



FUNDING SUCCESS FOR BIRSE CULTURAL HERITAGE

BCT has always had a commitment to ensure that as much as possible of Birse parish history is preserved and accessible.

Early in 2004, BCT made a successful application for grant funding which will make £38,500 available over fifteen months. This support comes from the Heritage Lottery Fund which awarded 57% and Cairngorms Leader + which awarded 43%.

In 2000, a start was made on collecting domestic items, tools, old documents, old photographs and postcards, church papers and books all with a connection to Birse parish. The Trust made available what limited funds it could spare to record everything in the collection.

This work was supplemented by many hours of donated time. With a great deal of voluntary labour and skill, the Soup Kitchen adjacent to the Old School was renovated to form an archive store and attractive project room.

All the items have been recorded and are stored in conditions where temperature and humidity are controlled to prevent deterioration. Already the informal Archive has attracted interest from people who had items they wanted to donate. Overseas visitors, many researching their Birse roots, have asked to see what has been done and pupils of Finzean School have used the collection to help with projects.

In addition to developing computer databases of all the historical material, catalogues will be done of the contents of the Souter's Shop and the Bucket Mill. Birse Kirk contents will also be catalogued and its history researched. The history of the Forest of Birse and Slewdrum Communities will be researched. A professional archaeological survey will be done in a selected area while all known and possible archaeological sites are to be listed and mapped. Similar listing, recording and mapping of historic sites will be done.

To help make information on the wealth of history in the parish widely available, a series of leaflets and booklets will be produced.

There are opportunities to help with the Archive and a number of the projects. Anyone interested should contact BCT office for more information.



Photo. © BCT Archive 2004

Manager's Minute

"Since I became the manager for the Birse Community Trust I have been impressed by its past successes and the ongoing dedication of all its personnel.

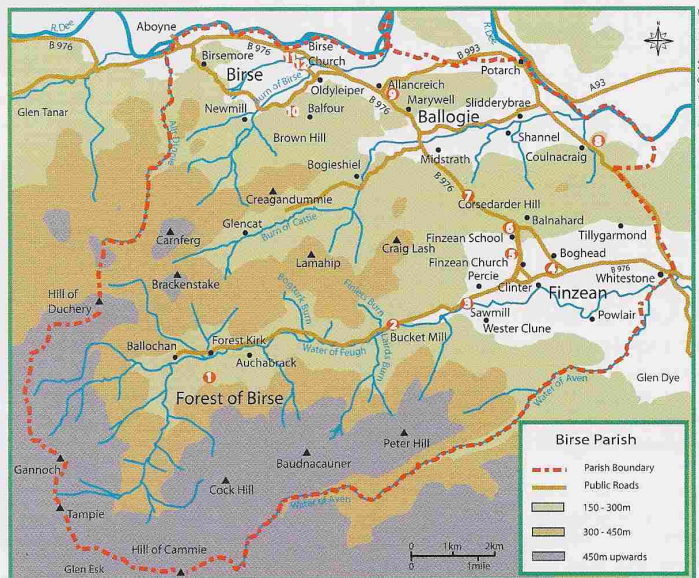
During the last few years the Trust has increased its asset base and delivered a number of exciting and beneficial environmental projects. As the Trust moves forward it is my aim to build on the past successes and deliver benefits that enhance both the local environmental and social well-being of the Birse community."

Over the coming months I will regularly update you on the Trust's progress as it strives to meet its 2004 goals. I hope to support this written communication by meeting with many of you and seeking feedback on any concerns or opportunities that you may have as a member of BCT.

Mike Thornton. Manager BCT. 2004

Birse Parish

Birse parish covers over 125 sq.km (50 sq.mls) of mid Deeside and has a population of c.800 in c.283 households. The parish's four main parts form the basis of BCT's logo - the communities of Finzean, Ballogie and Birse and the largely uninhabited Forest of Birse



BCT's SITE BASED PROJECTS

- 1. Forest of Birse Community. c.3750 ha. ancient rights.
- 2. Bucket Mill. c.1 ha. ownership.
- 3. Finzean Sawmill. c.1 ha. ownership.
- 4. Finzean Community Wood. c.15 ha. long-term lease.
- 5. Finzean School Wood. c.0.3 ha. long-term lease
- 6. Finzean Old School. c.0.3 ha. ownership.
- 7. Corsedarder. c.0.3 ha. long term lease.
- 8. Slewdrum Forest. c.155 ha. long term agreement.
- 9. Ballogie Soutar's Shop. Building only, ownership.
- 10. Balfour Wood. c.240 ha. long term agreement.
- 11. Birse Community Hall. Ownership.
- 12. Historic Birse Kirk. Ownership.

Commonty Pinewoods

The poster display at BCT's AGM concluded BCT's initial consultations over proposals for its next five year management scheme for the native pinewoods in the Forest of Birse Community. All the proposals were very positively supported and BCT has now received funding from Forestry Commission Scotland to develop its plans for the pinewoods. BCT will be consulting further as this work progresses.

Robin Callander