



Sitka Spruce and Scottish Forestry: Historical and Ecological Perspectives

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Introduction

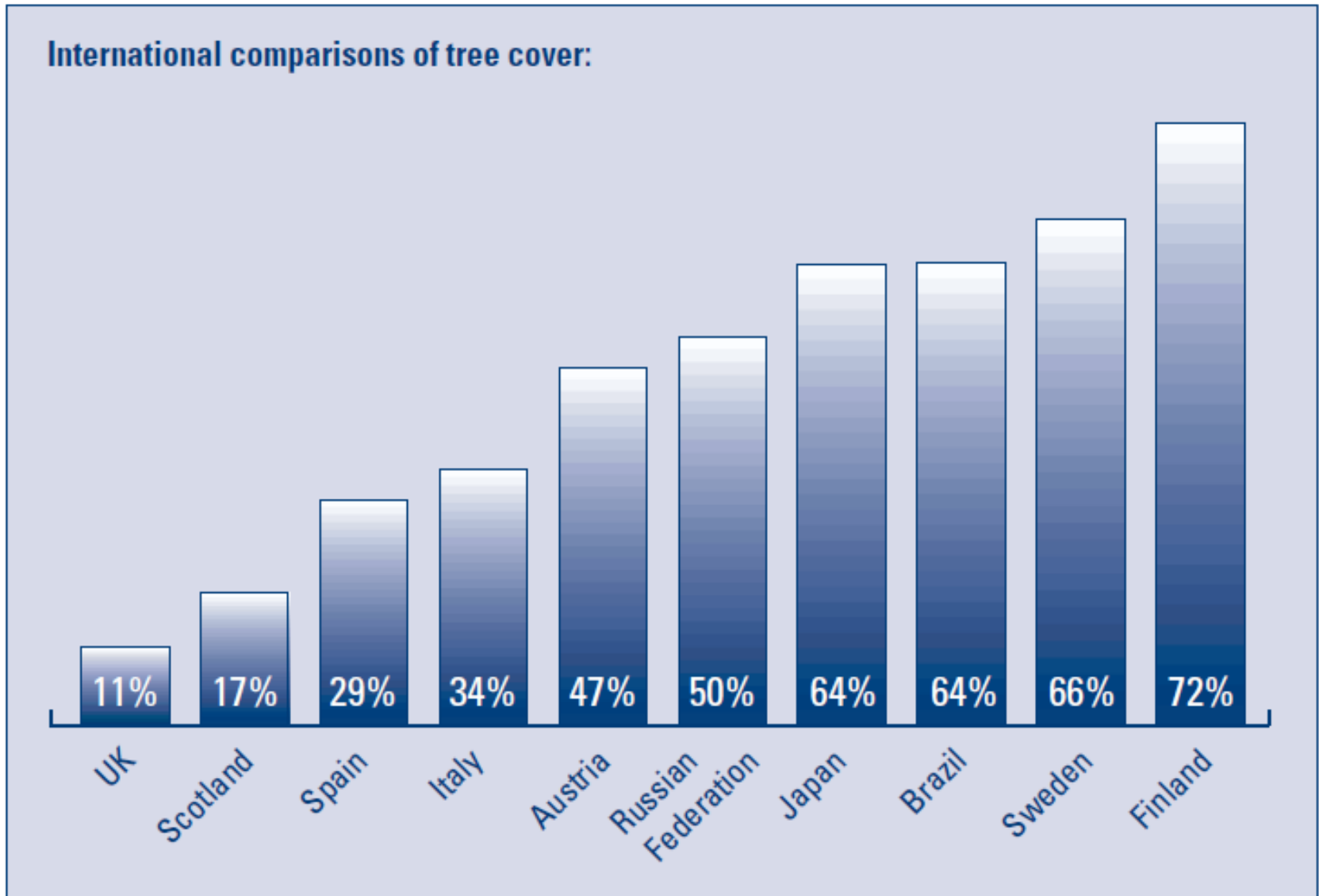


David Douglas, 1799-1834

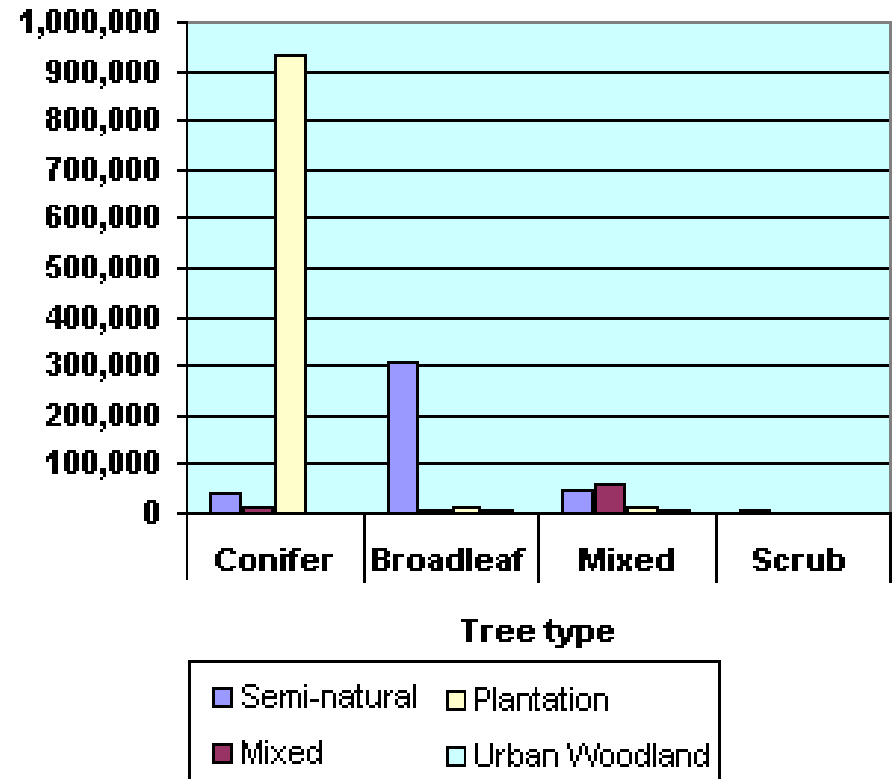


‘it may ... become of equal or greater importance [than Douglas fir] as it possesses one great advantage over that one by growing to a very large size...in apparently poor, thin, damp soils... This unquestionably has great claims on our consideration as it would thrive in such places in Britain where even *Pinus sylvestris* finds no shelter. It would become a large and useful tree ... This if introduced would profitably clothe the bleak, barren hilly parts of Scotland ... besides improving the beauty of the country.’

Forests & Woodlands as a % of Land Area



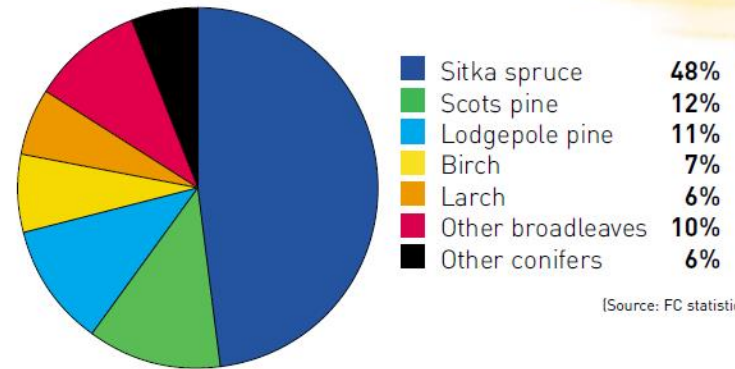
Woodland composition



Scottish Forestry Today



Species distribution in Scottish forests



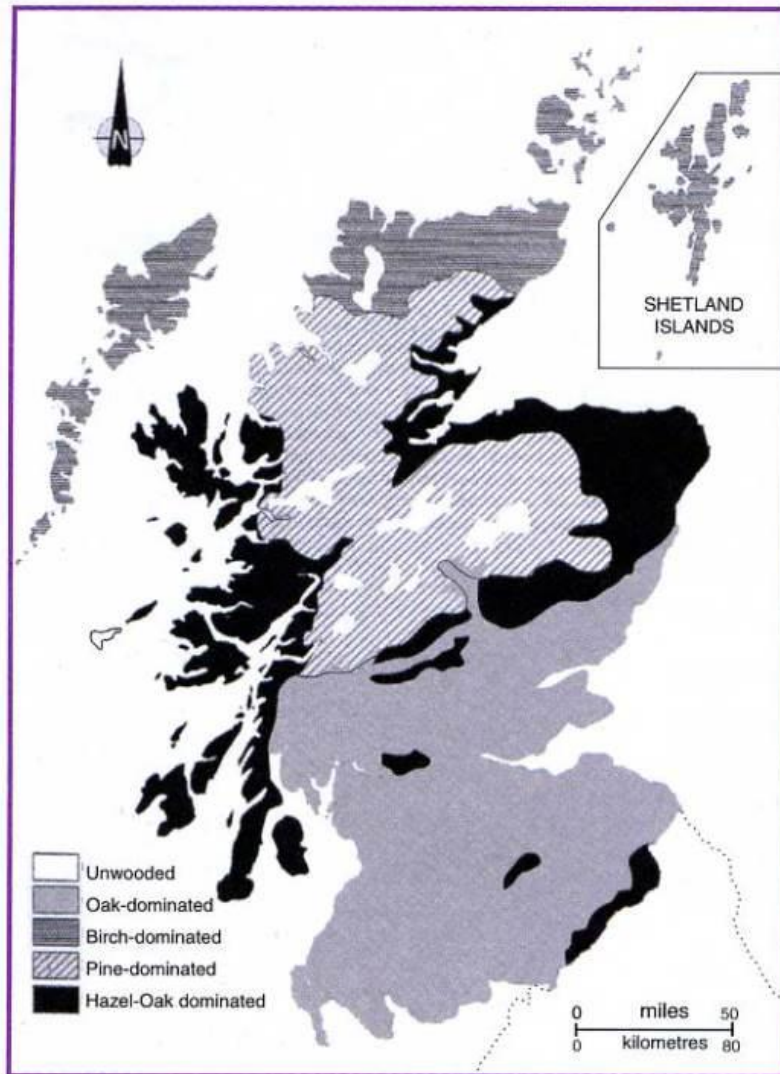
[Source: FC statistics]

At 500,000 ha, Sitka spruce comprises 48% of the total woodland area of Scotland (1.3 million hectares)

And almost 60% of all conifer woodland.

Over 70 per cent of Scotland's forests were planted during the second half of the 20th century.

Scotland's Forest Cover



Six thousand years ago Scotland was almost entirely wooded. Courtesy Richard Tipping

- **6,000BP – c.50-60%**
- **2,000BP – c.25%**

Smout et al 2005

NATIVE TREES

Scots Pine

Oak (2 species)

Ash

Wych Elm

Birch (2 main species)

Willow (several)

Hazel

Alder

Aspen

Rowan

Cherry (2)

Yew (?)

Woodland Cover

- **1800 - up to 9% of the land area.**
 - Of this planted woodland of non-native or native species accounted for 1/5th
- **1900 - around 6%.**
 - perhaps 1/2 of the ancient semi-natural woods had been lost.



Smout et al 2005

19th century Woods & Trees



Corrour & Loch Ossian



Original Douglas Fir (Scone Palace)



Ardverikie estate & Loch Laggan



Diana's Grove, Blair Atholl

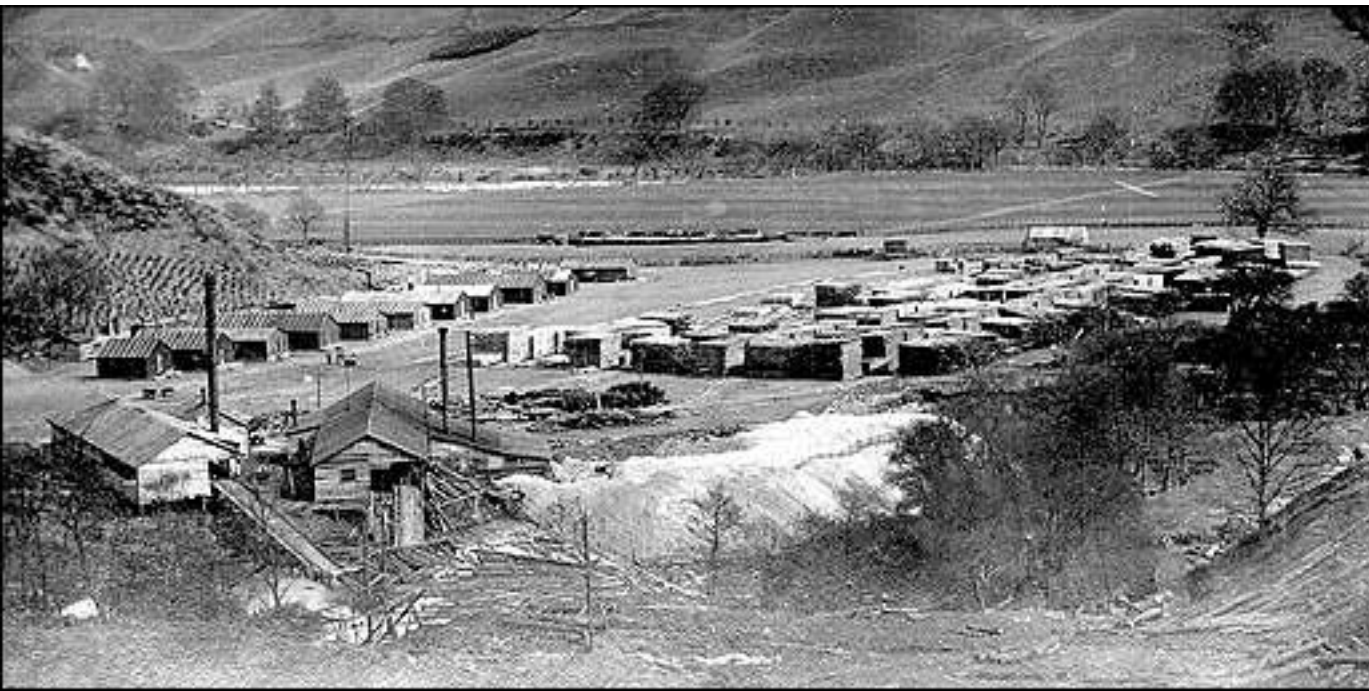
Forestry early 20th century



The Great War



'it has been revealed that we were only three weeks from disaster at one point.' (William Ling Taylor)



W.R.SMYTH, LT. COL.
OFFICER COMMANDING
HEADQUARTERS
43 BANK ST. OTTAWA

**BUSHMEN AND SAWMILL HANDS
WANTED**
JOIN THE
**238TH CANADIAN FORESTRY
BATTALION**

Forestry Commission 1919

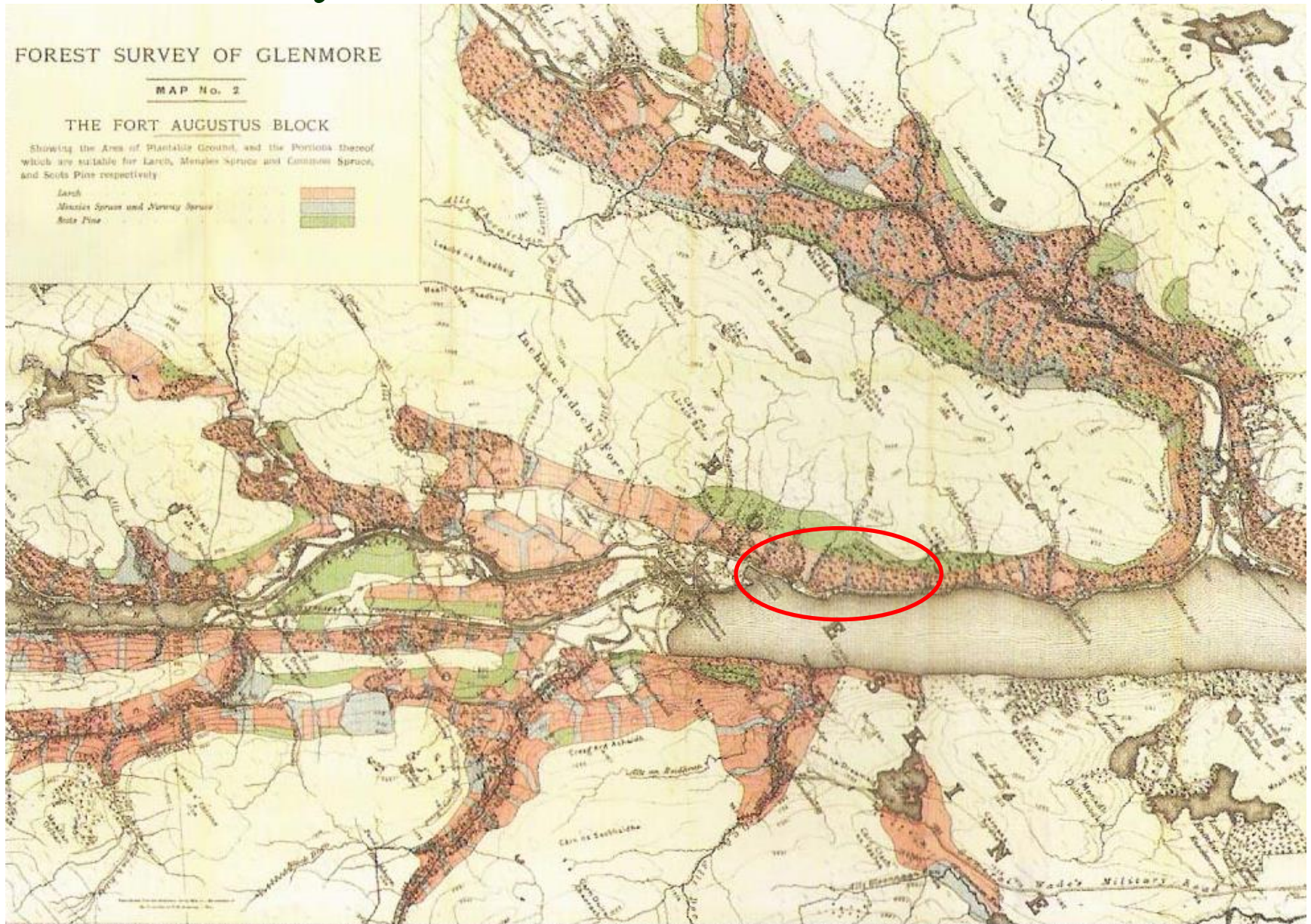


The splendour of Loch Awe
surrounded by Inverliever



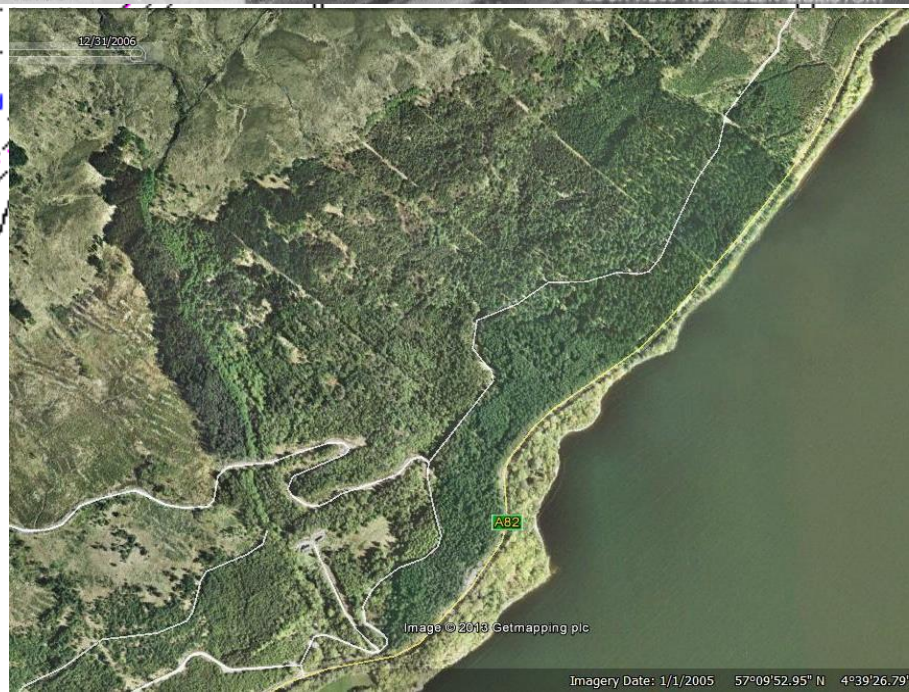
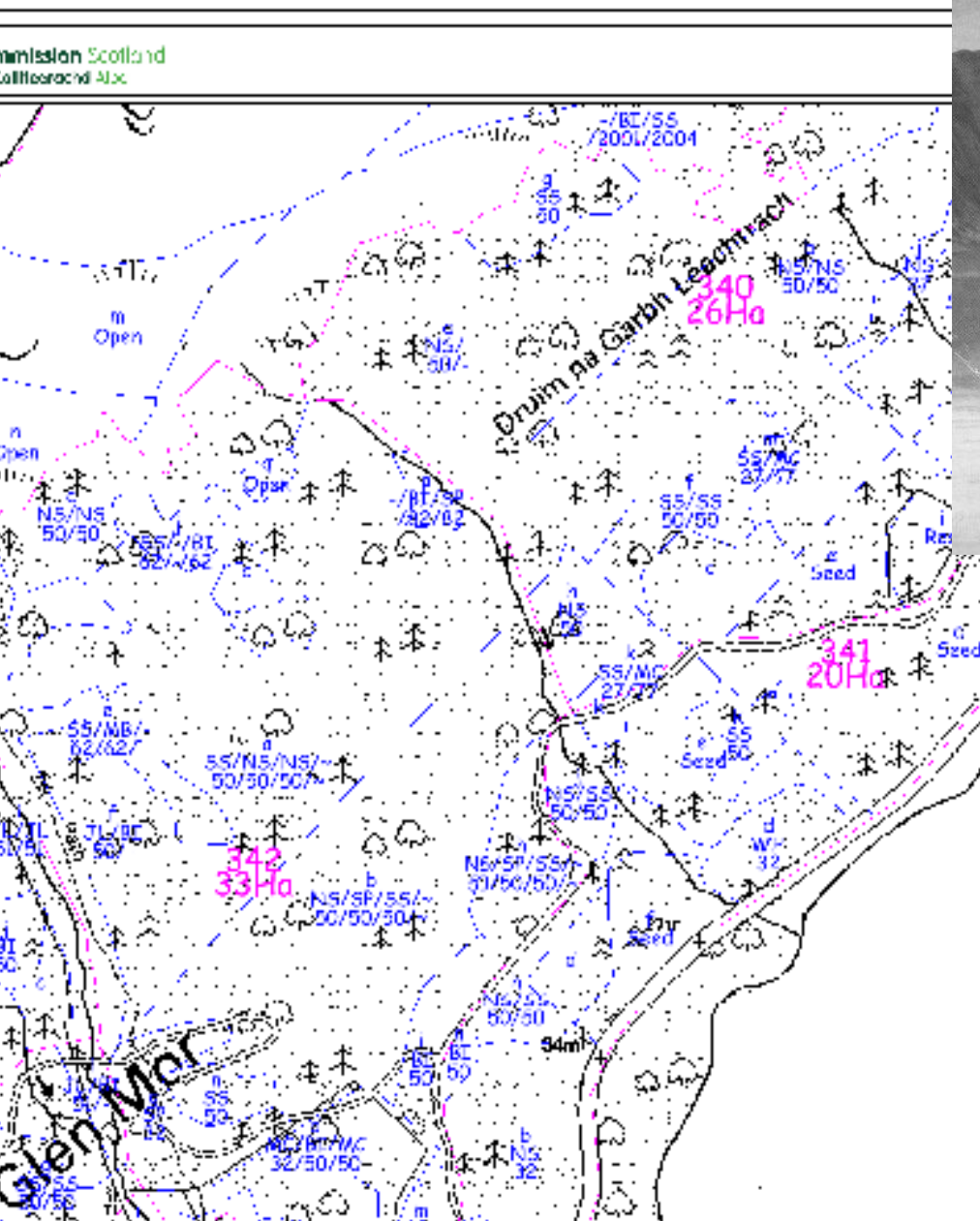
Lord Lovat, 1st chairman of FC and Roy Robinson, chairman 1932-52. Background: Inverliever forest on Loch Awe, Scotland's first state forest, 1907.

The Survey of Glen Mor (the Great Glen) 1911



Lovat's vision for afforestation in the Great Glen. Map shows areas proposed for planting, west end of Loch Ness, 1911

Portclair in Glen Mor



World War Two



Mechanisation



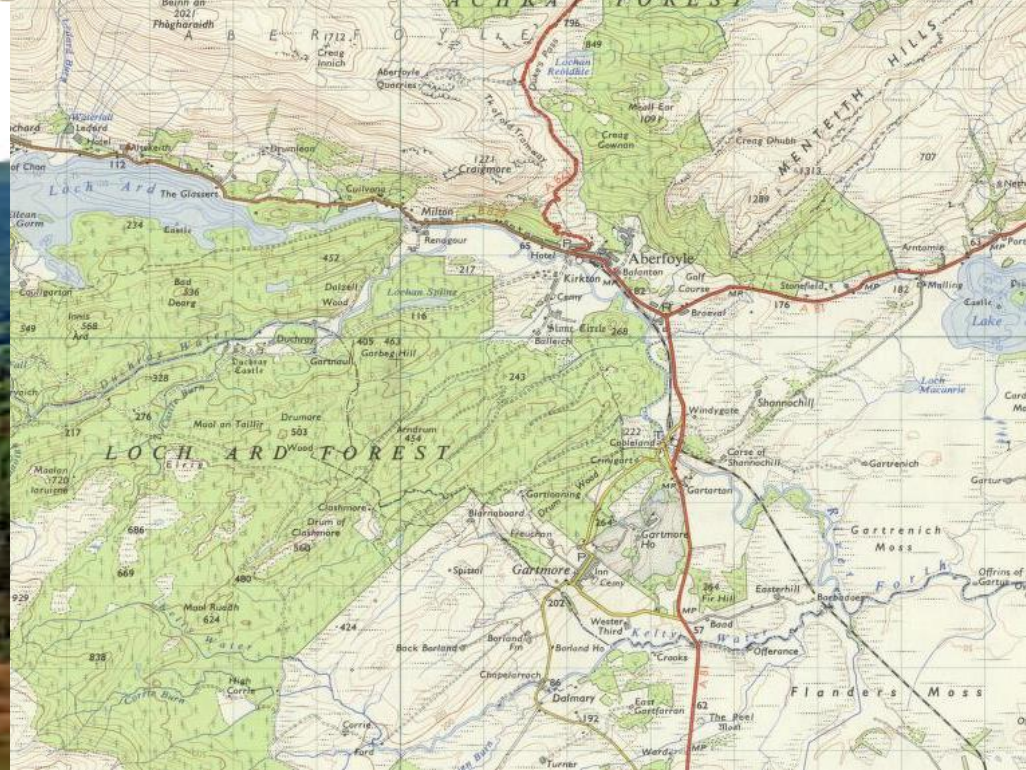
Post-war Afforestation

Strathyre, 1938





Above: Loch Ard, 1926; Below: in 1984. Photo: Loch Ard from the south



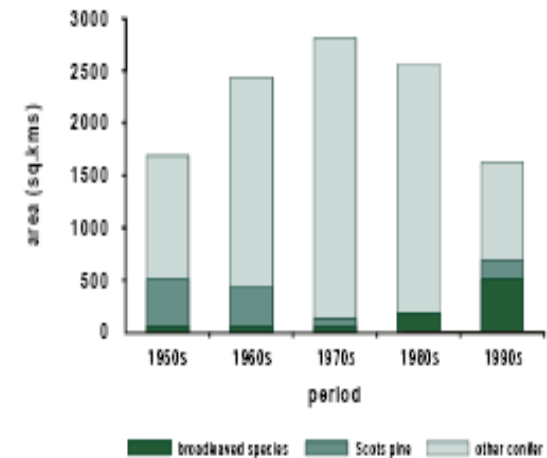
Landscape and Ecological Impacts



Environmental backlash 1980s



PLANTING, REPLANTING AND REGENERATION



Flow Country, Caithness

Ecological restoration



Kinloch Hills Restoration Project, Isle of Skye, 2009

Sitka spruce from a Scottish forest



Boreland, Perthshire