



Rally good: This year's guest speaker at the Bailies of Bennachie rally Gordon Cowie with Aberdeenshire Council ranger Fred Gordon (left) and Lord Forbes.

# The call of the mountain

**A**LMOST 300 people rallied to the Bailies of Bennachie's annual gathering at the Back O' Bennachie car park.

And the Bailies were well pleased by this year's turnout and the special guests the event attracted.

"It went very well and the weather was very kind to us," said senior ranger Fred Gordon.

"It was well attended with nearly 300 people and everybody was in good fettle."

The assembled Bailies heard from the new guardian of Bennachie Lord Forbes which they said was a great honour.

"It's not every year we have a maiden speech from a Lord," said Fred.

"It was a major event for the Bailies, we're delighted he accepted the role of guardian and that he attended the rally.

## Bailies rally gathers friends from far afield

"He gave a very interesting speech and looked forward to a long association with the Bailies."

As well as the noble guest the rally also heard from former Inverurie Academy pupil and recently retired chief executive of Forest Enterprise Gordon Cowie.

"It's great to have someone of the stature of Gordon Cowie at the rally," added Fred.

Moreover, the popular event was also attended by some far-travelled visitors.

For two North-east emigrants Scott Findlay from Melbourne, Australia, and Lexie Pettus from Ontario, Canada, were in Garioch for the event.

"Lexie left the North-east 35 years ago," Fred pointed out.

"She is always determined to attend the rally and organises her annual holiday to make it possible.

"She has only missed one rally since they started in 1973!"

Next year the rally will be the Bailies 25th and they will be looking at ways to celebrate the landmark event.

"We haven't got anything special in mind at the moment," commented Fred.

"But when we hold our next meeting it will be one of the things under discussion."