



■ Tree people: Area Forest Manager Norman Davidson with his commemorative certificate after he was made the 5000th Bailie of Bennachie. Full story on Page Seven.  
(Picture by Ellice Milton, of Kemnay)

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# Rotary Report

# Special milestone for new Bailie Norman

**G**UEST speaker at the weekly meeting of Oldmeldrum Rotary Club was Lesley Shepherd, enthusiastic educator for Aberdeenshire's involvement in LEC (Life Education Centres) or ALEC (Aberdeenshire Life Education Centre) to give it its local title.

LEC is a unique and inspirational drug prevention charity introduced into Great Britain in 1986 by HRH The Prince of Wales, providing programmes and resources for young people from the ages of three to 15.

The programme provides children with an awareness of themselves by getting to know the workings of the human body, particularly how and why its delicate equilibrium is affected by substances, legal or illegal.

LEC also aims to provide young people with the skills, knowledge and confidence to make healthy choices about their future.

The programmes are brought into schools in mobile learning centres - hi-tech caravans providing a unique learning environment for up to 30 youngsters who visit along with their teacher.

A teacher, Ms Shepherd has been involved with ALEC since its inception about 12 months ago and is very enthusiastic about the programme and its benefits to children.

Said Ms Shepherd: "The incidents of youngsters using drugs is getting higher and higher.

"The LEC initiative is designed to assist young people reject drugs and achieve their full potential in

**A** CENTRAL figure in the conservation of the Garioch's most prominent landmark has been credited with the title of the 5000th member of the Bailies of Bennachie.

Forestry Commission Buchan forest district manager Norman Davidson was awarded the honour at a special ceremony this week which also recognised the partnership formed between local

and national forestry organisations in promoting and preserving the area's famous hill.

When the Bailies of Bennachie, the long-established hill guardian group, realised their next appointed member would mark a special milestone for the organisation, they felt it only appropriate to celebrate the occasion by honouring Mr Davidson as a key figure in the

By JENNI MASSIE

conservation of Bennachie.

Senior Bailie and Bennachie Ranger Fred Gordon told the *Advertiser*: "We thought the appointment of our 5000th member was obviously something to be celebrated and since Mr Davidson has worked very closely in partnership with the Bailies of Bennachie, we decided he was very worthy of the title.

"He's always been very helpful, over a number of years, and we are keen to emphasise that the work of the Bailies is very much a partnership between the Forestry Commission, Aberdeenshire Council and Scottish Natural Heritage.

"The Bennachie Centre and its projects, past and present, have all been successful due to this partnership.

"We felt this membership was a good way to honour the man (Mr Davidson) for the help that he has

given to the Bailies and his invaluable contributions over the years."

The Bennachie Centre, based at of Garioch, provided the ideal venue for Monday night's ceremony which was attended by fellow Bailies as well as Mr Davidson's wife and son.

Said Mr Gordon: "We presented Mr Davidson with some commemorative Bailies parchment as well as a tie and some books on Bennachie.

"It was a small celebration which went very well."

Mr Davidson has been working alongside the Bailies in their ongoing conservation projects for around 12 years.

He told the *Advertiser*: "I was very delighted with the honour of becoming the 5000th Bailie.

"I've worked with the Bailies in my capacity as Forestry Commission Buchan district manager in what is very much a partnership which has seen advantages on both sides.

"No other partnership would be able to provide and preserve the area around Bennachie with the vast network of walks and paths which attract around 100,000 visitors every year.

"I am very keen to promote Bennachie and I hope to continue the good relationships established





The LEC initiative is designed to assist young people reject drugs and achieve their full potential in society, by building knowledge from as early as three.

"The sessions are interactive with as much participation from the pupils as possible, with teachers following up through projects."

In addition to drug awareness, LEC deals with topics such as healthy eating, decision making, dealing with emotional issues, alcohol, smoking and friendships.

Ms Shepherd also makes use of TAM (transmimetic animated manikin) where various organs can be removed and shown to the children.

Harold, a singing giraffe puppet is also used to encourage interactive role-play amongst the younger children.

ALEC is the only unit in Scotland and was funded initially by 10 North Aberdeenshire Rotary Clubs.

Ms Shepherd spends time at each primary school and has a two year programme to cover all schools in the area.

Clearly passionate about the LEC initiatives, Ms Shepherd receives very positive feedback from other teachers and her excellent talk provided Rotarians with an insight to her role of educating children at this very important stage in their development.



Oh so quiet: The 1st Alford Brownies proudly display the £415 cheque which they raised during a sponsored silence last November in aid of the Archie Foundation. (Picture by Ellice Milton, of Kemnay)

Bennachie and I hope to continue the good relationships established between the partnership."

Among the Bailies continuing forestry projects are the continual improvement to the network of paths, surveys on the flora and fauna and archaeological explorations.

The Bailies were founded in 1973 by the well-known late Dr Danny Gordon who became the Senior Bailie.

The Bailies honorary Senior Bailie is HRH Prince Charles who visited the Bailies room at the Bennachie Visitors' Centre when it had its official opening.

## Quarry tax setback

**LOCAL rural communities are bracing themselves for another blow after it was announced that an Aggregate Levy will be applied to all quarry products from April.**

For figures produced by the Quarry Products Association suggest the tax, which is supposed to be neutral, will raise £12m more in Scotland than will be returned through National Insurance reductions and the new Sustainability Fund.

West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine MP Sir Robert Smith commented: "I am concerned

that the treasury is to use a population-based formula to distribute some of the cash raised by the tax in the form of the Sustainability Fund.

"The predominantly rural communities bearing the burden of the tax are unlikely to benefit fully from the fund.

"Scotland as a whole stands to pay out £12m more than it will receive.

"Similarly, smaller quarries in rural areas could face closure as they are less likely to be able to absorb the increased costs, leading to job losses."



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