

KEY EVENTS August—October 2014

COUNCIL MEETINGS Held on the last Monday of the month. If you would like to attend or have something you would like to put on the agenda, please contact bailiesofbennachie@mail.com

WORK PARTIES Held on the first Saturday of the Month (not Jan/Feb)
Details are on our Website Events or contact bailiesofbennachie@mail.com

MOTH IDENTIFICATION

Saturday 23rd August 2014 Bennachie Centre Carpark 10am-12noon
Hosted by Dr Mark Young, County recorder for North Aberdeenshire
Event Free, but normal parking charges apply.

THE MAIDEN STONE OPERA

Friday 5th & Saturday 6th September 2014 @ 1pm & 3pm
Start at Bennachie Centre, Tickets £5, and under 26 years old free
Tickets can be purchased from Aberdeen Box Office or the Bennachie Centre
The Maiden Stone composed by Joe Stollery is based on the legend of the Maiden Stone, with words by Huntly poet Catriona Yule.

WHISPERS IN THE WOODS Composed by Petra Vergunst
Saturday 13 September 2014, Poetry walk @ 1.30pm
Performance outside the Bennachie Centre @ 3 pm
FREE event

BAILIES OF BENNACHIE AGM,

Thursday 25th September 2014, Chapel of Garioch Hall 7.30pm
All welcome. An excellent opportunity to catch up with what the Bailies have been doing over the last year.
Followed by entertaining talks by several active members of the Bennachie Landscapes Project

BAILIES CEILIDH with "Danse Macabre"

Saturday 25th October 2014
Chapel of Garioch Hall 8pm to midnight
All ages welcome. Please bring your own snacks and drinks and get ready to dance!
Tickets £8 Adult, £20 Family
from Bennachie Centre or email bailiesofbennachie@mail.com

For **more** details of all Events **please** go to our Website or Facebook Page



LIKE our Facebook page and keep up to date with News and Events

www.bailiesofbennachie.co.uk

email- bailiesofbennachie@mail.com



Charity No SC 013298

2014 Newsletter

ANNUAL UPDATE

from Jackie Cumberbirch, Senior Bailie

After our 40 year celebrations of last year we are now in a consolidation year. The Bennachie Landscapes Project is going well. The Field Archaeology Group meet every fortnight during the summer months and have been working at Keig, Druminnor and on Bennachie. The Archive Group, as well as doing a lot of research on the hill, put on a great exhibition in April at the Bennachie Centre. The display banners from this exhibition are now being displayed at various locations in Aberdeenshire including Inverurie Garden Centre and Aberdeenshire Council's Woodhill House.

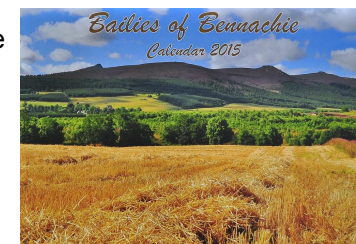
Colin Shepherd continues as the project coordinator and has been working with both Keig and Kintore Primary Schools. In September he will continue working with Kemnay Academy pupils, which continues the work of (Aoife) Leaf Gould who has now left the project to get married and live on Skye.

Our links with Aberdeen University continue to develop despite the lack of funding this year; 2014 is about getting reports written and work published! If you would like to get involved with the Bennachie Landscapes Project please contact us.

In 2014 we have been running several Bush Craft Workshops for young adults as we are aware that we need to involve and attract younger people into the Bailies. These have been going well. In addition to these workshops we have run several Hill Navigation Workshops and also in the summer we have run sessions looking at Birds and Plants, on Bennachie which we hope to develop in future years. Please Help us. We really do need to hear from Bailies who are willing to give us a hand—from helping run events, surveys on the hill, marketing etc. Please let us know if you can help in any way.

CALENDAR

We would like to thank everyone who donated photos for the 2015 Bailies Calendar which is on sale now at local shops. If you would like to purchase a Calendar, you can download an order form from our website or contact Ann Baillie Tel: 01467 643735
The Calendar Committee would like your photos to use for our 2016 Calendar. If you have any photos you think are suitable please e-mail them to us at bailiesofbennachie@mail.com



PEAT CORE & POLLEN ANALYSIS by Dr Ed Schofield Univ. of Aberdeen

As several of you may recall, around this time last year the Bailies of Bennachie assisted staff from the Department of Geography & Environment, University of Aberdeen, with the collection of a peat core from Moss Grieve, immediately east of the summit of Oxen Craig. The samples were taken so that the fossil pollen preserved with the peat column could be investigated. This technique – known as pollen analysis – can provide information about how vegetation communities growing on and around the hill have changed over time.

For your information, here is a brief account of progress to date towards this goal. The peat at Moss Grieve is surprisingly deep – almost five metres – and radiocarbon dating shows that, in this location at least, it has been accumulating continuously for around 7000 years. The pollen record contained in the peat shows that heather moorland has been present on the Bennachie Plateau since this time, but that mixed deciduous woodland (comprising Oak, Birch, Alder and Hazel) was



formerly much more extensive on the surrounding slopes and in lowland areas surrounding the hill. Sustained clearance of this woodland by the native peoples of NE Scotland appears to have commenced in the late Bronze Age (around 1000 BC), and accelerated through the Iron Age, leading to the development of a largely open and pastoral landscape. The Pictish period (first millennium AD) witnessed some regeneration of Birch woodland or scrub around Bennachie, suggesting that land-use

was slightly less intensive at this time. Agricultural improvements are evident over the last three centuries, indicated by the appearance of increasing numbers of cereal-type pollen grains (Oats and Barley). A dramatic rise in the pollen of Pine and Spruce in the uppermost 10-20 cm of the peat column reflects the recent planting of these trees by the Forestry Commission and within the grounds of private estates.

Research on the peat core will continue with the aim of improving the resolution of the analyses so that these reach a standard where they can be published in an international journal. Thanks go to SNH (Scottish Natural Heritage) and the SSW (Scottish Sculpture Workshop) for providing funding for the study under the programme 'Year of Natural Scotland 2013'.

MEMBERSHIP

If you pay your subscription annually this is now due. Please send cheques (£5) to Bailies of Bennachie, PO Box 11535, Huntly, AB54 9AD.

Why not make it easier and pay by Standing Order? You can now download a form from our website.

NEWSLETTER

To help us save on postage we can email the Newsletter to you next year. If you would like us to do this, please email your name & address to us, and write "Email Newsletter" in the subject line.

EXHIBITION

by Chris Foster

April saw the launching of the Bennachie Landscapes Project Exhibition at the Bennachie Centre. The main focus of this exhibition was the excavations and



research of the Colony and included two display cabinets of artefacts from the sites. A set of six banners illustrated the work undertaken over the last year and described the personal experiences of some of the volunteers involved in the project. Throughout the month there were also special event days providing a more in-depth explanation of this and other work currently being undertaken. The exhibition banners are now being circulated at local libraries,

schools, garden centres, etc in the Bennachie area and will be on display at the AGM on Thursday 25th September.

BAILIES WORK PARTIES

by Mick Taylor

The last year has seen the work parties busy as ever with maintenance on the paths from Rowantree and the Bennachie Centre up to Mither Tap, constructing cross drains and clearing existing drainage culverts and ditches to prevent path erosion. Cutting back vegetation on the Millstone Hill paths network was also undertaken.

Two work parties were carried out to create a short path to a picnic bench with a view of Mither Tap in Dr Danny Gordon's Widdie.

This path should gradually blend in and naturalise. Hopefully more work can be done to extend this path in the future.

Tree planting was undertaken around the newly created pond not far from the Centre. This will be an ongoing project with lots more to do.

On other work parties, we trimmed the willow sculpture at the Back o' Bennachie and carried out tree thinning around the hill.

To find out more about work parties look on our web site or e-mail us.



WILDLIFE POND

In March the Forestry Commission Scotland dug a new wildlife pond not far from the Bennachie Centre. In April the Bailies work party planted hazel, willow and alder in the area around the pond. Already there are signs of wildlife using the pond such as frog and toad spawn, pond skaters, fresh water shrimps, grey wag-tails and there was even a brief visit from a pair of mallards! In the future, we will plant some native pond plants too. If you are walking in the area and see any wildlife using the pond, please let us know or post a message and photo on our Facebook page.

Whilst we were planting the trees, we discovered a hoard of ladies dress shoes and work boots (about 50 shoes but no pairs). We have yet to decide what to do with them!