



NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS, BUT.....

As the campaign to Save Gillies Hill enters its third year, our supporters should be happy - but not complacent.

Happy, because there has been no extension to quarrying since the campaign began.

No coincidence there.

But not complacent because complacency is exactly what our opponents are relying on. That and, as time passes, apathy, and a feeling amongst some that, in the end, the big boys always win.

Ultimately, because they think they have an abundance of time (planning consent, albeit flawed, till 2042) and resources (they're one of the biggest aggregates companies in the world) while ours, are necessarily limited, they hope, and expect, we'll go away. It's a classic strategy, and it often works.

But that's exactly why we need to continue to show our opposition **in public** – by participating once again in June's *Re-Enactment of the Descent of the Gillies of 1314 onto the Field of Bannockburn*; by turning up in our usual large numbers at *the Big Widstok* in July. And by actively supporting all *SGH* initiatives this year.

But *SGH* is also taking on the fight – and the opposition – in other ways: our legal group continues to monitor the minutiae of Hanson's planning consent of 2002, and we remain convinced, as did Stirling Council's QC in January, 2008, that it is flawed, and should have included an EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment)

Should Hanson seek to activate this permission, we shall legally challenge them, confident of success.

And if the result of this challenge is a requirement that Hanson conduct an EIA, then we shall monitor *that* in the light of our own *Shadow EIA* which has been evolving over the past year, and which will continue, as more and more expert help comes on board. (Last year's pioneering work by our American botanist friends, Californian Peggy Edwards and Dale Kruse, from the University of Texas, will continue this summer when Peggy makes her **fourth visit in a year to Gillies Hill**, but is being complemented by expertise, academic and otherwise, from nearer home, as a weighty dossier on the negative impact of a resumption of quarrying, on the Hill's flora, fauna, history and recreational and aesthetic possibilities, is compiled..

Meanwhile, another team continues to examine the possibilities of a community buy-out of all, or any part of, the Hill.

Descent of the Gillies, 2009

This year's *Re-Enactment of the Descent of the 1314 Gillies onto the Field of Bannockburn* takes place on Sunday 21 June, leaving from Cambusbarron Park at 2pm. To attain maximum publicity, and to demonstrate to our opponents that opposition to their plans remains solid, it is vital that as many supporters as possible turn out.

PLEASE – IF YOU CAN – BE THERE.

Again, to maximise publicity, a change of route will see us, as in previous years, initially go through the village, up Gillies Hill into the woods, but then turn *left* and *down* Polmaise Road, and thereafter to the Borestone via Torbrex and St Ninians. There, as in previous years, speakers will address the crowd.

Stewards are therefore, as always, urgently required: please phone 463098, or email gillieshill@hotmail.co.uk if you can volunteer.

The Big Widstok.

Our annual free (but please also feel free to donate!) music festival takes place this year in Cambusbarron Park on Saturday 25 July, from 2pm to 6pm. These have been first rate days out in the previous two years, and acts such as the Lobsters and Konrad guarantee a repeat. (Please note: while *SGH* will, as usual, run its own bar – all profits therefore to the cause - **it is illegal to consume alcohol outside the designated area.**)

Poetry

The cause of Gillies Hill arouses, of course, powerful feelings. Two of our supporters, Ian Dowell and Roddy Ross, have been moved to capture what the Hill means to them in poetry:

The Gillies Hill

On this warm still Summer night,
I look towards Touchmollar across Gartur Estate.
To the lofty peaks of the Grampians,
That seem to guard the Highland gate.

The tall proud Wellingtonia
With the 'Name Tree' by their side,
Gaze towards Stirling Castle
A toast to all of Scotland's pride.

All this I see around me
Carved with God's own hand,
As I stand high on the Gillies Hill
Our precious piece of land.

To take away the freedom
Of the woods where I now stand.
To extend the excavation,
To quarry all this land -

It brings a tear into my eyes,
It breaks my heart to see
That all this nature's beauty
Will be taken away from me.

So let us stand together
To stop this wilful waste,
And save for future generations
This tranquil, peaceful place.

Don't let a faded photograph
Be all we can embrace,
When future generations ask –
Where was this beautiful place?

Ghostly whispers carried on the breeze
Of generations long gone by,
Will ask, where is the Seven Winds?
Will ask and wonder, why?

IAN DOWELL

GILLIESHILL.

Maybe it's the solitude, maybe it's the air,
But I know that Gillieshill is special when I'm there.

I absorb the vistas from Ben Lomond to the Forth,
The castles, farms and factories to East and West and North.

The crags and tails, volcanic stumps are wonderful to see,
Even the graceful turbines are magical to me.

From the orchids in the meadows to the massive pines
The ancient sites and ruins, the long forgotten lines

Contribute to this wondrous world - the gem we want to keep,,
These woodlands of our leisure hours fill our emotions deep.

Enjoy the joys of walking or gasp at climbing thrills,
Absorb the stunts of cyclists with jumps and sometimes spills.

The squirrels and the foxes, the badgers, stoats and cats,
The harriers and the buzzards, pigeons, owls and bats.

A pleasant place to spend some time, a place for you to chill,
Take your time to wander round the ancient Gillies Hill

RODDY ROSS





SAVE GILLIES HILL... FROM OURSELVES !

Early summer is almost here and we all hope to enjoy the better weather and possibly have a few walks in the Gillies Hill woods. We all know about the community campaign to *Save Gillies Hill* from being savaged by new quarrying operations at Murrayshall. We should also be aware that there are other factors which could damage the woods as a recreational area for the village and the wider community - factors which are more in *our* control.

Last year *Save Gillies Hill* spent a lot of time picking up bottles, plastic bags, mattresses, abandoned tents etc in the woods and taking them to a registered tip. It would be good if all users of the woods would ensure that they take all their litter home. If you are a parent and you know your children are camping in the woods, or simply spending some time there, please encourage them to do the same.

When the weather is dry there seems to be a temptation for some individuals to start fires in the bracken on the hill. Several years ago the historic Scots Pine at the viewpoint on Touchadam Craig was tragically killed off. Last year a fire severely damaged a number of smaller Scots Pine in the same area. Let's all ensure that we don't harm a tremendous recreational area by being careless with fire.

If you have been walking or cycling in the woods or quarry area, you may have been disturbed by trail bikes or quad bikes. Our Community Council has been informed by the Police that it is illegal to use motorised vehicles on private land without written permission from the landowner. The landowners of the woods and quarry have *not* given this permission and therefore the use of motorbikes or quad bikes in the woods and quarry area is illegal and the police will respond to complaints from the public.

So let's save Gillies Hill from quarrying - and do everything we ourselves can to preserve it as a priceless recreational area.

DOUGLAS CAMPBELL

Linda

Save Gillies Hill lost one of its stalwarts on 19 February with the death of **Linda Sharp**, better known, perhaps, to many as Linda Morrison. SGH intends to mark Linda's huge contribution to saving the Hill she loved by naming the path from Polmaise Castle ruins to the back of her house 'Linda's Path'. It is a path Linda and her team knew well: it's estimated that over 100 black-bags of rubbish (see Douglas Campbell's item) have been carried/dragged down it as part of SGH's clean-up efforts since the campaign began. This title will be entered into the maps being prepared as part of both our Shadow EIA documentation, and those at the centre of an initiative by our Community Council –entitled *Gillies Hill: Past Present and Future* - to widen appreciation of what the Hill has to offer. A short ceremony to formally name the Path, will be held at 2.30 p.m. on Sunday 7 June. All are welcome, and should meet at 2.15 at the Big gate entrance to the woods.

Meanwhile Linda's work will continue: on Saturday 6 June at 10am, there will be the first of this years clean-ups – appropriately from the big Gate along to the route of Linda's Path. Please; if you can be there, phone Janice at 463098.

Peggy Edwards



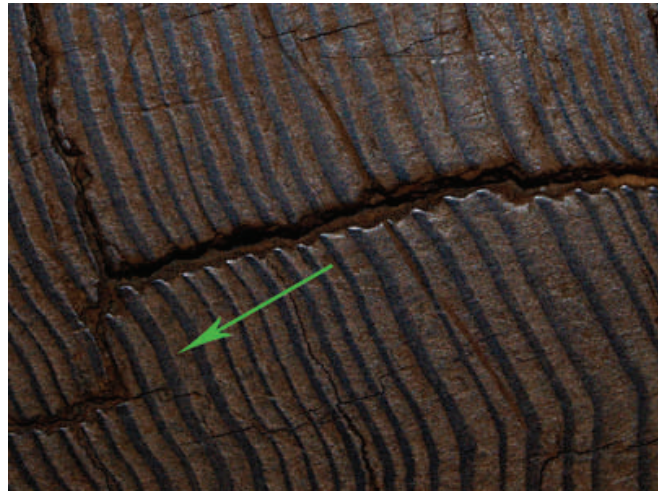
These two photographs, taken in California's State Park, throw a thoughtful light on the possible fate of the Gillies Hill, still under threat of destruction from quarrying. They were taken by one of *SGH*'s amazing American supporters, botanist Peggy Edwards. The first shows the seeds of a Giant Redwood.

"How" asks Peggy rhetorically "Can these possibly grow into the tallest living things on the planet?"

The second shows the ring for the year 1314 of a mature tree.

"Poignant to think", writes Peggy, "That while the Battle of Bannockburn was raging, this redwood was quietly growing 6,000 miles away in the deep, dark, temperate rain-forest".

And more poignant to think that the giant *Wellingtonia* on the Gillies Hill, cousins of that Californian Redwood, visible from miles away, and still stretching towards their prime, will be brought down if quarry operations restart – on the historic hill from which the gillies, or camp-followers of Bruce's army descended in that same year of 1314.



But another battle, the modern one to save Gillies Hill, continues.

Gillies Hill: Past, Present & Future

Gillies Hill: Past, Present & Future is a new group set up by *Cambusbarron Community Council* to foster appreciation, knowledge and responsible use of the Hill. As such, it is a quite separate body from *SGH* - but a group that *SGH* wholeheartedly welcomes. Its intention includes the publication of maps and guidebooks to the Hill's many fascinating aspects.