

What a mess!

(The following is not a direct translation of the Doric version of this story but it conveys the sense of the story. See the glossary below for direct translations of some words.)

Well folks there's trouble on Bennachie!

Jock O Bennachie is fed up...in fact he is raging...he is very, very angry, there is steam coming out of his ears and even his hairy toes have gone completely red. He's unhappy about what some of us humans are doing to his beautiful hill, and he has told the Bailies of Bennachie that this has to stop NOW!

(aside) You're maybe asking, how does a giant, thousands of years old, who is never seen for a long time, communicate with the Bailies of Bennachie? -Simple, Jock's been tweeting for hundreds of years before Twitter was ever thought of, and he has his own special Instajock and Facejock!

Jock knows that people like to visit Bennachie and enjoy the fresh air and peace and quiet. They can listen to the birds and look for buzzards flying high in the sky. They might see red squirrels scampering up Scots Pine trees and if they are very lucky they might see a fox or a deer running through the wood. It's a great place for folks to relax and have fun. They often leave with smiles on their faces and maybe a photo in their phones. Bennachie gives all this and lots more.

But what are some of us giving Bennachie in return? Litter! Rubbish! Loads and loads of it! Not only does this look ugly, but it is dangerous too!

Just last week Winston, the woodpigeon, got all tangled up in a discarded face mask over near Rowantree car park. His wing got caught in one string and his legs were caught up in the other string. No matter how hard he tried to escape he couldn't get free. Luckily, his partner was able to peck, peck, peck and get him free, but not before Winston had a nasty injury. And of course he couldn't go to a vet and get any antibiotics or anything to help him recover easily.

However, this wasn't the worst thing. Far worse than this is the fact that there have been several fatalities on the hill that could have been avoided.

The first fatality was Freda the field vole when she went out one late afternoon to find some food. She left her now born babies cuddled together in the long grass and went to find something to eat. She was soon attracted by a lovely smell coming from a long, strangely shaped object. When she stuck her nose in the hole she couldn't resist the lovely smell and so Frieda climbed into the plastic bottle and drank the tiny bit of juice that was left there. But sadly she couldn't manage to get back out of the bottle and so by the next morning she had died. And of course without their mother this meant that Freda's babies couldn't survive. Jock the Giant cried when he heard about this sad news.

And he felt the same when he heard about Naomi the roe deer. She was busy eating grass in the Woodend fields close to the Bennachie Visitor Centre. As she was munching the grass she accidentally eat a small plastic bag. This bag got stuck inside her creating a blockage in her stomach which slowly caused her death. It was horrible!

Jock was very upset. He looked around and saw plastic bottles and cans in the heather, broken glass on Mither Tap, sweetie papers, plastic bags, and used loo roll all over the place. Some people had even left old barbecues trays and cigarette butts lying around. They could have caused a fire.

Jock wondered how these items had got to Bennachie. Maybe the wind had blown them there? Maybe Jock O Noth, instead of throwing stones, had started throwing litter on the hill to make Jock O Bennachie angry. But this was going too far...

Jock was confused and exhausted by all this. He sat down and leant his back against an old Scots pine. He put his hands on his head and closes his eyes. "I have to do something about this!" he said out loud.

"Yes, you are right. They are all leaving," said the Scots Pine.

"What do you mean?" asked Jock as he looked up through the branches.

The tree then tells him that some of the Bennachie animals have left and others are thinking of leaving because the hill is no longer safe.

Jock said that he would speak to Jock o Noth about it and tell him he would have to stop throwing rubbish on Bennachie. But the Scots Pine explained to Jock that it is not Jock O Noth but humans that are visiting the hill, having picnics and snacks and dropping their litter on the ground. The tree also told Jock that some people are even hanging bags filled with dog poo on branches and leaving them there. These bags can last for a long, long time and there are no poo fairies to take them away!

"I can't believe it" said Jock. "Surely people could just take their rubbish home!"

"You would think so," agreed the Scots Pine.

"I must do something about this," Jock announced. "I know - I will suggest that everyone who comes to Bennachie makes a promise to be responsible for their own rubbish and take it to the bin or take it home."

So when I came to Bennachie today I made a promise to Jock that I would be responsible for my litter and take it home with me. That way Bennachie will stay beautiful and safe for everyone and all living things. Maybe you would like to make that promise next time you come to Bennachie.

Glossary

Affa - Awful

Auld - Old

Awa – Away

Bairns – Children

Dee – Do

Fa – Who

Far - Where

Foo – Why

Forbye – As well

Fit - What

Gaen – Went

Gey – Great, considerable

Girss - Grass

Gloamin- Twilight

Greetin – Crying

Hae - Have

Ilky bodie – Everybody

Ken – Know

Kittlet up – Annoyed

Lugs – Ears

Mair – More

Nae - None

Puckles – Some, a few

Raxed – Stretched

Scunnert – Fed up

Sic – Such

Syne – Then

Tae – To

Taes - Toes

Tod – Fox

Trapple – Throat

Wame - Stomach

Waur – Worse

Win oot – Get out, Escape

Winner – Wonder

Wye - Way