



8/45/1

THE DISTRICT OFFICE  
**FORESTRY COMMISSION**  
High Street, FOCHABERS, Morayshire IV32 7EP  
Telephone: Fochabers ~~308x~~ 820309

Please address any  
reply to:.....  
and quote: S18.1/BNC  
Your reference:

2 May 1978

Dr D G Gordon  
Coldwells  
Inverurie  
Aberdeenshire

Dear Dr Gordon

Firstly I would like to thank you and Mrs Gordon for your hospitality when I called last week.

As promised I am sending you a copy of our invitation letter and apologise sincerely on behalf of the Forestry Commission for not having invited the principal guest. That really is a very serious omission but I am quite sure you will not take it amiss.

Anyhow, to make amends I attach a copy now, also a copy of the programme for the day. From this you will see that Mr Morrison will introduce you, not myself as we had discussed.

Paragraph 2 of the programme for the day is merely a statement of our discussion last week. The programme timing also may be of interest to you.

Regarding the actual cutting of the tape, or ribbon, the choice of weapons I leave to you. My own feeling was that a sgian dubh might be more suitable than a pair of scissors, but Mr Paterson wondered if you would prefer to use a sword or claymore to make it a more picturesque ceremony. We could go the whole way and get a two-edged battle axe, but the Health and Safety at Work Act might preclude this! Seriously however, it is entirely up to you whether you cut the tape with scissors, a sgian dubh or a sword (perhaps borrowed from Lady Grant who seemed to have plenty at Monymusk House)



THE DISTRICT OFFICE  
FORESTRY COMMISSION

High Street, Bockham, Monmouthshire IV32 7EP  
Telephone: Bockham 820309

Please address only

Ref: 101  
and quote: 818.1/BNC  
Your reference:

Dr D Gordon  
Goldwell  
Inverurie  
Aberdeenshire

Dear Dr Gordon

I suppose really what we have to consider is how it will look in the press, and I leave it to your good judgement and experience in this sort of thing to make a suitable selection. If you wished to use a light hand axe for example, we would need to have a wooden post driven into the ground across which the tape rested so that it could be cut on the top of the post.

Perhaps when you have considered all the possibilities you will find that the sgian dubh is the easiest carried, the least likely to lose, the simplest to use and perhaps the most fitting.

Please do not hesitate to ask me if you have any other problems, and if I do not hear from you before, I look forward to seeing you on the day.

Yours sincerely

*R J R Marnie*

R J R Marnie  
District Forest Officer



Send copy to Dr. D.G.

8/1/5/2

S18/BNC EGR/SR

10 April 1978

Addressees overleaf

Dear

**BENNACHIE FOREST - OPENING OF ESSONS CAR PARK**

A day visitor facility consisting of a new car park with adjoining forest and hill walks at Woodend, near Esson's Croft, will be opened by Dr D G Gordon, Senior Bailie of Bennachie, on Wednesday 10 May 1978 at 3 pm, and you are warmly invited to be present.

We also intend to use this event to promote the Forestry Commission Guide "Forests of North East Scotland" which will be introduced by Professor Kenneth Walton, Vice Chancellor of Aberdeen University. Copies of this publication will be on sale at the ceremony.

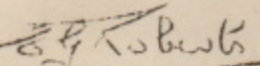
It is hoped that representatives of the Bailies of Bennachie, Grampian Regional Council, Gordon District Council, the Countryside Commission for Scotland, members of the Press and other interested parties, will be present.

To get to this Car Park, take the Chapel of Garloch road turning left off the A96 two miles north of Inverurie, turning left again at the junction at Chapel of Garloch, proceeding along the road to Monymusk for some 2 miles when the facility will be seen to the right hand side of the road. The Grid Reference is 700216.

Afternoon tea will be provided after the opening ceremony at the Grant Arms Hotel, Monymusk.

I shall be grateful if you will confirm that you will be present.

Yours sincerely

  
E G Roberts  
for Conservator

Copies: Information Branch, HQ  
Forest Management Division, HQ  
Mr R J R Marnie - Please attend  
Mr R M Hay  
Mr W H Clarkson  
Mr R G Aitken

ESSONS.



8/11/53

Dr Jean Balfour JP, Chairman E (S) RAC, Kirkforthar House, Markinch, Fife. KY7 6LS  
Mr Ian Archibald, Director of Technical Services, Gordon District, Wyness Hall,  
Jackson Street, Inverurie, AB5 2A

Mrs E Geraldine Scott, Director of Planning, Gordon District Council, Woodhill House,  
Ashgrove Road, West, Aberdeen.

Mr J Nicol, Director of Leisure & Recreation, Grampian Regional Council, Woodhill House,  
Ashgrove Road West, Aberdeen.

Mr E Brown, Public Relations Officer, Grampian Regional Council, Woodhill House,  
Ashgrove Road West, Aberdeen.

All members of the RAC (excluding Chairman)

Clerk to the Bailies' Council, (A H Watson), Springbank, Oyne, Aberdeenshire.

Director, Countryside Commission for Scotland, Battleby, Redgorton, Perth, PH1 3EW

Mr R Reid, Gordon District Councillor, Littlewood, Kemnay, Aberdeenshire

The Editor, Evening Express, Lang Stracht, Mastrick, Aberdeen.

The Editor, Press & Journal, Lang Stracht, Mastrick, Aberdeen.

The Editor, Inverurie Advertiser, High Street, Inverurie.

BBC, Broadcasting House, Beechgrove Terrace, Aberdeen.

Radio Aberdeen, Beechgrove Terrace, Aberdeen.

Grampian Television Ltd, Queens Cross, Aberdeen.

G R T Smith Esq, Pittodrie House Hotel, Pitcaple

Lady Grant, Monymusk House, Monymusk, Aberdeenshire.



8/11/5/2

OPENING OF ESSON'S CAR PARK AND WALKS, BENNACHIE FOREST ON 10 MAY 1978 BY  
DR D G GORDON, SENIOR BAILIE, BAILIES OF BENNACHIE

CEREMONY AND PROGRAMME

CEREMONY

1. Mr A Morrison, Conservator, East Scotland, will welcome guests, outline the programme including the publicity to North East Guide and will

- a. refer to the FC Recreational Policy
- b. acknowledge the encouragement and advice of Gordon District Council and the Bailies
- c. look forward to the joint map publication on the Walks of Bennachie which we hope will be produced to guide residents and tourists to these routes and
- d. ask Dr Gordon to open the facility.

2. Dr Gordon will be asked to include reference to:

- a. the increasing use and enjoyment of the forest and of Bennachie by Buchan residents, Aberdonians and holidaymakers alike
- b. The enchantment of this particular approach to the Mither Tap with its historical associations with the pioneer crofters of whom Esson was the last
- c. the usefulness of this base for ridge walking to Donview over Millstone Hill and to Back O'Bennachie car park over the main ridge.
- d. the dispersal of foot traffic so that wear on Maiden Causeway is not too severe
- e. thanks to squad who constructed it and the staff who designed and supervised.

Dr Gordon cuts tape

3. Mr Morrison will link to Professor Walton.

4. Professor Walton will be asked to speak on the many interesting features to be found in the new Guide and particularly the fine illustrations of many of the historical sites of this area.

5. Mr Paterson to give vote of thanks to Dr D G Gordon & Professor K Walton.  
PROGRAMME

1450	Assemble at Car Park (Grid reference 700216)
1500	Opening ceremony on path leading from second car park
1515-25	Publicity to Guide "Forests of North East Scotland"
1525-1600	Walk to viewpoint on Mither Tap Walk and return
1600	Disperse
1610	Arrive Grant Arms, Monymusk, for afternoon tea
1700	Disperse



8/1/5/5

OPENING OF ESSON'S CAR PARK AND WALKS, BENNACHIE  
ON 10 MAY 1978

GUEST LIST - Acceptances todate (25/4/78)

Dr D G Gordon	Senior Bailie of Bennachie
Professor Kenneth Walton	Vice Principal of Aberdeen University Member of East Scotland Regional Advisory Committee
Lady Jean Grant of Monymusk	Honorary Bailie of Bennachie
Dr Jean Balfour JP	Chairman East (Scotland) Regional Advisory Committee. Chairman Countryside Commission for Scotland.
The Viscount of Arbuthnott	Member of East (Scotland) Regional Advisory Committee
Mr T Bruce-Jones	Member of East (Scotland) Regional Advisory Committee
Mr J Nicoll (or Mr Alec Copland - Parks Technical Officer; and Bailie of Bennachie	Direction of Leisure & Recreation Grampian Regional Council
Mr Ian Archibald	Director of Technical Services, Gordon District Council
Mr John L Russell	Commissioner, Countryside Commission for Scotland. Retired Chief Executive Grampian Regional Council
Representative	Radio Aberdeen
Representative	Evening Express



8/4/5/6

## ESSON'S CAR PARK AND FOREST AND HILL WALKS: BENNACHIE

### BACKGROUND NOTES

The third Forestry Commission Car Park to be constructed on Bennachie Forest is to be opened on 10 May 1978 at 3 pm by Dr D G Gordon, Senior Bailie of the Bailies of Bennachie. The Commission has been encouraged to expand its facilities by the excellent response to and use of the facilities installed in recent years.

Situated beneath the Mither Tap on its eastern flank with access from the Monymusk to Pittodrie and Chapel of Garioch road and 25 miles from Aberdeen, the new car park has capacity for 20 cars. From this leads off a forest walk, on gentle gradients by a pleasant burn and a steep walk through forest to the Mither Tap. The latter gives grand views over the Garioch and the Buchan landscape.

The Mither Tap stands sentinel over the Car Park which has been carefully screened in a 35 year-old larch and pine plantation. Also seen from the entrance to the Car Park is Esson's croft. The name of the last occupant of this abandoned holding has been chosen for the Car Park to commemorate the pioneer spirit and endeavour of the settlers who formerly wrested a living out of the granite slopes, now clothed in forest.

Around 1821 John Esson married the daughter of the stone mason who, in 1801, had built a house and started to reclaim small fields from the heathery granite wilderness. John shared in this toil and other settlers joined them nearby. Then, in 1859, the settlers were forced to become tenants and, in hard times when rents could not be paid, they were evicted one by one until only John Esson remained. He defied eviction until he died and is now part of the history of this period. (Refer 'The Book of Bennachie', published by the Bailies.)

From today the public will be able to walk past these relics of former endeavour and hardship and enjoy the forest and hill walks, with perhaps a thought for former times before the tractor and before North Sea oil.

A feature of the Walks is the standard of construction and surfacing of the Lower Forest Walk and the first section of the Walk to Mither Tap. Boulders have been removed and surfacing of fine granite rolled in.

The Car Park forms a new base for ridge walking on Bennachie and Millstone Hill and traverses can be made to the other two Forestry Commission Car Parks at Donview and Back o' Bennachie.

Bennachie has for many years been very popular as an outing with the Nor' East folk in Aberdeen, Dyce, Inverurie and Kintore. We hope this new provision will be as popular with newcomers to the Area, and introduce them to the pleasures of quiet walks in the forest, with beckoning glimpses of the ridge of Bennachie from which such magnificent views can be obtained. There is something for the less nimble and something for the sprightly - come along and try it. And remember to take extreme care to prevent fire - fire could destroy what everyone wants to come and enjoy.