



8/1/70/11

FORESTRY COMMISSION
District Office
High Street Fochabers Moray IV32 7EP
Telephone Fochabers 82030 9

Mr James Mackay
The Dell
Blairdaff
Inverurie

Your reference

Our reference S18.1/BNC

Date 1 December 1981

Dear James

THE BAILIES OF BENNACHIE

You and I have such an excellent understanding, and know that any comment made by one will not be taken amiss by the other, that I have to bring to your notice the attached photocopy of a newspaper cutting. It has caused me some distress in that it would appear that most of the credit for the walks and car parks at Bennachie, or at least for their improvement, go to the Bailies and not, properly, to the Forestry Commission.

The Commission has always been very reticent about blowing its own trumpet, particularly in the press, and I doubt if anyone else in the organisation will pick this up, but it certainly causes me some concern.

I realise that the article was written by a Peoples Journal reporter in all probability, and that none of the blame can properly be attached to yourself, but doubtless the information came from you in the first place and it's a pity the distribution of credits came out as they did.

I know myself how much you recognise and value the work that has been done by the Forestry Commission, and I am sure you know how I feel about the Bailies and their considerable contribution to helping us to make and keep the mountain wholesome, but to a casual reader of the Peoples Journal the credits would certainly seem to be misplaced.

There is really nothing to be done about this article now and all I would like to make sure is that in any future articles or discussions about the hill range, you will realise the shortcomings of the gentlemen of the press and try to make some allowances.

I do hope you don't take this amiss.

Yours sincerely

R J R Marnie

R J R Marnie
District Officer

X Sorry the photocopy has been mislaid. It was from the Peoples Journal. If you have not seen it I will try to get another copy.
RJM



8/1/10/2

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Mr James Mackay
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Your reference

Our reference S18.1/BNC

Date 9 December 1981

Dear James

ARTICLE IN THE PEOPLES JOURNAL

I knew you'd get it wrong! I tried my damndest to point out that I was in no way annoyed with you but the blame was entirely with the editor of the paper, and merely asked if you could possibly try and counter in advance this sort of thing when next it happened. Sadly I have upset you and that's a shame, for it was certainly not intended. Perhaps you would re-read my letter, bearing in mind what I am now saying and you will see it in a different light. The considerable work done by the Bailies is appreciated by the Forestry Commission and by myself personally, and I do hold them in high regard. My attendance at the meetings whenever I have had the opportunity must surely bear this out. It's a reasonable long way from Buckie and the call of duty alone would not entice me to give up a warm evening by the fire, even for a warm evening at the Rowantree car park unless I believed in and appreciated what you, as a group, are doing.

Now to move on to your letter of 12 August 1981. You are right, I was off work for seven weeks and then had two weeks holiday in the sun. It was beautiful. But back to your letter. As I was off ill you should indeed have had a letter of acknowledgement at least, if not, thanks, and this was apparently not done. Please accept my apologies. The points raised have in fact all been noted and we have had some serious re-thinking about the layouts. Some changes will be happening between now and the opening in the spring. When I did read your letter the pto was in fact missed by myself in my haste to catch up on backlog and it is only now that I realise that a reply to your letter was in order. The answer you have asked for is that the existing map board at the Rowantree car park was made by someone whose name is forgotten but who lived in Hartingdon Road, Aberdeen. I can find no record of their name however, and Yellow Pages does not help. Sorry about this. Regarding the tatty Bennachie car park sign, is sadly nothing to do with us and we can't help you with that one.

I am really concerned about our present misunderstanding and hope you can confirm that things are back on their usual pleasant footing by signing your next letter

Yours aye

Ron

Ron Leamer

BEN NEVIS, EAT YOUR HEART OUT!

LORDLY, LOFTY PEAKS like Ben Nevis, Britain's highest mountain, look with envious eyes on Aberdeenshire's own lowly Bennachie.

It may not have the bulk of the Highland giants, but it has stature among mountains.

Socially, it commands a unique place in the community. It is protected, groomed and even cossetted by a grand company, the Bailies of Bennachie.

Many of the 2000 members of this organisation are actively engaged in the physical side of caring for their mountain, and there are many more in other groups who also lend a hand.

But take the population of Aberdeen, the Garioch and even wider afield, and it's a safe bet that one in three or four will have wandered along its many paths at least once.

Confirmed Bennachie-ophiles, who have scaled its modest heights dozens of times, are known to make monthly pilgrimages summer and winter.

Books in plenty detail its long history, and ballads extol its virtues. Who hasn't heard "Whaur Gadie Rins?" Where else but "the back o' Bennachie."

EXCELLENT

A recent poem and ballad competition organised by the Bennachie Bailies attracted an entry of 150.

"Some of the entries were of a very high standard," said Mr James MacKay, The Dell, Blairdruff, who is Senior Bailie.

stone-age fort around the top might suggest.

And there are fragments of recorded history down through the centuries indicating the importance given to the mountain by those who dwell around its foot.

But witness the last dying rays of a setting sun flickering across its distinctive shoulders, and through the flowing line of its unmistakable silhouette emerges more than a touch of mystery.

These images stir the interest, but on a practical plane, according to Mr MacKay, Bennachie's popularity is based on its accessibility and the many interesting features on and around the mountain.

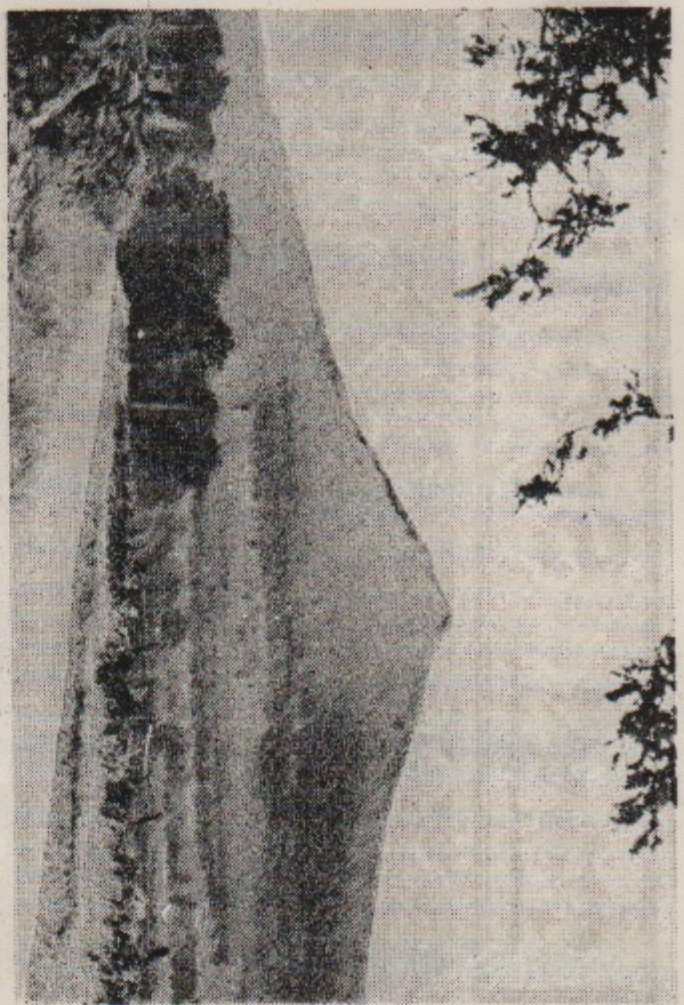
"There was a body of people who were concerned about what was happening in other places," he said, "and the Bailies were formed to ensure Bennachie could be properly preserved."

POPULAR

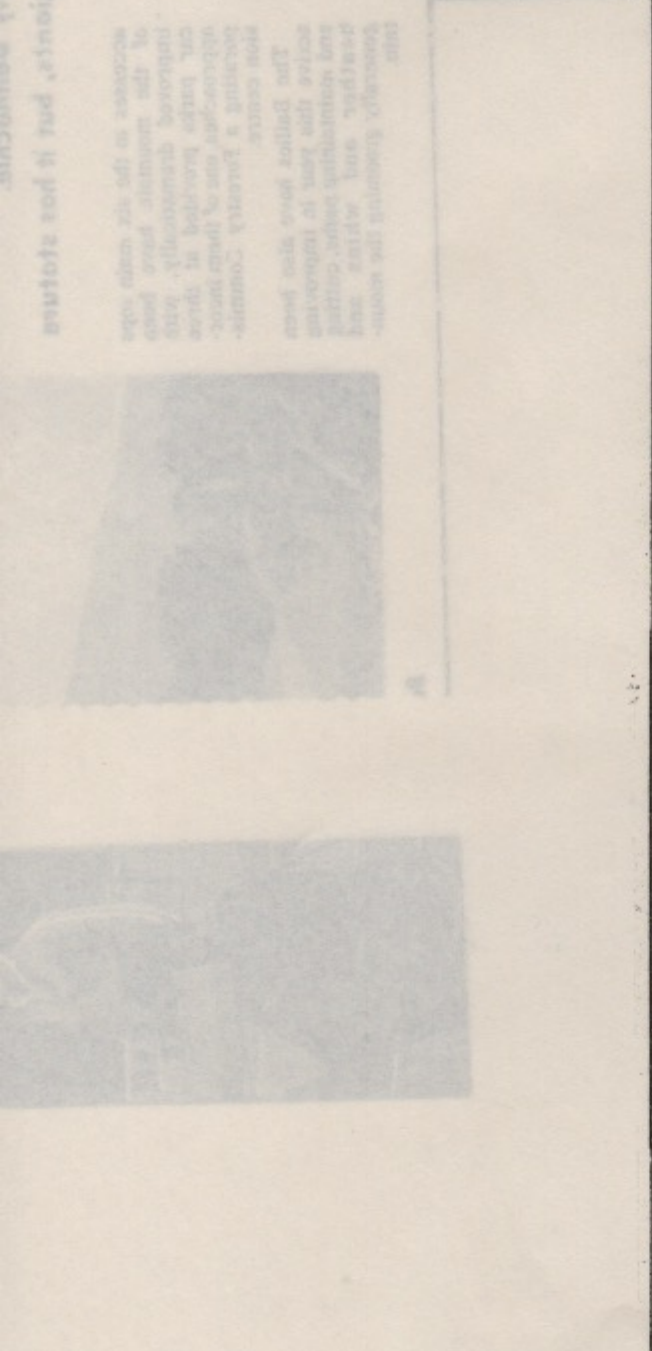
The membership fees of the Bailies help finance the many facets of conservation applied on the mountain along with receipts from the organisation's publication, "The Book

accesses to the six main tops of the mountain have been improved dramatically, with car parks provided at three approaches, one of them incorporating a Forestry Commission centre.

The Bailies have also been active this year in improving and maintaining paths, cutting heather and whins and generally grooming the mountain.



Bennachie—draws people like a magnet.



8/10