



“A’ ken a’body likes me,
They widna climb if they didn’t,
The folks that come are a mixture,
The young, the aul’ and the wisn’t.

The view is worth the effort,
O’er bonnie Garioch side,
They a’ reach the same conclusion,
Fit a bonnie place tae bide.”

‘To my Litter Allies’ - Tom Michie



The Guardian of Bennachie Sir Maitland Mackie (2nd from left) with the three successive Senior Bailies (L-R) Dr Danny Gordon (Founder 1973-78), James MacKay (1978-82) and Algy Watson (1982-1985).

Bailies of Bennachie

Annual Report 2022

Trustee Chair Peter Stock reflects on a seminal year and looks forward to an exciting new era for the Baillies of Bennachie.

It is hard to believe that a year has passed since I was elected as the Chair of the Baillies of Bennachie. I assumed the role from Jackie Cumberbirch in March 2022, after her long and successful time at the helm. We wish her well and look forward to her renewed participation when the time is right.

In spring of last year, the Baillies were dealing with a number of issues, both internally and externally; the post Arwen and post Covid 19 aftermath, loss of trustees and team leaders, a growing awareness of trustees' moral and legal obligations and inefficient lines of communication.

All this was in the way of our ambition for our forthcoming 50th anniversary on May 9th, 2023, and our desire to mark the event appropriately.

Triggered by a workshop

in March, the trustees set about developing and implementing a fit-for-purpose governance system and kick off an initiative to ensure compliance with the GDPR legislation. A big effort led to the issue of our governance system in mid-June, in time for the bulk of the Baillies led summer activities on the hill.

We have also taken advantage of business systems developed during the lockdown for managing remote groups and have adopted TEAMS for our communications and our data sharing. We have put more robust insurances in place. Our new administration support service has streamlined trustees' workload and volunteer sign-up and we are very grateful for that support.

As mentioned above, we have had quite a turnover of personnel at trustee and volunteer levels. This led to

some curtailment of our activities in the spring. However, we have been successful in attracting and recruiting the right calibre of people to fill the gaps and get us back on the right footing. We are also working on consolidating and developing our relationships with Bennachie stakeholders.

We have started implementing some projects on the hill, namely the new bin stores around the Visitor Centre and the renewal of our tool-store container (as the original one was damaged in Storm Arwen.)

We anticipate that significant and important environmental projects will start to be rolled out in 2023.

A significant highpoint of the year was the receipt of a legacy which will stand the Baillies in good stead for many years to come (ref Treasurer's

report). Our 50th Anniversary has given us motive for special events and activities. We have commissioned Bennachie themed original piano music and created a compendium of traditional tunes (both free to download from our website), commissioned a play and plan an Open Event on May 20th in Inverurie Town Hall to celebrate our birthday. This event is open to everyone, will be compered by Mark Stephen and include musical performances, displays describing the Baillies' history and showcasing the projects we're working on.

The highlight for me this year has been the renewal and strengthening of

our purpose and aims. We are very fortunate that our founders and predecessor recorded their thoughts and activities in book form (The Book and Bennachie and Bennachie Again). I find I refer to these often to remind me of what we are about.

Over the 50 years, we have grown, shrunk but always adapted to the issues and changes of the day. In such a dynamic environment, it is both appropriate and useful to take time and sense check our aims and directions of travel.

We have adopted the tag line, 'A Voice for the Hill'. Everyone who hears it smiles, because they know we have embraced the essence of the Baillies

and its membership in this simple phrase (see pages 4-5).

In the Baillies, or any charity, a trustee, team leader or volunteer gives of their time freely. In these circumstances, our shared understanding of our aims, our behaviours towards each other and our sharing in successes from our collected efforts forms the glue that binds.

In closing I would like to thank the trustees, team leaders, volunteers and members of the Baillies of Bennachie for their contributions and their support.

We have a fantastic future ahead of us as we start our second half century and I look forward to meeting and working with you over the coming year.

"...the highlight for me this year has been the renewal and strengthening of our purpose and aims."

Peter Stock - Trustee, Chairperson





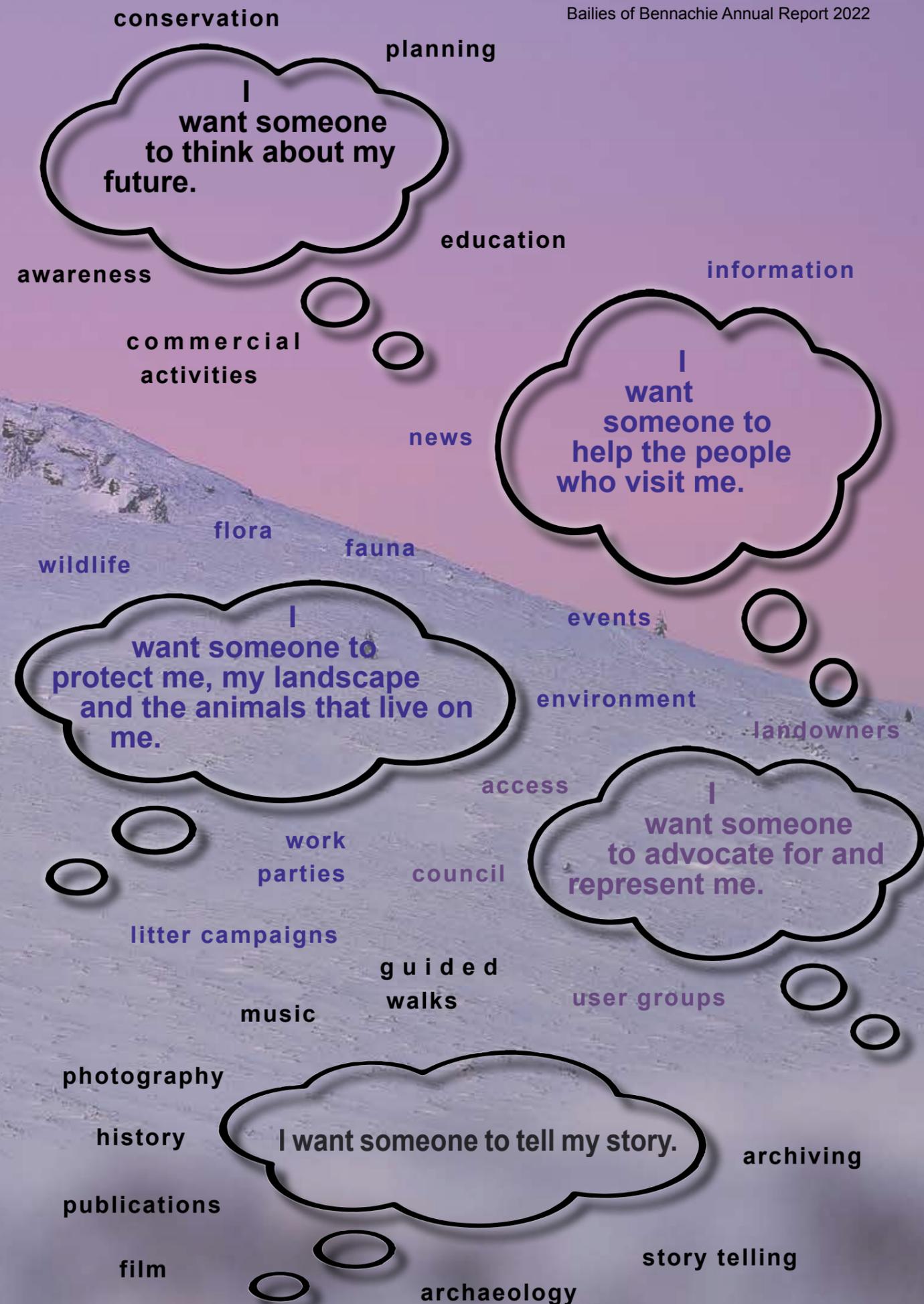
We expect that if you're reading this, you'll have a good understanding of who the Bailies are and what we do; non-members of the Bailies are very often much less familiar. We have decided to use our 50th anniversary as a great opportunity to update the purpose of the Bailies of Bennachie, very much based on our original constitution, but in the context of 'a voice for the hill'. From this point of view and overarching theme, we feel that all Bailies activities flow as

naturally as the Clachie Burn itself, everything from reviewing new planning applications to tackling litter, organising archaeological digs, and inspiring the next generation with fun and learning, to name a few. The graphic on the opposite page highlights what the hill might say if it had a voice, together with a few of the things we're actively involved in. Some Bailies activities, e.g. work parties and combating litter have been integral with our purpose and values since we were founded in 1973. This very flexible framework opens up lots of opportunities for the

TBailies to add new and exciting things in the future, for the benefit of the hill and everything it provides our community. Our logo has been updated accordingly and will be used in future messaging to attract new members and empower existing Bailies, volunteers and trustees. If Bennachie's voice resonates with you, please speak to us and let's work together to ensure that the next 50 years of Bailies activities are as successful for our hill as the last.

The Chair of the Bailies, Peter Stock explained 'A voice for the hill':

"This simple concept sums up our role as advocates for Bennachie, providing a resounding voice for the land, its history, archaeology, its flora and fauna which are at risk of being overlooked and suffering in modern society."



WORK PARTIES

“We are extremely encouraged to welcome a diverse group of new volunteers from a cross section of the general public.”

Willie Linklater & Kim Morgan - Trustees, Work Parties

PROTECT - MAINTAIN - ENHANCE

Work parties did not commence until May due to fallen trees and limited access to the hill, following Storm Arwen. Once work parties commenced, work included tree planting, path maintenance concentrating on higher priority areas, colony buildings tidy up and restoring the foraging woodland back to where it should be, following disruptions in work due to the pandemic.

Significant areas of work remain due to these unfortunate but necessary disruptions. Discussions will be held with other stakeholders to decide the best way to address these matters, including consideration being given to some mid-week work parties going forward.

OEG Offshore kindly donated a new container for storing our tools, following damage to the original one during Storm Arwen. This is being fitted out with new storage racking. Planned screening of the container with trestles and plants will hopefully conceal it in

the now treeless area. Alternative locations were considered for the container, unfortunately nowhere particularly suitable was identified. Some experienced volunteers understandably decided to retire from their volunteering roles following the pandemic, after years of loyal service. We are now extremely encouraged however to welcome a diverse group of new volunteers from a cross section of the general public, with their own varied reasons for supporting the work we do, joining the work parties. These volunteers bring a range of experience and skills, and all are very dedicated to support the Bailies' work parties. The group is bonding together well, with knowledge being

shared with those new to the working tools and methods involved. The last work party of 2022 had twenty volunteers, exceeding the total number of volunteers on any given day for many years. This has all been really rewarding for us involved in running the work parties.

We are delighted to welcome Kim Morgan as the new work party trustee coordinator, with the full handover of responsibilities currently ongoing.

We are still on the lookout for Team Leaders and volunteers, if either you or you know anyone who might be keen to help, please contact us. Work parties take place on the first Saturday of each month, weather permitting [March-December]. Follow the link on p6 for more info.



FUN & LEARNING

During 2022, our free fun and learning educational resources have been well used, both in local schools and by the public. These are designed to inspire an interest in, and to provide greater understanding of the hill for young people and their families. Through education, we aspire to engage and create a love of Bennachie in the next generation, raise an awareness, and highlight the importance of protecting and conserving this special place.

Aimed at primary school aged children, their families and teachers, the material uses an appropriately fun, but factually correct approach.

By delivering our resources via the Bailies website, users can access them economically, efficiently and conveniently, when it suits them. The site currently contains an extensive suite of nature-based resources, focussed on Bennachie, all classified under seasonal programmes, and relevant to the curriculum.

The 'host' character and local friendly giant, Jock o' Bennachie plays a key role in guiding the

youngsters through the resources, providing lots of relevant facts and advice, in a lighthearted manner that only a giant can get away with. Each programme features a Jock o' Bennachie Doric tale, narrated by Jackie Ross and filmed on the hill. These videos are all great fun, telling tales of the adventures of Jock and his animal friends, each containing many interesting and relevant facts. Can you see Jock's handsome profile in the rock-face opposite?

Follow the QR code or select the link on page 9 to access our extensive library of fun and learning resources.

The programmes all provide information on the seasons themselves and explore how plants, birds, mammals, minibeasts, amphibians, moths and butterflies have adapted to the seasons. There's advice to parents and youngsters on how to stay safe on the hill too.

Aware of the litter problem on the hill, a detailed resource on litter was also created, to spread the message of respecting and protecting Bennachie whilst out on the hill.

Each programme offers links to fun activities, be they outdoor, indoor or online.

The resources are written in an accessible, fun manner, including links to more detailed information. These links offer videos, animations, quizzes etc.

We make use of trailside camera footage provided by the Bailies Wildlife Group. These experts have been very supportive, kindly providing information and expertise, to make the material relevant to Bennachie. They have helped write some material, for which we are enormously grateful. Their depth of knowledge has been invaluable to this project. The resources have been very well received by local primary schools, with the website available to all Aberdeenshire primary schools. It has been a joy to work with staff and pupils as well as Authority staff over the past few years.

Next steps for the Fun and Learning project include a review, ahead of extending them into geography and history based topics.



INFORM - INSPIRE

Margaret Garden - Trustee, Fun & Learning



WILDLIFE

Our first event in 2022 was an evening led walk with David Bale and Colin Miller entitled 'Reading the Landscape' around the Colony trail. They wove together the history of human settlement with how the landscape and vegetation reveal the impact of human activities. Reading the landscape is a skill honed by years of experience. It is an eye-opening experience for those unfamiliar with interpreting the landscape and David and Colin's expertise was much appreciated by everyone. In July, Aileen Salway from NESBATS showed us the modern equipment used to record bats. She used her equipment set up outside Monymusk Church, to show us which bats had been recorded. Aileen is

highly skilled in using the equipment and interpreting the data. While most of us could just about make out various wiggly lines on the computer screen, Aileen could tell a soprano pipistrelle from an ordinary pipistrelle, and a long-eared bat from a Daubenton's bat. Furthermore, she could say if the flying bat was using its sonar system to home in on its prey, or simply echo-locating by bouncing signals off walls and buildings, quite amazing. In 2023 we're hoping to borrow some of the NESBATS equipment and record bats in various locations on and around Bennachie.

In August, Rosie and Beatrice, two members of the wildlife group, guided us around the woodland, planted by their family over 20 years

ago at Wantonwells near Inch. Their approach to woodland management differs from the conventional serried ranks of sitka grown for the timber industry. They've nurtured a varied mix of trees, shrubs and herbs provides timber and non-timber products (like willow for cricket bats) and, in addition, supply a variety of food for people and wildlife from fruit trees such as apples, cherries, various berries (eg elderberries, gooseberries, raspberries etc) nuts and herbs. Their latest project involves creating a forest vegetable garden. On our tour we feasted on cherries and sampled Rosie's kombucha creations, made from woodland plants and fungi, while she explained how she made other herbal teas and remedies. Rosie and

Beatrice sell their produce at the farmers market in Huntly. Visiting woods managed in innovative ways is inspiring, let's hope other land managers follow the example set at Wantonwells.

In September we visited the coast near Stonehaven with Peter Craig, the tutor who inspired us during a previous talk in a quarry, with his explanations about local granites. This time the subject was the Highland Boundary Fault. We enjoyed a lovely walk along the coast looking at rocks of different types and ages laid down in different ways along the fault. Peter expertly explained the story of what happened along the fault line on a geological timescale, illustrated in the rocks we could see. Physically the walk was easy, but mentally less so, for non-geologists grappling with

the mind-blowing sequence of events that geologists like Peter understand from the landscape. By the end we were enlightened, while Peter was exhausted from answering so many questions from the group. We look forward to further talks from Peter. We have been in negotiations with the North East Scotland Biological Records Centre to set up a Service Level Agreement to collate and present the wildlife records that we will continue to collect over the coming years. Our records and those submitted by others, will be stored and made available to us, land managers and other interested parties, to inform management and other decisions that could benefit or affect Bennachie. These records will be a very valuable asset.

We have embarked upon drafting a strategic plan

to set out how we would like to see Bennachie managed, to conserve and enhance the habitats and wildlife of Bennachie. This will form the basis of negotiation with land managers and the public to agree a positive approach to land management, to help tackle both the biodiversity and climate change crises. We will be collaborating with interested parties to agree detailed plans for implementation. The Bennachie Wildlife Group is an informal group which everyone is welcome to join. If you'd like to add your name to the mailing list please email admin@bailiesofbennachie.co.uk You are welcome to join us.

Lorna Bell, Lizzie Bacon, David Bale, John Wills, Jackie Cumberbirch and Jill Matthews.

[Trustees - Wildlife Group]

PROTECT - PRESERVE - CAMPAIGN

KAILYARD

At the Shepherd's Lodge on the Colony Trail, the reconstruction of part of the original Kailyard is now 6 years old. The cottage here, where ruins can still be seen, was home to the Littlejohn family during the 1800's.

This hands-on project was initiated to help study and display methods of cultivation used by the colonists, the types of produce grown and conditions they may have faced. Fruit bushes were initially planted at the Kailyard, due to their low maintenance; this has turned out to be a prudent decision over the last three years, given the access restrictions due to both covid and the storms! Thankfully the Kailyard was unscathed by the

storms. Although we were not able to keep to our normal monthly maintenance schedule at the beginning of 2022, once we were allowed back on the hill, the team soon caught up with jobs and were ready for the summer. What a lovely summer it was too, resulting in our best crop of fruit yet. The fruit bushes are mainly heritage varieties from the 19th century, so it is good to see them cropping well. Even the gooseberry cutting taken from the old bush at one of the other colony houses produced fruit. The only minor casualty was the rhubarb which finished very quickly, most likely due to the hot dry weather.

In September we joined the Year of Scotland 22 - Trails, Tales and Tunes promenade and gave

a talk on the Littlejohn Family at their Kailyard. The last three years has made us appreciate more some of the challenges that can present themselves as a result of inclement weather and poor health. One can only wonder what impact similar disasters would have had on the colonists... The Kailyard reconstruction is designed as a community project to help promote awareness of local history and heritage. If anyone is interested in joining the Kailyard team, please contact us [see page 27]. Select the link below for more information.

Chris Foster

Tending crops in the Kailyard.

EXPLORE - HISTORY

VISITOR CENTRE

"When summer in her glory glows, and verdant beauty clothes the land, Then to the north my fancy flows

Longing that I could once more stand upon the slopes of Bennachie, For that's the place I long to go."

Through our representation on the Visitor Centre Trust, the Bailies continue to collaborate with this important group on many aspects relating to Bennachie. The Centre re-opened on Good Friday 2022, later than anticipated again due to the storm damage and clearing operations. The Visitor Centre has promoted and hosted many events since, including 'Walks to Well-being', a Charlie Dear exhibition about Jock O' Bennachie, a plant sale and for the first time local artists participating in 'North East Open Studios' who displayed their

beautiful work. The Centre continues to upgrade its exhibits and IT systems and has purchased an interactive digital screen, ideal for meetings and exhibitions.

Ann Baillie
Trustee,
Deputy
Chair.





ARCHAEOLOGY



This season at Pittodrie saw extensions to one of last year's trenches and the digging of a new exploratory

trench on 'the mound'. The latter was sited down the slope from the structural remains on the top - now believed to be the foundations of a late medieval farmstead - and west of some other slight

foundations discovered last year. Sadly, these were not apparent in the new trench. One of the new extensions to Trench 1 revealed further footings of what is believed to have been a short-lived building

dating to around 1800. More work needs to be carried out to clarify the nature of this building as it demonstrates a number of eccentricities, such as an internal drain and an apparently blocked entrance. The latter suggests a period of re-design and may indicate a longer period of use than previously suggested.

A larger extension was placed across two slight earthworks running at ninety degrees to the assumed alignment of a dyke.

This dyke provided the northern side of a large rectilinear enclosure that had seen much disturbance, seemingly caused by the construction of the early 19th-century building and by other structural remains, sampled in 2019, that lay further east. Some basal stones of the former dyke were discovered, along with at least two metalised surfaces, the most recent one - possibly associated with the excavated building to the west - sealed the remains of the dyke. The two perpendicular earthworks appear to relate to further

structural features, possibly associated with the removed dyke. It is hoped to open a larger area next year in order to better understand these features.

Iain Ralston oversaw the excavation and provided archaeological training and guidance for the volunteers.

Grateful thanks are extended to Macdonald Hotels, the owners of the land, for permission to excavate and to James Hamilton, the estate land manager, for all his help in making the project run smoothly. Especial thanks are also due to the volunteers whose hard work has enabled such a rewarding venture. Copies of interim reports for this site can be downloaded from the Bailies' website.

Colin Shepherd
Archaeology Group.



Site under investigation - photo courtesy of Nadine Ralston

RECORD - PRESERVE

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	2022	2021 (restated)
	£	£
INCOME FROM:		
Membership and donations	1,603	2,867
Publications (e.g. calendars)	4,462	5,717
Legacies	2,287,337	6,000
Grants	-	21,016
Bank interest	5,447	803
Dividend income	15,579	-
TOTAL INCOME	2,314,428	36,403
EXPENDITURE ON:		
Publications (e.g. calendar)	3,522	2,305
Governance costs	16,981	5,494
Charitable activities	7,700	1,560
Bennachie landscape project	4,372	11,220
Outreach and admin support	12,664	17,269
Equipment & other ancillaries	4,074	2,337
TOTAL EXPENDITURE:	49,312	40,185
Net income / (expenditure)	2,265,116	(3,782)
Net gains / (losses) on investments	(127,413)	-
Net movement in funds	2,137,703	(3,782)
Fund balances brought forward	125,779	129,561
FUND BALANCE AT 31st DECEMBER:	2,263,482	125,779

INCOME - EXPENDITURE

As can be seen from the summary, 2022 has been a pivotal and transformational year with respect to our financial health. We were extremely fortunate to receive a significant legacy sum of £2,287,237 that will benefit Bailies projects and Bennachie for generations to come. Our total income was £2,314,428 which includes dividend income of £15,579. In 2021 our income was £36,403, this included grants worth £21,016. Given the legacy received the trustees appointed Rathbone Investment Management Ltd as investment managers, following a competitive tender process. Rathbones have been instructed to maximise

the return of the investments, consistent with an acceptable level of risk as agreed by the trustees. The policy and overall objective is to hold investments to generate income and provide capital growth in the medium to long term. The portfolio ended the year with a market value of £1,888,166, including a net loss on investment over the period from receipt of the legacy of £127,413. The trustees recognize that the stock market continues to be volatile and that gains or losses in one year may be cancelled out by losses or gains the next year. Expenditure increased in 2022 to £49,312 compared to £40,185 in 2021. This was mainly due to higher governance costs and payments related to the charities activities, partially offset by lower costs in relation

to the Bennachie Landscapes Project and to outreach and admin support. Year end funds amounted to £2,263,482. Given the increased income, the format of the accounts has been updated in-line with appropriate accounting requirements for charities, resulting in the 2021 numbers being restated. As required, we have in addition appointed auditors who are at the time of writing performing the necessary audit.

Alan Henderson -
Trustee, Treasurer.



MEMBERSHIP

“2,455 Members”

We've had the sincere pleasure of welcoming nearly 6,000 people as members of the Bailies over the last 50 years.

Our membership has been relatively stable in 2022, currently standing at 2,455, including people as far afield as Australia and New Zealand as well as descendants of the colonists that used to inhabit the lower slopes of the hill. It is always lovely to hear from members who have moved away and who still hold Bennachie close to their hearts.

Our website and facebook pages are regularly updated with information about Bennachie and the latest important and interesting projects that our members are working on. We are in the process of updating our online shop, so that purchases

of merchandise, including the annual calendar can be made easier.

You can find out about upcoming events and the regular workparties on our calendar too.

Our facebook page currently enjoys 4,704 followers (a 30% increase on 2022), many who share their beautiful photos and exciting adventures with us on

Bennachie. This increase is extremely encouraging and seems indicative of the more frequent posts, increased visibility of what we're doing and increased engagement from the public.

We would like to keep postage costs down in future and rely largely on electronic downloads.

However if you still prefer to receive this Annual Report by post, please let us know via email, see below.

Donna Taylor
- Trustee,
Membership
and IT.

info@bailiesofbennachie.co.uk



become a member

BENNACHIE LANDSCAPES PROJECT GROUP

“Eence the crafts o’ the Esson Men
Noo a broken wa’
Eence spaed an’ scythe an’ reekin’ lum
Noo the green girss haps a’.”

The Colony, by Flora Garry, Bennachie Again

The Landscapes Group continued its mission in 2022 to research and promote the heritage of Bennachie.

In February, an online meeting was held on the survival of plants on archaeological sites, presented by Dr Karen Dempsey, Postdoctoral Fellow at NUI Galway.

September was a busy month. As part of the Bailies contribution to the Year of Scotland’s Stories 2022, Chris Foster and Alison Kennedy welcomed Colony visitors with tales of feast and famine at Shepherds Lodge. BLPG and the Bailies Wildlife Group led a well-attended evening walk to the Bennachie Colony discussing its history and impact on the natural environment. Further joint working is proposed, focussing on an environmental vision for Bennachie. As part of Scottish Archaeology Month (SAM), we publicised our archaeological work on the display board at the Bennachie Centre and a “small finds” display

at the Garioch Heritage Centre. Later in the year, members helped with maintenance at the foraging woodland to enable tree planting in 2023. It is hoped to progress the preparation of a detailed list of ongoing management options for sites in the Bennachie Colony in 2023. Also in prospect is involvement with two University of Aberdeen research projects. “Voices of the Future” aims include to “build on long-standing community research around the hill of Bennachie to explore woodland histories and imagine new landscapes”. “Land for the Landless”, a multi-university project which is subject to the outcome of a funding bid, will explore the experience of rural squatter communities in Britain, with the Aberdeenshire focus being on the commonty at Corrennie along with additional work on Bennachie.

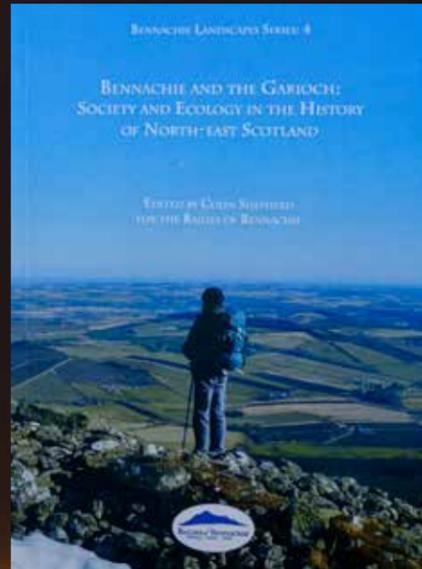
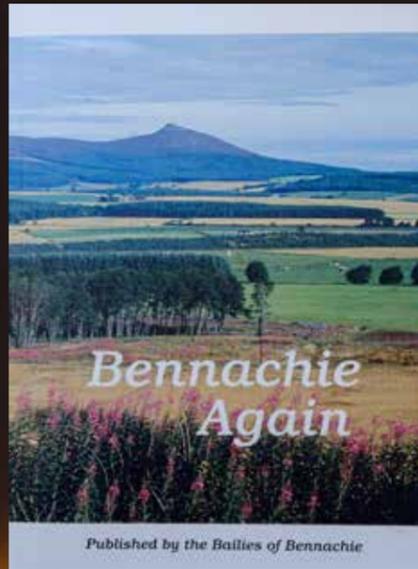
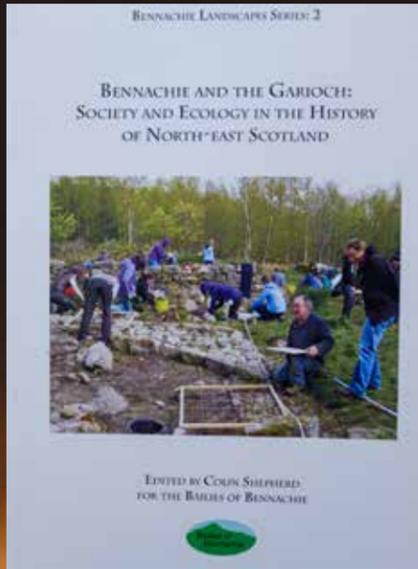
Among earlier BLPG projects, it is encouraging to report that the Digital Archive

(part of a previous HLF-funded package), has received new Bailies funding to engage a professional archivist. This should ensure the continued development of this resource, which is now the direct responsibility of the Board – the aim being to make the Bailies’ extensive material accessible to the wider community.

With the Bailies’ new scheme of governance, we are especially grateful to the Board’s Vice Chair, Ann Baillie, for taking on the role of Owner-Trustee for the Group in 2022. Also, a system is now in place whereby minutes from BLPG meetings are made available promptly to the Board – our thanks to Stella Gauld, whose essential new role includes supporting BLPG meetings.

Colin Miller - Bennachie Landscapes Project Group.





PUBLICATIONS

Bennachie is steeped in a rich tapestry of cultural significance and natural history that has captured the interest of artists, historians and scientists, inspiring several Bailies publications over the years. Copies of these may be purchased upon request, from our online shop, or by emailing us at publications@bailiesofbennachie.co.uk.

In addition, the “Digital Bennachie” Colony Trail app released in 2018 is still free to download on mobile devices, to take in your pockets on your walks around Bennachie. The app based on research by the Bailies and University of Aberdeen helps bring the past to life, by describing the lives of 19th century crofters who made their homes and

brought up their families, on the lower slopes of Bennachie.

Alex Doig - Trustee, Publications.



AWARENESS - EDUCATION

publications@bailiesofbennachie.co.uk



2023 AGM will take place in-person at the Garioch Heritage Centre in Inverurie on Thursday 27th April 2023, at 7.30pm. An email will be sent out and notifications will be shared on the Bailies website and social media sites. Alternatively, you can join via zoom by clicking on the symbol below or using the details provided.



email admin@bailiesofbennachie.co.uk for zoom meeting id and passcode

Bennachie relies on its varied group of care-taker volunteers and trustees. We're an extremely welcoming and passionate group of people who would love to listen to your opinions, benefit from your ideas and welcome any new volunteers, whatever your interests and skillsets.

Thank you.

Chair / Vice Chair
Treasurer
Secretary

Work Parties
Membership
Social Media

Gordon Way
Learning
Publications



info@bailiesofbennachie.co.uk

www.bailiesofbennachie.co.uk

Please note that we have a new postal address:
Bailies of Bennachie, PO Box 18591, Inverurie AB51 1DH.

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