



Interskola Visit

BIRSE COMMUNITY TRUST WELCOMES OVERSEAS VISITORS

On Sunday 1st August Birse Community Trust welcomed a party of educationalists from across the U.K., Scandinavia and Germany. The visit, hosted by Aberdeenshire Education & Recreation, was part of a planned programme of events to mark the Interskola 2004 Post-Conference visit to Aberdeenshire. Interskola is a well established annual conference of educationalists and had held its main conference in Skye prior to the visit of 12 delegates to Aberdeenshire.

Accompanied by Hamish Vernal, Director of Education and Recreation, Aberdeenshire Council, his wife Mo, Finzean Primary School Head Teacher, their two grandsons, Jack and Rory and Avril Barnett, Acting Senior Education & Recreation Officer, the group spent a glorious full day at Birse Community Trust. Under the guidance of Jane and Alan Bennett and Sue Storey the group firstly visited the Saw and Turning mills and were intrigued by these unique facilities. David Duncan gave a very entertaining and authoritative explanation of the operation techniques and historical perspective of the mills. Then it was on to the Bucket Mill where Stan Moyes demonstrated his craft and gave a very interesting guided tour.

The group then visited Finzean School Wood where, bathed in glorious sunshine, the group enjoyed a picnic lunch followed by a pleasant stroll around Finzean Community Wood. After Lunch, it was off to Ballogie Souter's Shop where the party were enthralled by the living history and eloquent presentation given by Alison Bell.

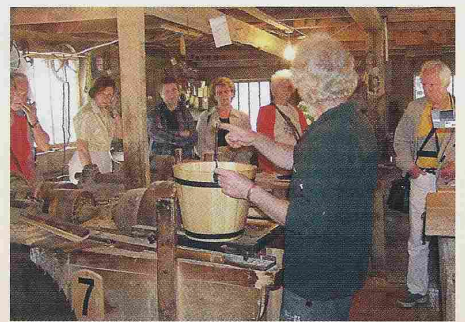
All in all a memorable day was had by all and the party have taken back to their homes an excellent impression of Birse Community Trust which we hope they will pass on to their colleagues.

"Aberdeenshire Education & Recreation is very grateful to all at the Birse Community Trust for the support and exceptional standard of hospitality afforded to our visitors" (Avril Barnett)

Jane Bennett



The Interskola group during their visit to BCT.
Photo. © Sue Storey 2004



Stan Moyes demonstrating the skills involved in bucket making
Photo. © Sue Storey 2004

Slewdrum Forest



The view from the Shooting Greens Road across the Dee towards the Hill of Fare.
Photo © W. Bailey ABIPP 2004

The major felling along the south side of Slewdrum Forest reported in the last newsletter, has been completed and the next phase of work is about to start between the two hills in the Forest, Little Ord and Meikle Ord. While the immediate aftermath of such extensive fellings is very unattractive, there are now panoramic views from the Shooting Greens road eastwards across the Dee to the Hill of Fare and over time, there will be substantial environmental benefits as the felled areas are regenerated as native broadleaved woodland.

BCT has completed the case study reported in Update 10 of its partnership with Forestry Commission Scotland over Balfour Wood and Slewdrum Forest. BCT is also now making substantial progress in the long running negotiations to fulfill the mandate BCT was given by the local community to buy Slewdrum Forest and secure all the local benefits that will come from bringing this former common land under local community ownership and management.

Robin Callander

Natural Heritage

Funding Secured for BCT Natural Heritage programme.

Scottish Natural Heritage has confirmed funding of a new three-year programme of habitat and species studies and conservation projects in Birse starting this year. The new programme builds on the wide range of successful projects carried out in the previous 3 years. As a result of this work, much more is now known and recorded about the rich natural and cultural heritage of Birse. In addition to further survey and monitoring work on key habitats and species, the new programme will include a community consultation exercise leading to the production of a community based biodiversity action plan. Further details will be forthcoming soon. In the meantime BCT hopes to widen community participation in its natural heritage work. If you are interested or have relevant expertise whether professional or amateur, please do not hesitate to contact either John Addy (01339 886089) or Paul Chapman (01330 850645)

John Addy

Community Woodlands

The annual walk around Finzean Community Woods, organised along with Finzean Community Association, will be held this year on Sunday 17th October, meeting at Finzean Hall car park at 2pm. Please come and enjoy the walk, even if you don't think you have any specific suggestions. If you are not able to come, please do let us know if you have comments on the Woods, on their improvement or their management. We are currently in the process of building a bridge in the South Wood across a ditch to extend the walk. We have also extended the walk via a trimmed path towards Powlair Road. You can contact the BCT office with any comments you have on the Woods.

Jane Bennett