



## Chairman's Comment

ONE REFLECTION OF THE INCREASING LEVEL OF COMMUNITY ACTIVITY in Birse parish over recent years, is the number of local community bodies acting on behalf of the parish's residents.

Three years ago, everyone living in Birse parish was a member of at most one such body (either the Finzean or the Ballogie Community Associations). Then, with the establishment of BCT and the Birse Area Community Association in 1999, everyone became a member of two community bodies. Now, with the formation of the Finzean and the Birse and Ballogie Community Councils, the total is three.

Each of these community bodies has a distinctive and valuable contribution to make to the well being of our local communities. They have also demonstrated the additional benefits that can come from working together on certain types of issues and already maintain regular contact through the Birse Liaison Group – a Community Association, a Community Council and BCT as the parish wide community business.

BCT initiated this Liaison Group last year, and it has proved very useful. Now, with the new parish's Community Councils, the Group's operation is due to be reviewed to ensure it continues to be as valuable as possible.

With this complementary range of community bodies now established and working together, I believe that Birse parish is in an advantageous position to try and meet the challenges of sustaining a vibrant rural community.

Reverend Jack Holt  
(July 2001)



In March, BCT hosted the first ever meeting for all the Committee Members of the three local Community Associations as part of the local consultations on its Strategic Plan for 2001-04.

## FE Partnership

In April, BCT and Forest Enterprise (FE) signed the Slewdrum Forest Management Agreement to add to their existing Agreement over Balfour Wood. The management of both woods, covering 1000 acres in the parish, is therefore now jointly decided by BCT and FE and this enables BCT to increase the benefits that the local community can derive from them.

After a recent visit, FE's Chief Executive Bob McIntosh said "Forest Enterprise has a very positive and productive relationship with BCT, which has proved itself to be an innovative and successful community business. The type of management agreement they developed for Birse is now being used by rural communities elsewhere in Scotland and we expect that the local partnership that BCT and FE are continuing to develop will also be a model of its kind."



An Early Purple Orchid (top) and Northern Marsh Orchid, in Slewdrum Forest.

Photos by Paul Chapman



Photo by Anke Adley

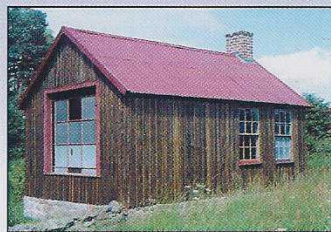
The Dardanus Stone

## Corsedarder

TO COMPLETE THE MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS that BCT has previously carried out at Corsedarder, an information board is still due to be set on the stone cairn that has been built at Corsedarder as part of BCT's improvements there. The board will illustrate and explain the three distinctive stone monuments which stand on this important community site – the Parish War Memorial, the Millennium Standing Stone and the Ancient Dardanus Stone.

## Ballogie Souter's Shop

THE REMAINING BUILDING WORK at the Souter's Shop was completed during the first half of the year, including rebuilding the chimney, pointing the walls, repairing and painting the roof, replacing a missing window and re-constructing the entrance. Inside, the front shop and back workshop have also been transformed back closer to their original layout during the period 1896-1941



when the souter, James Merchant, worked there. While further expert advice continues to be obtained on the conservation, cataloguing and interpretation on the shop's remarkable 'timecapsule' contents, a programme of group visits has also been started. For more information contact: Alison Bell, The Schoolhouse, Finzean (tel.01330.850740).

## Finzean Community Woods

BCT HAS MADE SOME FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS in the Community Woods, while the regular maintenance work includes cutting the grass along the path through the Woods during the summer. The path, which forms the course for the Mile Race at the Community Games, is well used by local residents day to day and was also especially popular when Foot and Mouth access restrictions applied to many other areas.

