



Finzean Wood Mills

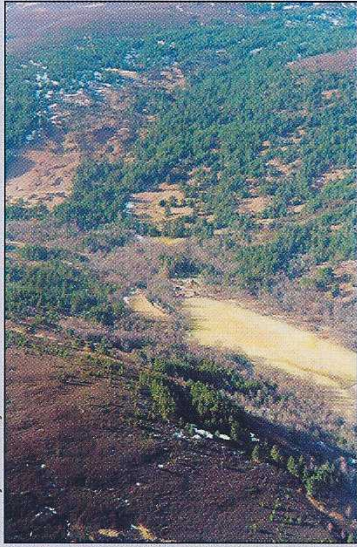


Photo by Arnie Addy

The Bucket Mill is in the centre of the photo (red roof at the end of the field) with part of the Commonty pinewoods that are managed by BCT in the background.

DURING THE FIRST PART OF THE YEAR, BCT continued to use the European larch selectively felled from the Commonty pinewoods to produce posts, rails and stakes at the Sawmill for other BCT projects and for sale to local members. In April, however, cracks were found in the cast iron rims of the water wheel and sawing had to stop until these could be repaired by a specialist company from Glasgow.

BCT also completed the rest of the first phase of its restoration work at the mills. This work was featured in the Annual Report of the Historic Buildings Council for Scotland, who highlighted the "outstanding importance" of the mills. For the second phase of restoration, the focus shifts from the Sawmill and Turning Mill to the Bucket Mill. The entire roof needs re-clad with new corrugated iron and amongst other repairs, part of the main drive drum will be rebuilt to replace rotten timbers. However, in anticipation of bucket production then being resumed, a fresh supply of native pine timber has been felled, cut into boards and set out to season.



Repairs to the Sawmill water wheel.



Stan Moyes (centre) selecting the Scots pine in the Commonty pinewoods from which he will make the next batch of buckets at the Bucket Mill, with Mike Archibald (left) and Norman Kellas of Birse Estate who felled and extracted the 120 year old tree for BCT.

Natural Heritage Projects

BCT HAS STARTED to implement the programme of wildlife projects that it has developed with the help of its local natural heritage advisory group. As part of that, BCT has been carrying out three main surveys:- of the relic burnside trees and woodlands in the Forest of Birse Commonty outwith the pinewood area; of the extensive peatlands in the Commonty and of some of the main areas of base rich vegetation elsewhere in the parish. BCT has also continued to progress its project on the parish's rivers and burns which was described in Update 4.

In June, after a visit to BCT by Scottish Natural Heritage's East Areas Board, the Chairman Professor Jeremy Rowan Robertson commented that "All the Board Members and staff were particularly impressed by BCT's integrated approach to community development in which caring for the natural heritage forms an important part".

If you would like to be involved with BCT's expanding range of natural heritage projects, please contact: Paul Chapman, Myreside, Finzean (tel.01330.580645).

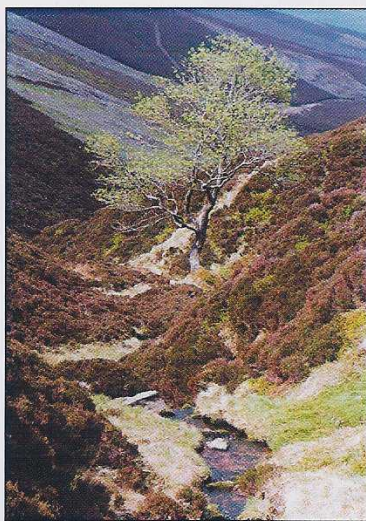


Photo by Neil MacKenzie

The most remote tree in the Commonty - the rowan beside the headwaters of the Feugh, upstream of the Oxter Burn (NO506865).

Commonty Pinewoods

THE NATIVE PINEWOODS THAT BCT MANAGES in the Forest of Birse Commonty are at risk every year of serious damage by an accidental fire. These fires can result from muirburn on adjacent land getting out of control or from someone being careless with a cigarette end or barbecue. BCT therefore continues to improve its fire protection measures for the pinewoods.

In the first half of 2001, this work included erecting specially painted traditional fire warning signs and also stands of firebeaters; carrying out three controlled strips of muirburn to limit the spread of accidental fires; clearing gorse and other growth back along the road edge to reduce the risk of a fire jumping the road; writing a fire plan and operating fire patrols with Ballogie Estate on dry weekends when there is a high fire risk. BCT also pays for an insurance policy each year that would allow the use of helicopters to help control a major fire.

Another form of protection for the pinewoods is the deer control each year to reduce the damage by deer to the young trees naturally regenerating within the pinewood area. Over the last two years, the number of deer culled within the area has been increased nearly three times through BCT's deer management agreement with Ballogie Estate. However, the shooting ban in February and March due to foot and mouth restrictions, resulted in some increased damage by the deer.



One of BCT's fire signs.