



It's been another exciting and busy time since our last NEWSLETTER, with Seminars, Talks, Digs, Bus Trips and Exhibitions all taking place during that time.



Exhibition

An exhibition was held in the Farming Museum in Aden Park from Saturday 13th Oct. to Sunday 28th Oct., with an Open Day on Saturday 20th. On display were finds from our Archaeological digs including the Hnefatafl Viking gaming board and our new interpretation panels for the Project room. This year's dig was recorded by students of Aberdeen College, and their film was shown at the event. Archaeologist Ali Cameron of Cameron Archaeology delivered a talk on the search for the Monastery and answered questions to a full house. The whole event was very well attended with good feedback.

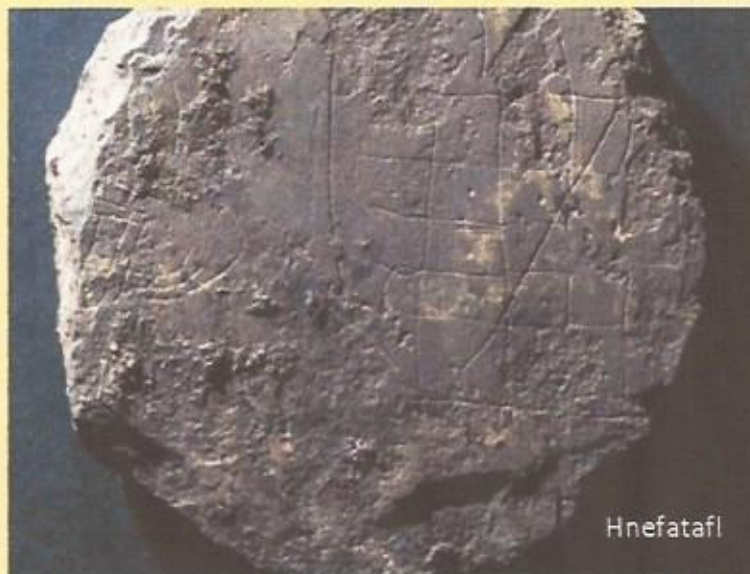
Helen Chavez of Museum Services was also present at the Open day with a selection of artefacts on show.

Heritage Lottery Funded 2018 Archaeological Dig at Deer Abbey

This year we were fortunate enough to have funding from Heritage Lottery Fund and Aberdeenshire Archaeological Service to continue our excavations at Deer Abbey. Once again we had help from local primary schools, Mintlaw and Ellon Academies, Young Archaeology Club, Archaeology students and members of the public. Pupils were treated to a storytelling session by Helen Macdonald, *The Blacksmith's Daughter*, which was very successful and enjoyed by all. This year our dig was filmed by students from Aberdeen College, who have produced a fantastic record of the dig.

The 2 open days both were very popular with transport being provided between Aden Park and the Abbey. Once on site visitors were given guided tours of the trenches, the opportunity to handle finds and even have a pottery lesson.

Six trenches were dug, with most producing finds or evidence of structures. A substantial stone path was uncovered which would have provided a way through a very boggy area (carbon dated 1000-1200). Carbon samples from postholes has been dated from 667 to 777 and a stake-hole structure has been dated from 1000 to 1200. Most trenches produced pottery including some good examples of early handmade pot. The most exciting find of the dig being the Hnefatafl gaming board.



Hnefatafl

(below)

Publicity has been wide ranging, from *'Current Archaeology'* magazine and Neil Oliver's column in *'The Times'* in the UK, to *'The Smithsonian Institute'* magazine a Washington DC based publication who report on a wide range of scientific areas. Local press also picked up on the story with some visiting the site.

THANK YOU SANDY

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Sandy Cowie, who has just stood down from the committee after many years dedicated service. Sandy has always been a huge supporter of the Project, and a very willing pair of hands, we are sure he will continue to follow our progress as we continue to promote the Project and search for The Monastery.



The Book of Deer Project were invited to be one of the speakers at this years Pictish Art Society's Conference 'Moray and Beyond' held at Elgin Museum Hall. The Society was founded in 1988 to raise awareness of the Pictish Stones, History and art inspired by Pictish design. Derek Jennings spoke on behalf of the Project on the Search for the Monastery of Deer, while Ali Cameron spoke to the group at their Brechin base on the same topic on 16th November.

George's Bus Trip

Once again the 2018 bus trip 'Stone Ordes and Heritage' was a great success and enjoyed by all who attended. This year the group are off to Kinneff Church, Arbuthnott Church and the Lewis Grassie Gibbon Centre. After a short coastal walk in the Johnshaven area the group will stop for supper at Brewars Fayre Portlethan.

Bus leaves Mintlaw at 9am On 1st June 2019

Letter from parliament

The group were delighted to receive a letter from MSP for Aberdeenshire East, Gillian Martin, who submitted a motion to Parliament congratulating the Project on The Heritage Lottery Fund Grant of £10000, and wishing us well for future excavations.

Motion S5M-12973: Gillian Martin, Aberdeenshire East, Scottish National Party, Date Lodged: 26/06/2018

The Book of Deer Project Receives Heritage Lottery Funding

That the Parliament congratulates The Book of Deer Project on receiving a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £10,000; recognises that the Book of Deer is a 10th century illuminated manuscript that contains the oldest pieces of Gaelic writing to have survived from early medieval Scotland and that, by 1000AD, it was in the possession of the Monastery of Deer at Old Deer in Aberdeenshire; understands that the funding will allow The Book of Deer Project to continue carrying out excavations to attempt to rediscover the lost Monastery of Deer; welcomes that the project has an associated schools programme involving local primary and secondary schools in its work, and wishes it every success.

Supported by: Angus MacDonald, Joan McAlpine, Sandra White, Graeme Dey, Richard Lyle, Colin Beattie, Stuart McMillan, Clare Haughey, Bill Kidd, Ash Denham, David Torrance, Emma Harper, Fulton MacGregor, Stewart Stevenson, Jenny Gilruth, Tom Arthur

2018 Seminars

We had standing room only at a very well attended seminar at Aberdeen University Chaplaincy in April when Ali Cameron gave a talk on 'The Search for the Monastery of Deer'.

On 24th November Lynda McGuigan of Fraserburgh Lighthouse Museum delivered an excellent talk 'Let there be Light' at the Kemp Hall Old Deer.

2019 Spring Seminar will be held in St Drostan's Church on 4th May.

Refreshments will be served at 1.30 and the talk will begin at 2pm.

Stuart Donald, Archivist of the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney will give a talk on Dean Rankin a former minister of St Drostan's.

Visit to Cambridge

25-30 members and friends of the Project are looking forward to visiting Cambridge University Library to see 'The Book' on 19th March 2019. Our host, Keeper of Rare Books and Early Manuscripts has also organised visits to The Wren and Parker University Libraries.

2018 AGM Stephen Callaghans 'Portmahomack- what next?' Was well received. He described the origins of the Tarbet Centre, the future for the project and hopeful collaboration with other similar groups in Scotland.

2019 AGM will be held at Kemp Hall on 22nd June when our speaker will be Dr Lisa Collinson of Museums and Special Collections Department at Aberdeen University.

FUNDRAISING

Last year our crowd-funding raised almost £1000 towards the Deer Abbey Dig. This year we have opened a new page at

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/bookofdeerproject>

We are desperately keen to continue our search for the Monastery, and with your continued support we hope to be digging again soon.

Buying on Amazon?

Open [smile.amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk) and select

The Book Of Deer Project (SQQ) as your charity

Shop as normal on amazon and

The Book of Deer Project will receive 0.5% of your spend.

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