

Glenlivet news



The Lecht mine



World record tree
planting attempt

Tomintoul School
celebrates
FSC Friday

Mountain bike trail
update



Keeping you informed

Welcome to the January 2010 edition of the Glenlivet Estate newsletter which we hope you will find of interest.

The Crown Estate works in partnership with a range of organisations, local people and businesses to help ensure the long term sustainable development of the estate. Work over the last year has continued to build on the investment undertaken as part of the Glenlivet Estate Development Project, started just over 20 years ago.

During this time there has been a wide range of projects and activities undertaken to help 'put Glenlivet on the map' and to assist with the diversification and development of the local economy, the protection and enhancement of the local environment and the development of tourism and recreational infrastructure. This work will continue and we hope this newsletter helps to keep you informed about some of the initiatives and activities recently completed and those in the pipeline.

The Crown Estate welcomes feedback on these activities and if you have any comments or questions please contact us at the Glenlivet Estate Office and Information Centre in Tomintoul Tel 01479 870070 or email on info@glenlivetestate.co.uk.

Vicky Hilton, Countryside Manager, Glenlivet Estate

Tree O'clock !



Crown Estate properties across Scotland recently joined in a world record attempt to plant 1 million trees across the UK in one hour.

At Glenlivet Estate, twenty nine volunteers helped plant an impressive 2,250 trees to start what will be a new 40 hectare native Caledonian woodland near Altnaglander. Andrew Wells, Head of Countryside Management said; "the woodland will ultimately have around 63,000 native trees in total and planting will now continue throughout winter to create this new woodland. As it grows and matures – across decades – it will become a welcome

habitat for many of our native species." Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, who also joined in with the tree planting at Glenlivet said: "This is a great event for communities to take part in. The event is a fantastic way for everyone to have some fun and take part in some physical activity. At the same time, it is also a chance to make the important connection with how our forests and woodlands are helping in the global battle for climate change. Well done to all those involved."

In all The Crown Estate succeeded in adding nearly 4,000 trees to the total of trees planted in the hour as part of the BBC's Breathing Places campaign (www.bbc.co.uk/breathingplaces/treeoclock). These also included an avenue of native lime trees at Applegirth Estate in Dumfries and Galloway and a mixture of native broadleaved species to extend an area of existing native woodland, at the Whitehill Estate south of Edinburgh. The current world record stands 653,143 trees and the Tree O'Clock organisers hoped to smash the record by planting one million trees.

Glenlivet Estate celebrates green tourism award



Glenlivet Estate has won the Green Award category in the Highlands and Islands Tourism Awards held recently. The Green Award recognises organisations or groups which are proactive in raising awareness of the environment, adopt high standards of sustainable business management and have a strong involvement in local conservation activities.

Glenlivet Estate countryside manager Vicky Hilton received the award on behalf of The Crown Estate. Speaking afterwards, she said: "Receiving this award is a great honour, as it recognises The Crown Estate's focus on sustainability which is embedded within our core values of commercialism, sustainability and stewardship. A lot of our education and outreach work is built on promoting environmental understanding and we have worked proactively in partnership with our tenants, stakeholders and the local community to help ensure a long term sustainable future for the environment and economy of this remote rural area."

The judges acknowledged that the Glenlivet Estate, was driven by a powerful vision of sustainability and that the green agenda was at the forefront of the entire organization. They were also impressed at the way The Crown Estate demonstrated collaboration with its tenants, visitors and many other stakeholders to drive public access and a whole series of projects aimed at improving the environment. These have included the provision of an extensive network of paths and trails to help put Glenlivet on the map as a tourism destination, educational services for schools, the restoration of historic buildings, investment in tourism infrastructure and a wide range of community projects which have helped develop new local services, tourism marketing activities and community involvement in conservation and biodiversity management.



Outgoing Crown Estate Chairman Ian Grant honoured with Knighthood

The Crown Estate's outgoing chairman, Ian Grant CBE, who retires in January 2010, has been awarded a knighthood in the 2010 New Year Honours. Ian first joined The Crown Estate as Scottish Commissioner in 1996 and was appointed First Commissioner and Chairman of the Board in 2002. Ian also chaired the Cairngorms Partnership before the establishment of the Cairngorms National Park. In his role as Scottish Commissioner he had a close association with the Glenlivet Estate, particularly with the Estate Development Committee, which was created to encourage diversification along with community and tourism projects to help stimulate economic development. As a former farmer himself, based in Perthshire, Ian is a frequent visitor to the estate and has close associations with the agricultural community. Throughout his time with The Crown Estate Ian has steered through many significant changes and his efforts within Scotland have provided enormous benefit to The Crown Estate's rural properties.

Ian will be succeeded in his role as Scottish Commissioner by Gareth Baird. Mr Baird is a third generation tenant farmer involved in arable and beef production near Kelso in the Borders and is a leading figure in Scotland's agricultural and food and drink sectors. He has been involved with farming cooperatives for many years and it was this commitment to co-operation that led to his chairmanship of the Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society (SAOS) for two separate three-year terms. He also chairs the South of Scotland regional advisory board of Scottish Enterprise.

Improved access for Auchindoun Castle



The Crown Estate and Historic Scotland are working together to plan improved access and interpretation of Auchindoun Castle, following the restoration work carried out by Historic Scotland to the building. The Crown Estate will be liaising closely with the local farmers to explore opportunities to improve car parking, pedestrian access and interpretation at the castle, as well as working to develop other access improvement projects at Auchindoun.

Glenlivet keeps Gold award

The Glenlivet Estate Office and Information Centre was re-assessed under the Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS), and for the second time has secured the prestigious gold award.



The GTBS is the national sustainable tourism certification scheme for the UK and grading is based on a rigorous set of criteria, covering a range of areas, like energy and water efficiency, waste management and biodiversity. Any tourism businesses can apply and details of the scheme are available at www.green-business.co.uk

Mountain bike trails feasibility study completed

The Crown Estate continues to investigate opportunities to help boost the local economy by establishing a centre for mountain biking in the forests around the estate. Mountain biking is increasingly popular and mountain bike centres elsewhere have brought significant economic benefits to remote rural areas.

A leading UK mountain bike trail designer has carried out a feasibility study at Glenlivet and identified three potential forest routes, which will provide challenging downhill riding while also offering stunning views of Glenlivet's spectacular scenery. These routes would be carefully integrated into the landscape, preserve the environment and not interfere with any existing land use activities.

Vicky Hilton, Countryside Manager at Glenlivet said: "Following the completion of the feasibility study, we have undertaken a full public consultation to seek the community's views on these proposals. We recently hosted an open evening so people could call by and discuss the plans with us which was really well attended and raised some interesting points which will be fed into the project. The majority of respondents to the consultation have welcomed the initiative."

The Crown Estate has been working with Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Moray Council, the Cairngorms National Park and Scottish Natural Heritage to develop the project plan and the funding support, which is essential for the project to go ahead. Should it gain community and agency support, the trails would hopefully be developed over the next three to four years. Moray Council has given its full support to the project and has applied for European funding to assist with a significant proportion of the costs.



Further information can be downloaded from the Glenlivet website including; a summary of the proposals and plans, the feasibility study and the results of the consultation.

www.glenlivetestate.co.uk/Mountainbiketrails.htm

Expanded plans for Scalan seminary

The Scalan Association has purchased the old Scalan farmhouse in the Braes of Glenlivet and arranged a long-lease of further grounds to protect and enhance the historic seminary of Scalan and its surroundings. The seminary has long been a place of pilgrimage, and attracts visitors from all over the world because of its importance to the Catholic Church in Scotland. The Association has carried out renovations to the building and was keen to secure ownership of the additional building and management of the wider site to allow future improvements to be carried out. The Scalan is one of the most important heritage sites on the Glenlivet Estate and The Crown Estate is pleased that the new arrangements will allow the Scalan Association to raise awareness of the Scalan as a significant attraction for visitors coming to Glenlivet and the Cairngorms National Park.

Scalan Association president, Canon Brian Halloran said: "The Scalan Association is very pleased to acquire the old dwelling of the late Sandy Mathieson which was once part of the kitchen wing of the College. Sandy was a faithful guardian and protector of the old seminary. The lease of the surrounding area has enabled us to fence the area to prevent possible damage from livestock and the developments should help us to promote pilgrimage to the old seminary of Scalan."

To mark the transfer of ownership an open air celebratory Mass was held at The Scalan last June. Canon Brian Halloran gave the sermon, which was also attended by Cardinal Keith O'Brien and the local bishop, Bishop Peter Moran of Aberdeen.



Tomintoul School celebrates FSC Friday

Pupils at Tomintoul Primary School have used a tree from a local Crown Estate forest to create benches and flower tubs for their playground. The project was the idea of Vicky Hilton, Countryside Manager for The Crown Estate's Glenlivet Estate.



Vicky said: "We wanted to support the 'FSC Friday' event being run by the Forest Stewardship Council, which aims to raise awareness of the FSC logo as a mark of responsible forestry and highlight the fact that forests and woodlands in the UK and internationally need to be well-managed."

"The purpose of involving the children is to make sure they understand where the wood they use comes from and why it is important

for it to be traceable and sustainable. In this case we were able to take a tree into the school playground and using a mobile sawmill unit process it into planks and stakes, which the pupils then used to make benches, bird boxes and a raised bed for their wildlife garden."

Jonathon Marshall, teacher of the Primary 6/7 class said: "Using a real tree to make things we need for the school brought it home to the pupils that as consumers we have a responsibility to choose products that we know come from well-managed forests, ones that are managed in a way that will benefit future generations."

Having witnessed the complete 'chain of custody' (the traceable route of certified wood) from raw material through to finished product, the pupils completed the project by producing their own FSC certification signs, featuring the 'FSC tick tree' logo for their newly built products.

Walkers are welcome

Tomintoul is set to become only the third community in Scotland to receive the prestigious Walkers are Welcome accolade. Walkers are Welcome is an innovative community-led scheme and represents a commitment by the village to ensure that



it is an enjoyable and welcoming place to come walking, with good footpaths and facilities.

The Crown Estate was pleased to assist with the award application, as the work which has been done by the estate to develop networks of walking and cycling trails on the Glenlivet Estate have helped significantly to put the Estate 'on the map' as a walking destination. The local tourism marketing group, Tomintoul and Glenlivet Highland Holidays applied for the award, to help promote the area more widely for visitors and to help increase the recognition of Tomintoul as a place to enjoy the great outdoors.

Following a visit from the Walkers are Welcome assessor early this year to confirm the award, there will be a spring treasure trail event to mark the accolade.

Eagle Platform installed to attract iconic birds

A bespoke nesting platform has been built on the Glenlivet Estate in a bid to attract more breeding pairs of golden eagles to make it their home.

The project was undertaken by North-East Scotland RaptorWatch, a partnership involving RSPB Scotland, Grampian Police, Scottish Natural Heritage and Cairngorms National Park Authority. The Glenlivet Estate is one of 22 estates working with RaptorWatch to try and improve breeding numbers of golden eagles, peregrines and hen harriers in Scotland's north-east.

"Getting the platform into place took two expert climbers from the RSPB along with assistance from myself and the RaptorWatch project officer," said Glenlivet Estate countryside manager Vicky Hilton "The platform

sits high in a larch tree in a secret location on the Glenlivet Estate where RaptorWatch will continue to monitor it. If it is successful in attracting golden eagles to nest there might be future opportunity to add a webcam to the setup as long as it does not compromise the birds' safety."

Jim Craib, Project Officer, North East Scotland RaptorWatch said platforms such as the one installed at Glenlivet have been used successfully in other areas of Scotland where more commonly used nest sites such as cliffs are lacking. "I am delighted to be working with The Crown Estate in



©Laurie Campbell/SNH

an attempt to increase the breeding numbers of this iconic bird," Jim Craib said.

North-East Scotland RaptorWatch was set up in 2006 to try to increase the breeding numbers and nest success of declining populations of golden eagles, hen harriers



and peregrines in north-east Scotland. The main objective of the project is to try to increase the breeding numbers and nest success of these raptors through increased communication and cooperation between the main partners and estate owners, estate managers and gamekeepers. The project was initially set up for three years but has now been extended to 2012. The Glenlivet Estate was one of the first estates to work with the project.

Glenlivet Ranger Service welcomes new partnership agreement with National Park



The Crown Estate's Glenlivet Ranger Service has been in operation now for 20 years and has made a significant contribution to the provision of local access facilities,

educational services, conservation projects and the promotion of the Glenlivet and Tomintoul area. Much of this time the service has been supported by Scottish Natural Heritage. However, changes to funding arrangements for ranger services within the Cairngorms National Park (CNP) have seen the park authority and The Crown Estate agree a new arrangement which will deliver high quality countryside services which meet both organisations' aims. Andrew Wells, Head of Countryside Management for The Crown Estate, said: "We are very pleased to be working with the CNPA to build on the extensive work that has

been achieved so far and to continue to deliver a wide range of services for the benefit of the Park and the local community."

Peter Crane, Senior Visitor Services Officer with the CNPA added: "The Park Authority is working with the 12 ranger services operating across the National Park. The aim is to help these ranger services work together to deliver the aims of the National Park and in particular to promote enjoyment and understanding of the Park. We recognise that The Crown Estate has invested significant resources in the provision of ranger services at Glenlivet and we are delighted to be working in partnership with the estate to help build on this success in the future."

The network of Cairngorms National Park Rangers that is being formed uses the existing rangers and countryside staff already employed on private estates and by councils throughout the Cairngorms area.

From dragonflies to Antler Moths



The Glenlivet Wildlife Recording group met for several training events over the last year, which saw local experts from various initiatives and groups come to Glenlivet to share their knowledge and expertise.

Events included water vole survey technique, dragonfly and damselfly identification and bat and moth surveying. The group have had the chance to get to grips with some new recording techniques and use of equipment from bat detectors and moth traps to the humble kitchen colander!

The events have also resulted in helping build a better picture of the wildlife that is found at Glenlivet, with new species of dragonflies being recorded and over

30 different species of moths being caught in one evening alone. The catch included the antler moth named for its distinctive white antler-shaped markings, which can often be seen flying in the daytime. All these records, along with any wildlife sightings are now recorded into an online wildlife recording database that was developed by local man David Newland.

To view the wildlife sightings logged so far visit www.glenlivetestate.co.uk and follow the 'wildlife' link and then click on 'species distribution maps'. Anyone can record onto the database over the internet – but a log-on is required which can be obtained from the Ranger Service. It is an easy system to use and the more people that use it and record sightings the better!



Squirrel sightings sought!

We would like to have a better understanding of the red squirrel distribution at Glenlivet.

This will enable us to feed information into national projects such as the Scottish Squirrel Survey which is investigating the distribution of red squirrels and their habitat and also monitoring the spread of grey squirrels (which can carry the deadly squirrel pox virus) through Scotland. If you are interested in helping with this work please note down all red squirrel sightings along with the grid reference (or a very detailed location description), the date seen and hand your record into the Glenlivet estate office, or alternatively log sightings via the on-line recording database.

New countryside signs

Work is in progress to update and renew many of the information signs, and other signs on the estate. These ongoing improvement works will help visitors find their way around the estate, understand more about the special qualities of Glenlivet and encourage them to stay longer in the area. The familiar 'Welcome to Glenlivet' information panels at car parks and picnic sites have recently been replaced along with the estate entrance signs. The Crown Estate also worked in partnership with the Farming Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) Scotland, to produce new wader panels for the Tomintoul Circular Walk.

Nicky Penford, former local FWAG advisor, said: "The wetland and rough grassland areas either side of the Conglass Water are renowned for their breeding populations of Curlews, Oystercatchers, Lapwings and Redshanks and these new signs help walkers to recognise the distinctive characteristics of these wonderful birds, which bring the skies alive when they return each spring to breed." Other new information panels are currently in preparation for the information point at the Lecht road junction and The Crown Estate is working with the Cairngorms National Park Authority to renew the displays at the Estate Office and Information Centre in Tomintoul. It is hoped that all of this work will continue to help promote Glenlivet to visitors, and help people to enjoy and learn more about the natural and cultural heritage of Tomintoul and Glenlivet.



Glenlivet forests' sustainable status reconfirmed

Since the 1990s the environmental impact of forest management has been of international concern.

The Crown Estate recognised one way to provide assurance was through a process known as forest certification, involving independent verification against a published standard which defines sustainable forest management.

The Crown Estate was first awarded certification in 2000, with Glenlivet being one of the sites regularly inspected. In 2008 a full independent audit was carried out again at Glenlivet by the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS). Meeting the UKWAS certification means that The Crown Estate forests and any forest products are able to display the internationally recognised logo of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) - the 'tree-tick', indicating sustainable forest management.

UKWAS provides a single common standard for use within forest certification schemes operating in the UK. The standard generally prescribes what must be achieved overall, with different sections each addressing a specific aspect of woodland management:

1. Compliance with the law and conformance with the requirements of the certification standard
2. Management planning
3. Woodland design: creation, felling and replanting
4. Operations
5. Protection and maintenance
6. Conservation and enhancement of biodiversity
7. The community
8. Forestry workforce



Certificate no.
SGS-FM/COC-0535
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Further information about UKWAS can be found at www.ukwas.org.uk/standard/background_information/index.html

Forest management last year



An ambitious 12 month work programme included the removal and replanting of part of Cairn Ellick and Chapeltown forest plantations meeting aims of the Long Term Forest Plan. The timber had previously been left uncut due to low commercial quality and access difficulties, but more favourable markets last winter for low value small roundwood allowed a large part of the felled timber to go by boat to Sweden and Belgium.

A large tree planting programme was undertaken last winter, partially funded by the Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme (SFGS), which provided grant aid towards

replanting costs of certain areas. About 100ha of woodland was felled comprising blocks at Cairn Ellick, Clashnoir, Auchriachan, The Carrachs (Chapelton), Carn Daimh and Croughly.

Following ground preparation, more than 370,000 trees were planted across about 120ha, most of these were planted to restock the recently felled sites. The SFGS provided £185,000 towards the cost of this replanting. The SFGS scheme has now ceased and future funding for such projects will now be through the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP).

The forestry year ahead

In line with the Long Term Forest Plan, work continues on restructuring the commercial plantations across the Glenlivet Estate. The plantations were all established during the 1950s and 1960s and consequently the even-aged nature of the woodlands can create difficulties for forest management, particularly in exposed areas where the trees are susceptible to wind-blow during gales. Peter Jones, Smiths Gore Forestry Manager said: "The aim is to diversify the woodland structure by felling areas early, replanting and creating a more mixed forest of different ages and species. This can help provide employment and maintain long term revenue from timber, as well as increase landscape and biodiversity value, opportunities for recreation and other community benefits."



New local harvesting business

A new company, Tomintoul Harvesting Ltd, has been formed by local man Andy Duffus. The Duffus family have been long-term tenants of The Crown Estate, farming at Auchriachan for many years. Andy has invested in a harvesting machine and with son Sam, is now working locally as a forest contractor. Andy, who has long experience of working in forestry said: "There was insufficient work for the whole family on the farm. Sam has recently left school and wanted to stay and work in the area. I have been considering for some time if there was an opportunity for us to work together in our own forestry business and with the help of The Crown Estate and Euroforest I have been able to start up this new enterprise which will hopefully ensure there is a future for all of us working in the forests. Sam was involved in the Rural Skills course at Speyside High School much of which was taught in partnership with the Glenlivet Estate Ranger Service. He was very keen to continue working in a rural business when he left school and we are delighted this opportunity has arisen."

A significant proportion of the harvesting work at Glenlivet is now being carried out by Tomintoul Harvesting, through partner Euroforest. Euroforest is a specialist company which carries out all the woodland harvesting (felling) work and marketing of the cut timber on behalf of the Estate. It organises the harvesting contractors and timber hauliers and also sells the timber on The Crown Estate's behalf across the north of Scotland and to Europe. It is the policy of The Crown Estate, as well as a requirement of UKWAS, to use local businesses whenever possible thus supporting sustained local employment.



Sam and Ben Duffus

For further information about forest management activities please contact Peter Jones at the Glenlivet Estate Office in Tomintoul.

Tel 01807 580 799
(or Fochabers office 01343 823009)

Board visit to Glenlivet



(L to R) Jamie Evans-Freke, Sir Ian Grant, Charlie Reid & Fiona Simpson at Laggan Farm, Auchindoun.

A visit to the Glenlivet Estate by The Crown Estate Board in September was marked by a celebratory reception.

The Crown Estate visits a number of its rural estates every year on a regular rolling programme, with the last visit to Glenlivet having taken place in 2006. Board members toured the estate, accompanied by managing agents Smiths Gore and representatives from The Crown Estate's Scottish office. They visited a number of tenant farmers to view current farm operations and learn how their businesses are being developed.

The Crown Estate held an evening reception at Glenlivet Distillery which was attended by around 120 people. Tenants and their families joined the Board and guests Richard Lochhead MSP and Angus Robertson MP for dinner and dancing.

Chairman and Scottish Commissioner Sir Ian Grant gave a speech to thank all present on what was his final Board visit to Glenlivet before he steps down from his role at The Crown Estate in January.

Rural Development opportunities

The Crown Estate is keen to work with local communities and business partners to help develop rural areas through the Scottish Government's Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP).

The SRDP is a £1.6 billion programme of economic, social and environmental measures designed to promote development in rural areas and empower communities over the next six years. It brings together a range of formerly separate support schemes, including those covering farming, forestry, rural tourism and business.

Alan Laidlaw, Head of New Business Development for the Rural Estate, said the programme was a real opportunity to consider collaborative or business focused projects. "The scheme can contribute to regional priorities and deliver national outcomes, such as making Scotland greener, wealthier and fairer. Possible projects could include renewable technology or improved public access," he said.

At Glenlivet several local farmers have already been successful in gaining SRDP grants through the land management options, and projects are already underway on the ground including the enhancement of field margins through hedgerow planting and improved water course management and the creation of farm ponds. The Crown Estate has also worked in partnership with other tenant farmers to enable them to gain funding for replacement farm buildings.

The local managing agents or members of the rural team in the Edinburgh office are available to discuss potential SRDP applications from individual tenants or members of the local communities.



Maintenance team foreman retires

Jimmy Gordon retired in May 2009 after 44 years from his position as supervisor of the six-strong Fochabers and Glenlivet Estates maintenance squad. In that time Jimmy moved from salmon fishing into joinery and finally to team management. Jimmy's father and grandfather also worked for The Crown Estate and Jimmy has never regretted following their example.

A special event at the Spey Bay Centre marked Jimmy's retirement with the presentation of a Long Service Award. His award, from the Scottish Rural Property and Business Association (SRPBA) was presented by the association's chairman Luke Borwick and chief executive Doug



(L to R) Andrew Wells, Luke Borwick, Jimmy Gordon & Doug McAdam

McAdam on behalf of the association and The Crown Estate.

Stuart Copland has been appointed as the new maintenance team supervisor. Stuart is already a familiar face around Glenlivet and Fochabers as he has worked as a part of the maintenance squad for the past five years.

Joining the team as maintenance worker is new member of staff Lee Hickson.

Smiths Gore staff

Smiths Gore are the Glenlivet Estate land agents. Jamie Evans-Freke is now the managing agent having recently taken over from Rachel Bromby who has moved on from her position. Jamie is supported by assistant William Hawes. Peter Jones, Senior Forest Manager, now manages Glenlivet's in-hand forestry.

Jamie can be contacted at Smiths Gore on 01343 823000.



The Glenlivet countryside team

Based in the Estate office in Tomintoul, the Glenlivet countryside team works hard to protect and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the Estate and maintain and promote its visitor facilities and infrastructure. Countryside Manager, Vicky Hilton, co-ordinates a wide range of projects and tasks aimed at encouraging visitors to explore, enjoy and learn more about Glenlivet's wonderful landscapes and many of these projects are developed in partnership with other agencies and the local community. Maintenance of the waymarked trails and associated gates, picnic sites etc, is the work of part-time Ranger Alan Linee, who also organises and oversees the work of volunteers and schools groups carrying out practical work on the estate. Back in the office the Countryside Business Assistant, provides support and also acts as a receptionist for the information centre. Andrew Wells, The Crown Estate's Head of Countryside Management based in Edinburgh, helps guide the strategic direction of Estate's Countryside and forestry work and oversees major projects.



Vicky Hilton and Alan Linee



The Lecht mine

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Across Glenlivet Estate there is a range of historic sites and buildings waiting to be explored. Here we feature the Lecht mine, easily reached by a pleasant short walk from the car park on the Lecht road.

- Iron ore was first mined at the Lecht in 1730 by York Buildings Company of London. The mine was abandoned in 1737 due to substantial losses.
- The mined ore was transported on horseback across the Avon at the Fordmouth-Lynachork ford, and then over the Dorback Hills to Nethy Bridge. Wood from the Abernethy Forest was used to smelt it down into "Strathdoun (Strathavon) pigs".
- The mine was re-opened in 1841 by the Duke of Richmond as a manganese mine, local stories tell that the Minister of Corgarff had to lend his bull to help drag the new heavy rollers over the Lecht Pass. However following the importation of manganese ore from Russia, the price fell from £8 per ton to an uneconomical £3 per ton, and the mine was closed for a final time in 1846.
- At the peak of activity over 60 men and boys worked at the mine and it was, and still is, the largest manganese mine ever worked in Scotland.
- In 1863 there was nearly a reprieve for the old mine when samples of iron ore were sent to James Morrison, Manager of the Ferryhill Iron Works, Co Durham, for assessment. He would gladly have taken 50,000 tons per annum, and all that was needed to secure viability for the re-opening of the mine was a railway link to Tomintoul, but in that time of economic retrenchment no-one could be found to back the proposed iron ore railway.
- The foundations of some other buildings can still be seen, but only the mine building has survived as it was very solidly built to carry the water wheel and heavy machinery.
- The mine building was restored and reroofed and interpretation about the mine workings installed in a joint project between The Crown Estate and Moray Council.

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