

BENNACHIE DVD PROPOSAL

Cinécosse

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Earlier this year, Ellice Milton, representing the Baillies of Bennachie, approached Cinécosse asking them to pitch for a new DVD looking at the history of the Colony. Having done preliminary research we concluded that while it is quite possible to do a DVD concentrating solely on this one aspect of the hill's history, we feel this may have limited appeal to a general audience. We feel that by combining an in-depth examination of the Colony with a much broader celebration of Bennachie, we can produce a more marketable product, which potentially could defray part of the production costs.

We would therefore like to submit the following for discussion.



Bennachie is one of the most iconic peaks in Scotland. Celebrated by artists, song-writers, poets and authors, it's a symbol of home for those who no longer live here and a lodestone for those of us who do. It's a family hill – often the first real “mountain” any local child climbs. Folk choose to get married on Bennachie, and a surprising number opt to have their ashes scattered there.

Rich in natural history it also commands an unparalleled view of our history too. Bennachie overlooks 18th century enclosure walls and the ruins of the old Colony. From the summit of Mither Tap, you can see recumbent stone circles, pictish symbol stones, iron-age forts, ancient battle-sites and medieval castles, but you can also see multi-story flats, hi-tech factories, oil supply vessels, commuter flights heading into Aberdeen airport, and tens of thousands of acres of some of the most productive and intensively farmed land in Europe, in short, all the aspects of sea, land and sky that give this area its distinctive character.

What should a new DVD of Bennachie do?

We believe that we should try to convey and reflect all of the above. It should be filmed across a full calendar year. We would follow the changing of the seasons, the broom and the heather coming into flower, Bennachie under snow, the sun coming up on midsummers day and the First Footers walking off the Hogmanay excess on New Years Day.

It would feature the traditional songs and music that celebrate Bennachie but we would also commission 4 new works by local artists to try and reflect the hill in winter, spring, summer and autumn. This could be something like an original fiddle-tune by Paul Anderson, a painting by Eric Auld, a photograph of a snow-covered Bennachie by moonlight, a poem, a song, a sculpture, tapestry, there are numerous options. The idea would be to film the artists at work, or on the hill, and use their insights to guide us through various aspects of the landscape.



However impressive, however well-loved, the landscape is empty without its people. The DVD would tell the story of the 18th century land enclosures which led to the founding of the Colony. This key section would make extensive use of photographic archive and would also include interviews with descendents of the colonists. We would also feature the work of the Baillies, the volunteer path makers, follow the daily dog-walkers, and talk with archaeologists, countryside rangers, commercial pilots and farmers.

We need to hear their voices, their passion and their personal involvement.



Within the DVD, and separate from the programme, we could mimic Bennachie's importance as a viewing platform by creating a virtual mountain indicator, not just a way of identifying key points in the landscape but also a guide to exploring its geology and history too. There's a rich heritage of photographs, which we would utilise, and we could also solicit locally for home footage of the "Kilty" hill race or Sunday school picnics or just family excursions.

In terms of marketing the DVD has to appeal to folk here and abroad. It could be marketed through the Bailies website and it should be possible to stream a short 2 minute trailer on the site too.

Cinécosse and Nevismark are two local companies run by local loons. There are big advantages to being almost permanently on location, being privy to local knowledge and being able to speak the language. We grew up with this hill and we'd like to tell its story.

Budget

Initial estimates based on the foregoing, have produced a figure in the region of £35,000 plus VAT. We would suggest that, as with the previous production, commercial sponsors be sought to support this project. Both Cinécosse and Nevismark would happily contribute. We can also assist, if required, in sourcing additional sponsors.

Graeme Mowat
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