

BCT's Trustees visiting the Souter's Shop, from left, Neil McCannach, Brian Page, Donald Silcock, Diane Maher and Sandra Forster.

AGM 2005

BCT's Seventh Annual General Meeting was held in Finzean Hall on 11th May and attended by over 80 members. The formal business of the meeting included the election of three new Trustees (Donald Silcock, Brian Page and Diane Maher). There were also presentations and discussions about BCT's projects and an exhibition of material related to them.

The highlight of the evening was David Duncan's truly remarkable twenty five minute recital of "The Muckle Spate of Twenty Nine", the fast flowing doric poem describing events along the Feugh 175 years ago during the disastrous flood of 1829.



David Duncan at the AGM

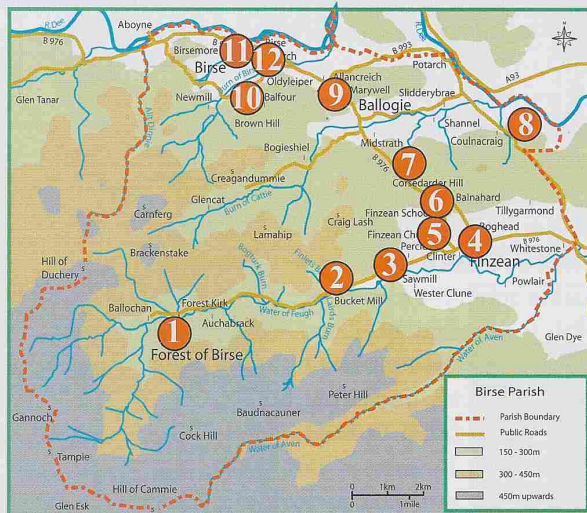
Associate Membership

Anyone who lives outside Birse parish can support BCT's work by becoming an Associate Member. The annual subscription is £20 in the UK and £25 overseas. Membership runs for 12 months and includes two issues of BCT Update, special discounts on BCT's publications, invitations to visit the sites managed by BCT and other benefits. Only one subscription is needed per household. Subscriptions should be sent to: BCT, The Old School, Finzean, Banchory AB31 6NY

Acknowledgements

BCT is very grateful to all those who have supported BCT's work during 2005 so far, including the following for grants: Aberdeenshire Council, Cairngorms Leader+ Programme, Forestry Commission Scotland, Forward Scotland, Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic Scotland, Scottish Land Fund and Scottish Natural Heritage.

Birse Parish covers over 125 sq.km (50 sq.mls) of Mid Deeside and has a total population of nearly 750 in c.260 households. The four main parts of the parish that form the basis of BCT's logo are the communities of Finzean, Ballogie and Birse and the largely uninhabited Forest of Birse. The sites that BCT is directly involved in managing are marked on the map and listed below with the legal basis of that involvement.



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

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Chairman's Comment

I considered it a great honour when I was elected a Trustee at BCT's AGM in May. I was also rather nervous at exactly what might be involved. Little did I know that my fellow Trustees would also then elect me as the Chairman of the Trust (!), one of the best and foremost rural community businesses this side of Hadrian's Wall.

Picture six adults in a people carrier charging around Birse Parish on a midge infested evening doing a whistle stop tour of all the sites with which BCT is involved – if you manage it in one evening you are either breaking the speed limit or you've forgotten your midge repellent! This perhaps gives you an insight into the scale of BCT's commitment to delivering benefits across the Parish.

BCT is a fantastic community initiative, with a portfolio of projects that has to be seen to be fully appreciated. I now know what has been achieved, what is being achieved and what will be achieved and I urge you to come and see for yourself. It is truly stunning what we have achieved locally as a community thanks to BCT.

I guarantee one or more of BCT's projects will spark your interest once you see them for yourself. This is our Business, its here to stay, be involved, phone BCT on 01330 850200, lets keep going places.

Donald M Silcock, BCT Chairman