

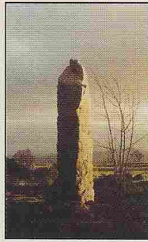


BCT is directly involved in managing ten sites in Birse parish on behalf of the local community. Two themes unite these site based projects and BCT's parish wide projects – promoting community well-being and conserving the parish's heritage.

## 7 Corsedardar:

*0.3 ha, long-term lease*

The parish War Memorial and ancient Dardanus Standing Stone are both at Corsedardar. The longstanding significance of the site to the local community was further enhanced when BCT, after carrying out a major restoration of the site, erected the Birse Millennium Stone there. Around 300 local residents attended a special ceremony to dedicate the Stone on 1st January 2002.



## 8 Ballogie Souter's Shop:

*building only, ownership*

This remarkable 'time capsule' is potentially the only surviving *in situ* souter's shop in rural Scotland. Built in 1896 by a local shoe-maker, the Shop had remained largely untouched since his death in 1941. After extensive restoration of the building, BCT has been cataloguing and conserving the contents and developing their use as an educational resource.



## 9 & 10 Balfour Wood & Slewdrum Forest:

*240 ha & 155 ha, long-term agreements*

In 2000, BCT and Forest Enterprise signed a pioneering long term agreement to manage Balfour Wood jointly 'to maximise the economic, social and environmental benefits to the inhabitants of Birse from the sustainable management of the Wood'. A similar agreement was signed over Slewdrum Forest in 2001. A wide range of improvements are now being carried out at both sites for local benefit. There are particularly strong community associations with Slewdrum Forest as it was a local common until the 1950s and BCT hopes eventually to own the site on behalf of the community.



An aerial view of Balfour Wood before the Allansack Burn clearfell in 2000. The Newmill fields are in the top right and those around Balfour House in the bottom middle.

## Parish Wide Projects

### Cultural Heritage

In addition to BCT's cultural heritage projects based directly on the sites it manages, BCT has an expanding number of parish wide projects. BCT has reprinted three local history books so far and started projects on local place names, traditional routes, the music, songs and poems of Birse, local family history records and other topics. BCT is also developing the collection of interesting documents and other items that have already been donated to its Local History Archive at Finzean Old School.



The entrance to BCT's Local History Archive, in contrast to the building work shown in Update 6. Two donations are displayed on the wall – a peat spade and a pit saw.

### Natural Heritage

BCT is implementing a three year parish wide natural heritage programme as part of developing its work to conserve and enhance the environmental value of the sites it manages. The programme includes compiling a database of local wildlife records, carrying out habitat surveys and studies of particular species and raising awareness of the parish's wildlife. BCT also has a separate project on the parish's Rivers and Burns.



Blackcock at one of several leks in the Forest of Birse Community.

Photo by John Chapman

### Community Well-Being

As one of its range of initiatives to promote community development locally, BCT is undertaking a pilot community planning project. This involves consulting local residents for their views on a range of issues,



BCT hosted the first ever meeting involving the committees of all three Community Associations in the parish.

including water supplies, local roads and health services. The project is managed in partnership with the parish's three Community Associations and two Community Councils. BCT also co-operates closely with these bodies on other local issues and ways of improving community well-being.