

## Restoration of the Fungle path.

One of the old north-south routes across the Mounth, the Fungle path runs from Aboyne via the Forest of Birse to Tarfside. This historic Right of Way no longer sees itinerant traders or teams of drovers with their herds of cattle but these days it is popular with walkers and cyclists.

In the lower sections south of Birse Castle, some resurfacing of the track and attention to drainage has been carried out.

Further up, where the track climbs steeply up to the watershed with Tarfside at the county boundary the work was more challenging. The ground is much steeper and growth of leggy heather and washout caused by periodic spates meant the path had become "lost" making route-finding difficult.

Specialist hill path contractors were brought in to work on this section, to reconstruct the path along its original line.



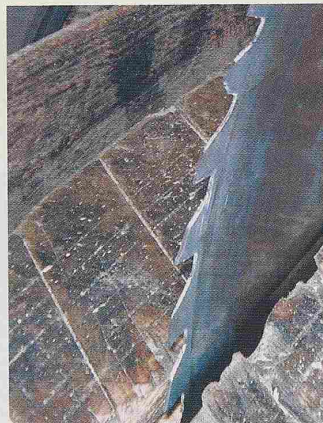
Work in progress on the steep upper section of the Fungle path. Photo © John Addy

## Finzean Woodmills

BCT is now nearing the end of the third phase of restoration work at Finzean Woodmills. At the Sawmill the timber loading ramps have been renewed using larch from the Forest of Birse and the sawbench has been refaced as the original had become too worn and the gap for the blade too wide. At the Bucket Mill, repairs have been carried out to the wheel and some of the bearings in the drive train to the lathes. The sawbench at the Bucket Mill is also being refurbished.



David Duncan running the saw through the new facing on the sawbench. Photo © John Addy



Doug Gray, Stan Moyes & John Addy at one of the refurbished sluices at the Finzean Bucket Mill. Doug put his Army pattern-making skills to good use in creating the detailed wooden patterns for the moulds from which the new winding mechanisms for the sluice were cast. Replacement of the sluice has been one part of a programme of renovation at the Bucket Mill.



Doug Gray, Stan Moyes & John Addy. Photo © W. Bailey

## Black Grouse Habitat Survey

The Black grouse is in decline throughout the UK, but a small breeding population remains in the Forest of Birse and many people will have seen the spectacular gathering of cock

birds at the "lek" which is used to be visible from the road up the Forest. The quality of its breeding habitat is



Black grouse chick. Photo © John Forster

critical for successful breeding by Black grouse and BCT is therefore mapping and recording the condition of the habitat so as to identify the best areas for breeding in the Forest and decide what management will be needed to safeguard and improve them. We hope that the results of this work will prevent the population from declining any further here – and, hopefully, in the longer term will encourage it to increase. The work is being undertaken over the next few months by Kath Richards for BCT, with funding from Scottish Natural Heritage.

BCT has many projects on the go and would like to encourage members of the community to be involved. If you are interested in becoming involved with the work of BCT please contact the BCT office.