



SGH is a registered charity  
SCO38687

**Inside this issue:**

The Campaign Continues ....1  
 How Popular Is Gillies Hill? .....2  
 2014 And All That .....2  
 Gillies Hill - Now Part of the Battlefield .....3

**Campaign Diary**

**Save Gillies Hill AGM.**

Thursday 26 May:  
7.30pm in the  
Community Centre

**Descent of the Gillies to the Field of Bannockburn**

Sunday 19 June:  
1.30 pm for 2pm  
at the Public Park.

**Gillies Hill Litter Pick**

Saturday 25 June:  
10am  
(meet at Gillies Hill Big Gate)

**Big Widstok Free Music Festival**

Saturday 30 July:  
Public Park.  
1.30pm

**Coffee Morning/ Campaign Update**

Saturday 24 September  
10pm Church Hall

**Gillies Hill Litter Pick**

Saturday 8 October  
10am  
(meet at Gillies Hill Big Gate)



Save Gillies Hill  
Newsletter

**The campaign continues on all fronts**

The campaign to save Gillies Hill enters its fifth year with its prime objective – the preservation of the historic and beautiful landscape on the southern fringes of Stirling – as firm and resolute as it was on Day One of the campaign when it was standing room only in Cambusbarron Community Centre. A campaign waged on several fronts – recreational, historical, floral and faunal, political, legal, financial, and, perhaps most important of all, that of public opinion – will continue to be fought on these fronts with the same determination and commitment as has been manifestly visible these last four years.

After all, that strategy has brought results: the announcement by Hanson in the autumn of 2006 that quarrying would recommence on the Hill, was met by the formation of *Save Gillies Hill*, which was met by...no quarrying. So far. For four years. Just a coincidence?

But before we get too self-congratulatory, consider these troubling possibilities: that Hanson - and this has come from more than one quarry ‘insider,’ - has been patiently waiting for the momentum of the campaign to slow significantly so that they can begin blasting again with minimum opposition. A tactic often deployed, apparently, by conglomerates opposed by small groups of enthusiastic amateur volunteers: but - once the enthusiasm wanes and the *sma folk* get, well, smaller – in number – the Big Boys make their move, without the public opprobrium and outrage they would have had otherwise - and earlier; that part of this multinational waiting game also recognises that running a successful protest campaign takes money, a finite resource for everyone, but especially for voluntary groups. The Big Boys see that such money takes an awful amount of labour to come by, and, that the work-rate required to raise it isn’t easy. They know, too, that

initial and very generous donations eventually, as they must, dry up. They, on the other hand, can afford to be patient; and, when push comes to shove, when, as now the community has actually begun preliminary legal procedures, the Big Boys know just *how* finite our resources are, and that even four years of campaigning may not meet the cost of going to court. This is why Cambusbarron Community Council has, for the present, halted further legal moves: right now, we don’t have the sums needed. We’re grateful to Stirling Council for matching our funding, but it looks like much more will be needed. And – what’s also needed is a clear understanding of the implications of our community *not* proceeding with legal action: quarrying almost certainly will recommence leading to the loss of large tracts of the Hill. If there’s no *immediate* quarrying, Hanson in all likelihood, would, around 2015 or 2016, raise their Murrayshall presence and become much more visible on the ground -  
(continued on back page)

## HOW POPULAR *IS* GILLIES HILL? 50,000 FIRST FOOTS CAN'T BE WRONG!

There has been considerable discussion in recent years about the value of Gillies Hill to the population of Stirling, and how an abstract term such as 'value' might be measured. For the last year, a team from our community, headed up by Roddy Ross and with the help of Stirling Council's Access Team, has done exactly that: measured one aspect of the value of the Hill to those who use it, by measuring its popularity - by counting heads; or, more precisely, feet. And this was done quite scientifically, by discreetly placing 3 Pressure Counters on the 3 most popular access points to the Hill. These counted each footfall on them for a whole year. Despite an element of possible 'double-counting' for those occasions when users may have also exited over a Pressure Point, and despite the hard frosts and snow of last year freezing the Counters for up to 42 days of this period (perhaps balancing out any 'double-counting') the results are astonishing.

### Save Gillies Hill

For more information  
visit

[www.savegillieshill.org.uk](http://www.savegillieshill.org.uk)  
Phone 01786-463098



Almost 50,000 footfalls recorded. Which means, even if *everyone* also exited over Counters, at the very least, 25,000 people. But, given the number of possible entrances and exits, and the fact that we had the use of only 3 Counters, the total number of visitors to Gillies Hill last year must have been considerably more than that figure - between 30,000 and 40,000. Some people may be surprised and sceptical at such figures. But the folk who visit the Gillies Hill often won't be. They daily see their fellow walkers, cyclists, runners, dog-walkers, orienteers, climbers, bird-watchers, nature-lovers, photographers, etc. Compare these figures with those for other, more 'visible' attractions - Bannockburn Heritage centre: 62,322; Argyll's Ludging: 53,745; the Stirling Smith: 49,072 - and Gillies Hill comes out quite well. It has, of course, been around a bit longer than its admirable if 'rival' attractions. Let's hope such scientifically calculated popularity ensures it's around to welcome many more First Foots for many new years to come.

## 2014 AND ALL THAT

The Gillies Hill - and, indeed, other areas of Cambusbarrow - should feature in the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn, claims Cambusbarrow Community Council.

"The acceptance of our argument for the inclusion of the Gillies Hill in *Historic Scotland's* official battle terrain is real boost", says Community Council's Chair, Peter Paterson. "And the building of an up-to-date new Visitor Centre at the Borestone for 2014 is great. But we think that *any* local connection with the events of June 1314 should be marked by tastefully-designed information panels, giving visitors a grounding in that area's possible role. People will get a better idea of the events of those two days if they're able to follow a Battle Trail around the area. And while there is still much debate about the where and who and when of the events of the battle, surely these educational panels can simply reflect this, while allowing battlefield visitors to weigh up the various possibilities from specific viewpoints? That's why we'd have the Gillies Hill panel just off the roadway near Tinkers' Loan, looking

down to the Borestone. From here, the contribution of the Hill to the battle can become much more meaningful."

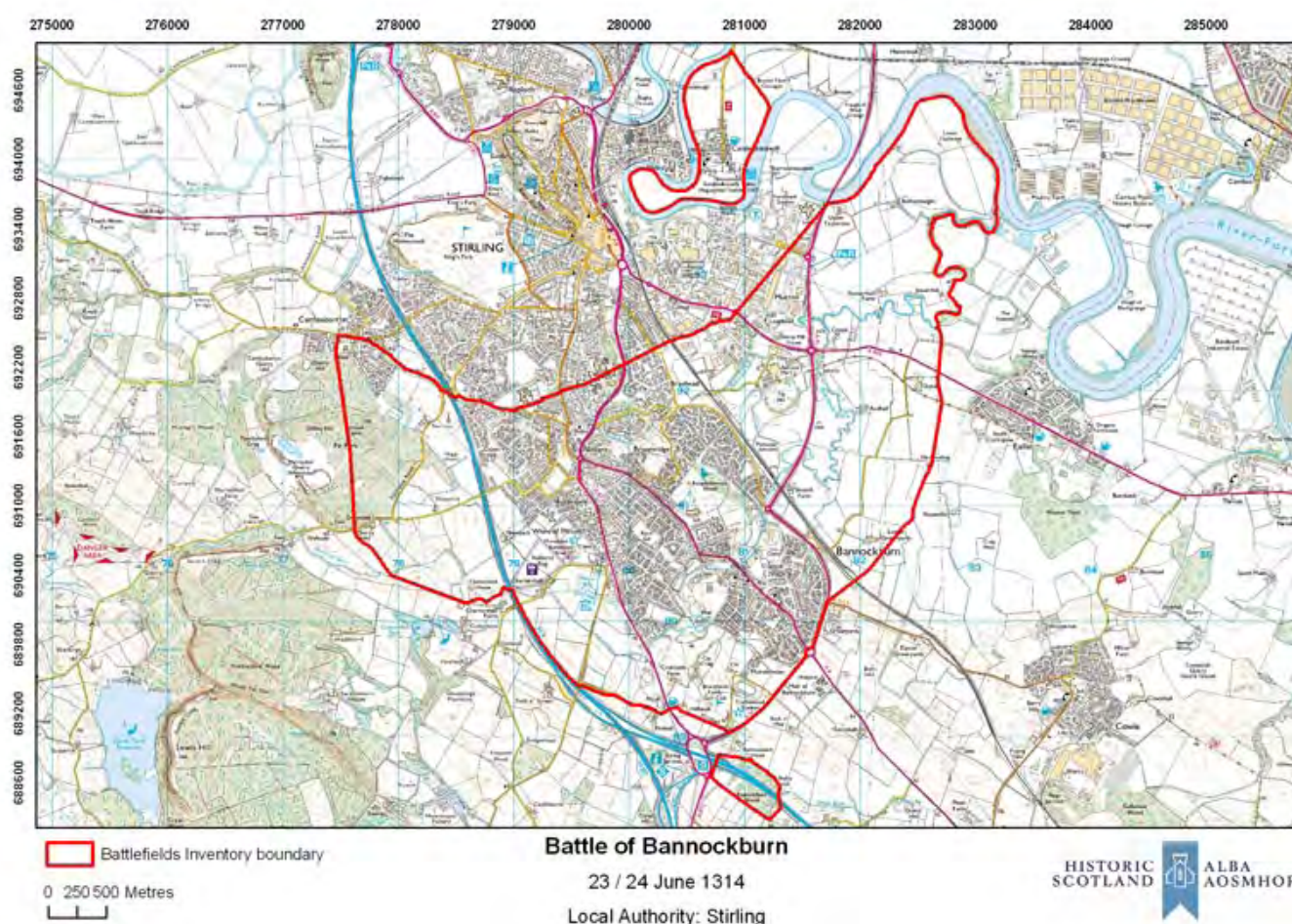
Thus, the skirmish between Randolph and Clifford on 23 June should be similarly marked - at Randolphfield and/or Batterflats, and the much more than a skirmish at Bloody Faulds should be recorded, on its site.

Cambusbarrow's second (and bloodless) contribution - the visit by Bruce before the Battle to Cambusbarrow Chapel to take communion and possibly hold a council of war - should also be recorded.

"Yes," says Peter, "Plans are already under way to commemorate Bruce's visit and his taking the water from what became known as 'Bruce's Well', to be scattered on the battlefield, by a physical memorial of the event, more substantial than that unveiled back in 1979 when the Well was first rediscovered."

And, unlike that first plaque, vandal-proof also. And, there are also plans to celebrate the village's 1314 connection in a village sign. In all of these ambitious plans, of course, the Gillies Hill is central. What awful irony if 2014 sees this historic terrain blighted even further by quarrying.

## Gillies Hill: Now Officially Part of the 1314 Battlefield



*Save Gillies Hill* was much cheered recently after *Historic Scotland*, the government body responsible for Scotland's historical heritage, agreed to representations from Cambusbarron Community Council (abetted by many letters from local people) to include officially the eastern half of Gillies Hill in the Battle of Bannockburn site.

Exactly where the actual fighting on the two days of the Battle took place has been the subject for many years of intense debate. Many books have been written, as different historians argue their corner; but that western corner of the terrain, called for centuries by local people after the *sma folk* or *ghillies* of Bruce's army has sometimes been overlooked. Not any more.

Kevin Munro, Historic Scotland's Inspector of Ancient Monuments (Battlefields) wrote:

As a result of this feedback to the consultation, [by Cambusbarron CC] we have extended the area to include the eastern side of Gillies Hill, as it would have been this side of the hill from where the Sma' Folk could have observed the battle unfold. The record for the Battle of Bannockburn was added to the Inventory of Historic Battlefields on 21 March 2011.

The updated record is available through the Historic Scotland web site:

<http://www.historicscotland.gov.uk/index/heritage/battlefields.htm>

(continued from page 1)

– thus making it more difficult for Stirling Council planners to impose the kind of Hill-saving measures in the 2017 Review that we want. 2017 is a vital year: it is then that a Review of Old Mineral Permissions – ROMP – *must* be undertaken, 15 years after the previous one: that 2002 ROMP failed to impose the EIA that the law demands. Court action would allow our community to present its case, to point out to the decision makers, in unambiguous terms, the dire consequences of that non-imposition, some 10 years after it should have been in place – **and to point out what could still be saved were it to be ordered by the court.**

Thus much of the Gillies Hill's social, environmental and historical treasures may yet be protected. And, the other innocent victims in this, the ordinary people who daily appreciate the Hill as walkers, bird-watchers, runners, bikers, nature-lovers, historians - or the thousands who each day, as has happened for centuries, look up momentarily from any approach to Stirling, and are heartened by that beautiful, rising, historic landscape - they, too, would also get justice.

We may have right on our side; we may even have legal right *potentially* on our side (Stirling Council has long recognised its 2002 error.) But unless that right is upheld in a court, we should expect the worst: letters to the local press and protest marches will cut no ice with Hanson, if they have an unchallenged permission in their back pocket. It is galling to think that through no fault on our part, the cost of such a legal challenge means that that error stands, and that the quarryers can 'legally,' until it is challenged, begin blasting tomorrow.

But, let us repeat our commitment: this campaign, including its legal front, *will* continue.

But – we need help. Not simply financial help, though that would, of course, be most welcome. But the sums required are considerable. We need a 'Funding Czar' to take responsibility to try to raise such money as may be required. Or for a small group to do so. And we need more help generally. The present committee has been in place for four years. There is, as this Newsletter shamelessly repeats, no loss of commitment here. The same people are willing to continue in their positions. But, as the campaign has developed, responsibilities and duties have grown: the organisation of the Descent of the Gillies (this year on Sunday 20 June), Big Widstok; this Newsletter; the legal debates with many, many parties, the annual calendar, etc – all require time and effort, all gladly given. But, we also know that, reading this Newsletter, there *are* people very willing to help when called upon: look at those who did magnificently in last year's petition to Stirling Council, who *attend* the Descent of the Gillies, who deliver these Newsletters to 5,000 homes. All we're asking is for such enthusiasm and effort to become a little more 'official' – especially in the area of fundraising for possible legal initiatives. The alternative doesn't bear thinking about: that sprawling, ugly First World War landscape that is the present Murrayshall Quarry - where the Lake and beautiful rhododendrons, azaleas and Scots Pines once stretched up to the Bonnety Tree: some remember it poignantly - replicated on the remaining idyllic, ancient contours of the Hill. (And nearer, much nearer than it ever has been: whatever the 'official' boundaries of the quarrying-to-come on the planners' maps,



there will, inevitably, be an additional 'no-go' area between it and Cambusbarron. Check out the present quarry top around Murrayshall.)

But we can still stop this happening. Not by shaking our heads and holding up our hands, but by channelling our anger (remember those 2007 meetings in the Community Centre) to help - by attending our AGM on 26 May; by once again replicating the Descent of the Gillies on 19 June (remember: the more people there, the greater publicity for our cause, and the greater benefits for Gillies Hill) and to support once again, *Big Widstok* on 30 July.

But this year, please consider helping in a direct and practical way: there's much to do and many hands make it easier. Above all, we need your help to raise that money to service the most potent weapon in our campaign, our legal challenge to the quarryers. into direct action helping to raise the money needed.

The wonderful weather throughout April and early May has shown Gillies Hill at its colourful best: the daffodils and bluebells, the bright greens and browns of ancient Scots Pines and Redwoods; even the timid red squirrels, roe deer and peregrines seem less shy. And, of course, the sublime views and vistas.

Are we seriously going to let this all be destroyed?