

Press release from *Save Gillies Hill*

As their fourteenth century predecessors did long before them, the 2007 Gillies, who marched over the Gillies Hill, Cambusbarron, on Sunday triumphed magnificently. Despite a pre-March almost continuous downpour, over 400 followed the same route as the original camp-followers of Robert the Bruce's army, and emerged onto the Field of Bannockburn with as much noise. But instead of frightening the enemy, the modern Gillies were happy simply to vent their opposition to plans to reactivate quarrying on the hill where Bruce positioned the cooks, smiths, armourers – the famous 'sma folk' of Bannockburn legend, indeed fact.

Their opposition was bolstered by Bruce Crawford, MSP for Stirling, who addressed the crowd at the Borestone after marching with the protestors. Stirling Council, he said, needed to heed this overwhelming voice. They were, he said, voicing the opposition of almost the entire community against quarrying and what it would mean for the community; not only the disastrous consequences for wildlife – the badgers, deer, green woodpeckers, peregrines, ospreys, red squirrels and deer which occupied the Hill, but also against the destruction of a historical site that had helped shape the modern nation of Scotland. He called on the Council to revoke planning permission for further quarrying under the 1997 Town and Country Planning Act: 'material' changes had, indeed, occurred since planning had been granted, some 25 years previously.

Mr Crawford was followed by David Ross, historian and author, who warmly commended the marchers for literally and metaphorically following in the footsteps of the original Gillies, in their attempt to hang on to something very important. We honour them, he said, as they honoured us by their efforts almost 700 years ago.

The campaign to save the Gillies Hill – never in any way bothered by the power ranged against them – takes enormous heart from Sunday's march: the campaign, like Bruce's after Bannockburn, will continue until ultimate success is **officially** registered.

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