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# An ootstan'in day for the Bennachie Bailies

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By NORMAN HARPER

SIR, — YE REPORTIT that the Bailies o' Bennachie hid gotten a special mention certificate fae the Keep Britain Tidy Group on the occasion o' the group's second annual awards ceremony te commemorate the Queen Mother's 80th birthday, she bein' patron o' the group.

There canna be ony doot aboot the wye the group got te hear o' the Bailies. They hiv a directir in Aul Reekie, an' een o' thon craws that fowk coont mileages bi, maan hae flut-ter't doon 'is lum some nicht, stracht fae the Mither Tap, an' tell't 'im fut a gweed job the Bailies hiv deen on the hill sin their birth jist nine 'ear ago.

The inspired genius — or geniuses — fa conceived the idea o' formin' this body o' conservationists an' kirsnt it wi' sic an apt name, maan be richt prood the day.

Then there's thon doctir chiel Danny Gordin o' Ca'wulls. He wis at the birth, an' fut better Howdie cwid a buddy wint?

Fae the ootset there's been a wise cooncil an' hardwirkin' office-bearers at han' te mak siccar that the lusty infint wis weel brocht up.

An' there's the common or gairden Bailies o' baith sexes fa hiv chaavt awa' on the hill an' hinna grum'lt (weel, nae muckle) at gettin' sair backs an' han's cut an' clartit wi' dirt fae the rubbish orra fowk hiv dumpit on wir hill. Is't ony winner that the craw couldna hud its whisht ony langer?

Bit you, sir, as weel as Radio Aiberdeen an' Gramplan Tillyveeshzin maan hae coppit the ee or lug o' the Aul Reekie directir chiel at least some o' the mony times ye've gi'en the Bailies' activities gweed publicity.

**THE VOLUNTEERS** who look after the interests of Aberdeenshire's favourite hill, Bennachie, heard they were to be presented with a conservation award in London.

So the Bailies of Bennachie, as the volunteers are known, nominated Inverurie exile Mr James Milne, now living in London, to receive the award on their behalf.

Mr Milne, now in his 70s, has stayed in the capital for more than 30 years, but maintains strong connections with the Garioch.

One of his many hobbies is writing Doric-style prose. The Bailies' award and its presentation were natural subjects for the Milne pen.

Ye war deen't lang afore the feathert cratur made its lang journey te hae a wurd wi' the directir, bit it wis that wurd that clincht it.

There wis nae prooder Baillie than maesel on the day o' the ceremony, for,

bein' Lundin-based, I shared wi' ma dother (ma wife bein' laid low wi' a lumbackit back) the great honour an' preevlige o' representin' the Bailies at the awards ceremony in the Guildha'.

Fin I read the list o'

companies, local authorities, banks, organisations, the media an' individuals that earned awards for ootstan'in effort in promotin' environmental improvement, particularly throwe litter abatement, ma kist swall't wi' pride till I wis some feart ma sark buttons wid flee aff. For then, an' only then, did the fu measure o' the Bailies' achievement strik me . . .

Oot o' a total o' 94 awards, jist three gid te Scotlan'. It wis an odd, bit happy, coincidence that, wi' hunners o' fowk there, we happen't te sit doon neist te the representatives o' a distric cooncil up Largs wye.

We hid a crack wi' them, an' we a' agreed that tho' Scotlan' wis oot o' the Warl Cup an' wisna ower weel representit in the awards list, the Keep Britain Tidy Group couldna hae deen

better than ging there for the premier award.

That trophy, a crystal triangular prism acht inch heich bi twa inch wide, wis the wark o' Caithness Gless Ltd., jintly won bi the Girl Guides Association an' the Scouts Association.

After Michael Heseltine hid presentit the awards, tea wis ser't in the crypt, o' a' places! It wis bit dimly lichtit, bit if I hadna kent far ma moo is at my age, I wid lookit roon for a niche te crawl intil.

There wis nae sign o' the craw, bit I'll sweir that fin his time comes, he'd raither rist his weary wings somewe nae ower far up wir ain bonnie hill.

I widna winner gin he wis on anither eeran, tellin' fowk o' the glory te be gotten throwe membership o' the Bailies o' Bennachie. James Milne, 12 Sportsbank Street, Catford, London, SE6 2EX.