

## Cultural Heritage

Nearly all the buildings and other sites that BCT manages are important parts of the parish's cultural heritage. BCT carries out on-going maintenance and restoration at these, many of which are of national significance.

BCT also safeguards and promotes the cultural heritage of Birse in many other ways, for example, archaeological surveys, publishing local history books and research into a wide range of different topics. These have included local place names, traditional routes, family history and the music, songs and poems of Birse. A recent project surveyed the stone arched bridges in the parish.

An important development has been the environmentally controlled parish archive created by BCT at Finzean Old School. This enables old documents, photographs, other material and artefacts of historical interest to be preserved for the future. There is already a varied and valuable collection. Further donations are very welcome.



*Eileen Bailey and Dorothy Dinnie digitising Archive records*

## Natural Heritage



*A seed pod of the Green Shield Moss. This rare moss, which has the same European conservation status as capercaillie, was found recently in Quithel Wood.*

BCT carries out many different types of projects to conserve and enhance the natural heritage of Birse. These cover both the sites where BCT is directly involved and the wider parish.

Current examples from the Forest of Birse Community include a new initiative to reduce the threat from muirburn to ground nesting birds of prey and the second planting season in BCT's native woodland restoration project along the Feugh. BCT also recently held its second annual workshop on capercaillie conservation and has been swiping heather in the Community pinewoods to encourage blaeberry and improve the habitat for capercaillie.

Other current projects include a parish wide study of aspen trees and a local biodiversity audit with the primary school and others. After nearly ten years, BCT has an interesting collection of reports and other information about habitats, species and other aspects of conserving the parish's natural heritage.

## Chairman's Comment

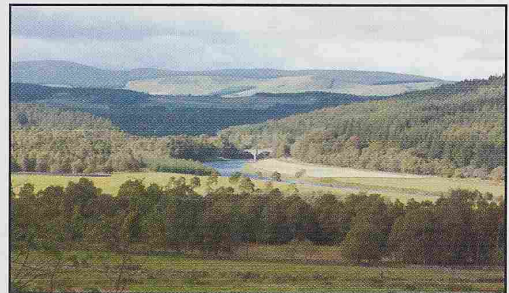
This issue of BCT Update focuses on the lands and buildings that BCT manages on behalf of our community. BCT became involved with each of them because they were important to the community and under threat. They are a remarkably rich and varied heritage to have safeguarded for the common good of the parish.

The challenge for Trustees has always been how to generate the income to look after these sites, given the un-economic nature of most and costs of maintenance and other overheads. BCT's vision from the start was to be able to earn the funds necessary by harvesting timber from the community's own woods and forests. Very recently, an important part of that long held ambition has been achieved with BCT's first income from the thinning in Slewdrum Forest and the prospect of further income to follow in coming years as Slewdrum is re-structured to a more sustainable native forest.

Now, with BCT's bid to buy Balfour Wood, Trustees are working on the final stage in the strategy to secure a viable income. In addition to many immediate benefits of bringing Balfour into community ownership, the Wood could be managed to produce a timber income in the future while Slewdrum is re-growing. These two woodlands would ensure a sustainable future for all the sites managed by BCT and be a tremendous legacy for those who come after us.

Donald Silcock, Chairman  
April 2008

*Potarch Bridge from Slewdrum Forest*



## Associate Membership

Anyone who lives outside Birse parish can support BCT by becoming an Associate Member. The subscription is £20 within the UK and £25 overseas. Membership runs for 12 months from the date of joining. Members receive BCT's newsletters, other mailings, special discounts on BCT's publications and other benefits. Only one subscription is needed per address.

Please support BCT and send your subscription to BCT's office (address on front page).

## Donations

BCT greatly appreciates donations to support its projects. Please send donations to BCT's Office. BCT can provide a Gift Aid Declaration form for donors who are UK taxpayers. Signing the form will increase the value of the donation to the Trust by 20%.

## Acknowledgements

BCT is very grateful to all who have supported the Trust's work with donations and other assistance during the last twelve months, including the following for grants: Aberdeenshire Council, Cairngorms National Park Authority, Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage.

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