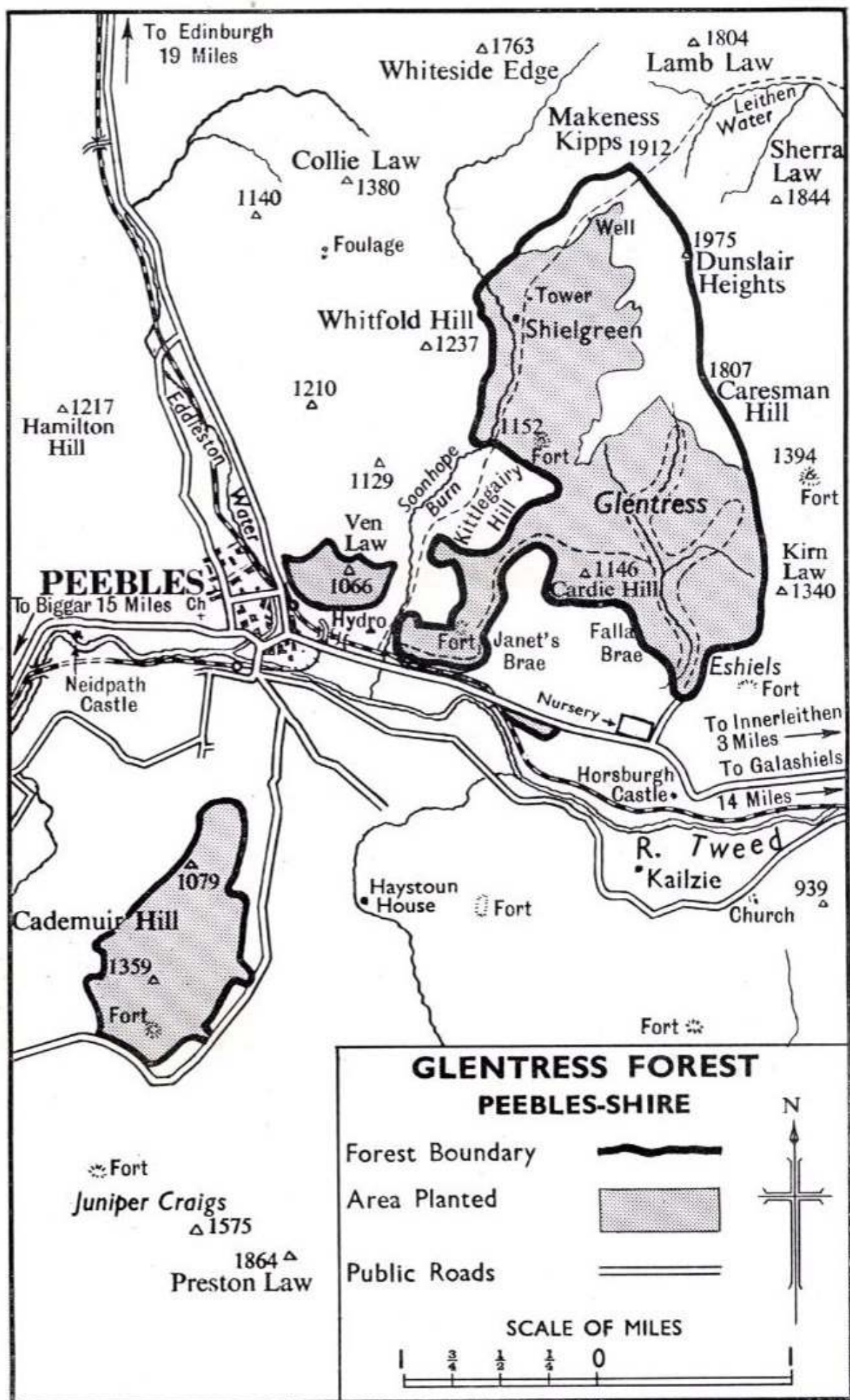
The actual planting of the trees is done during autumn, winter and spring, when growth is at a standstill. Each planter carries a bag full of young trees, which have been newly lifted from the nursery and are about one foot tall, and he plants these at intervals of about five feet. At this spacing, 1,750 trees are needed for each acre; they are put in quickly, one man planting several hundred in a day. The method of planting varies according to the nature of the ground; some trees are set in carefully dug pits, others in simple notches, and others again in turves. As we have seen, the kind of tree to be planted has also to be varied to suit local conditions of soil, drainage, and ground vegetation, and the correct choice of species is one of the most important—and most difficult—things that the young forester has to learn.

The planted trees have to be weeded for a few years until they are high enough to stand clear of grasses and bracken; so during the summer months these weeds are cut back with a sharp reap hook. They are also exposed to dangers, both in the nursery and out in the forest, from insect pests and fungal diseases, against which precautions have sometimes to be taken.

The greatest danger to the forest, however, is fire, and from the outset all planting is planned with fire risk in mind. Thus the woods are divided up, by roads or rides, into sections not more than thirty acres in extent. In dry weather lorries loaded with fire fighting tools and pumps are kept constantly ready to rush to any reported outbreak. To aid in the prompt detection of fires, look-out towers, linked by telephone with the Forester's house, with connections to the local public fire services, are built at many forests. The Glentress tower is not very conspicuous, but the tower on Cardrona ridge, on the opposite bank of the Tweed, is a prominent landmark. The watchers on these two towers co-operate in reporting fires at either forest, and in fact all the forests of the valley are linked together for purposes of fire protection. Every fire has a cause, and by exercising care with matches, tobacco, or any other form of fire, visitors can do a great deal to ensure that these valuable and beautiful woodlands suffer no loss.

The correct harvesting and preparation of the timber crop is as important as its planting and protection during youth. As the young trees, planted a few feet apart, grow larger, they have eventually to be thinned out; this work usually begins when they are about fifteen years old. The selection of the trees to be removed, to secure the proper development of the crop, is highly skilled work, and requires a good deal of the forester's attention. He must know, too, how to fell the trees quickly and without risk, and how to trim them out and get the resulting logs out to the high road by the most efficient method. This may be by horse or tractor haulage, as shown on page 9, by the use of an overhead wire ropeway or by a chute; all these methods are employed at Glentress.

During the time when the Forester Training School was situated



at Glentress, the wide variety of trees, and the large number of forest operations in which the students could take part, proved of great value. The men who go to such schools have been carefully selected, and all have had previous experience as forest workers. The course, which lasts two years, is given free of charge, and carries allowances. Practical work in the forest is supplemented by lectures and visits to other woodlands. Most of the men who complete the training eventually secure posts as Foremen and Foresters in the Commission's forests, though some work on private estates, and a few go abroad. Two Forester Training Schools are now operating in Scotland, one at Benmore, near Dunoon, and the other at Faskally, near Pitlochry; they provide excellent opportunities for young men who require responsible and interesting posts out in the woods.

OUTPUT AND EMPLOYMENT

In common with the 192 other forests that the Forestry Commission has established in Scotland, the purpose of Glentress is to supply timber to meet the nation's needs. At the present time (1952), about 100 acres of young plantations are thinned every year, yielding 30,000 cubic feet (about 1,000 tons) of timber. Although much of this is in the form of small poles, some of it, coming from the older plantations, is big enough for the sawbench, and can be cut into dimensions suitable for building construction or box making.

The smaller poles, for which there is a good demand, have many uses. Some are sold in their full length, as mining timber; they go to either the Midlothian or the Lanarkshire coalfield, where they are cut into pit props. Others are cut to special sizes, for various uses, such as sheep net stakes, fence stobs, and also as stack props.

A recent survey of 800 acres of the older plantations showed that they are carrying one and a quarter million cubic feet of timber. Despite the regular removal of a proportion of the growth in thinnings, this volume is steadily increasing, while at the same time more and more of the younger plantations are reaching a measurable size and coming into production. As time goes on more of the valuable larger timber, suitable for sawmilling, will be harvested, and the management of the forest is planned so that a "sustained yield" can be obtained over the years. The "final fellings" of each portion of the Forest, which will take place when the trees are eighty to a hundred years old, will be made good by replanting, or possibly by the natural regeneration of the crop from self-sown seed.

This substantial and sustained output implies steady employment, and (though part of the work is done by the students) twenty-four local men are regularly employed at Glentress. Most of these live in and around Peebles, and with the town so close at hand it has not been found necessary to build houses especially for them. But elsewhere along the Tweed, for example at Cardrona, Elibank, and Yair Hill, the increase of employment due to afforesta-

tion has made it essential to build groups of houses for the workers; those at Cardrona, which are sturdy timber structures brought over in sections from Sweden, can, in fact, be seen from Glentress. There are however, two older cottages in Glentress Forest, at Shielgreen and Eshiels respectively, which now house forest workers.

Prior to afforestation, only one or two men found work on the whole two thousand acres of hill land. Consequently, tree planting in the Tweed Valley has great possibilities for encouraging the prosperity of a rural district that is threatened with depopulation. Peebles, with its good communications to other parts of the country, is well placed to serve as a centre for an expanding timber trade.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF GLENTRESS

Besides being of general interest to the visitor, a knowledge of the natural history of a forest and its surroundings is of importance to the forester, because it helps him to plan his work to the best advantage. Starting with the underlying rocks, those at Glentress are mostly hard grey whinstones or greywackes of the Ordovician formations; they yield a good stone for road making and building—in fact much of Peebles is built of this attractive grey stone, unlike the softer and browner sandstones of other Border towns. But the glaciers of the Ice Ages, which moulded the Tweedside hills to their smooth and rounded contours, left behind a thick deposit of brown boulder clay, with many stones and boulders. This gravelly clay forms the main rooting medium for tree crops over most of the forest, and is reasonably fertile. A little thin peat is found on the higher slopes.

The rainfall at Glentress varies from thirty to thirty-five inches annually. This is adequate for tree growth, but there is sometimes a dry spell in the spring which makes it difficult for newly-planted trees to become established, while it also increases fire risk. Snowfall can be heavy, and plantations of Scots pine at the higher elevations have suffered severe snow damage. While winter frosts do little harm, the spring frosts are severe in the two main valleys; they cause widespread damage to the young shoots of Sitka spruce, but fortunately the Norway spruce is less susceptible, and this latter species is now preferred for planting in "frost hollows". Much of the forest is fully exposed to south-west winds, but is fairly well sheltered from other directions; apart from one large windblow in Douglas fir, caused by an exceptional gale after heavy rain, the trees have suffered little wind damage. The lowest point of the plantations, beside the Tweed, is 500 feet above sea level, while the main mass of the forest begins at 600 feet and runs up to 1,750 feet; land which is considered unplantable on account of elevation and exposure, goes a little higher, to 1,975 feet on Dunslair Heights. When one remembers that there is little higher ground around to give shelter, since few of the Peebles-shire hills exceed 2,000 feet in altitude, it will be seen that Glentress demonstrates the ability of our common coniferous trees to thrive in these windswept uplands.

Although no very rare plants have been noted at Glentress Forests the commoner elements in the vegetation of the hills serve as a useful guide to the forester when he has to decide which trees to plant. For example, in the valley bottoms there are rushes, and tufted hair grass, which suggest ground suited to the spruces. On the lower slopes willow herb, bracken, raspberry, ferns and a variety of grasses are found, indicating fairly fertile, well drained soil on which many kinds of coniferous trees will succeed. But on the higher tops there is little plant life except heather, cross-leaved heath, mat grass, and deer grass; all these plants indicate difficult ground on which few trees can thrive, and show why much of this land is planted with Scots pine, known to be tolerant of infertile soils.

A number of roe deer roam the woods; they are attractive animals to look at, but unfortunately can do considerable damage to trees by browsing and rubbing their horns. Rabbits, of course, have been exterminated and fenced out, but occasionally a nimble hare may leap the three-foot fence. The brown hare is found on the lower ground, but the common hare of the hilltops is the mountain hare, which is not a true native of the district but was introduced from the Highlands in 1846. A few red squirrels haunt the tree tops, probably descendants of animals released at Dalkeith in 1772, after the native strain had vanished, owing to the deforestation of the Tweed Valley. The common small carnivorous animals such as the fox and the otter are seen from time to time. The forest streams, as might be expected of tributaries of the Tweed, are not without their trout.

It is sometimes suggested that coniferous woods are poor in bird life, but this is clearly not so at Glentress, for observations by the forestry students show that no less than eighty-six species of birds can be found in or around the forest area, and many of these are known to nest in the woods. Nest boxes, such as that shown on page 17, have been put up, partly to encourage useful birds which destroy the insect pests of trees, and partly to enable observations to be made on bird populations. Unusual birds to be seen along the Tweed include the pied flycatcher, which sallies out from the tree tops to perform aerial acrobatics after flies on the wing, and the handsome grey wagtail. Moorland birds found around the upper reaches of the forest include lapwing and curlew, and a flock of black-headed gulls which have a nesting site on the neighbouring hills. Red grouse are common, but the black grouse have recently become scarce.

HISTORY AND LITERATURE

The early settlers in Scotland appreciated that the Tweed provided the only good line of communication from east to west through the Southern Uplands. They guarded this route with a series of numerous round forts or earthworks set on the summits of the foothills, about five hundred feet above the floor of the valley. The



Loading pitwood for the Lanarkshire coalfield, from thinnings in the plantations

sites of three such Iron Age forts have been noted in Glentress Forest, one being at the summit of Janet's Brae, another near Kittlegairy Hill, and the third at Cademuir. There are many others on hills nearby, including two at Cardrona Forest, while at Lyne, four miles up the valley, the Romans built a square fort during their short-lived attempt to overawe the Caledonian tribes.

The place names around Glentress reveal a curious mixture of Gaelic and Norse roots, and probably date from the Teutonic settlement of the Border region. Thus one of the two valleys is a "glen" and the other a "hope"—Soonhope—the valley of the swine. "Shiel" as at Eshiels and Shielgreen, is an old Norse word signifying shelter, and hence a homestead; while "car" or "care", found at Cardrona and Caresman Hill, is Gaelic *cathair*, a hill-fort.

Evidence of the troubled days of the Border wars survives in the form of towers built at intervals along the dale of the Tweed. Most are now in ruins, though the thirteenth century Neidpath Castle, which may be seen from many points in the forest, remains to show their great defensive strength. There is one such tower within the forest, that at Shielgreen, now little more than a pile of stones, though some evidence of solid masonry remains. Another, Horsburgh Castle, which dates from 1214 A.D., stands as an impressive ruin on a knoll close to the nursery and there are similar ruins farther down the river at Cardrona and Elibank Forests.

In mediaeval times this countryside was included in the royal

hunting ground of Ettrick Forest, and some records have come down to us. In 1200 A.D., a certain John Ker was a hunter in Soonhope, while in 1427 both the Ven Law and Cademuir were the property of King James I. In 1503 the Welsh princess, Margaret Tudor, received Ettrick Forest as part of her dowry on her marriage to James IV, a union which led, in 1603, to the Union of the Crowns of Scotland and England.

Peebles itself has a long and colourful history, having been a Royal Burgh since 1195. Remains of two ancient churches, and of the old town wall, are still to be seen, but the latter defence was not always effective against the English, who burnt the town on two occasions. Today Peebles, an attractive and well laid out town of 6,000 inhabitants, with pleasant parks and a busy High Street, is the administrative centre for Peebles-shire, with an important market, big woollen mills, and a thriving tourist trade. Its ancient charters, incidentally, show that in 1506, during the reign of James IV, some of the lands now comprised in Glentress Forest were held as common grazings by the burgesses.

Despite the constant raids and warfare of the Borders, the literature associated with the environs of Glentress is mostly of a peaceful or pastoral character. The quaint old poem entitled "Peblis to the Play", attributed to King James I, records the ancient Beltane or midsummer festivities that are still kept up in the town at the end of June each year. The district has associations with Sir Walter Scott, who resided for a time at Ashiesteel, below Yair Hill Forest a few miles down the Tweed, and with James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd. The scene of the latter's most famous poem, *Bonny Kilmeny*, is believed to be the Plora Burn, close to Elibank Forest; it tells how:

"Bonny Kilmeny gaed up the glen . . . to hear the yorlin sing,

And pu' the cress-flower round the spring;

The scarlet hypp and the hindberrye

And the nut that hung frae the hazel tree",

before she was spirited away to fairyland. Not far away is the "Bush aboon Traquair", a clump of birches that became famous as a trysting place for lovers, and a source of inspiration for poets.

In quite another mood, William Wordsworth, who travelled down the valley in 1803, declaimed in an indignant sonnet against "Degenerate Douglas", the fourth Marquess of Queensberry, who in 1795 had "levelled with the dust a noble horde, a brotherhood of venerable trees", around Neidpath Castle. The sonnet ends:

"The traveller at this day will stop and gaze
On wrongs which Nature scarcely seems to heed,
For sheltered places, bosoms, nooks and bays
And the pure mountains, and the gentle Tweed
And the green silent pastures yet remain".

In our day, let it be said, these Neidpath woods are restored to their former glory.



European larch underplanted with Norway spruce. Note on the right the nestbox to encourage useful birds

HOW TO SEE GLENTRESS

Peebles, an attractive town with several good hotels, is the best centre to make for when visiting Glentress Forest. The railway links Peebles with Edinburgh, and also with the main Edinburgh-Hawick-Carlisle line at Galashiels. A good bus service (S.M.T.), running from Edinburgh through Peebles to Galashiels passes the forest. Another regular service (Central S.M.T.) links Peebles with Biggar, Lanark, and Glasgow, with connections to Dumfries.

Much of the forest may be seen from the public roads on the outskirts of Peebles, while two or three public paths enable the walker to come to closer terms with the trees. One such path runs up the Ven Law, and another goes up the Soonhope glen and through the Shielgreen plantations, continuing as an ancient right of way below Makeness Kipps to the valley of the Leithen Water. Another really beautiful walk branches off the Soonhope road to the right, as soon as the railway is crossed, ascends Janet's Brae, affording wide views of both the forest and its surroundings, and then drops down to Eshiels.

The forest nursery is readily found, as it lies beside the main Peebles-Galashiels road two miles east of Peebles. Those who wish to see more of the forest, and the work that goes on therein, should apply at the Forester's House, close to the nursery.

FACTS AND FIGURES

AREAS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER, 1952

Total area of Glentress Forest			2,349 acres
Area classified as "plantable"			1,889 acres
Area under plantations			1,794 acres

The "unplantable" balance of 460 acres is mainly ground too high and exposed for planting.

EMPLOYMENT AND OUTPUT

In 1952, 24 men were regularly employed, in addition to 60 students who worked part-time in the forest as part of their training.

The present annual output of timber, all from thinnings, is 30,000 cubic feet (quarter-girth measure, over bark) equivalent to about 1,000 tons. This will steadily increase.

ELEVATIONS ABOVE SEA LEVEL

Lowest : 500 feet. (River Tweed)

Highest : 1,975 feet. (Dunslair Heights)

Highest for tree planting: 1,750 feet (Caresman Hill)

ANNUAL RAINFALL

30 to 35 inches.

ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP

The whole forest is shown on Sheet 80, "Peebles and Galashiels" of the Popular Edition for Scotland of the Ordnance Survey one inch to the mile map.

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The picture opposite shows the view east from Janet's Brae, with Peebles in the centre, backed by Neidpath Castle and its woodlands, and the Penvalla hills of the Upper Tweed valley. On the right, across the Soonhope Glen, rises the Ven Law; to the left may be seen the Hydro and the River Tweed. This view is the opposite of that on the cover



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