

AT a loose end? Time on your hands? Looking for a new pas-time or ideas for a night out? Check out our What's On in Gordon five days a week in the Evening Express.



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YOUR GORDON LOCAL NEWS PA



■ **WORK BEGINS:** Gordon provost Raymond Bisset turns the symbolic first sod on the site of the Bennachie centre. He is joined by, from left, Span Construction site agent Duncan Thomson; Gordon planning officer Chris White; Gordon Ranger Fred Gordon; Scottish Natural Heritage officer Kenny Steele; trustee Algie Watson; Forestry Commission district manager Norman Davidson and trustee James Mackay.

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NEWS, views, chat and gossip
around Gordon. Not to mention
pictures from down your way.
It's all in your Gordon Evening
Express.

House prices take a tumble

by **MARK ATKINSON**
Press Association

HOUSE prices fell 0.4% last month, possibly influenced by the threat of April's tax rises knocking confidence in the property market.

Britain's biggest mortgage lender the Halifax Building Society said today the price of an average home dropped to £61,133 in January after a revised 0.6% fall in December.

Gary Marsh, head of research at the Halifax, said he was slightly surprised by the fall in prices at a time when it was thought that the market, though fragile, had stabilised.

December and January were normally very weak months, but it was possible that the sharp tax increases announced on November 30 may have made more of an impact on confidence than first thought.

Despite the monthly fall in prices, they were still 1.1% higher than January 1993 and overall activity in the market continued to show signs of picking up, said the Halifax.

LOCAL NEWS PAGE

■ Work starts on 'natural' Bennachie centre

'Make the hill alive'



WORK has started on the £400,000 visitor centre on one of the North-east's most prominent landmarks.

The Bennachie Centre will be the new headquarters for Gordon District ranger Fred Gordon and is expected to open before the end of the year.

The development is a joint venture between the district council, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Forestry Commission, Grampian Enterprise and the Bailies of Bennachie.

It is thought the centre, which will be near the Esson carpark on the slopes of Bennachie, could attract up to 50,000 visitors a year.

"We don't doubt that people of all ages get a lot of pleasure from outings to Bennachie but this centre has been

devised so it will add to their enjoyment in an appealing and entertaining way," said planning convener Norman Donald.

"The main purpose of the centre is not so much to attract thousands more people to Bennachie, because that could have a negative impact on the environment, but to make the hill and its surroundings come alive."

The centre will use a range of methods to put across the history of Bennachie, including a focus on the wildlife and the people, who once lived and worked on the hill.

The final design of the building will incorporate many natural features of Gordon, including hill forts, stone circles and standing stones.

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