

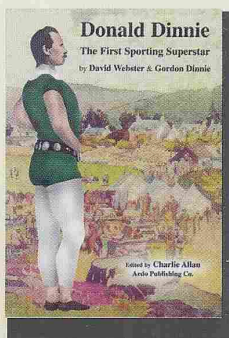
BCT Natural Heritage Programme

BCT is in the last six months of its three-year Natural Heritage Programme which has been funded by Scottish Natural Heritage. We have undertaken several projects during this time, these include:

1. Proposals for managing Black Grouse and Capercaillie habitats;
2. Surveys of Lapwings, Oystercatchers and other waders on farmland;
3. A Survey of the plants of track and roadside verges to identify interesting areas that are rich in species;
4. Drafting a guide to the geology of Birse - to be published later this year;
5. Work to safeguard Water voles
6. In Slewdrum Forest, we have undertaken a survey of the main woodland habitats and predictions of the native woodland potential and will be making a preliminary survey of fungi – a group of plants in which woodlands are particularly rich.

Making a Birse Biodiversity Action Plan will be the final and most important element in this programme. The Action Plan will set out the most significant natural history features of Birse and suggest ways in which they can be safeguarded. To achieve this, we want to involve everyone in Birse. The plants, animals, and habitats provide the background to people's daily life and work and everyone has a valuable view about what is significant. Everyone – particularly all who own property and farmers, keepers and foresters will need to be involved too when ideas are put forward about safeguarding important features. The starting point will be a public meeting to be held on 1st November in Finzean Hall – further information will be mailed out soon.

From Birse to Ballarat (Australia)



Scottish World Champion athlete, Donald Dinnie, a native of Birse, spent a number of years from 1882 to 1898 in Australia where he toured extensively competing in events. In the botanic gardens of Ballarat in Victoria stands a white marble statue of William Wallace. Because of his stature and physique, Donald Dinnie was chosen by the sculptor to be the model for this statue. [ref: www.scran.ac.uk] You can read more about the life of Donald Dinnie in "Donald Dinnie. The First Sporting Superstar" by David Webster & Gordon Dinnie. Copies of this hard-cover 158 page book are available from BCT office at £12.95 plus postage.

Finzean Wood Mills

Spurtles made by David Duncan from the Finzean Turning Mill will be in action at the 13th World Porridge Making Championship being held in Carrbridge, Inverness-shire in October 2006.

Aberdeenshire Council also purchased a quantity of Spurtles for delegates attending a seminar about the River Dee

Chairman's Comment

Since our last update in the spring we have held a successful AGM in May and a big thanks to all of you who came along to offer your support and to those who helped with the organisation.



Photo © Anke Addy. ARPS

Shortly after this event the Trustees and indeed the whole community were saddened and shocked at the sudden death of Neil McConnach one of our Trustees. He has been greatly missed by us and the wider community over the past few months. He would

have wanted BCT to continue boldly and this we shall do.

For the Slewdrum project we are about to press forward with the sale negotiations and the intricacies of setting up the Trading Company for the commercial activities. We have successfully secured 95% funding of the purchase price the balance of which we will require to fund ourselves and from donations. Perhaps you could give this some thought, all donations are a great help to BCT - every penny counts and if we encourage Gift Aid it can count for even more. Remember BCT's core costs are seldom funded by grant bodies and we do rely on a level of donations to help us operate on a day to day basis.

BCT does wish to engage some new team members due to some imminent changes in the current team. We would like to hear from interested parties who could offer experience in BCT's activities either on a voluntary basis or perhaps otherwise where funding is secured. Even tasks such as assisting in funding applications or some maintenance skills at our sites could help immensely.

If you feel you could help us then I am sure the BCT Office would be delighted to discuss this further with you. We look forward to perhaps hearing from you.

Donald M Silcock
Chairman