

NEWSLETTER

Friends of the Book of Deer

Www.bookofdeer.co.uk

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

That time has come around again and we are doing something a bit different by shifting our meeting to a Friday evening. As usual the business will be short and sweet, reporting on another busy year past. The business will be followed by a talk, given by Gordon Hay describing his experience of

translating the New Testament of the Authorised Version of the King James Bible into the Doric.

Venue is the Stuartfield Village Hall 6 30pm for 7 on Friday 24th June, 2011. Do come along and enjoy this talk. There will be hospitality and, as usual, it is an open meeting and all are welcome.

WEBSITE

Two years ago we revamped the website with some help, and the traffic increased substantially which was pleasing. Now we have gone a step farther, as mentioned in the previous edition and introduced an up to the minute technology which allows for easier and faster updating by selected Project workers. It is too early to tell if this has led to an increase in visitors, but with a more sophisticated method of analysing what the visitors are viewing, we should be able to respond better to suit their interests.

There are additions we can make, for example - a section for younger people and one for Gaelic readers. We have already added the back numbers of this publication, to the website in the hope that it will bring our activities to the attention of a wider audience.

Now that some fine tuning has taken place, it would be of great benefit if we could have feedback on the website and if readers feel so inclined offer suggestions and perhaps articles which we can place on the website, or indeed, publish in the Newsletter.

ARCHAEOLOGY

The next phase in our search for the long lost Pictish Monastery will start soon. The delay has been as a result of G.U.A.R.D (Glasgow University Archaeology Department) reinventing itself as Northlight Heritage, and now attached to York University which is famed for its pro-active approach.

Our outreach to schools via archaeological projects was a great success last year and we will continue with this under the leadership of Derek Jennings.



The children and their teachers enjoyed the experience despite the weather!

EVENTS IN ADEN PARK

The Project is hosting a programme of guided tours for people interested in the history, archaeology and heritage of Buchan on the 18th of June 2011. The main event will be a guided, circular tour of 8 miles in the area around Aden Park and Old Deer. The leader will be George Smart, who will set off at 9am from the Book of Deer Project Room in Aden Park. Walkers can expect to be back at 12, and to get the most benefit from the tour should bring binoculars, snacks and water. The route will go past the mansion house, along the loop in the river and onto the Hill of Biffie, where the walkers will have great views of the Buchan country side; the return leg will go through Old Deer, past Mavisbank and then on to the Project Room.

There will be Project workers on hand to give shorter tours around the Park and Old Deer in the morning from 10am and later in the day at 2pm to explain the mysteries of the ancient manuscript which is the Book of Deer.

Those interested in the longer walk should contact Elizabeth Pirie on 01779 613666 or contact bookofdeer@yahoo.co.uk. Others for the shorter walks just have to turn up nearhand the time.

This programme replaces our traditional Pilgrimage, and you can be sure that George has researched the topics in his usual thorough manner.

AUTUMN SEMINAR

The "Friends of the Book of Deer" have arranged the next Seminar for the afternoon of the 24th September at 2pm in the Kemp Hall, Old Deer. It is a paper called *Stuartfield and Crichtie: an Historical Relationship* and was presented by Laura Dorant in a *Dimensions of Political Ecology* conference in the US, in the *Rural - Urban Interfaces Session*. It was very well received. Planned Villages, of which Stuartfield is one, are wonderful examples of people/nature relationships i.e how we relate to the land where we live.

The paper introduces Buchan, the lands of Crichtie and Dens, the village of Stuartfield and the Burnett Stuart family, then contextualises such planned villages within certain aspects of Scottish history such as the Enlightenment and Scottish Famine. The final section is about changes in the relationship that residents have with the village and the land. These have of course changed over time; still-existing planned villages now being home to a wide variety of residents.

MEDIEVAL CHURCH MUSIC



This topic took us to the very heart of the life of the monks who were in possession of the *Book of Deer* and Fr. Benedict did us a great favour in bringing us his well researched and beautifully presented talk. There is really no way in which this humble scribe can do justice in reporting the content and impact of his presentation on the attentive and appreciative audience.

Helped by a Power Point Presentation (his very first ever) of 14 slides, excerpts from Pluscarden's own CD's - the COLLEGERUNT from the *Liturgy of Holy Week* and the "Salve Splendor" from a *Liturgy for St. Columba*, and his own intonations of 6 excerpts from the Gospel of Luke as in the Book of Deer, but with the Latin pronounced as it is today, Fr. Benedict transported us to the very heart of the medieval Monk's life. He put forward that the Pictish Church was in no way isolated from mainstream Europe and that the Latin texts in the manuscript would have been sung, and giving good reasons why this should be so. The Chant used must have been closely related to what is now known as Gregorian Chant. Chant was used to enable the voice to carry clearly to reach large congregations in basilicas and also, of course, because singing helps to make the text special, sacred and beautiful!

Why in Latin? Was it because of the multiplicity of languages and dialects throughout the Western Church that there had to be a common language for worship as there was in law, governance, and literature?

Hopefully we can harness technology to place this talk in its entirety on the website.

VISITOR CENTRE

We intend to do a major overhaul in the Visitor Centre to make it more atmospheric, in line with the time of the Pictish Monastery. As the longer term future of what might (or might not) happen in Aden Park, the fittings and interpretation boards will be completely portable and designed to make our presence more visible. There is already a new film on display and when the work is complete, various slide shows will be enabled through an overhead projector. This all should all be in place for late July.

The opening times of the Heritage Museum on the Park have been reduced, but with the goodwill of our volunteers we should be able to maintain our usual in the meantime; that is during June, July and August we will be open 1 30 to 4 on Saturday and Sundays; but we will have to review the situation in August as to what we will do in September. We will respond to any special requests from parties who wish to visit.

FRIENDS OF THE BOOK OF DEER

Member numbers remain at an encouraging level and we value greatly your support. If you are not up to date with your membership (only £5 per annum), please send it on to the Maud office—cheques made out to "the Friends of the Book of Deer", and of course we welcome any new members.

Bunty Penny, to whom we will be eternally grateful, is gradually winding down and her role will be taken on by Joyce Brown.