



Finzean Wood Mills

ONE OF BCT'S MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES is ensuring the conservation and continued operation of the remarkable group of three individually unique water-powered wood-working mills in Finzean:- the Sawmill, Turning Mill & Bucket Mill.

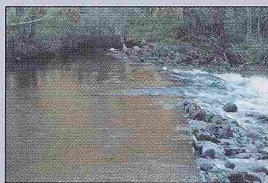
Restoration

An important achievement during the period covered by this newsletter, was completing the substantial repairs to the main drive drum at the Bucket Mill. This drum transfers the power from the water wheel to the belts and pulleys in the Mill and its restoration by Stan Moyes has enabled him to resume bucket production.



Stan Moyes working in the Bucket Mill.

Progress was also made on two other tasks requiring specialist skills: the casting of a rack and pinion to operate the sluice gates at the Bucket Mill and re-



The breach in the Sawmill weir.

constructing the lathe and plaster canopy for the old forge in the Turning Mill smiddy. Another difficult challenge that resulted from the heavy spates in November, was the need to repair a breach in the Sawmill weir.

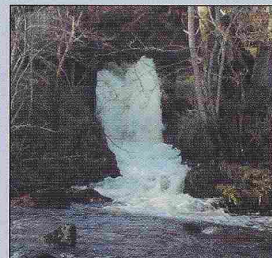
Operation

Some large windblown larch and pine were extracted from the Commonty pinewoods to the Sawmill to provide timber for the weir repairs, replacement 'paddles' for the water wheels and producing buckets. The trees will also be used to produce posts and rails, tree stakes and other timber for use in BCT's other projects.



Tony Jamieson of Finzean Estate extracting timber for BCT in the Forest of Birse Commonty.

During the period, BCT also carried out a regular Health & Safety review at the Mills and has drawn up an action plan to implement further improvements.



The outfall at Finzean Sawmill, which is the possible site for a hydro-electric turbine.

Hydro-Electricity

As one possible way of helping fund the conservation of the Mills, BCT carried out an initial investigation into the scope to install a turbine at the Sawmill and generate electricity for sale to the grid. The results suggested there is some potential for this to be worthwhile and BCT now

anticipates funding under the government's new Scottish Community Renewables Initiative, to carry out a full feasibility study into the proposal.

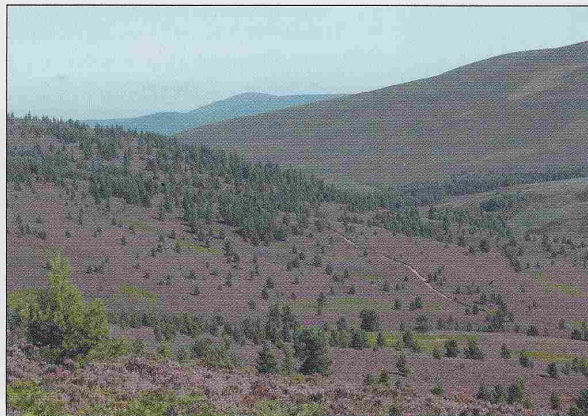
Commonty Pinewoods

IN JULY, A NEW ACTIVITY was added to BCT's management of the native pine-woods in the Forest of Birse Commonty. In response to requests from Associate Members, BCT arranged for them to have several dozen bee hives at the foot of the Bogturk Burn for the heather season.



Bee hives beside the Bogturk Burn.

In December, work resumed on BCT's on-going project to improve the drainage and surface of the Finlets track as far as the cairn on Corybeg. The first mile was completed in spring 2002 and to the credit of James Reid, who has been carrying out the work with his JCB, it was unaffected by all the torrential rain in the autumn.

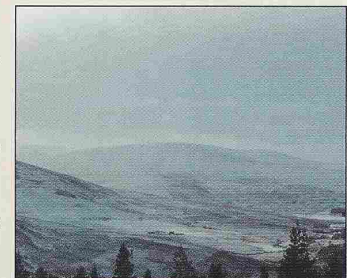


A view over part of the Finlets track to the Laird's Burn woodlands

Cairngorms Area

BIRSE PARISH HAS BEEN within the Cairngorms Partnership Area since that was established in 1995 and this has benefited BCT. The Partnership has regarded BCT as "a model community initiative" and in recently awarding BCT a vital project development grant, their Chief Executive, Stewart Fulton, wrote that the Partnership is "happy to be associated with Birse Community Trust, which by empowering local people to manage their own environment for the benefit of the community, catches the mood of the times; is fully consistent with the grain of government policy; and sets an important benchmark for others to follow".

Birse parish is one of the few parts of the Partnership Area not to be included in the new Cairngorms National Park. Some initiatives, however, will continue to cover the Partnership Area and BCT has recently submitted an application to the Cairngorms Leader + European Grant Programme.



Looking across Achabrack towards Gannoch (731 ms), where the western boundary of the parish is the eastern boundary of the Cairngorms National Park.