

Press Release from

Save Gillies Hill

The *Sma Folk* March Again

On 24 June, 1314, the *gillies*, or camp followers of Bruce's army, made their legendary intervention onto the field of Bannockburn – and history.

On 24 June, 2007, the modern version of these heroic *sma folk*, as Bruce's chronicler, John Barbour, called them, will march again, this time to try to save the hill from which their 24th century counterparts descended, and after whom it has long been named, the Gillies Hill. That sprawling, beautiful, wooded slope 2 miles south of Stirling is instantly recognisable from a variety of directions.

But not for much longer if industrial giants Hanson Aggregates realise their threat to re-activate quarrying, and the heights that Bruce wisely chose as shelter for his most vulnerable people will be no more.

But the *gillies* of today are equally determined that *their* intervention in the modern battle to save the Gillies Hill will be as successful as that of their illustrious predecessors.

A spokesperson said: "The original *gillies* came round the side of the Hill at a dramatic moment in the Battle of Bannockburn. Waving and banging their pots, pans and cooking utensils, they looked, and sounded like a reinforcing Scots army. The sore-pressed English certainly thought so, and their resistance melted away. We want the quarriers to do the same, to see that the whole community, not just of Cambusbarron, not just of Stirling, but of Scotland itself, will never surrender this icon of Scottish history, and we call on all local people, and those from further afield to whom our heritage matters, to join us on our march on Sunday. And it's not just for history: this is a special and vital place for rare wild-life: peregrines, ospreys, green woodpeckers, badgers, deer - all have their home on the Gillies Hill. And joggers, climbers, walkers, bird-spotters, horse-riders, cyclists, kids simply playing, and people who come from far and wide to enjoy the spectacular views from the cliffs – the loss of the Hill will devastate all of these."

It is appropriate that the March, at 1.45 on Sunday, begins from the Public Park, Cambusbarron, just a few yards from the site of the ancient Chapelwell, where Bruce prayed on the night before the battle. From the well, long lost but rediscovered some 25 years ago, was taken the holy water that was sprinkled on the field of Bannockburn in the hope of success.

"It's true", the campaign spokesperson went on, "that Cambusbarron has always had this special connection with Bruce and Bannockburn, and that's why this campaign has begun here: but this is Scotland's fight, not just ours. Would America stand by and let

Gettysburg be built upon? Would France allow commercial sand-removal from the D-day beaches? Would Russia demolish the remaining fortifications from Stalingrad? Come and join the 2007 *gillies* on Sunday,”

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