

Save Bennachie Newsletter

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Welcome!

Welcome to our fifth newsletter, the 4 months since our previous newsletter have literally flown by and there is no shortage of information to pass on to you all.

We have met with a great number of people from numerous organisations - too many to list here - but the product is self explanatory as you all see from the articles that follow.

Ongoing conversations with Transport Scotland indicate that the award for the engineering design contract is now likely to be mid-year. This is a double edged sword, giving us more time to raise public awareness of the threat to Bennachie, and focus on the local council elections in May and publish our campaign, "One Year On" Report; but it creates yet more difficulty for the Planning Authorities, and for Inverurie and its traffic issues. Do not rely on others, be prepared to make your views known to Transport Scotland and the Consultants at the 'Meet the Team' event when it is held for the Eastern Section.

Get Involved

Add your photographs of Bennachie and the surroundings to our website gallery which showcases the breathtaking beauty of the area. If you have some interesting facts, folklore or local history about Bennachie, or if you would like to write an article for our Newsletter or Blog, we would love to hear from you.

hello@savebennachie.com

Appointment of Consultants

Transport Scotland issued a Contract Notice for expressions of interest in the tender for the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen Multi Disciplinary Support Services Contract' (Consultants) on 27th January, with the aim of reducing those tendering to a maximum of five consultants. The shortlist was announced on 4th April 2017. AECOM Ltd, Amey Arup Joint Venture, Atkins WSP Joint Venture and Jacobs Ltd have been invited to bid.

The four consultancies/ joint ventures will now tender for the work with an expected award early summer 2017. Award of the £50 million, 20 year contract to the successful Consultant will commence the 2 year Stage 2 programme which will see the current broad lines on the map taken to detailed route options. There will be a 'Meet the Team' presentation approximately 6-8 weeks after the award, but this will not take place during the summer school holidays. It looks as if they are going to be tight for time to have a 'Meet the Team' before the holidays, therefore we are probably looking at September. Choice of the final route options will be taken by Holyrood during 2019.

What action can Save Bennachie take? We as a group of currently 760 members who have responded by e-mail and 2,400 members linked on Facebook must know the Team and ideally 'Meet the Team' at the earliest opportunity. Every one of our members will have their own angle on Saving Bennachie and it is vital that all members get involved. The Core Group will keep you posted on the award of the contract to Consultants and circulate details of any meeting with Transport Scotland and the Consultants.

Do not rely on others, be prepared to make your views known to Transport Scotland and the Consultants at the 'Meet the Team' event when it is held for the Eastern Section.



The Battle of Mons Graupius

Source - Colin Shepherd's blog 20 February 2016 on the Save Bennachie website.
 Marren, Peter. *Grampian Battlefields*. Aberdeen University Press, 1990. Chpt. 1 "Mons Graupius" pp4-19.

Could the slopes of Bennachie have been the site for the Battle of Mons Graupius between the Romans and local native Caledonian tribes?

Mons Graupius was the biggest and bloodiest battle fought in Northern Scotland. It was fought in the North East of Scotland. There are three or four possible sites - much evidence points to Bennachie being the location.

An exceptionally large Roman camp was found at Durno in 1975 by Dr J K St Joseph during an aerial reconnaissance flight. It covered about 144 acres and is between Pitcaple and Old Rayne. The ditches were eleven feet wide and four feet deep. It was designed to hold 24,000 men and it is the biggest Roman marching camp found beyond the Antonine Wall. It is likely this was a base for a large battle. The two sides could have met for battle not far from the camp between the Gadie Burn and The Mither Tap on the lower slopes of Bennachie as suggested by Dr Joseph in his reconstruction.

In AD 84 the Roman army led by Agricola "reached Mons Graupius which he found occupied by the enemy" (as told by in the account of the Battle of Mons Graupius by Tacitus). The Caledonians massed to protect a prominent hill position. Could this have been Bennachie with its Pictish fort? Tacitus estimates 30,000 men although this could be highly exaggerated. The 2 forces joined battle with the rough ground at the base of the hill making cavalry attacks by the Romans difficult. Initially the battle was being won by the Romans with their superior weaponry but the Caledonian tribes held the hillside. As the Caledonians came forward, however, the Roman cavalry on small agile horses attacked from the sides and scattered the local tribes, causing mayhem and carnage. The Romans lost around 360 men, the Caledonians many more as the remainder scattered.

The Bennachie site as described by Tacitus comes close to the Bennachie we see - with the steep and concave northern slopes and the mention of the top of several hills - could it be the Bennachie massif? Could this be the site of the Roman victory at Mons Graupius?

A Big Thank You to the Bailies of Bennachie!



Save Bennachie are absolutely delighted to have received a surprise donation of £250 from the Bailies of Bennachie. We have been extremely grateful to the Bailies for all their support since the Campaign was launched, and now to come forward with this donation is absolutely marvellous. We will spend it on publicity material in the form of banners and pop up display material. Up to now we have been self funding, with Core Team members having made personal donations. A very sincere thank you to the Bailies.

On The Political Front

We have been very busy meeting with local councillors and MSPs, getting our messages across. We have secured very encouraging cross party support from all North-East MSP's and our MP. As we approach the local council elections, please raise the threat to our beloved hill with your candidates and ensure that they are onside with the campaign.

Make Your Voice Heard!

Spread The Word

Remember to **Like Us** on Facebook and **Follow Us** on Twitter. This is a simple way to help us engage with more people.



facebook.com/SaveBennachie/



twitter.com/savebennachie

Joining Forces in the Alliance

A big welcome to the Cairngorm Club, Cluny, Midmar and Monymusk Community Council and the Inverurie Business Association to the Alliance.

Following a Save Bennachie presentation at a recent Cluny, Midmar and Monymusk Community Council meeting, we were delighted to receive the news that they have decided to join the Alliance.

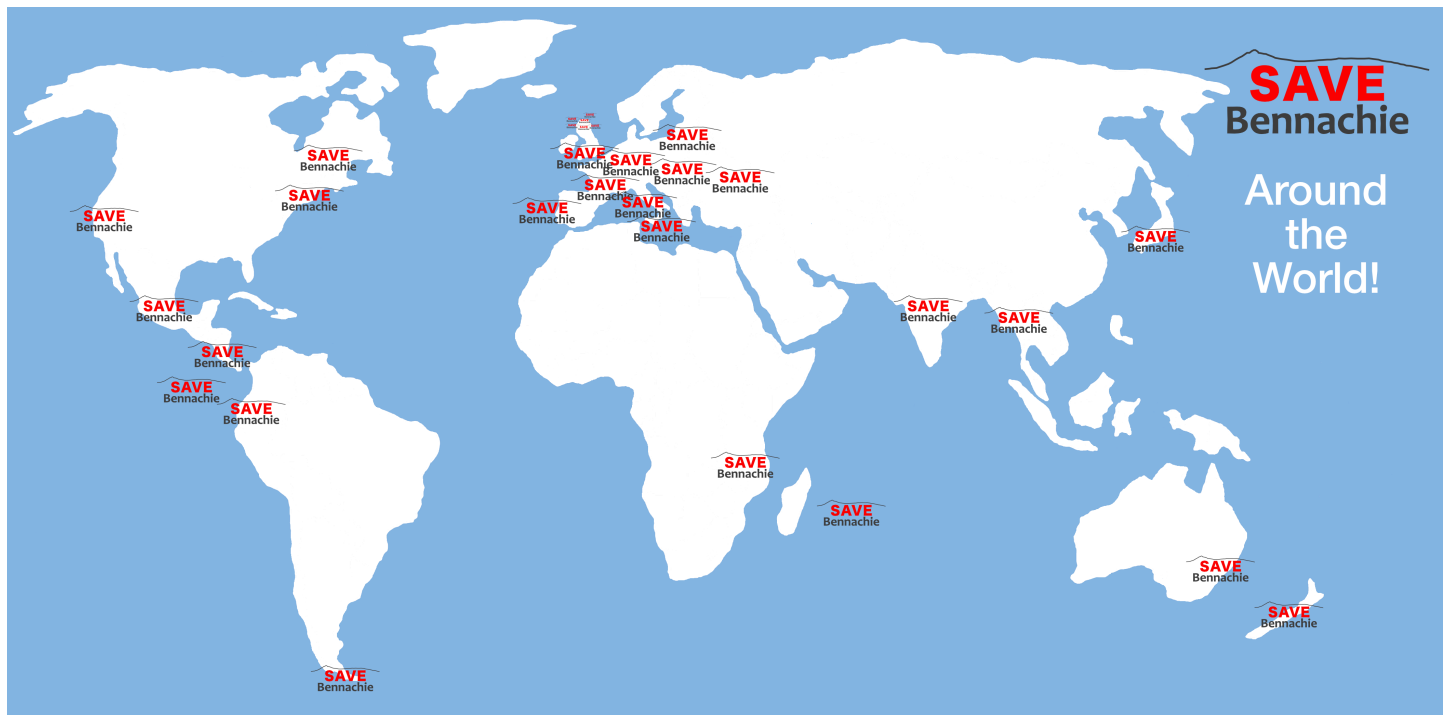
With about 400 members, mostly based in the North-East, the Cairngorm Club has since 1887 "encouraged mountaineering, with special reference to the Cairngorm group of mountains". It holds regular meets in both the uplands and lowlands of the NE, produces its own Journal every few years, and possesses an extensive Library.

Confirming their support of The Save Bennachie campaign the Inverurie Business Association committee said, "Bennachie truly is the "heart" of the Garioch. As Inverurie's main focal point Bennachie attracts visitors from near and far to spend time in the local area. This brings many economic benefits not only to our member businesses, particularly those in hospitality and retail, but to the local economy in general."

Whether you are an individual member or an Alliance member, we greatly appreciate your support. The Campaign is really gathering momentum and with so many community, outdoor, environmental, conservation and business groups joining forces with our individual members, coupled with our cross party political support, we are making it harder and

Save Bennachie Logo Travels the World!

Massive thank you to our followers for sparing a thought for Bennachie whilst away from home, and expats who still love Bennachie and want to help to protect it. Bennachie fans have been taking photos of our logo in all kinds of locations from across the planet - proving Bennachie is loved locally, nationally and internationally. Find all the photos and a more detailed map on our web site www.savebennachie.com/save-bennachie-around-the-world. Please keep your photos coming!



And Finally

The next few months will be critical for the future of Bennachie. Do not underestimate this very real threat to our hill. It is so important for all of us who value this special place, and who want to preserve it for future generations to;

- support this campaign
- lobby the key influencers
- take part in the consultation events (we will keep you updated with these)
- and say a huge NO! to this proposal which is ill thought through.



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