



Finzean Old School

IN THE SECOND HALF OF 2001, BCT made major progress with its project to safeguard the Finzean Old school buildings and re-develop them for new community purposes.

After BCT's lease was finalised in August, planning and building warrant permissions were obtained. Building work then started in earnest using local tradesmen and by Christmas, sufficient progress had been made in the main building for BCT to have set up its office in one of the former classrooms and for office space to have been rented out in the other classrooms to three locally based businesses.

It has been a tremendous boost for BCT to have its own office, not least because more people have been able to become involved in helping with the Trust's work. BCT also now has an expanding range of office equipment that members of the community can come and use including a photocopier, an A3 colour printer, a scanner, e-mail, a laminator and report binder. The office is open most week days 10am - 2pm, but it



One of the refurbished classrooms that BCT has made available as office units for other local businesses.

is advisable to phone before visiting (01330.850200).

During the same period, the former soup kitchen and toilet block were gutted for conversion into BCT's project work room and an environmentally controlled archive for old documents and



Left to right: Sandra Holt, Dorothy Dinnie and Wendy Hector working in BCT's new office.

other items of local interest. Additional aspects of the overall project, such as collecting memories from former pupils of the Old School, were also well underway.

A fascinating range of items have already been donated to the archive, including a collection of old bottles found around Finzean and over 80 local postcards from the early nineteen hundreds. There are also historical papers relating to the parish War Memorial and local churches, as well as a growing amount of family history material.

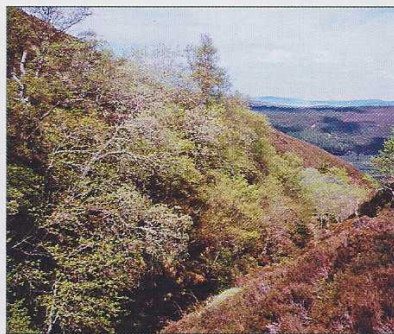
If you would like to see any of these collections or if you have items you might like to donate, please contact Sandra Holt at the BCT office (01330.850200).



The new link between the areas that will be BCT's project room (former soup kitchen) and archive store (former toilet block).

The Nature of Birse

WORK CONTINUED during the last six months with BCT's projects to learn more about the natural heritage of the parish. The work has included locating and collating a large number of existing wildlife records for the parish into a BCT database, setting up bird lists for a number of parts of the parish and completing several main habitat surveys - the relic burnside trees and woodlands in the Forest of Birse Commony; the peatlands in the Commony; base rich vegetation in the parish; & the habitats associated with both the Bucket Mill and Finzean Sawmill lands.



Looking north from some of the remote relic native woodland on the Rough Burn to part of the Commony pinewoods.

Photo by Neil MacKenzie

Each of the surveys has produced interesting results and the reports, together with the Trust's other wildlife records, can be seen at BCT's office. With advice from the Trustees' local Natural Heritage Advisory Group, BCT will be carrying out a further programme of natural heritage work in 2002. Research also continued on BCT's Rivers and Burns of Birse project. If you would like to be involved in work on these projects, please contact:

Paul Chapman, Myreside, Finzean 01330.850645.

Paul Chapman with the Green Butterfly Award presented to BCT by the Aberdeenshire Environmental Forum in recognition of the Trust's environmental achievements.



Photo by G MacGregor

Finzean Water Mills: While the re-cladding of the Bucket Mill roof and repair of the mill's main drive drum were delayed until 2002, work continued at the Sawmill. Most of the European larch felled by the Trust in the Commony Pinewoods, has now been cut at the mill into timber for use on BCT projects, including wooden framing for the Old School building work (see photo above). BCT also has additional stakes and posts that are available for sale - for more details contact BCT's office.



Stakes and posts at Finzean Sawmill