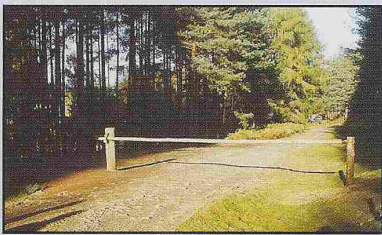




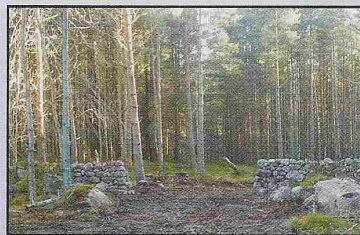
Balfour Wood

During the period while BCT is planning to buy Balfour, BCT also continues to try and influence the management of the Wood through BCT's management agreement with Scottish Ministers over the site.

Forestry Commission Scotland have carried out two recent improvements at BCT's request and using James Ironside from Birse as the contractor. The barrier at the start of the forest road has been moved back from the entrance and a small parking area created. Near the other end of the forest road, some ground re-instatement has been done and the dyke ends repaired where FCS extracted timber through the bend in the old march dyke that runs through the Wood.

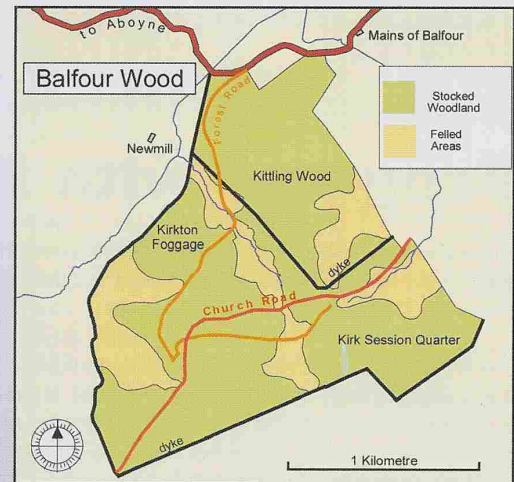


The new parking area in Balfour Wood.



Repairs to the old march dyke in Balfour.

This historic dyke is in fairly good condition along most of its 1.5 km length in the Wood. In the 18th century, the dyke was the outer boundary of Balfour Estate and the corner where the repairs have been done, was the juncture between three separate properties. West of the bend in Balfour's march dyke, the line of the Church Road right of way still follows what was the boundary between the two



other properties (*see map*). The land to the south was part of the distinctive property known as the Kirk Session Quarter of Kinminity. The land to the north was part of the Kirktion of Birse and known as the Kirktion's foggage or common grazing.

In the 19th century, all three properties became owned by the Earl of Aboyne and the area was enclosed by the march dykes which now mark the western and southern boundaries of Balfour Wood.

BCT has erected boundary signs at each end of the Forest along the public road and at the two main entrances from Blackhall Forest.



Slewdrum Forest

BCT leases Slewdrum to its wholly owned subsidiary, the Birse Trading Company (BTCo), because of the commercial timber harvesting involved in managing the Forest.

BTCo completed its first thinning operations in the Forest this summer. While further tidying up is still to be undertaken, the thinning produced nearly, 6,000 tonnes of timber. This was of three main market types: chip and pulp wood (25%), pallet wood (60%) and sawlogs (15%).



Removing timber from Slewdrum

In August, the government at last introduced its new forestry grant scheme. BCT was ready and waiting. BCT was the first applicant to the scheme in Grampian and possibly the whole of Scotland. BCT's application to be able to develop a Forest Management Plan for Slewdrum was subsequently approved and the formal paper work is due to be completed in November. BCT will therefore be able

to take this forward, including community consultations, after the Festive Season break.

At present, BCT is in discussions with Aberdeenshire Council about their proposal to take the Deeside Way through part of Slewdrum as a link in the route from Blackhall Forest to Potarch. This could involve constructing a new length of path in Slewdrum as well as the use of existing forest tracks. A short length of these tracks in Slewdrum is currently used each year by the Granite City Rally (April) and a horse and carriage driving event (October).



Finzean School Wood: Pupils taking part in a Biodiversity Day organised in the Wood this summer by BCT as part of the School's on-going projects there.