



The Bailies of Bennachie Annual Report 2018

We care about Bennachie, its natural environment, history and culture -
protecting this unique landscape for future generations

A DATE TO REMEMBER

BAILIES OF BENNACHIE AGM: THURSDAY 21ST MARCH 2019, 7.30PM
AT THE GARIOCH HERITAGE CENTRE, INVERURIE



The AGM will be followed by an entertaining talk entitled
“Bennachie - a catalyst...”
presented by **Mark Stephen**

Mark Stephen is Radio Scotland's most prolific features presenter. He presents the highly popular weekly outdoor magazine programme *Out of Doors* on Saturday mornings. Mark kindly narrated the Bennachie Colony app. for the Bailies.

Mark's talk will be about how growing up in the shadow of Aberdeenshire's most iconic hill sparked a lifelong interest in history, geography, geology, wildlife, culture and heritage around the world. This promises to be an entertaining talk!

New and existing members – All are welcome. Refreshments available.

2017/19 Trustees

Chairperson and Senior Bailie: Jackie Cumberbirch (from 13th March, 2017)

Treasurer: Brian Cornock (from 13th March, 2017)

Minute Secretary: Rosemary Sievwright (from 13th March, 2017)

Membership Secretary, Web Master and Social Media: Donna Taylor (from 13th March, 2017)

Publications: Ann Baillie (from 13th March, 2017)

Work Party Co-ordinators: Harry Leil (from 13th March, 2017)

and Willie Linklater (from 22nd March, 2018)

Annual Report Editor: Sue Taylor (from 13th March, 2017)

Other Trustees:

Margaret Garden (from 15th January, 2018); Angela Groat (from 13th March, 2017);

Dave Peter (from 22nd March, 2018); Andrew Wainwright (from 13th March, 2017)

Please see our web site for more details www.bailiesofbennachie.co.uk

or write to:

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Contact details:

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chair@bailiesofbennachie.co.uk (Senior Bailie)

workparties@bailiesofbennachie.co.uk



Cover photo: Mither Tap courtesy of Donna Taylor



Report from the Chair

Please try this app yourself and send us your feedback. Mark Stephen who is speaking at the Bailies AGM in March 2019 kindly narrated this app.

Over the summer, after a successful tree planting event in April, the kailyard and foraging woodland, both near to Shepherds Lodge on the Colony trail, grew well and, luckily, were untouched by the small fire on Bennachie in July. In late summer, apples appeared on the young apple trees and a few small pots of raspberry jam were made from the fruit bushes in the Kailyard. As the years progress, we hope to obtain more fruit from the shrubs and trees planted!

In June, July and August the **Bennachie Landscapes Fieldwork Group** located and investigated the 'Bede House' on the Pittodrie Estate (see page 6 for interim report). The Bede House dates from late medieval times and provided refuge for the old and infirm of the estate. The work was carried out with the kind permission of Macdonald Hotels. The Bailies funded this dig and hope to continue this work next year if we can obtain funding.

The **Bailies' work party** did a lot of work on the hill this year under the leadership of Mick, Harry and Willie. The group also met on some weekdays to undertake additional work on drystone dykes and colony buildings.

Several Bailies volunteered to keep the **Rowantree toilets** open and running during the spring, summer and autumn months. Thanks to Greg, Nicola, Anne, Claire, Liz, Ruth, Lynda and Margaret.

The Bailies ran several new events this year including a visit to see forestry machinery working on the hill, geese watching, a look at the bogs on Bennachie and a very informative talk on wild cats in the mountains of Spain presented by two visiting Spanish students who were surveying around the hill - Héctor Ruiz Villar & Ana Morales González.

Looking to the future, in Spring 2019, we plan to employ a part time outreach officer to both promote the work of the Bailies and build relationships with all the different landowners on the hill. We will also be launching a new web site. In June 2019, we plan to run a big event – **MT 518** - on Mither Tap which will involve joining hands around Mither Tap summit so look out for more details..... Please do get involved in this or other activities or become a TRUSTEE!

Jackie Cumberbirch
Senior Bailie

2018 I find it difficult to believe that yet another year has gone by since our last AGM in March 2018! Thanks to all Bailie volunteers, Trustees and others who work with the Bailies of Bennachie. Here are some of the most notable occurrences during the past year.

After three years of continuous campaigning, the **Save Bennachie** Group found out in October that the A96 dualling would not be close to Bennachie. This was largely thanks to **Save Bennachie** who made the case very clear that Bennachie is a very special area in the north-east of Scotland.

Many in the **Bennachie Wildlife Group** helped to gather information about plants and animals found on the hill and are still actively gathering information using trail cameras and undertaking surveys from pine marten to red squirrel. You can read more about their work in this report and follow our Bailies of Bennachie Facebook page for recent wildlife videos.

In June, with help from Inch Primary School and Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Alison Sutherland, the Bailies launched our first FREE mobile application about Bennachie - named the **Bennachie Colony app** (see back cover). The app aims to help users, aged 10 years and over, to glimpse into the past and understand more about the lives of the Bennachie Colonists. Heritage Lottery funded this project which the Bailies ran in association with Smart History.

Treasurer's Report

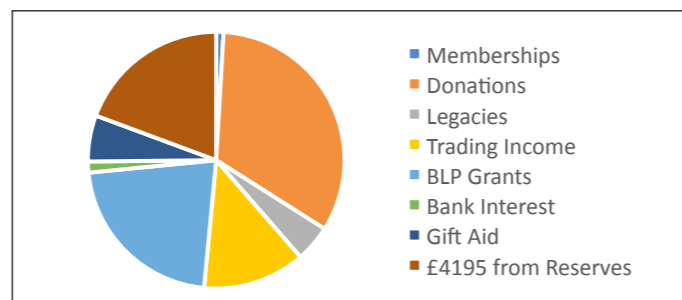
The Bailies unincorporated charity (SC013298) accounts for the 17 month period ending on 31 Dec 2017 (as presented at the last AGM held on 22 Mar 2018) were acknowledged by OSCR, the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, on 28 Mar 2018.

SC013298 was dissolved on 31 December 2017 and all financial matters for the Bailies transferred to the SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) SC047231, with the financial year now the calendar year. The current report is for calendar year 2018. Two pie plots here show a split of income and expenditure for 2018. They are complicated by the carryover of funds from 2 substantial grant aided projects ('HLF' and 'PPL') which officially ran for the 2017 calendar year but where some expenditure occurred in 2018. Significant grants were also received from Aberdeen University, to pay for work within the 'BLP' (Bennachie Landscapes Project).

This year the two pie plots have been shown at the same scale, which highlights the £4195 of funding from

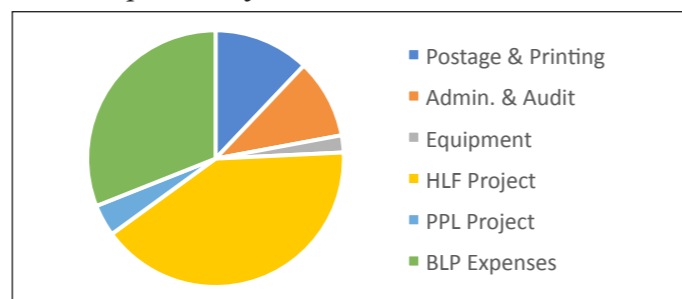
reserves required to fulfil the agreed project expenditures. At 31 December 2018, the Bailies had reserves of £144,240, which compares with £148,435 held at 31 December 2017. The 2018 figures are provisional and remain to be checked by the independent auditor.

Brian Cornock
Treasurer



Above: Source of funds for 2018 - £21,681.

Below: Expenditure for 2018 - £21,681.



Workparty News

It's been another busy year for the Bailies' work parties. We have done a variety of jobs looking after the hill. We planted a lot of trees, cleared all the water bars and drains on the Rowantree path, removed a lot of scrub and broom and cleared a lot of scrub around the pond. We also did a lot of clearance on the Heather Brig to Mither Tap path. Some dykes were rebuilt and we pruned the Willow Structure at Back o' Bennachie. Some maintenance took place on the path from the Bennachie Centre to the Mither Tap. The jobs on Bennachie are never ending. We try to keep all the paths well maintained and litter free and try to liaise with landowners and stakeholders whenever possible. Aye, there is always plenty work to do on the hill. Bennachie is so important to Aberdeenshire!

Work Party Co-ordinators
Harry Leil, Mick Taylor & Willie Linklater



(Photo: Donna Taylor.)

Membership & Marketing

The current membership for the Bailies of Bennachie is 2240. We lose some members each year due to members moving and not informing us. If we can no longer contact them they are removed from our database. So, please remember, if you move or change your email address, let us know so that we can send you the Annual Report and keep you informed of Events and Projects. We are keen to encourage young members to join the Bailies and volunteer to help on some of our projects: after all they are the future 'Protectors of the Hill'! If you know of any youngsters with a love of the outdoors, please encourage them to join us.

We are currently working with Globalweb to update our Website. We hope to make it user-friendly for mobiles and tablets as well as being easy to navigate through the various pages. We are adding an online shop to make sales of our books and calendars easier, as well as online registration for new membership and donations. The new website will be live in the new year. If you have any ideas or comments about the new website please email info@bailiesofbennachie.co.uk.

Our Facebook page now has 1665 followers, and we often have photos of the hill posted to us which is great. There are a lot of followers outwith the Bennachie area who love to see the Hill. The power of Facebook is amazing - one post of the fire on the hill reached 62000 people! Facebook is an easy way to keep up with what the Bailies are doing and see what events we have planned, so please follow us and help us reach 2000!

Donna Taylor
Membership and Social Media Secretary



As you may know the recently announced route options for the dualling of the A96 no longer present a direct threat to the Bennachie massif, which is a huge relief to the Save Bennachie Campaign. It is, however, disappointing that one of the route options does impinge slightly on the Special Landscape Area (SLA) which has recently been granted.

In view of this the Save Bennachie Core Team has decided to suspend direct involvement in the ongoing public debate about the new route options. We shall nevertheless remain a properly constituted group. We shall maintain our contacts with Amey Arup Joint Venture and Transport Scotland so as to remain informed about developments in the process over the next twelve months until a preferred route option is announced towards the end of next year. In this way should the threat to Bennachie return, we would be in a position to take action.

The Save Bennachie Core Team would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Bailies of Bennachie for all your support as a crucial member of the Save Bennachie Alliance throughout the three years of the Campaign.

Margaret Garden
Save Bennachie

Publications

The Bailies produce a range of merchandise, mainly publications. These enable the Bailies to disseminate new knowledge and research in order to better inform and enhance protection of the landscape. Buying this material directly supports the aims of the Bailies and permits the continuance of research and education focussed on the hill. Further details from:

www.bailiesofbennachie.co.uk/publications

Also available is the
Bennachie Tartan:

www.bailiesofbennachie.co.uk/bennachie-tartan

The Bailies' Library and Archives

The Bailies Library and Paper Archives can be consulted all year, free of charge, at the Garioch Heritage Centre (GHC) at the Inverurie Loco Works. The Library comprises just over 800 items relating to Bennachie and the surrounding area. The Archives date back to the founding of the Bailies in 1973, and are housed in two filing cabinets. They consist of working papers and notes, drafts and original manuscripts for published works, and photographs. Included is much data of long-term value on the history, cultural and natural environment of Bennachie. We owe a debt of gratitude to Myrtle Anderson-Smith for her thorough, professional cataloguing of both resources, to Ann Baillie for coordinating the move from Bennachie, to Duncan Downie for installing the book cabinets in their new home, and to Alan, Nora and GHC volunteers for their assistance.

Archival consultations this year have included work on a Master's degree dissertation on Bennachie, and viewings of the Cormack Collection of local photographs which are available digitally on the Mac computer. These images vividly convey scenes of the area at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, themed largely on Bennachie and Kemnay, where Sarah Cormack resided for the latter part of her photographic career. Use of the Library and Archives is expected to increase as

the availability of these resources becomes more widely known. Anyone with a particular Bennachie-related interest, whether academic or personal, is recommended to contact info@bailiesofbennachie.co.uk for further information on how to find relevant material.

An immediate focus will be on familiarising volunteer staff with the materials and procedures for assisting visitors to the collections. At the same time, we are calling for Bailies volunteers to help with two main tasks: (1) to rationalise the Library holdings, which currently include a number of duplicate items and some titles which do not relate closely enough to the theme of the collection; (2) to ensure that the paper archives are managed consistently with the principles established for the Digital Archive. The ideal situation would be for a small group to meet at GHC to progress this work. If you are interested, and can spare a morning or afternoon on a regular basis, please contact info@bailiesofbennachie.co.uk.

In conclusion, there is no better way to round off this note than by repeating Ann Baillie's words from 2017 – "I hope you will find the time to support not only the Bailies but the fine work the Garioch Heritage Society is doing, and go along and see your Library".

Colin Miller



This view of Kemnay with Bennachie in the background was taken in 1908. It shows the kirk with both the smiddy and the joiner's establishment adjacent to each other - both necessary artisans in any community at that time. (Photo: Sarah Cormack, Caption: Duncan Downie.)

The Colony Kailyard - Year 2

Another year has passed since we first started recreating part of the old Kailyard at Shepherds Lodge, one of the derelict colony houses on the slopes of Bennachie. When last year's Annual Report went to print the preparation of the plot was near completion and we were waiting for the delivery of the fruit bushes for a mid-October planting. However, owing to the late delivery by the suppliers, this did not take place until the end of November, just as the snowy weather arrived! On the planting day we joined forces with the volunteers who had come along to help plant trees and shrubs for the Foraging Forest project around Shepherds Lodge. It was a lovely bright

and sunny day but there had been snow and frost over night, making it bitterly cold. Wonderfully, a lunch was laid on for all the workers who were treated to hot soup, rolls, cakes and a good blether around a roaring fire. This reinvigorated us for the afternoon's work and was well appreciated on such a cold day. Full marks to the organisers! By the end of the day various bushes of gooseberry, blackcurrant, redcurrant and whitecurrant had been planted, plus two varieties of raspberries. We were rather anxious for the newly planted fruit bushes, having been planted in such icy conditions, and then followed by a hard winter and dry summer. We did lose two of the gooseberry bushes and one of the raspberry canes, all of which have since been replaced. This spring we also added a crown of Prince Albert Rhubarb.

The kailyard has grown well this year and we are at a stage where we just need to maintain what is there. We have erected a fence to deter deer, dogs, etc., which seems to be working well. Other jobs during the year have included weeding, cutting back the grass in and around the kailyard, watering, pruning, and even harvesting, although a very small amount of fruit, just enough to make 3 mini pots of raspberry jam!

The main objective of this project is not to produce vast quantities of fruit (although that would be good), but to practise and observe its cultivation using methods we consider would have been used by the Colonists. Circumstances sometimes dictate that



Making the brash fence around the kailyard. (Photo: Chris Foster.)

we have to deviate from what facts we know, but we follow as close as possible to the methods we believe the Colonists would have employed. For example the brash fencing we have built around our section of the Kailyard. Being skilled dyke builders, the Colonists would have built a stone dyke around the kailyard, evidence of which is still there. We, on the other hand, lacking these skills required a quick cheap alternative while keeping within the limitations of what the Colonists might have done if stone was not available. Therefore, a fence constructed from the brash laying around the site seemed a logical alternative.

What might it have been like living and working on the hill? What problems might the Colonists have encountered within the Kailyard and how might they have dealt with them? While studying the history of the colony these are often questions we ask ourselves. By replicating this Kailyard as close as possible to what it might once have been, we hope to come closer to learning and understanding what life in the colony would have been like. A diary will be kept over the next 3 years from which we will transcribe our findings.

Visitors are always welcome, so if you are visiting Bennachie pop along and view what is going on.

Chris Foster
Bennachie Landscapes Project

The Bede House Project

The first edition of the Ordnance Survey map of the Bennachie area shows a small rectangle enclosed by a larger rectangle on the hillside overlooking Pittodrie. It is marked, 'Bede house (Remains of)'. In a book about Bennachie written by I.A. McConnochie about twenty-five years after the Ordnance Survey, a description of the Bede house is given. Intriguingly, it does not match the OS depiction of it in any way. The Bailies decided that this was a mystery that needed investigating.

Background research was carried out alongside field surveys in advance of excavation. The documentary searches provided a wealth of new detail along with the unexpected recognition of a seventeenth-century 'hospital' on the Pittodrie estate. This had gone largely un-noticed. Furthermore, the field surveys found a wealth of archaeological remains within the woodlands that had also gone unrecorded up until this time.

By the time the excavation began - overseen by Iain Ralston - during the school summer holidays, the mystery had, therefore, deepened. Instead of simply examining what a 'Bede house' looked like, it was no longer certain whether the structure shown on the OS maps was indeed a 'Bede house'. If it wasn't McConnochie's 'Bede house', what was it? Was it, in fact, the missing 'hospital'? Or, were the 'Bede house' and the 'hospital' one and the same structure? But, even if this was the case, what of McConnochie's description? Where were the structures that he described? Were they to be found within the extra archaeological remains found during the field survey?

Remarkably, many of these conflicting

descriptions and references appear to be well on the way to being answered as a result of this project. Excavations have recorded a fascinating three-celled structure of two storeys - the upper floor being accessed by a centrally-placed staircase facing the door. The building was approached by a nice cobbled path lying between a rather dramatic entrance-way lined by stone dykes. A series of steps in front of the door gave access to the garden yard.

The walls were very well made of local stone bonded by clay. Mortar was used internally for some construction purposes and the roof was slated. Each of the downstairs rooms - apart from the entrance 'vestibule' with staircase - had at least one window each that may have had glass. One window had been fitted with window bars. Doors were hung on pivot hinges.

It is likely that each of the rooms had a fire, though these would have needed 'hanging lums' fitted with a means of extracting the smoke via the upper storey. Such a system has been recorded elsewhere so appears to be possible. Secondary hearths were found in each of the rooms and these are assumed to have been made and used by the workmen dismantling the property or by casual users after the structure became derelict. The building had been dismantled very carefully with most of the materials having been removed for use elsewhere.

Finds from the excavation suggest a date range from the late 17th through to near the end of the 18th century. This fits with the foundation date for the 'hospital' and for the date of abandonment of the 'Bede house' recorded by McConnochie.

Many people visited the site during the period of the excavation, both on formal walks organised by the Bailies and as casual 'passers-by' out for a walk. Also, many volunteers experienced their first taste of digging and coming to terms with the methodologies employed. Full details of the findings will be reported in Bennachie Landscapes Series: 4 - available later in 2019.

The Bailies are very grateful to Macdonald Hotels for permitting the work to be carried out on their land and to Finlay Morrison (Estate & Property Manager) for all his help in making the excavation such a success.

Colin Shepherd
Bennachie Landscapes Project



Excavating and recording the stone dykes around the Bede house enclosure. (Photo: Iain Ralston.)

Druminnor Castle Excavations

This year was the seventh season of excavations at Druminnor Castle carried out by the Bennachie Landscapes Fieldwork Group. This resulted in an extremely busy year for the group as members attempted to balance the Bede house, Druminnor and a raft of other commitments.

Druminnor Castle was the original centre of operations of the powerful Lords of Forbes - still a major landowning family on Bennachie. Owing to the kind invitation of Alex Forbes - the present owner of Druminnor - the Bennachie Landscapes Project is able to explore past ecologies and landscape management methods on this historic estate. From the 13th century the Lordship encompassed the western end of the Garioch and spread south across the Correen-Bennachie ridge to the Don and beyond.

This year at Druminnor proved especially rewarding as the large - 130 square metres - trench number 2 was effectively completed. The complicated sequences recorded over the years were finally consolidated and a picture emerged of the development of this part of the site. We can now describe the development of the early 15th-century castle plan. It was roughly square in plan and utilised the earlier Great Tower for its north-west corner corner. The excavations have showed that thousands of tons of 'hardcore' were used to create a platform on which it was built and that defensive ditches enclosed it. It is probable that there was a rampart within the ditches and that a section of well-built walling may have been a formal entrance facade.

During the 16th century, a 'lower' courtyard was added that was built across one of the former ditches. The earlier entrance appears to have been replaced by a new one along a different side of the castle. It is possible that the earlier northern rampart and walling was laid out as a terrace to overlook a formal 'Renaissance' garden. (Though further work would be needed to confirm this hypothesis.)

Within the lower courtyard, a range of buildings was built against the inside of the now lengthened 'barmkin' wall. The small, corner structure needed to have one wall rebuilt as the first attempt had sunk into the soft fill of the former ditch over which it had been



The 16th-century walls of the lower courtyard buildings of Druminnor Castle being brought into the open after two centuries. (Photo: Iain Ralston.)

built. (Yes, they had builders like that in those days as well!) Its internal mortar floor also needed replacing for the same reason.

After this, in the 17th century, one of the buildings of the range was replaced by a larger structure. This was supplied with a well-made drain along its lower gable end that appears to have functioned in association with a longitudinal, central drain. The floor either side of this central drain was nicely cobbled and there were indications of post settings within the cobbles. The plan might suggest that the building was used as a stable. At a similar time, the small, corner building was also given a new drain, constructed in a similar fashion to that in the possible stable.

But, these improvements marked the hey-day of Druminnor and, although the Forbes families continued to control large parts of the North-east from their other estate centres - such as Tolquhon, Pitsligo and Newe - Druminnor was never again the centre of lordly influence. During the 18th century it fell into disrepair and the Lords of Forbes eventually built a new 'Castle Forbes' in the southern part of their demesne at Keig. Apart from the 'South Range', Druminnor was demolished in 1800 and has kept its secrets until these present excavations. It had, in fact, been so completely destroyed that all memory of its former size and grandeur had been erased with it.

Colin Shepherd
Bennachie Landscapes Project

Bailies of Bennachie Wildlife Group



Checking a pine martin box.

The Bailies set up the Bennachie Wildlife Group last year helped by a grant from the players of the People's Postcode Lottery. Throughout 2018 the group continued to discover more about local wildlife.

The group has trail cameras spread over Bennachie that record the wildlife living on the hill all year round. The cameras continue to show the importance of Bennachie as a home for many animals even if we don't see them very often because they are avoiding contact with people. The cameras collect data about these species in a very unobtrusive way without disturbing them. The cameras regularly take pictures of roe deer, badgers, foxes, pine martens and red squirrels and occasionally snap birds too. This wildlife information is valuable because the Bailies can use it to encourage wildlife-friendly management of the hill and to protect the hill from inappropriate developments. We are grateful to Forestry Commission Scotland and other landowners for giving us permission to locate our cameras on land they own.

Last February the group started helping Keziah Hobson from Aberdeen University with her PhD study on pine martens. Pine martens have re-appeared on Bennachie in the last decade after a long absence. Keziah's research is focusing on the recovery of pine martens, looking at how population density varies within landscapes with different land uses, as well as estimating

population demographics including individual survival, turnover, and recruitment. There is a socio-economic component in her research too, looking into the different costs and benefits of living alongside pine martens. The forests surrounding Bennachie are one of her three study areas, the other two are in the Borders and the Trossachs. The Bennachie wildlife volunteers have helped her put up feeder boxes baited with food to attract pine martens. A sticky patch on the inside of the lid of feeder box collects hairs from the back of the pine marten as it feeds on the



Roe deer captured on camera.

peanut bait. The volunteers collect these hair samples and send them to Keziah so that she can analyse their DNA. Keziah has been kept busy analysing the samples the group has collected so far but she has promised to give us an update on her progress soon.

This summer two very experienced wildlife researchers, Hector and Ana, came over from Spain to help Scottish Wildcat Action find out more about wild cats on Forestry Commission land in the North East. It was a real treat to attend their slideshow presentation describing their work on wild cats in the Cantabrian mountains in Northern Spain. Apparently, they can watch wild cats walking through mountain meadows in broad daylight. Here, in contrast, this incredibly hard-working pair spent many hours not finding cats until very near the end of their stay when they finally struck lucky and recorded a wild cat on one of their cameras.... but not on Bennachie.

Our resident tracking experts, Lizzie and Willow ran another mammal tracking course for the group. These inspirational courses are an excellent way to give local people the skills to identify signs and tracks of wildlife they hardly ever see. This evidence is collated by the North East Biological Records Centre (NESBReC) which manages a database of all wildlife for NE Scotland. It is the NESBReC data which is used for assessing the environmental impact of projects such as the dualling of the A96 or pylon routes or windfarms.

In June, John, our resident bird expert, led the always-popular dawn chorus walk. But the walk is no longer an introduction to the birds that can be heard and see but a more in depth discussion about which birds are singing and calling.

With permission from Dunecht estate, John also led the group to witness another astonishing dawn spectacle. 56,000 geese, almost all pink-footed geese, departing from their roost of Loch of Skene in late November, flying off to graze of the fields in the surrounding area. The visit generated quite a bit of discussion about how to count 56,000 geese accurately!

David, our resident plant expert, ran a master class on bogs on Bennachie for the group. Under David's expert tuition the group are no longer bamboozled by bogs and heathlands, but have expert discussions on plant taxonomy, habitat classification and management. And they are always keen to learn more.

We are now developing a programme for 2019. Everyone is welcome, all we ask is that people become members of the Bailies of Bennachie. If you want to join us please get in touch with wildlife.bennachie@btinternet.com. We keep in touch using email.

Jill Matthews

Plane Crash Memorial Event

The Bailies will be acknowledging the 80th anniversary of the first air crash on Bennachie on Sunday 1st September 2019.

It is planned that a walk will take place from the Bennachie Centre stopping near the site of the first crash. A time of reflection will be followed by traditional pipe music before the walkers head up and on to the cairn. This event also coincides with the 80th Anniversary of the start of the Second World War, the two young air crew being the first casualties of the Second World War.

The Bailies will have an exhibition in the Bennachie Centre from the beginning of August which will include information about the air crashes on Bennachie.

Ann Baillie
Trustee



The airmen's cairn on Bennachie.



The Bennachie App



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ON YOUR SMARTPHONE OR TABLET
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