

THE GEARAGH

This area, comprising some 324 ha represents the last remnant of an alluvial forest which once extended for a distance of 8 km along the River Lee, south west of Macroom, prior to inundation of the area to create the Lee Reservoir in the 1950's.

The Gearagh represents the last remaining alluvial forest in Ireland or Britain. The area is characterised by a mass of small wooded islands separated by an anastomosing network of streams.

The dominant tree species is Oak (*Quercus robur*) with some Ash and Birch and an understorey of Hazel and Hawthorn. Willows and occasionally Alder grow along the margins of streams and in waterlogged areas.

The ground flora is dominated by Allium ursinum in spring which, later in the year, is replaced by a variety of species such as Ajuga reptans, Cicuta lutetiana and ferns.

The streams and rivers are unpolluted and where not shaded by over-hanging trees, contain a luxuriant growth of submerged aquatic vegetation. The area is important for waterfowl and others.