

**DOORS
OPEN
DAYS** 2026

Aberdeenshire 
COUNCIL

Aberdeenshire

DoorsOpenDays2026

Saturday 19th & Sunday 20th September

find out more online at



doorsopendays.org.uk/regions/aberdeenshire



[Aberdeenshire Architecture Heritage Design](#)

**16
NEW
VENUES**



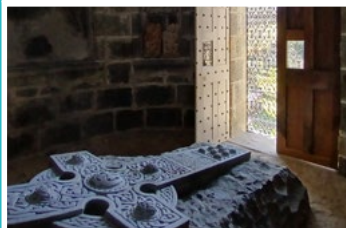
4 Boyndie Visitor Centre



10 Cruden Parish Church



16 National Decommissioning Centre



22 Elyza Fraser Mausoleum



34 Stonehaven Coastguard
Rescue Station



44 Tough Community Church

Doors Open Days is coordinated nationally by the Scottish Civic Trust. It runs throughout Scotland every September as part of European Heritage Days. For more information see our websites www.doorsopendays.org.uk www.scottishcivictrust.org.uk



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD
EACHDRAIDHEIL
ALBA

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



Welcome to Doors Open Days **Aberdeenshire 2026**

This year's event will be held over two days, **Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th September 2026**, allowing visitors the best opportunity to visit a wide range of properties and experiences across the length and breadth of Aberdeenshire.

We have an exciting and varied programme with 55 properties taking part, some for the first time. There will also be tours, exhibitions, and refreshments at many of the venues, hosted by Doors Open Days volunteers.

Come along and join us in celebrating Aberdeenshire's rich heritage!

Doors Open Days is Scotland's largest free annual architectural event. It is coordinated nationally by the Scottish Civic Trust and forms part of European Heritage Days, a joint initiative of the Council of Europe and the European Union alongside Scottish Archaeology Month. Both events are supported by Historic Environment Scotland.

This year's Aberdeenshire event has been organised by Aberdeenshire Council's Historic Environment Team and coordinated by Clare Tierney and Mandy McKenzie.

Our gratitude and thanks go to all those who have generously agreed to open their buildings to make this event possible, and to all the volunteers who have given up their valuable time.

OPENING TIMES

Please note that not all properties are open on both days. Please check the opening times of the properties you wish to visit before you travel. Openings may also be subject to unavoidable last-minute changes. For the most up to date information on the buildings taking part, please check the event's national website <http://www.doorsopendays.org.uk/> or our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/AberdeenshireArchitectureHeritageDesign/>

With so many buildings to visit across Aberdeenshire on Doors Open weekend, there's something for everyone – what better excuse to explore the region!

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1 - Banff Castle



6 - Portsoy Salmon Bothy



13 - Fyvie Parish Church



28 - Kintore Town Hall



46 - Braemar Castle



9 - Aberdeenshire Museums Service



34 - Stonehaven Coastguard Rescue



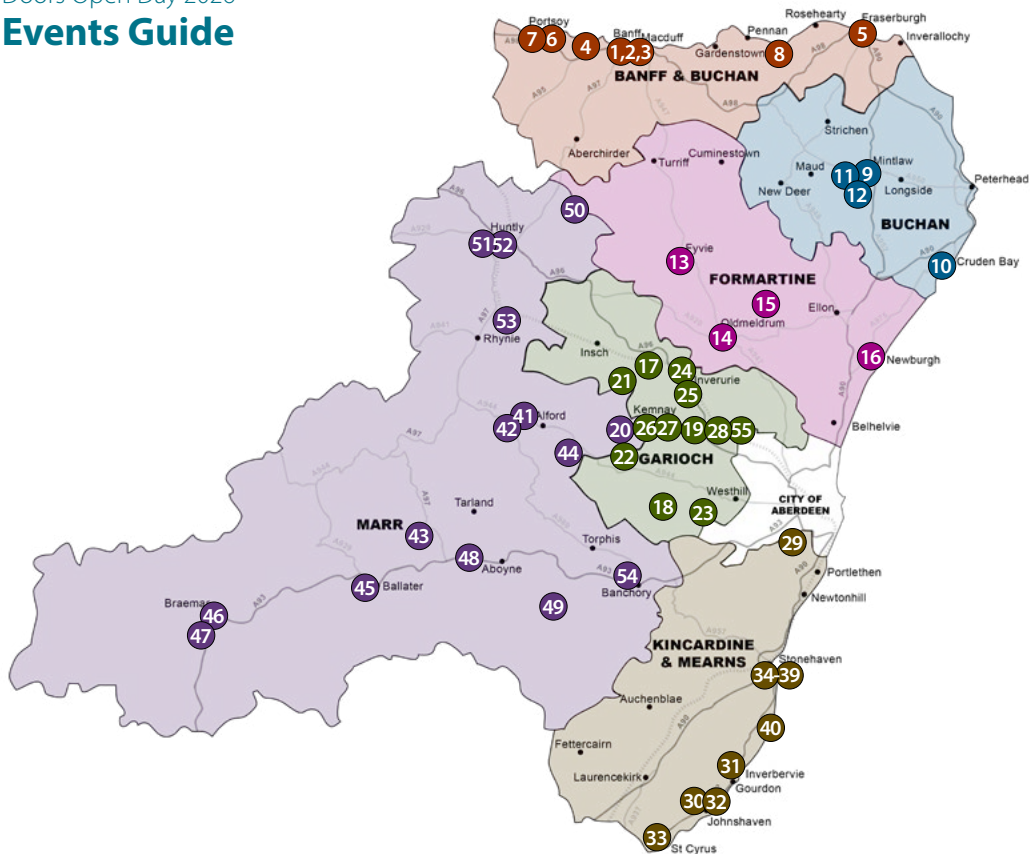
29 - Beannachar Camphill Community



47 - Downie's Cottage

Doors Open Day 2026

Events Guide



KEY TO VENUE SYMBOLS

	Toilets		Events for Children		Wheelchair Accessible Building
	Wheelchair Accessible Toilet		Refreshments		Not an Accessible Building
	Parking		Hearing Loop		Limited Access

Please note that visitors entering buildings do so at their own risk. Children must be accompanied by an adult. None of the participating buildings or organisations are responsible for any accidents or damage that might be incurred. The owners/custodians of the buildings retain the right to refuse access.

BANFF & BUCHAN AREA

- 1 Banff Castle Community Centre & Ancient Monument
- 2 Museum of Banff
- 3 Banffshire East Church of Scotland
- 4 Boyndie Visitor Centre
- 5 Kinnaird Head Castle and Lighthouse and the Museum of Scottish Lighthouses
- 6 Portsoy Salmon Bothy
- 7 Portsoy - The Granary
- 8 New Aberdour Church

BUCHAN AREA

- 9 Aberdeenshire Museums Service Headquarters
- 10 Cruden Parish Church
- 11 Deer Parish Church
- 12 The Old Manse, Stuartfield

FORMARTINE AREA

- 13 Fyvie Parish Church
- 14 Live Life Aberdeenshire Libraries
- 15 Tarves Heritage Centre
- 16 The National Decommissioning Centre

GARIOCH AREA

- 17 Bennachie Parish Church at Chapel of Garioch and Blairdaff
- 18 Bennachie Parish Church at Echt and Midmar
- 19 Bennachie Parish Church at Kintore
- 21 Bennachie Visitor Centre
- 22 Elyza Fraser Mausoleum
- 23 Garlogie Mill Beam Engine and Turbine House
- 24 Inverurie - Garioch Heritage Centre
- 25 The Lodge of St Anthony, Inverurie
- 26 Kemnay Village Hall
- 27 Kemnay - Grampian Mesolithic Community Archaeology Group
- 28 Kintore Town House
- 55 Lodge Royal Braemar No. 1195 – Hatton of Fintray

KINCARDINE & MEARNS AREA

- 29 Beannachar Camphill Community
- 30 Benholm and Johnshaven Heritage Museum
- 31 Hallgreen Castle
- 32 Mill of Benholm
- 33 St Cyrus National Nature Reserve
- 34 Stonehaven Coastguard Rescue Station
- 35 Stonehaven Court Building - Old Court Room
- 36 Stonehaven Lifeboat Station
- 37 Stonehaven - St James Episcopal Church
- 38 Stonehaven - The Masonic Lodge of Stonehaven 65
- 39 Tolbooth Museum
- 40 Tod Head Lighthouse

MARR AREA

- 20 Bennachie Parish Church at Monymusk
- 41 Alford Valley Community Railway
- 42 Alford - The Gordon Mills MBE Bus Collection
- 43 Cairngorm Bothies
- 44 Alford Area - Tough Community Church
- 45 Ballater - The Victoria and Albert Halls
- 46 Braemar Castle
- 47 Braemar - Downie's Cottage
- 48 Deeside Gliding Club, Aboyne
- 49 Finzean Bucket Mill
- 50 Fergie Old Kirk
- 51 Huntly - Christ Church
- 52 Number 30, The Square, Huntly
- 53 Rhynie - Books Abroad
- 54 St Ternan's Scottish Episcopal Church, Banchory

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BANFF & BUCHAN

1 Banff Castle Community Centre & Ancient Monument

Castle Street, Banff, AB45 1DL



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 11am - 3pm

Banff Castle, originally a medieval royal stronghold, is first recorded in historical accounts from the 12th century. In its early years, it served both as a defensive fortification and a royal residence, holding significant strategic importance in the region. Over time, however, the original structure fell into ruin, and little of the medieval castle remains today.

In the 18th century, the site was transformed with the construction of a Georgian mansion around 1750, designed by the distinguished architect John Adam. Despite retaining the name "Banff Castle," the building we see today is not medieval in form, but rather a refined example of Georgian architecture—symmetrical, balanced, and elegantly proportioned.

This transformation represents a striking shift in both architectural style and social function. What was once a fortress of power and defence evolved into a gracious domestic residence. Today, the building has been thoughtfully repurposed as a community arts centre, ensuring its legacy continues in a meaningful and accessible way. Through music, exhibitions, and workshops, the castle remains a vibrant cultural hub.

The surrounding gardens and parkland enhance its appeal, offering scenic beauty while firmly connecting the site to the local community—blending history with everyday life.

Activities:

- Visitors are welcome to explore the Castle

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Ground floor is wheelchair accessible

 banffcastle.com

 [banffcastle.scotland](https://www.facebook.com/banffcastle.scotland)



2 Museum of Banff

High Street, Banff, AB45 1AE



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 12noon - 4pm

Founded in 1828 as The Museum of the Banff Institution, this is the oldest museum in Scotland north of Perth. When the Banff Institution was dissolved in 1875, its collections were transferred to Banff Town Council, ensuring their preservation for future generations.

The present museum and library building dates from 1902 and remains an important cultural landmark. Today, the museum is run by the Banff Preservation and Heritage Society in partnership with Aberdeenshire Museums Service.

The exhibits showcase a wide range of fascinating artefacts, spanning from the Celtic period to the modern day. Together, they offer a rich insight into life in Banffshire, highlighting the history of Banff and Macduff through carefully preserved objects and displays. The museum also houses an impressive collection of Banff silver.

2025 marked the 60th anniversary of the Banff Preservation and Heritage Society, celebrating six decades of dedicated work to protect

and promote the town's built heritage. The summer exhibition reflects on the Society's many successful projects, exploring its history and achievements while looking ahead to its continued efforts to safeguard Banff's unique architectural legacy.

Activities:

- Explore artefacts from the Celtic period to the present day, showcasing the history of Banffshire.
- Some of the museum's oldest documents will be on display, giving a fascinating insight into the Town through its Charters and Banff Mercants letters.
- Local heritage displays and exhibitions.
- View the museum's impressive collection of Banff silver, one of its most notable collections.
- Visit the special 60th anniversary exhibition celebrating the Banff Preservation and Heritage Society and its conservation achievements.

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- The first floor is accessible by lift

 bphsmob.org.uk

 [Museum of Banff](#)



3 Banffshire East Church of Scotland

Church Street, Macduff, AB44 1UN



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm
Sunday 20th 10am - 4pm
(open for worship 10am-11am)

Occupying a prominent position on the hill overlooking Macduff harbour, this striking church has been at the heart of the community since it opened in 1805. Its commanding position and distinctive architecture, featuring an Italianate square tower, domed roof, and cupola added in 1865, make it a notable landmark, particularly for boats approaching the town.

The church is rich in architectural and historical interest. Among its most significant features are the stained-glass windows installed in 1922 in memory of local people who lost their lives in the First World War. Created by the renowned City Glass Company of Glasgow, these windows were also exhibited at the Royal Academy in London. More recently, additional stained-glass work by artist Jennifer-Jane Bayliss has been installed in the vestibule, commemorating the church's connections with Malawi.



The organ, built in 1903, remains an important feature of the church's musical life. Over the years, the building has been carefully maintained and adapted to meet the needs of an active and evolving congregation.

The surrounding graveyard is also well worth exploring, with many interesting gravestones alongside Commonwealth War Graves Commission burials.

In August 2025, Macduff Parish Church united with Whitehills Parish Church to form the Banffshire East Church of Scotland, marking a new chapter in its long history.

Activities:

- Guides will be available to share insights into the church's history and the life of the congregation
- Arts and crafts activities are available for children

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Sunday service takes place from 10:00am to 11:00am, with visitors warmly welcomed to attend
- Tea and coffee are served after the service

 banffshireeastcofs.org.uk

 [MacduffParishChurch/](https://www.facebook.com/MacduffParishChurch/)

 [MacduffChurch](https://twitter.com/MacduffChurch)

4 Boyndie Visitor Centre

The Old School, Boyndie, Banff, AB45 2JT



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 10am - 4pm

Set within seven acres of attractive gardens, Boyndie Visitor Centre is housed in a former Victorian-era school. Today, it welcomes tens of thousands of visitors each year, drawn by its popular, family-friendly restaurant, gift shops, and garden centre.

What many visitors may not realise, however, is that the building is owned and operated by a community-led charity delivering a wide range of vital local services. Even those familiar with Boyndie are often surprised by the scale and diversity of the work carried out behind the scenes.

Whether you are a regular visitor or discovering Boyndie for the first time, this special visit offers a unique opportunity to go beyond the surface. Guests will have the chance to meet the Charity's CEO and gain a personal insight into the organisation's history, its aims and objectives, and the real impact of its work within the community.

Within the visitor centre, there is also a small display highlighting the area's wartime history, including information about RAF Banff.

A short interactive talk, lasting approximately 30 minutes with additional time for questions, will be delivered by CEO Duncan Leece B.E.M. The session will explore the charity's work, its history, and its "behind the scenes" activities, offering valuable insight into its impact and operations. Talks will take place at 10:30am, 12:00pm, and 1:45pm, with each session limited to a maximum of 30 participants. Throughout the day, visitors can also enjoy access to the gardens, shops, and restaurant, all of which will remain open.



Activities:

- A short interactive talk taking place at 10:30am, 12:00pm, and 1:45pm

Visitor Information:

- Booking is essential for the interactive talk
- To reserve a place, please email: boyndietrust@hotmail.com
- All public areas are on one level, ensuring easy access
- Water bottles can be refilled on site
- Dogs are welcome in the gardens and picnic area
- Food and drinks are available in the café (charges apply)

 boyndievisitorcentre.co.uk

 [theboyndievisitorcentre](https://www.facebook.com/theboyndievisitorcentre)



5 Kinnaird Head Castle and Lighthouse and the Museum of Scottish Lighthouses

Museum of Scottish Lighthouses, Kinnaird Head, Stevenson Road, Fraserburgh, AB43 9DU



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 10am - 12noon

Visit Kinnaird Head Castle and Lighthouse, the first lighthouse built on mainland Scotland in 1787, and explore the purpose-built museum located alongside it.

The Museum of Scottish Lighthouses tells the story of the Northern Lighthouse Board, the engineers who designed and built the lights, and the keepers who maintained them. It is a story of skill, courage, technical innovation and outstanding organisation.

On Doors Open Day, both the museum and Kinnaird Head Castle and Lighthouse will be free to visit, offering a rare opportunity to experience this nationally important site.

Activities:

- Guided Lighthouse Tours
- Free entry to the Museum

Visitor Information:

- No booking required however tickets for guided lighthouse tours will be available to collect from the museum building
- Visitors are advised to park in the museum car park while attending both venues.

 [The Museum of Scottish Lighthouses](#)



6 Portsoy Salmon Bothy

Links Road, Portsoy, Banff, AB45 2SS



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 10am - 4pm

Built in 1834, the Portsoy Salmon Bothy originally served as an icehouse for the town's thriving salmon fishing industry. From February to August each year, fishermen went out in their cobsles, setting off around 3am to haul their nets from the waters around the Point. The catch was washed, packed in ice, and sent to market.

The fishermen lived on site in what is now known as the Small Bothy, reflecting both the demanding nature of the work and the close-knit community that supported it. The Bothy remained in use until the early 1990s.

The building reopened in 2009 as a museum celebrating Portsoy's rich heritage:

- Chamber 1 displays artefacts from the salmon fishing industry, bringing to life the tools and traditions of the fishermen.
- Chamber 2 explores Portsoy's past as a busy trading town, highlighting key industries such as the buoy factory, engineering works, and its smuggling history.
- Chamber 3 focuses on the unique geology of Portsoy, along with the local flora and fauna that make the area so distinctive.

In 2025, a new Geology Wall was created with funding and support in kind from the local community, showcasing the pride and ongoing commitment to preserving Portsoy's natural heritage.

At the front of the museum stands *Soy Lady*, a traditional coble built locally, offering a striking reminder of the town's fishing past.



Activities:

- Interpretive displays across three chambers
- Outdoor exhibit featuring *Soy Lady* coble

Visitor Information:

- Accessible harbour-side location

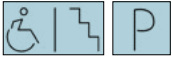
 salmonbothy.org

 [PortsoySalmonBothy](https://www.facebook.com/PortsoySalmonBothy)



7 Portsoy - The Granary

Shorehead, Portsoy, AB45 2PB



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 12noon - 4pm

Sunday 20th 12noon - 4pm

The North East Scotland Preservation Trust (NESPT) has been gifted six historic Listed buildings at Portsoy Harbour through the will of the late Tom Burnett-Stuart.

The Category B Listed Granary will be open and will host a small exhibition exploring the life and legacy of Tom Burnett-Stuart, the work of NESPT, and future proposals to bring these important buildings back into productive use.

The Portsoy Marble Shop, located within the Category A Listed Marble Warehouse designed by John Adam, will also be open to visitors. From outside, visitors can view the Category B Listed Marble Workshop, the Category C Listed Rag Warehouse, and the Category B Listed houses at 6-7 Shorehead, all of which form part of this significant harbour group.



Activities:

- Exhibition on Tom Burnett-Stuart and his legacy
- Information on the work of the North East Scotland Preservation Trust
- Displays outlining future plans for the harbour buildings
- Open access to the Portsoy Marble Shop
- External viewing of surrounding listed harbour buildings

Visitor Information:

- Access: Some buildings viewable externally only

 [nespt.org](https://www.nespt.org)

 [NorthEastScotlandPreservationTrust](https://www.facebook.com/NorthEastScotlandPreservationTrust)

 [nespt_projects](https://www.instagram.com/nespt_projects)



8 New Aberdour Church

Elphinstreet, New Aberdour, AB43 6LH



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 12noon - 4pm

Built in 1818 and designed by Aberdeen architect John Smith, New Aberdour Church is a striking example of early 19th-century architecture.

The church is currently being revitalised by the Friends of New Aberdour Church Pilgrimage and Heritage Initiative, who are working to preserve the building while creating a welcoming space for community, heritage and pilgrimage activities. The initiative places strong emphasis on preserving both the built heritage of this 200-year-old building and the cultural heritage of the surrounding area and wider northeast of Scotland.

Throughout the year, the church hosts a range of social and cultural events. For Doors Open Days, visitors can explore a variety of displays and activities celebrating local heritage, creativity and wellbeing.

Heritage displays include fishing and farming memorabilia, alongside the story of St Drostan, who is believed to have arrived by sea at Aberdour to bring Christianity to Scotland.



Activities:

- Isobel's Hats talk – Sat 19th 11am, Sun 20th 2pm
- Menopause talk & head massage – Sat 19th 1pm
- Spinning demonstration – Sat 19th 2–3pm
- Art display by NESCOL students
- Local artists' exhibitions
- Charity cards and craft stalls
- Craft demonstrations
- Vintage car trips (1937 Austin Ruby)
- Heritage memorabilia display
- The St Drostan Story (rolling presentation)

Visitor Information:

- No Booking Required



BUCHAN

9 Aberdeenshire Museums Service Headquarters

Discovery Centre, Station Road, Mintlaw, AB42 5EE



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 11am - 3.30pm

Sunday 20th CLOSED

The Aberdeenshire Museums Service Collections Centre is the headquarters of Aberdeenshire Museums Service, part of Live Life Aberdeenshire, and is located in Mintlaw.

Aberdeenshire Museums Service cares for and manages the historic and artistic collections owned by Aberdeenshire Council. While two museums are open to the public at Banchory Museum and Aberdeenshire Farming Museum at Aden Country Park, the majority of the collections are housed within this state-of-the-art storage facility.

The building includes conservation laboratories, a walk-in freezer, photo studio and staff offices. The Service cares for more than 250,000 objects, covering social history, natural history, archaeology, photography and more.

During Doors Open Days, visitors can enjoy a rare behind-the-scenes guided tour of the facility and gain insight into the work of museum professionals and the remarkable objects in their care.

Aberdeenshire Museums Service is also developing a new Museum of Aberdeenshire in Peterhead, due to open in 2028. Part of the successful Cultural Tides Levelling Up bid, the museum will explore Aberdeenshire's stories through themes of cultural connection, linking the region to places such as the Baltic, North America and Africa.

Activities:

- Behind-the-scenes guided tour of the Collections Centre
- Insight into museum conservation and collections care
- Opportunity to view a selection of stored artefacts

Visitor Information:

- Access: Lift available; some storage areas are narrow and not suitable for wheelchair access
- Age suitability: 12 years and over
- Tour length: Approximately 60 minutes
- Prebooking required
- Personal items: All bags and jackets must be left in secure storage before the tour

Tour times:

- 11am, 11.30am, 12pm, 12.30pm, 1pm, 1.30pm, 2pm & 2.30pm

To book:

Email: museums@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Phone: 01467 536544

 livelifeaberdeenshire.org.uk/museums

 [AberdeenshireMuseumsService](https://www.facebook.com/AberdeenshireMuseumsService)



10 Cruden Parish Church

Bridgend, Hatton, Peterhead, AB42 0QB



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 10am - 4pm

Built in 1776, Cruden Parish Church marks the 250th anniversary of its current building this year. Its history, however, stretches back much further, with a rich and sometimes quirky local heritage.

Visitors can discover the story of **St Olaf**, the parish's patron saint, and learn about the tradition of the last Viking battle on mainland Scotland. The area is also linked to nearby **Slains Castle**, once associated with Jacobite spies.

A highlight not to miss is the chance to sample **"Dracula Salad"**, made to an original recipe created by the widow of Bram Stoker to help raise funds for the restoration of the church organ.

Activities:

- Organ playing – Saturday afternoon
- Talk: *The Three Jacobite Countesses of Slains Castle* by Mike Shepherd – Sunday at 2.30pm
- Exhibits of local historical significance
- Guided tours of the church
- Children's crafts
- Floral displays

Visitor Information:

- No Booking Required

 [Cruden Parish Church](https://www.crudenparishchurch.org.uk)

 [CrudenParishChurch](https://www.facebook.com/CrudenParishChurch)



11 Deer Parish Church

Kirkgate, Old Deer, Peterhead, AB42 5LJ



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 10.30am - 4pm

(open for worship 10.30am-11.30am)

The current Parish Church of Deer dates from the 18th century and was built on the ruins of a medieval predecessor. The remains of the earlier choir still stand behind the church, offering a poignant reminder of its long and layered history.

The church shares strong historical links with nearby Deer Abbey and with one of Scotland's most important literary treasures, the Book of Deer. Believed to have originated at the Abbey, the Book of Deer contains the earliest written examples of Scots Gaelic. Having spent centuries in Cambridge University Library, it was recently returned to the north east for exhibition at Aberdeen Art Gallery, renewing interest in its sacred origins.

Inside the church, visitors can view a rare and historic Willis organ, renowned for its craftsmanship and sound. Whether drawn by music, manuscript or memory, this is a place where history feels very close.

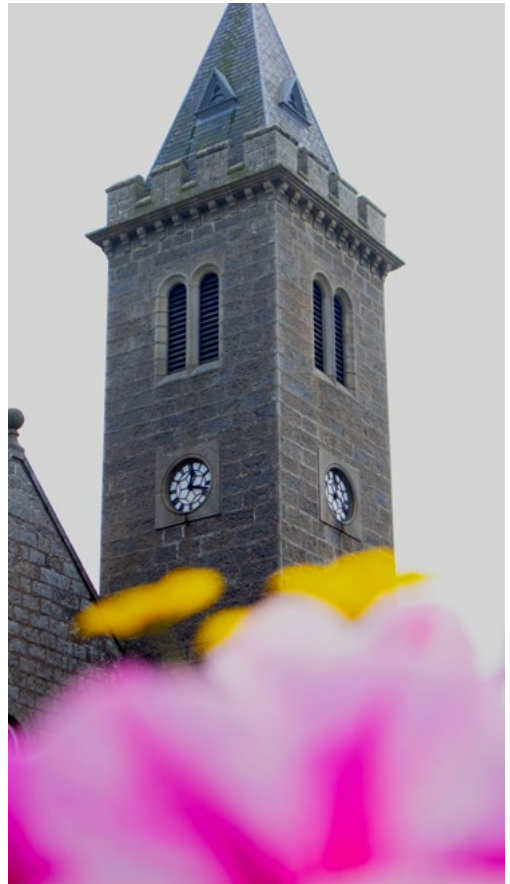
Several local heritage and community groups, including The Book of Deer Project, the Buchan Heritage Society, the Buchan Field Club, Friends of Aden Park and the local churches, have now come together to form the Deer Heritage Initiative SCIO, with the aim of redeveloping the church as a cultural, community and heritage hub for central Mintlaw. The Initiative is working in cooperation with the Friends of New Aberdour Pilgrimage and Heritage Initiative.

Activities:

- Exhibition by the Deer Heritage Initiative outlining its work and future plans
- Displays from local heritage groups involved in the SCIO
- Information on the Book of Deer and local history
- Opportunity to hear the historic Willis organ played (subject to availability)

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Access: The Formartine and Buchan Way can be accessed from the village of Old Deer



12 The Old Manse, Stuartfield

4 Windhill Street, Stuartfield, AB42 5DR



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 10am - 4pm

(pre-booked tours only)

Make a stop at the Old Manse, a 220 year old house closely associated with the neighbouring church and rich in local history. While rooted in a religious setting, the story of the Manse is ultimately one about people and their lives.

Visitors are warmly welcomed into the Manse—now a private residence—by its owner, whose engaging and traditional storytelling brings the past vividly to life. Using images, illustrations, artefacts and video, the talk explores the origins of the church and Manse and the lives of the ministers who lived there.

Particular focus is given to the first minister, James Robertson, and his children, who went on to achieve remarkable success. The story also reveals intriguing coincidences between the Manse's first resident and its present owner.

The talk takes place in one of the rooms within the house, creating an intimate and immersive experience that has proved a highlight of previous Doors Open Days.

A must-see during Doors Open Days, as praised by previous visitors:

"It was the most enjoyable hour we've spent in a long time."

"A wonderful glimpse into fascinating local history, brought vividly to life."

"The depth of research was clear from the slides—we thoroughly enjoyed it!"



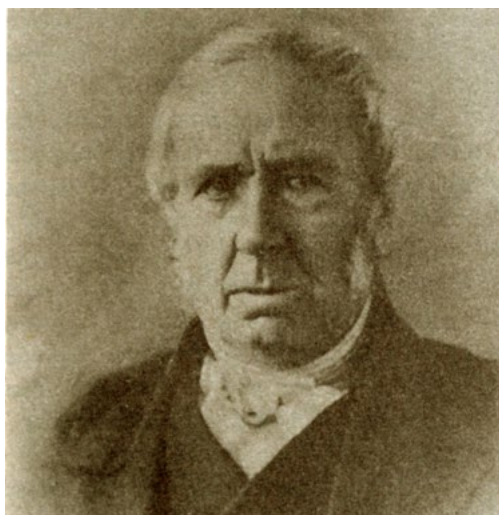
Activities:

- Guided storytelling inside the Old Manse
- Illustrated presentation using artefacts, images and video
- Exploration of the lives of ministers and their families
- Insight into the church and Manse's shared history

Visitor Information:

- Booking is required
- Tour times: 10am, 12pm, 2pm, 4pm
- Talk length: Approximately 1 hour
- To book:
Phone: 01771 624412 or 07855 537824
Email: ablo.home@gmail.com

 theoldmanse.synology.me/sgcm/



FORMARTINE

13 Fyvie Parish Church

Beech Row, Fyvie, AB53 8PB



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th CLOSED

There has been a worshipping community in Fyvie for over 1,000 years. The Church is believed to have been founded by monks who evangelised Aberdeenshire in the 10th century. The nearby site of the former Priory of Fyvie (now marked by a cross) was once a sub Priory of Arbroath Abbey, with monks conducting services here until the Reformation. Traces of this early history can still be seen in the graveyard. Following the Disruption of 1843, part of the congregation formed a Free Church at Woodhead, which remained in use until the reunification of the Church in 1960.

The present building dates from 1808, with significant additions in 1902 including the chancel, the Laird's Loft, vestry, session room, and organ. The highlight of the church is the remarkable east window by Louis Comfort Tiffany, depicting the Archangel Michael on the Wheel of Time. The church, including its galleries, seats up to 1,000 people. A warm welcome awaits all visitors to discover the rich heritage and unique features of Fyvie Parish Church.

Activities:

- Guided tours throughout the day
- Viewing of the Tiffany stained-glass window
- Opportunities to explore the church interior and historic graveyard
- Informal talks on the history of the church and village



Visitor Information:

- Step-free access to main areas (please ask for assistance if required)
- Leaflets and historical information available on site

 [Friends of Fyvie Church](#)



14 Live Life Aberdeenshire Libraries

Meldrum Meg Way, Oldmeldrum, AB51 0GN



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 2pm

Sunday 20th CLOSED

This purpose-built facility serves as the headquarters for Live Life Aberdeenshire Libraries, with a public library on site. It acts as the central distribution hub for books and resources circulating across 31 libraries throughout Aberdeenshire. As a working warehouse, it also supports primary and secondary schools, HMP Grampian, care homes, and Doorstep Delivery customers, playing a vital role in the region's library network.

The building is also home to the Local Studies Centre, which offers a rich collection for anyone interested in local and family history. Resources include books, newspapers, photographs, maps, and materials to support genealogy and heritage research. Together, these services provide access to a wide range of information, promoting reading and lifelong learning for all. Come along to discover how library services reach communities across Aberdeenshire and explore a fascinating range of local history resources.



Activities:

- Guided behind-the-scenes tours of libraries HQ at regular intervals
- Meet the team and learn how library services operate across Aberdeenshire
- Book sale featuring withdrawn stock, including fiction and non-fiction, local history titles, maps, and audiobooks

Visitor Information:

- No booking required; drop-in event
- Tours and activities available throughout the day
- Bargain book sale

 livelifeaberdeenshire.org.uk/libraries

 [onceuponashelf](https://onceuponashelf.org.uk)



15 Tarves Heritage Centre

1 The Square, Tarves, Ellon, AB41 7GX



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 10am - 4pm

Housed within part of a former Victorian school, the Tarves Heritage Centre occupies a building dating from the 19th century and situated in the heart of the village's Conservation Area. Opened in its present form in 2004, the Centre has been carefully restored to create a vibrant museum and local heritage resource, preserving the character of this historic building while providing a welcoming visitor attraction for Tarves and the surrounding area.

Visitors will receive a warm welcome and can explore a wide range of displays, historical artefacts and photograph collections, as well as experience the authentically restored Victorian classroom, offering a glimpse into school life of the past. The Centre also regularly updates its displays and exhibitions, ensuring there is always something new to discover. Step back in time and discover the rich history, traditions and community life of Tarves through this engaging and welcoming heritage centre.

Activities:

- Exhibitions exploring farming in days gone by and rural life
- Displays celebrating traditional Northeast music and culture
- Family-friendly childhood-themed displays and games
- Experience the restored Victorian classroom
- Traditional music and poetry sessions throughout the day



Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Friendly volunteers on hand to welcome visitors and provide information
- Parking in The Square opposite
- Water bottles can be filled and there is a café next door for meals and snacks.

 tarvesheritage.org.uk

 [Tarves Heritage Project](#)

 [tarvesheritageproject](#)

16 The National Decommissioning Centre

Main Street, Newburgh, AB41 6AA



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th CLOSED

(pre-booked tours only)

The National Decommissioning Centre (NDC), located in Newburgh, Aberdeenshire, is a multi million pound research and development facility dedicated to transforming the way energy assets are decommissioned and supporting the transition to net zero emissions. Launched in 2019, the centre works closely with industry, regulators and key stakeholders, delivering a diverse programme of research spanning engineering, environmental, economic and regulatory challenges.

The NDC is home to a unique suite of advanced facilities, including a state of the art, walk in marine simulator. This impressive 9 metre diameter, 300 degree immersive environment features four control stations, enabling real time, real physics simulations. Additional specialist equipment includes a high power laser, indoor water immersion tank, hydrostatic pressure chamber and large scale environmental chambers.



The centre's work links closely to this year's European Heritage Days theme by exploring the future of offshore structures and their impact on the marine environment. Research carried out at the NDC examines the balance between removing ageing infrastructure and preserving important marine habitats that have developed around them, helping to inform decision making across the energy sector.



Activities:

- Introductory presentation offering an overview of the NDC and its work
- Guided tours with live demonstrations of the immersive 300 degree marine simulator, with opportunities for visitors to operate control stations
- Tours of specialist facilities including the indoor immersion tank, hydrostatic chamber and environmental testing areas
- Interactive children's activities, including simulator experiences and creative sessions inspired by marine life

Visitor Information:

- Booking is essential for the introductory presentation and tours
- Presentation and tour times: 10.30am to 12pm, 12.45pm to 2.15pm and 2.30pm to 4pm
- Children's activities run from 10am to 4pm (drop in)
- To book for the presentation and tour, email: Alyson.machado@abdn.ac.uk
- Please indicate when booking if a hearing loop is required
- Water bottle refill facilities available

 ukndc.com

 [decomcentre](https://twitter.com/decomcentre)

 [The National Decommissioning Centre](https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-national-decommissioning-centre)



GARIOCH

17 Bennachie Parish Church at Chapel of Garioch and Blairdaff

Chapel of Garioch, Inverurie, AB51 5HG



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th CLOSED

The Chapel of the Garioch has a history stretching back almost 900 years. A private chapel stood at Old Logie from 1151 before becoming a parish church in 1583. A new church was built on the present site in 1599, with the current building dating from 1813. Over the centuries the church has remained at the heart of the local community and today offers visitors the opportunity to explore its rich architectural and historical heritage.

Visitors can discover a range of notable features including Pittodrie's Yeat, built into the west entrance wall in 1626, the chancel stained-glass First World War Memorial Window of 1931, the Good Samaritan Mosaic Plaque, and the striking Burning Bush candelabra by Sean Crampton. Other highlights include brass rubbings of the Maiden Stone, Amanda Potts' painting of St Moluag, who brought Christianity to the Garioch, the Clan Leslie Font installed in 2014, and the

vaults and gravestones of local families. Members of the congregation will be on hand throughout the day to welcome visitors and share the story of the church and its many treasures.

Activities:

- Explore the church's long history from 1151 to the present day
- View Pittodrie's Yeat (1626) and the First World War Memorial Window (1931)
- See the Good Samaritan Mosaic Plaque and Burning Bush candelabra
- Discover brass rubbings of the Maiden Stone and Amanda Potts' painting of St Moluag
- Visit the Clan Leslie Font and historic family vaults and gravestones

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Church members available to provide information and answer questions
- Limited parking at the church; additional parking may be available at the Village Hall.

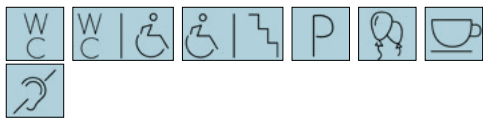
 [chapel-of-garioch-and-blairdaff](http://chapel-of-garioch-and-blairdaff.org.uk)

 [bcogkirk](https://www.facebook.com/bcogkirk)



18 Bennachie Parish Church at Echt and Midmar

Echt Church, Main Street, Echt, Westhill,
AB32 6UL



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 12noon - 4pm

Sunday 20th 12noon - 4pm

Standing at the heart of the village, Bennachie Parish Church at Echt occupies a prominent position at the crossroads of the historic routes linking Aberdeen and Tarland, and Banchory and Kintore. Built between 1804 and 1806, the church is an early example of the Gothic style, distinguished by its elegant, pointed basket-weave windows and strong architectural presence.

The church has long-standing connections with the nearby Dunecht Estate, which played an important role in its history and development. In 1930, the building underwent a major refurbishment costing £3,000. During this work, the pulpit, lectern and communion table were crafted by skilled local tradesmen from the estate, while the striking wooden ceiling was modelled on that of St Machar's Cathedral in Aberdeen.

Further improvements were carried out in 2019, when underfloor heating was installed, the interior was redecorated and the original pews were replaced with chairs to create a more flexible and welcoming space for worship and community activities.

Today, the church and congregation form part of Bennachie Parish, continuing a tradition of worship and community service that has been at the centre of village life for more than 200 years.

Activities:

- Explore the historic church building
- Learn about the church's links with Dunecht Estate
- Discover the 1930 refurbishment and handcrafted furnishings
- View the distinctive Gothic architecture and decorative ceiling
- Tea and Coffee will be available; water bottles can be filled

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Level access to the main worship area



bennachieparish.church



[MidmarEchtChurchesTogether](#)



19 Bennachie Parish Church at Kintore

Kingsfield Road, Kintore, AB51 0UB



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 12noon - 4pm

Built in 1819 to a design by the renowned architect Archibald Simpson, Bennachie Parish Church at Kintore stands on the site of an earlier medieval church and remains an important landmark at the heart of the town. The building incorporates several historic features from its predecessor, including a 16th-century Sacrament House and a 17th-century carved pew end, providing tangible links to centuries of worship on the site.

Inside the church, visitors can admire three notable stained-glass windows. Two were created by the distinguished Scottish artist Willie Wilson, while the third is the work of Gordon Webster. The church also contains four memorial plaques reflecting the history of the congregation and local community.

Surrounding the church is a historic graveyard containing a Pictish stone and several notable gravestones. The entrance gates serve as Kintore's War Memorial, commemorating those who lost their lives in the First World War. Visitors can also obtain a booklet detailing the names recorded on the memorial.

Today, as part of Bennachie Parish, the church continues to serve both its congregation and the wider community while preserving its rich architectural and historical heritage.

Activities:

- Guided tours of the church and graveyard
- Information sheets on the church's history
- Children's activity sheets
- Discover the stained glass, Pictish stone and historic memorials



Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- The main door has steps and therefore is not wheelchair accessible
- Wheelchair access via the signposted side entrance
- Parking available at Kintore Square car park
- Baby changing facility is available

kintore-church

[KintoreKirk](https://www.facebook.com/KintoreKirk)

21 Bennachie Visitor Centre

Pitcaple, Inverurie, AB51 5HY



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4.30pm

Sunday 20th 10am - 4.30pm

Opened by HRH The Prince of Wales on 27 April 1995, the Bennachie Visitor Centre was the result of a design competition and was inspired by the landscape and history of Bennachie. Its distinctive circular design reflects the ancient hill fort on Mither Tap, while the use of natural materials echoes the surrounding woodland and local dry-stone dyking heritage. South-facing windows maximise natural light and solar warmth within the building. The Architect is Ronald Reid (Dodds, Jamieson Partnership), 1994-95.

Managed by the Bennachie Centre Trust, a voluntary organisation and registered charity, the centre provides a welcoming base for visitors to discover the social, cultural and natural history of Bennachie. Through exhibitions, educational resources and interpretation displays, the centre helps visitors explore the stories of the landscape and the people who have called it home over the centuries.

The centre also supports local community initiatives, including projects celebrating the Doric dialect, working with local schools, authors and poets to help preserve this important part of north-east Scotland's cultural heritage.

Nestled at the foot of Mither Tap, the Bennachie Visitor Centre welcomes visitors from across the world and showcases why Bennachie is much more than just a hill.

Activities:

- Explore the visitor centre exhibitions
- Information and activity resources for adults and children
- Doric language and cultural heritage displays
- Community room and exhibition space
- Forest and hill walking trails
- Discovery Trail (wheelchair and buggy accessible)

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Indoor and outdoor seating
- Water bottle refill point
- Fully accessible visitor centre, Discovery Trail suitable for wheelchairs and buggies

 bennachievisitorcentre.org.uk

 [bennachievisitorcentre](https://www.facebook.com/bennachievisitorcentre)



22 Elyza Fraser Mausoleum

Cluny Old Churchyard, Cluny, AB51 7RS



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 12noon - 4pm

Sunday 20th 12noon - 4pm

Built in 1808 for Miss Elyza Fraser, owner of Castle Fraser, the Elyza Fraser Mausoleum was designed by her friend, the noted Scottish architect James Byers of Tonley. Miss Fraser died in 1814 and was laid to rest within the mausoleum, alongside several generations of her family, with the last interment taking place in 1946.

Now more than 200 years old, the Category A listed mausoleum stands within Cluny Kirkyard and is owned by the North East Scotland Preservation Trust (NESPT), with support from the Friends of Elyza Fraser Mausoleum Group.

Cluny Kirkyard is also home to a collection of mort safes, used in the 19th century to deter body snatchers, as well as a number of fascinating historic gravestones.

Earlier this year, a major programme of repairs was completed by NESPT and its specialist design and contractor team, working in partnership with the Friends of the Elyza Fraser Mausoleum. The project has secured the future of this important heritage asset, ensuring it is better able to withstand increased rainfall and more extreme weather conditions.

Visitors will have the opportunity to see the fully restored mausoleum and learn more about its history and conservation from members of the Friends group and NESPT.

Activities:

- Visit the newly restored Elyza Fraser Mausoleum
- Learn about the history of the mausoleum and its restoration
- View Cluny Kirkyard's historic gravestones and mort safes
- Children's graveyard eye-spy and treasure hunt activity sheet

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Access is via steps into the churchyard followed by a short walk. Entry to the mausoleum is by a further short flight of steep steps.

 [Elyza Fraser Mausoleum - North East Scotland Preservation Trust](#)

 [North East Scotland Preservation Trust](#)

 [nespt_projects](#)



23 Garlogie Mill Beam Engine and Turbine House

Garlogie, Skene, AB32 6SA



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 10am - 4pm

Garlogie is the site of a former wool spinning mill established in 1799 and is home to one of the most significant industrial heritage sites in north-east Scotland. The mill contains the oldest steam engine in Scotland still in its original location, dating from the 1830s and incorporating an 1805 Boulton and Watt cast-iron beam. Together with the surviving mill buildings, which are Category A listed, it provides a fascinating insight into Scotland's industrial past.

The site also features a 1923 hydroelectric power station, demonstrating how the power of the nearby Leuchar Burn continued to be harnessed long after the heyday of steam. For centuries, the burn played a vital role in supporting industrial activity at Garlogie, first through water power and later through hydroelectric generation.

During Doors Open Days, visitors will have the opportunity to explore the beam engine house, turbine house and wider mill site. Members

of the Garlogie Beam Engine Trust will be available throughout the day to explain how the machinery worked, the history of the mill, and the Trust's plans to preserve and enhance this remarkable piece of Scotland's engineering heritage.

An accompanying exhibition in Garlogie Village Hall will tell the story of the site and its workers, highlighting the importance of the Leuchar Burn in powering industry over several centuries. Teas and light refreshments will also be available.

Activities:

- Guided tours of the beam engine, turbine and mill site
- Heritage exhibition in Garlogie Village Hall
- Meet members of the Garlogie Beam Engine Trust

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Teas and light refreshments available
- Village Hall and turbine house are wheelchair accessible; the beam engine house is accessible by stairs only

 garlogie-engine.org.uk

 [garlogie.engine](https://www.facebook.com/garlogie.engine)



24 Inverurie - Garioch Heritage Centre

Loco Works Road, Inverurie, AB51 4FY



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 10am - 4pm

Housed within the beautifully restored Carriage and Wagon Workshop of the former Inverurie Locomotive Works, the Garioch Heritage Centre brings new life to one of the area's most important historic industrial buildings. Following the closure of the Locomotive Works in 1969, the building has been transformed into a vibrant heritage centre and home to the collections of the Garioch Heritage Society.

The centre tells the story of life in the Garioch from the early 20th century to the present day, exploring both the domestic and working lives of local people. Through displays, artefacts and photographs, visitors can discover the area's rich social, industrial and community history.

In addition to the exhibitions, visitors can research local history in the centre's library and browse the Society's extensive collection of photographs and archive material. A café, gift shop and activities for younger visitors make the centre an enjoyable destination for all ages.

Come and visit the Garioch Heritage Centre and gain a fascinating insight into the people, places and stories that have shaped the Garioch.

Activities:

- Self-guided tours of the heritage centre
- Pop-up exhibitions and historical tableaux
- Access to the local history collections and extensive photographic archives
- Children's activities

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Café, gift shop and research library on site

 gariochheritage.co.uk

 [GariochHeritage](#)

 [GariochHertiCen](#)



25 The Lodge of St Anthony, Inverurie

22 High Street, Inverurie, AB51 3XQ



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 10am - 4pm

Founded in 1783, Lodge St Anthony No. 154 is, apart from the Kirk, the oldest organisation in Inverurie and the oldest Masonic Lodge in the Province of Aberdeenshire West. The Lodge received its licence from the Grand Lodge of Scotland on 26 December 1783 and has played an important role in the town's history for more than two centuries.

The Lodge's first hall was built behind the Mason Lodge Inn, on land purchased in 1788 at the north end of the Market Place. The Lodge met there until 1838, when the property was sold and the Lodge became dormant. Following the efforts of local Freemasons, particularly Captain Charles Hunter, the Lodge was revived in 1872 and allowed to retain its original number, 154.

After a period meeting in a former Methodist Chapel, the present Masonic Hall was constructed in 1881. The foundation stone was laid with full Masonic honours, and an extension added in 1902 created the large meeting hall still in use today. In 1984, the Lodge celebrated its bicentenary, marking 200 years of continuous history and service to the local community.

Visitors will have the opportunity to learn about the history of the Lodge, its buildings and traditions through a range of displays and exhibitions.

Activities:

- Exhibition on the history of Lodge St Anthony No. 154
- Displays of Masonic heritage and traditions

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Easy wheelchair access from High Street
- Refreshments available on site, with donations welcome towards the upkeep of the Lodge

 stanthony154.co.uk



26 Kemnay Village Hall

8 Aquithie Road, Kemnay, Inverurie, AB51 5SS



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th CLOSED

Built around 1878 by a group of local businessmen, Kemnay Village Hall is a fine granite building that has served the community for almost 150 years. Originally constructed in a traditional style, the hall was gifted to the people of Kemnay in 1950, when a Trust and Management Committee were established to oversee its future.

Over the years, the building has been extended and adapted to meet the changing needs of the village, creating a surprisingly spacious and versatile community facility. With three rooms available for hire and a wide range of community activities taking place throughout the year, the hall continues to play an important role at the

heart of village life. Its blend of historic character and modern facilities makes it a fascinating building to explore.

During Doors Open Days, visitors can browse a display of historic photographs and documents that tell the story of the hall and the wider community.

Activities:

- Display of historic photographs and documents relating to Kemnay Village Hall

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Delicious refreshments will be available at a very reasonable cost.
- Mid Grampian Mesolithic Community Archaeology Group display, 2pm–4pm. See Venue 27 for more details.



kemnayhall.co.uk



[kemnayvillagehall](https://www.facebook.com/kemnayvillagehall)



27 Kemnay - Grampian Mesolithic Community Archaeology Group

Kemnay Village Hall, 8 Aquithie Road,
Kemnay, Inverurie, AB51 5SS



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 2pm - 4pm

Sunday 20th CLOSED

Step back in time and discover what life may have been like in Kemnay over 11,000 years ago. This exhibition showcases the findings from archaeological investigations at Boatley's Farm, Kemnay, exploring evidence of Mesolithic communities who lived on the banks of the River Don between 9000 and 5000 BC.

Presented by the Mid Grampian Mesolithic Community Archaeology Group, the exhibition brings to life the world of Scotland's early hunter-gatherers through artefacts, displays and interactive activities. Visitors can learn about the evidence uncovered during local fieldwork and excavations, including stone tools and traces of temporary camps used by people who regularly returned to the area thousands of years before Kemnay existed.



Through information panels, photographs, replica artefacts and hands-on exhibits, the exhibition encourages visitors to reimagine daily life in Mesolithic Aberdeenshire and discover how archaeologists uncover evidence of these early communities.

Activities:

- Display of archaeological finds from the Boatley's Farm site
- Hands-on exhibits and replica artefacts
- Children's Playmobil Mesolithic landscape
- Opportunity to learn about Mesolithic life and archaeology

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Access: The venue is approximately 400 metres from Kemnay Bridge over the River Don, offering views upstream towards the Mesolithic archaeological site



midgrampianmesolithic.org



[mid grampian mesolithic](https://www.facebook.com/midgrampianmesolithic)



28 Kintore Town House

1 The Square, Kintore, AB51 0UA



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 10am - 4pm

Standing in the heart of the Royal Burgh of Kintore, Kintore Town House is one of Aberdeenshire's most important civic buildings. Completed in 1747 to a design by renowned architect John Adam, the Category A listed building is notable for its distinctive T-plan form, impressive external forestair and original clock tower.

Throughout its history, the Town House has played a central role in community life. It served as the town's courthouse and jail, hosted council meetings and, more recently, provided a home for a local radio studio. Although currently unused, a local community group is working to secure its future through a programme of

renovation and restoration that will bring the building back into active community use.

During Doors Open Days, visitors will have the opportunity to explore this remarkable historic building and learn more about its past, its architectural significance and the exciting plans for its future.

Activities:

- Guided tours led by members of the Kintore Action Group
- Learn about the history of the Town House and restoration plans
- Video display showing the operation of the historic clock mechanism

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Accessibility: Ground floor accessible to all visitors
- Please note: Access to the clock tower requires the ability to climb a ladder



55 Lodge Royal Braemar No. 1195 - Hatton of Fintray

Hatton of Fintray Village Hall, Hatton of
Fintray, AB21 0YQ



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th CLOSED

Ever wondered what happens inside a traditional Masonic Lodge? By visiting this venue, you'll have the opportunity to learn how a rural Lodge operates.

During Doors Open Days, visitors are warmly invited to explore Lodge Royal Braemar No. 1195, meet members of the Lodge, and enjoy informal guided tours throughout the day. Discover fascinating stories from the Lodge's past, learn about its traditions and charitable work, and ask any questions you may have.

Explore displays of historic Masonic artefacts, view minute books dating back more than 100 years, and learn about the Lodge's important role within the local community.

Everyone is welcome!



Activities:

- Take a guided tour, led by Members of the Lodge and explore a traditional, rural Masonic Lodge
- Learn about the history of the Lodge
- Enjoy displays of Masonic items including Minute book dating back over 100 years

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Limited wheelchair access
- Parking is available at the rear of the Hall
- Refreshments will be offered

KINCARDINE & MEARN'S

29 Beannachar Camphill Community

Banchory-Devenick, AB12 5YL



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th CLOSED

Set within a historic estate on the South Deeside Road, Beannachar, formerly known as Banchory House, is centred around a distinguished mansion designed by the renowned Aberdeen architect John Smith and completed in 1837. Today, the estate is home to a thriving Camphill community, providing residential and day services for young adults with additional support needs in a supportive and inclusive environment.

The story of Beannachar is one of transformation and renewal. While preserving its architectural heritage and historic landscape, the estate has evolved into a vibrant community where learning, creativity and meaningful work are at the heart of daily life. Visitors will have the opportunity to discover both the site's rich history and its important role today.

During Doors Open Days, historic maps, architectural drawings, photographs and archive material will reveal the development of the estate over time. Visitors can also learn

about contemporary life at Beannachar through exhibitions and presentations showcasing the wide range of activities undertaken by the community. The beautiful grounds, including the walled garden, provide an opportunity to explore the setting that continues to inspire residents, staff and visitors alike.

Activities:

- Historical exhibition featuring maps, plans, photographs and archive material
- Video presentation exploring life at Beannachar today
- Guided tours of the grounds and walled garden
- Visit craft and horticultural workshops
- Opportunity to purchase handmade products and locally grown produce
- View the award-winning residential house recognised with an Aberdeenshire Architectural Award in 1996

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Accessible routes are available around much of the estate

 beannachar.co.uk

 [Beannachar Camphill Community](https://www.facebook.com/BeannacharCamphillCommunity)



30 Benholm and Johnshaven Heritage Museum

The Lifeboat House, Fore Street, Johnshaven, DD10 0EU



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 10am - 4pm

Located in the heart of the historic fishing village of Johnshaven, the Benholm and Johnshaven Heritage Hub Museum is housed within the former Lifeboat House, built in 1891. Run entirely by dedicated volunteers, the museum celebrates the rich history and heritage of Benholm Parish and offers visitors an engaging and hands-on insight into local life.

This year's exhibition, *Land and Sea*, explores how generations of local people lived between two worlds – the fertile farmland inland and the challenging waters of the North Sea. Many families combined farming and fishing, working the land while also earning a living from the sea. The exhibition highlights the skills, traditions and resilience that shaped a community whose identity was forged by both environments.

As part of European Heritage Days, the exhibition also explores heritage at risk in coastal communities, documenting local stories,

dialect and traditions while examining the challenges facing rural and coastal areas today. Through the work of its volunteers, the museum demonstrates how local communities can preserve and share their own heritage for future generations.

The museum occupies a Category C listed building within the Johnshaven Conservation Area. Originally constructed to house the village lifeboats, the former Lifeboat House remains an important landmark on the harbour front and a key part of the village's architectural and maritime heritage.

Activities:

- Explore the *Land and Sea* exhibition
- Discover the history of farming and fishing communities in Benholm Parish
- Hands-on displays and heritage exhibits
- Children's area with toys and self-guided activities

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Split-level building with ramps available; wheelchair access may be limited in some areas due to space restrictions
- On-street parking available around the harbour area

 [Johnshaven heritage hub museum](#)



31 Hallgreen Castle

King David Drive, Inverbervie, DD10 0PE



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm
Sunday 20th 10am - 4pm

Overlooking Inverbervie Bay, Hallgreen Castle is a remarkable fortified house with origins dating back to the 14th century. Although extended and altered over the centuries, much of the original structure survives, offering a fascinating glimpse into Scotland's medieval past. Rising three storeys high and set within four acres of grounds, the castle retains a number of historic features, including original gun loops visible within its thick stone walls.

Now a private residence, Hallgreen Castle is rarely open to the public. Doors Open Days offers a unique opportunity to step inside this historic building and explore parts of the castle that are not normally accessible. Visitors can also enjoy an art exhibition in the Great Hall, providing a striking contrast between contemporary creativity and the castle's centuries-old surroundings.

In the castle grounds, the Knights of Monymusk will bring medieval history to life with demonstrations of period combat techniques, armour and traditional weaponry. These displays offer an engaging insight into the martial skills and equipment that would have been familiar to the castle's former inhabitants.

Activities:

- Explore Hallgreen Castle and learn about its history
- Art exhibition in the Great Hall
- Medieval combat demonstrations by the Knights of Monymusk
- Displays of traditional armour and weaponry



Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Combat demonstrations: 12pm and 3pm daily
- Limited parking at the castle; visitors are encouraged to use the beach car park and enjoy the short walk to the venue

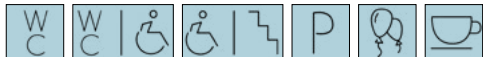
 knightsofmonymusk.co.uk

 [Hallgreen Castle](#)



32 Mill of Benholm

Mill of Benholm, Benholm, Montrose, DD10 0HT



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 10am - 4pm

The Mill of Benholm is a rare and remarkably complete Category A Listed water-powered meal mill, cared for by the community organisation Mill of Benholm Enterprise (MoBE). One of only a small number of historic working water mills to survive intact, the site offers visitors a fascinating insight into Scotland's rural and industrial heritage.

At the heart of the site is the restored waterwheel and milling machinery, demonstrating how the power of water was harnessed to grind grain for local communities. Visitors can follow the route of the burn through the mill grounds and discover how water is channelled into the mill pond before turning the wheel. The surrounding site includes attractive grounds, a community garden and a network of paths through ancient woodland linking the mill to the car park.

MoBE was established to preserve this important historic site for future generations while restoring it as a community hub. Through conservation, interpretation and community involvement, the project ensures that the mill's history and traditional skills continue to be shared and enjoyed.

The site also includes the popular Café at the Mill, run by volunteers, serving artisan cakes, wholesome lunches, teas and coffees.

Activities:

- Guided mill tours
- Access to the mill buildings and grounds
- Exhibition on the history of the mill
- Children's activities
- Explore the woodland paths and community garden

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Vehicular access closer to the buildings can be arranged on the day if required



millofbenholm.scot



[benholm-mill](https://www.facebook.com/benholm-mill)



[millofbenholmenterprise](https://www.instagram.com/millofbenholmenterprise)



33 St Cyrus National Nature Reserve

The Old Lifeboat Station, Nether Warburton, St Cyrus, DD10 0AQ

From Montrose, head north on the A92 coastal road. St Cyrus NNR is signposted on the right, immediately after the Northwater Bridge over the Esk. Follow the single-track road for 1.5 miles to the car park and visitor centre.



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 11am - 3.15pm

Sunday 20th 11am - 3.15pm

Set at the mouth of the River North Esk, just north of Montrose, St Cyrus National Nature Reserve is one of Scotland's most spectacular coastal landscapes. Towering volcanic cliffs, sweeping sandy beaches, rolling dunes and flower-rich grasslands combine to create a stunning natural environment that changes with the seasons.

The reserve is home to more than 300 species of plants, including several that are at the northern edge of their natural range. Its unique combination of climate, soils and sheltered position has created ideal conditions for a remarkable variety of wildlife, making St Cyrus one of the most important nature reserves in Scotland.

The reserve's Visitor Centre is housed within a former lifeboat station dating from the 1860s, reflecting the area's close links with the sea and the changing coastline over time. During Doors Open Days, visitors can discover more about the reserve's rich natural heritage and learn how this special landscape supports an extraordinary range of plants and animals.

The reserve team will be on hand throughout the weekend to share their knowledge and highlight the conservation work being carried out to protect this nationally important site for future generations.

Activities:

- Wildlife and nature displays
- Family-friendly activities
- Meet the reserve team and learn about local conservation work
- Discover the unique plants, animals and habitats of St Cyrus National Nature Reserve

Visitor Information:

- No booking required

 nature.scot

 [stcyrusnnr](https://www.facebook.com/stcyrusnnr)



34 Stonehaven Coastguard Rescue Station

Unit 11, Spurryhilllock Industrial Estate,
Broomhill Road, Stonehaven, AB39 2NH



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th CLOSED

Sunday 20th 10am - 4pm

Step inside the local HM Coastguard Rescue Station and discover how volunteer Coastguard teams respond to emergencies along our coastline. From cliff rescues and water incidents to searches for missing people, the Coastguard plays a vital role in keeping coastal communities safe.

Visitors will have the opportunity to meet members of the volunteer rescue team and learn more about their work, specialist capabilities and the area they cover. Rescue vehicles, communications equipment and specialist rescue gear will be on display, providing a fascinating insight into the skills and resources used during real-life incidents.

Throughout the day, the team will be available to explain how Coastguard operations work and what is involved in responding to emergencies at sea and along the shore. A warm welcome awaits visitors of all ages.



Activities:

- Explore Coastguard rescue vehicles and specialist equipment
- Meet volunteer Coastguard team members
- Demonstrations of radio communications, blue lights and sirens
- Hands-on opportunity to view rope and water rescue equipment
- Try throw-lining techniques
- Family-friendly search and rescue activity

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- On-street parking available nearby
- Water and light refreshments available

 hmcoastguard.uk

 [hmcgaberdeencityandshire](https://www.facebook.com/hmcgaberdeencityandshire)

 [MCA](https://www.facebook.com/MCA)



35 Stonehaven Court Building - Old Court Room

Sheriff Court Building, Dunnottar Avenue,
Stonehaven, AB39 2JD



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 1pm - 4pm
Sunday 20th 10am - 4pm

Step back in time with a visit to The Old Court Room, part of the former Stonehaven Sheriff Court, a Category B Listed building with a history stretching back to the 18th century. While the present courthouse was largely remodelled between 1863 and 1865 by architect James Campbell Walker, it incorporates even earlier fabric, including elements dating from 1767 and alterations by renowned Aberdeen architect John Smith in 1822. The building retains many fine neo-classical features and occupies a prominent position between Stonehaven's old and new towns.

Historically, the building served as the centre of justice for Kincardineshire, replacing the older Tolbooth at the harbour. It was used as a courthouse, police station and prison, and remarkably still contains some of its original basement cells, which are among the oldest surviving features of the complex. Historic Environment Scotland recognises the building as an important example of a Scottish sheriff court, notable for its architectural quality and its role in the civic life of Stonehaven.

Following an asset transfer from the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service, the courtroom has been given a new lease of life as a community meeting space while retaining much of its historic character. Visitors will have the opportunity to explore the courtroom and experience a space that has changed very little since its days as a working court.



Activities:

- Explore the historic courtroom, Sit in the judge's chair and step into the dock
- Learn about the history of the courthouse and its role in Stonehaven

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Drop-in visits throughout the day, suitable for all the family



36 Stonehaven Lifeboat Station

Old Pier, The Harbour, Stonehaven, AB39 2JU



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th CLOSED

Sunday 20th 11am - 3pm

RNLI Stonehaven entered a new chapter in its history with the opening of its purpose-built Lifeboat Station and boathouse in September 2025. Designed to support the charity's lifesaving work for generations to come, the modern facility provides improved accommodation for crew, equipment and training, ensuring the station can continue its vital role protecting those at sea along the Aberdeenshire coast.

Doors Open Days offers a unique opportunity to explore the new station, learn more about the work of the RNLI, and discover how volunteer crews respond to emergencies in all weather conditions. Visitors can meet crew members and hear firsthand about the station's operations, the challenges of lifesaving at sea and the importance of the new facilities.

The station is home to the 'Jamie Hunter' inshore lifeboat, and crew members will be on hand throughout the day to explain how the vessel is used and the difference it makes in helping to save lives at sea.

Activities:

- Guided tours of the new Lifeboat Station and boathouse
- View the RNLI shop
- See the inshore lifeboat crew kit
- Meet RNLI crew members and learn about their lifesaving work
- Find out more about the 'Jamie Hunter' lifeboat

Visitor Information

- No booking required
- RNLI Fundraisers will be offering refreshments

Please note the RNLI crews remain on call throughout the event and may need to respond to emergency incidents at any time

 [Stonehaven Lifeboat Station](#)

 [RNLIStonehaven](#)



37 Stonehaven - St James Episcopal Church

Arbuthnott Street, Stonehaven, AB39 2JB



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 10am - 4pm

One of Stonehaven's most impressive historic buildings, St James the Great Episcopal Church is a Category A Listed church recognised for its exceptional architectural and historic significance. Designed by the renowned Scottish architect Sir Robert Rowand Anderson, the church was built between 1875 and 1877, with later additions including the chancel, organ chamber, vestry and baptistery. Its striking Romanesque design, high-quality stonework and remarkably intact Victorian interior make it one of the finest Episcopal churches in the north east of Scotland.

While photographs and videos can provide a glimpse of the building, nothing compares to experiencing its scale, craftsmanship and peaceful atmosphere in person. From the soaring interior and beautiful stained glass to the carefully detailed architectural features, St James offers visitors a memorable encounter with Scotland's built heritage.

The church is also home to the "Priests and Pipes" exhibition, which explores the history of the Episcopal Church in Stonehaven and celebrates the life and work of John Wardle, the distinguished organ builder and choirmaster who served the congregation for 58 years. Through interactive displays, historic artefacts and a demonstration organ that visitors can play themselves, the exhibition brings the church's rich musical and ecclesiastical heritage to life.

Activities:

- Explore the historic "Priests and Pipes" exhibition
- Discover the history of St James and the Scottish Episcopal Church
- Learn about organ builder and choirmaster John Wardle
- Try the demonstration organ
- Coffee and cake morning (Saturday)

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Tea and coffee available throughout the weekend

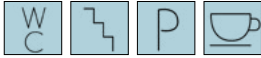
 stjames-stonehaven.org.uk

 [StJamesStonehaven](https://www.facebook.com/StJamesStonehaven)



38 Stonehaven - The Masonic Lodge of Stonehaven 65

43 Ann Street, Stonehaven, AB39 2DA



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 2pm - 4.30pm

Sunday 20th 10.30am - 3pm

Freemasonry has been part of Stonehaven's history for almost three centuries. The first recorded minute of The Lodge of Stonehaven dates from 27 December 1738, making it one of the oldest continuous organisations in the town. The Lodge received its official charter from the Grand Lodge of Scotland in 1755, establishing its place in Scotland's rich Masonic tradition.

Over the years, Lodge members met in a variety of locations across Stonehaven, including private houses and other buildings within the town. The Lodge found its permanent home in 1929, when members purchased the former United Presbyterian Church building in Ann Street. Since then, the building has served as the centre of Masonic activity in Stonehaven and continues to play an important role in the local community.

During Doors Open Days, visitors will have a rare opportunity to step inside the Lodge, meet members and learn more about Freemasonry, its history in Stonehaven and the role it continues to play today. The event offers a chance to explore a building that is not usually open to the public and to discover an often-misunderstood aspect of Scotland's social history.

Activities:

- Explore the Lodge building and meeting rooms
- Meet Lodge members and learn about Freemasonry
- Discover the history of Freemasonry in Stonehaven since 1738



Visitor Information:

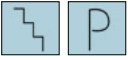
- No booking required
- Tea and coffee available throughout the days
- Access: There are two small steps at the entrance to the building

 stonehaven65.com



39 Tolbooth Museum

Old Pier, Stonehaven Harbour, AB39 2JU



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 10am - 4pm

Overlooking Stonehaven's historic harbour, the Tolbooth is the oldest surviving building in the town and one of its most important landmarks. This Category A Listed building dates from the late 16th century and was originally constructed as a storehouse for George Keith, 5th Earl Marischal, during the development of nearby Dunnottar Castle. Around 1600, it became Stonehaven's Tolbooth, serving as the town's courthouse and prison for more than 150 years.

The building retains much of its historic character, including its distinctive crow-stepped gables and stone-built form overlooking the old harbour. Historic Environment Scotland recognises it as the oldest surviving building in Stonehaven and an important reminder of the town's civic and judicial history.

Today, the ground floor houses the Tolbooth Museum, where visitors can discover Stonehaven's rich heritage through a variety of fascinating displays. Exhibits explore local history, geology, archaeology and everyday life, bringing to life the people, places and events that have shaped the town over the centuries.

Among the highlights are displays on the founding of the Scottish colony in New Brunswick, local domestic life, historic photographs, geology collections and a model of the earliest known air-breathing animal, discovered nearby at Cowie. The museum also houses one of the few permanent displays of Scottish agates in the country. Visitors can even step inside a recreated prison cell and experience a glimpse of the building's former role as a place of confinement.



Activities:

- View exhibits on local history, geology and archaeology
- Step inside a recreated prison cell
- See the museum's permanent display of Scottish agates
- Children's dinosaur hunt

Visitor Information:

- No booking required

Please note: The first floor is occupied by the Tolbooth Restaurant and is not part of the Doors Open Days programme

 stonehaventolbooth.co.uk

 [stonehaventolbooth](https://www.facebook.com/stonehaventolbooth)



40 Tod Head Lighthouse

Kinneff, DD10 0TH



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th CLOSED

Tod Head Lighthouse, located south of Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire, built in 1897 by David Alan Stevenson, is now a privately owned family home, lovingly restored and reimagined.

The lighthouse is a classic example of Scottish lighthouse architecture, with its circular entasis tower, corbelled gallery, and domed lantern. David Alan was indeed the third generation of the Stevenson dynasty, following in the footsteps of his grandfather Robert Stevenson, the pioneering engineer behind the Bell Rock Lighthouse, and his father David Stevenson, who built many of Scotland's coastal lights.

The Stevenson family designed and built over 90 lighthouses across Scotland and beyond, spanning four generations and more than 150 years. Their legacy is etched into the very cliffs and coastlines of the country.

Tod Head was decommissioned in 2008 and though then the Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB) removed all light mechanisms, the structure retains its architectural integrity and atmospheric charm.

The sensitive conversion of Tod Head Lighthouse into a private residence was undertaken by Moxon Architects, who have earned acclaim for their thoughtful approach to heritage buildings. Their work at Tod Head was Highly Commended in the Aberdeenshire Architectural and Landscape Design Awards (AALDA), and they've also won multiple awards from the Aberdeen Society of Architects and the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS) for other projects.

It's a beautiful example of how historic infrastructure can be reimagined for modern life while preserving its soul.



Activities:

- Tower Access: Climb the spiral stair to the top for panoramic views and a sense of the keeper's daily routine.
- Lamp & Light Rooms: Explore the spaces where the powerful lenses and clockwork once operated.

Visitor Information:

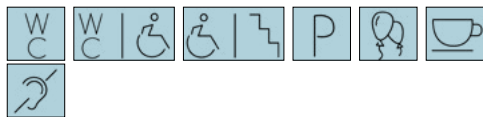
- Guided tours are offered.
- Booking in advance is essential.
- Tour times: 10am, 11am, 12pm, 1pm, 2pm & 3pm. **Please book one ticket per car** (not per person). Limited to 6 car loads of visitors per tour due to limited parking.
- IMPORTANT: Children need to be able to climb the companion ladder unaided. There are restrictions on younger children accessing the outside gallery.
- **Link to book tickets on Eventbrite:**
[BOOK YOUR TOUR](#)
- Road access is via a single track road with limited parking places

 [todheadlighthouse](#)

MARR

20 Bennachie Parish Church at Monymusk

Monymusk Church, Monymusk, Inverurie, AB51 7HJ



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 11.30am - 4pm

Bennachie Parish Church at Monymusk is a remarkable Category A listed building with roots that stretch back to the earliest days of Christianity in north-east Scotland. While much of the present church is believed to date from the 12th century, the site has strong connections to an early Christian community established in the area during the 7th century. Restored between 1929 and 1932, the church was carefully returned to an approximation of its medieval appearance, creating the simple yet beautiful interior that visitors see today.

One of the church's most significant treasures is an 8th-century Class II Pictish stone, brought into the church in 1978. The stone features a large cross, a disc symbol and the rare "step" symbol, one of only a handful known in Scotland and believed to be associated with sanctuary boundaries. Visitors can also admire stained glass by Alexander Strachan, Gordon Webster and Vanessa Thom, including a striking window depicting the story of the church's foundation. Other highlights include a 17th-century Bible, historic memorials linked to the Grant family and the church's 17th-century clock tower.

In recent years, the church has faced challenges common to many historic places of worship. Following a period of uncertainty over its future, Monymusk Church remains an active part of the newly formed Bennachie Parish, continuing its long tradition of serving both the local community and visitors. In 2025, the church and its volunteers were recognised nationally when it



reached the finals of the National Churches Trust Awards.

Today, Monymusk Parish Church continues to welcome visitors to explore a building shaped by centuries of faith, history and community life.

Activities:

- Guided tours of the historic church interior
- View the 8th-century Class II Pictish stone
- Discover stained glass by Alexander Strachan, Gordon Webster and Vanessa Thom
- See the 17th-century Bible and historic memorials
- Guided tour of the church tower and 17th-century clock

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- The tower and gallery accessed by stairs
- Accessible toilet available in the adjacent Village Hall on request
- Water bottle refill available



[monymusk-church](https://monymusk-church.org)



[Bennachie Parish Church at Monymusk](https://www.facebook.com/BennachieParishChurch)

41 Alford Valley Community Railway

Main Street, Alford, AB33 8AD



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 10am - 4pm

The Alford Valley Community Railway is a narrow-gauge railway and popular community attraction that runs between Alford village centre and Haughton Country Park. Operated by the Alford Valley Charitable Community Benefit Society (AVCCBS), the railway is a successful community-led project that has brought a much-loved local attraction back into operation through significant funding and volunteer effort.

Created and run by the community for the benefit of both residents and visitors, the railway offers a unique opportunity to experience a heritage-style journey through the Alford countryside while learning about the redevelopment of the railway and the investment that has helped secure its future.

During Doors Open Days, visitors can enjoy a behind-the-scenes look at the railway, discover how the project was delivered, and explore areas that are not normally accessible to the public. A train ride between Alford Station and Haughton Country Park completes the experience, making this a great day out for families, railway enthusiasts and anyone interested in community-led heritage projects.



Activities:

- Behind-the-scenes tour of the Engine Shed
- Displays within the Station Building
- Return train journey between Alford Station and Haughton Country Park

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Train times from Alford Station: 10.30am, 11.15am, 12pm, 12.45pm, 1.30pm, 2.15pm, 3pm and 3.45pm
- Train carriages are wheelchair accessible; noise-suppressing ear defenders are available if required

 avcr.org.uk

 [AlfordValleyRailway](https://www.facebook.com/AlfordValleyRailway)

 [Alford Valley Community Railway](https://www.instagram.com/AlfordValleyCommunityRailway)

 [Find 'alford valley community railway'](https://twitter.com/AlfordValleyCommunityRailway)

 [Alford Valley Community Railway](https://www.youtube.com/AlfordValleyCommunityRailway)

 [All You Should Know BEFORE You Go \(with reviews\)](#)

42 Alford - The Gordon Mills MBE Bus Collection

Adjacent to Grampian Transport Museum,
Montgarrie Road, Alford, AB33 8AE



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10.30am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 10.30am - 4pm

The Bus Collection at Alford is the home to a fascinating fleet of vehicles that have spent their lives being used as public transport across the vast road networks of Aberdeen City and Shire. The collection is maintained by The Aberdeen & District Transport Preservation Trust, which was created in 2006 and as much as possible, vehicles in the Trust's care are returned to running condition and during events are presented to the public.

The collection aims to promote the education of the public by bringing together, holding, adequately housing, maintaining, preserving, and conserving a fleet of buses, coaches, trams and many other vehicles, along with any related equipment.

During the weekend visitors will receive a guided tour around the bus collection and have the opportunity to view bus preservation work in progress. Have your cameras at the ready as plenty of photo opportunities will exist as visitors will be permitted access to many of the vehicles on display. Weather permitting there may be an external display of vehicles with the possible of experiencing a "wee hurl" around the track, an adventure for all ages to enjoy!

The Bus Collection at Alford is a short walk to the left of the main entrance to the Grampian Transport Museum. It can also be accessed from the rear entrance to the site from Stewart Road. The fleet of vehicles are housed in the large green and cream building.

It houses the largest collection of vintage buses North of the central belt, dating back to 1947. These vehicles show the development of buses, and how they were used in and around Aberdeen City and Shire ... history in the real.



Activities:

- Guided tours of the bus collection
- View vehicle restoration and preservation work in progress
- Explore a range of historic buses and coaches
- Photography opportunities throughout the collection
- Outdoor vehicle display and short heritage rides (weather permitting)

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Entry via the main museum entrance or from Stewart Road at the rear of the site

 thebuscollectionatalford.co.uk

 [thebuscollectionatalford](https://www.facebook.com/thebuscollectionatalford)

 [thebuscollectionatalford](https://www.instagram.com/thebuscollectionatalford)

 [buses at alford](https://twitter.com/buses_at_alford)

43 Cairngorm Bothies

Logie Coldstone, Aboyne, AB34 5PZ



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th CLOSED

Sunday 20th 12.30pm - 4pm

Nestled within a 100-year-old Scots pine forest in the Cairngorms National Park, Cairngorm Bothies offers a unique collection of off-grid woodland retreats. Recipients of Green Tourism's Gold Award, the bothies provide sustainable accommodation for visitors who want to enjoy the natural environment while minimising their impact on it.

Each of the 12 bothies is powered entirely by renewable energy and has been designed to demonstrate how sustainable tourism can work in harmony with the landscape. Set amongst native woodland, the site encourages visitors to connect with nature while learning about the importance of protecting the fragile habitats and wildlife of the Cairngorms.

During Doors Open Days, visitors will be invited behind the scenes to discover the story of Cairngorm Bothies, explore how the site operates sustainably, and learn about the environmental challenges facing the Cairngorms National Park. The tour will highlight the importance of conservation, responsible access and wildfire prevention in one of Scotland's most treasured landscapes.

Activities:

- Behind-the-scenes guided walking tour
- Learn about off-grid living and sustainable tourism
- Geocaching activity
- Opportunity to discover local wildlife and conservation initiatives
- Ranger-led nature activity TBC at time of booking



Visitor Information:

- Booking is essential
- Tour time: 12.30pm, Maximum capacity: 16 visitors
- Please book using this link: <https://www.ticketsource.com/cairngorm-excursions>
- Access to an accessible bothy for toilet facilities will be provided where possible

 [cairngormbothies.co.uk](https://www.cairngormbothies.co.uk)

 [CairngormBothies](https://www.facebook.com/CairngormBothies)

 [cairngormbothies](https://www.instagram.com/cairngormbothies)



44 Alford Area - Tough Community Church

Tough Church, Kirkton of Tough, Alford, AB33 8ER



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 3pm

Sunday 20th 10am - 3pm

Tough Church is a striking 19th-century rural landmark designed by the renowned Aberdeen architect John Smith. Set within an area closely associated with the development of the Aberdeen Angus breed, the church stands as an important part of the area's architectural and social heritage. Behind its simple exterior lies an elegant interior featuring classical detailing and a remarkable marble sculpture, an unexpected artistic treasure in a rural setting.

For generations, the church has been at the heart of local community life, witnessing baptisms, weddings, funerals and countless gatherings. Today, following community acquisition of the building, a new chapter is beginning as local people work to preserve its heritage and re-establish it as a vibrant community asset.

The project reflects the European Heritage Days theme of Revive, Resist, Reimagine. Through

community ownership and sustainable planning, the building is being safeguarded for the future while being reimagined as a flexible space for events, learning, wellbeing and cultural activities. In doing so, Tough Church is transforming from a heritage building at risk into a living part of the community once more.

Activities:

- Explore the church and discover its architectural and historical features
- Meet volunteers and learn about the building's past and future
- Daily talk at 11am on the Byres family, the church's architecture and its unique marble sculpture
- Children's craft activities with take-home creations

Visitor Information:

- Talk Booking essential, to reserve a place at the 11am talk, email fotcc24@gmail.com
- Booking not required for general visits
- Activities will take place on the ground floor only
- Teas and coffees will be served – donations welcome

 [FriendsofToughCommunityChurch/](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofToughCommunityChurch/)



45 Ballater - The Victoria and Albert Halls

Station Square, Ballater, AB35 5QB



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 11am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 11am - 4pm

The Albert Memorial Hall is a prominent Category C Listed building at the heart of Ballater. Officially opened on 29 September 1875, it was built as a community meeting place for residents and also housed the village post office on the ground floor. Situated opposite the railway station, the building occupied an important position within village life and was one of the first landmarks encountered by visitors arriving in Ballater, including Queen Victoria during her frequent journeys to nearby Balmoral.

The Albert Hall occupies the first floor of the building and continues to serve the community through a wide range of events and activities. Around twenty years after its opening, additional accommodation was created through the development of the Victoria Hall and Gordon Institute complex, including the space now known as the Mike Sheridan Room, reflecting the growing needs of the community.

For almost 150 years, the halls have played an important role in the social, cultural and civic life of Ballater. Today, they remain a vibrant community hub, cared for by a dedicated committee of trustees committed to preserving the building and ensuring its continued use for future generations.

During Doors Open Days, visitors are invited to explore this historic building and discover its rich story through a special exhibition of original plans, photographs, documents and artefacts illustrating the history of the halls and the many activities that have taken place within them.



Activities:

- Explore the historic Albert Memorial Hall
- Exhibition of original building plans
- Displays of historic photographs, documents and artefacts
- Learn about the history of the Victoria and Albert Halls and their role in community life

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Lift access available to the Albert Hall
- Please note that some areas of the building may be unavailable due to the halls' ongoing community use

 victoriaandalberthalls.co.uk

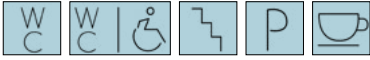
 [VictoriaandAlbertHalls.Ballater](https://www.facebook.com/VictoriaandAlbertHalls.Ballater)

 [va_halls_ballater](https://www.instagram.com/va_halls_ballater)



46 Braemar Castle

Braemar, AB35 5XR



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th CLOSED

Built in 1628 by John Erskine, Earl of Mar, Braemar Castle is one of Aberdeenshire's most distinctive historic buildings and a prominent landmark on Deeside. This Category A Listed castle combines the features of a traditional Scottish tower house with later military adaptations, including its unusual star-shaped defensive curtain wall, crenellated turrets and imposing round stair tower. The castle occupies a strategically important position overlooking the River Dee and has been at the centre of local history for almost 400 years.

Over the centuries, the castle has witnessed clan rivalries, Jacobite uprisings, military occupation and Victorian society. Originally built as a hunting lodge and stronghold, it was attacked and burned in 1689 before being rebuilt and used as a government garrison following the Jacobite rebellions. Many of the features visible today date from this period, including the military-style curtain wall established during reconstruction in the mid-18th century. The interior retains elements of both its time as a military barracks and later as a family home of the Farquharsons of Invercauld.

Today, Braemar Castle holds a unique place in Scottish heritage as Scotland's first community-run castle. In 2007, local people stepped in to secure the future of the building, and it is now cared for by a dedicated team of staff and volunteers. Through ongoing conservation and community involvement, the castle continues to share its remarkable stories with visitors from around the world.

Visitors are invited to explore the castle, meet staff and volunteers, and discover the people and events that have shaped its history, from clan chiefs and redcoat soldiers to the charismatic Frances and Alwyn Farquharson, whose hospitality helped establish Braemar as a fashionable Highland destination.

Activities:

- Explore the historic castle and grounds
- Open guiding throughout the day
- Meet staff and volunteers and learn about castle life
- Visit the castle shop
- Relax in the courtyard with refreshments

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Large grounds with space for children to play and picnic tables available
- Dogs welcome in the grounds but not permitted inside the castle



braemarcastle.co.uk



[braemarcastle](https://www.facebook.com/braemarcastle)



[braemarcastle](https://www.instagram.com/braemarcastle)



47 Braemar - Downie's Cottage

Tomintoul, Braemar, AB35 5XX



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 11am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 11am - 4pm

Tucked into the Cairngorms landscape, Downie's Cottage is a remarkable survivor of 19th-century rural life. Built by crofter John Downie, who supplemented his income by guiding Victorian visitors through the surrounding mountains, the cottage remained in family occupation until the 1920s before gradually falling into disrepair.

For many decades the building stood abandoned, largely untouched by modern alterations. When new owners acquired the cottage in 2006, it had permission for demolition, but closer inspection revealed a rare and important survival. Beneath a later corrugated iron roof, the original heather thatch remained intact, while inside, many traditional features had survived, including box beds, a timber-hinged lum and furnishings that reflected everyday life in a Highland cottage of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Recognising its exceptional significance, the owners worked with heritage specialists to secure Category A Listed status, and an ambitious restoration project followed. Over the next decade, the cottage was carefully conserved and sensitively adapted, allowing modern comforts to be introduced while preserving its historic character. By 2017, Downie's Cottage



had been brought back to life as an outstanding example of Scotland's domestic heritage.

Today, visitors can experience a rare glimpse of the past. Original prints, newspapers and household details remain in place, creating an authentic record of daily life and offering a fascinating insight into the people who once called the cottage home. The restoration has ensured that the character, craftsmanship and atmosphere of this unique building will continue to be enjoyed by future generations.



Activities:

- Explore the restored cottage and its historic interiors
- Learn about the life of crofter and mountain guide John Downie
- Discover original domestic features and furnishings
- View surviving prints, newspapers and artefacts from the late 19th and early 20th centuries

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- A rare opportunity to step inside a carefully preserved 19th-century Category A listed cottage, original thatched structure, traditional box beds and an exceptional example of Cairngorms domestic heritage



downiescottage.co.uk



[downiecottage](https://www.facebook.com/downiecottage)



[downiescottage](https://www.instagram.com/downiescottage)

48 Deeside Gliding Club, Aboyne

Aboyne Airfield, Dinnet, Aboyne, AB34 5LB



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 10am - 4pm

(booking required)

Set against the spectacular backdrop of the Cairngorms, Deeside Gliding Club has been introducing people to the experience of silent flight for more than 70 years. The club's origins date back to the mid-1950s when gliding began in Aberdeenshire at Inverallochy, near Fraserburgh. By the late 1950s operations had moved to Aberdeen Airport before relocating in the mid-1960s to its current home near Aboyne, where the club has remained for almost six decades.

Run entirely by volunteers, the club is built on a strong tradition of sharing skills and experience. Members support one another in all aspects of gliding, from flying and instruction to aircraft maintenance and operations. Over the years, many pilots who began their flying journey at Deeside have gone on to careers in the RAF, commercial aviation and even the Red Arrows.

The club operates throughout the year and welcomes aspiring pilots, aviation enthusiasts and visitors interested in learning more about the sport. Its location above the Dee Valley offers ideal conditions for gliding, with pilots making use of rising air currents to soar above the surrounding landscape.

During Doors Open Days, visitors can explore the clubhouse, learn about the history of gliding in the north east through a dedicated exhibition, and find out what is involved in becoming a glider pilot. If weather conditions allow, there may also be opportunities to watch gliders in action.

Activities:

- Tour the club facilities
- Explore the Deeside Gliding history exhibition
- Learn about glider flying and club activities
- Watch gliding operations (weather permitting)
- Gliding simulator experience

Visitor Information:

- No booking required for general visits
- Advance booking required for Simulator sessions (1 booking = 1 person)
- Simulator times: 10.30am, 12.30pm and 2.30pm
- Session length: Approximately 1 hour
- Participants must be at least 4ft 10in tall to reach the simulator pedals

Link to book tickets on Eventbrite:

[BOOK YOUR TOUR](#)



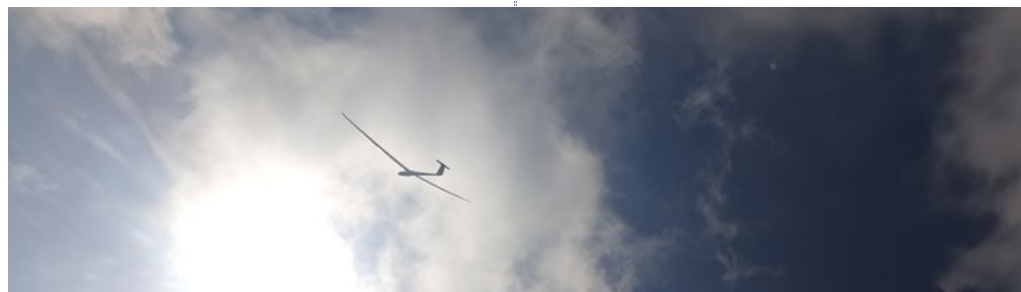
deesideglidingclub.co.uk



[Deeside Gliding Club](#)

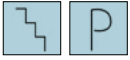


[Deeside Gliding Club](#)



49 Finzean Bucket Mill

Finzean, Birse, Banchory, AB31 6NE



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 10am - 4pm

(pre-booked tours only)

Built in 1853 to a design by Peter Brown, the Finzean Bucket Mill is a rare water-powered sawmill and the only surviving mill of its kind in Scotland still associated with the production of its traditional product – turned wooden buckets.

Powered by water and containing an extraordinary collection of historic machinery, the mill offers a fascinating insight into traditional rural industries and woodworking skills. For generations, local craftspeople used the mill's specialised equipment to produce wooden buckets and other timber products, supporting the rural economy of Deeside.

Today, the mill is cared for by the Finzean Bucket Mill Community Interest Company, a not-for-profit social enterprise dedicated to preserving the building, its machinery and the traditional skills associated with it. As one of only three surviving water-powered sawmills of its type, and with all three currently on the Buildings at Risk Register, the project is exploring how heritage-led regeneration and social enterprise can help secure the future of historic rural buildings while supporting sustainable local development.

Visitors will have the opportunity to explore the mill on guided tours and learn about the extensive work being undertaken to return the machinery and building to working order. The project demonstrates how historic industrial heritage can be revived and reimagined for the benefit of future generations.



Activities:

- Guided tour of the Finzean Bucket Mill
- Learn about the restoration project and future plans
- Discover the historic machinery used to make wooden buckets
- Explore the role of water power in rural industry

Visitor Information:

- Booking is essential
- To book visit: www.bucketmill.co.uk
- Tour Details: Approximately 1 hour, 12 people max per tour
- Tour Times Saturday: 10am, 11.30am, 1pm, 2.30pm, 4pm
- Sunday: 10am, 11.30am, 1pm, 2.30pm
- Limited parking available

50 Forgue Old Kirk

Church Terrace, Forgue, AB54 6BY



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 10am - 4pm

Standing on a prominent hill above the site of the earlier St Margaret's Church and its historic graveyard, Forgue Old Kirk is a striking Category B Listed building designed by the renowned north-east architect Archibald Simpson. Built in 1819 to replace the medieval parish church, the kirk served for many years as the centre of the large Parish of Forgue and remains an important landmark in the local landscape.

The church's imposing rectangular design, impressive massing and high-quality stonework reflect Simpson's architectural skill and give the building a commanding presence. Inside, a number of historic features survive, including a beautifully painted plaster ceiling dating from 1819 and remnants of decorative acanthus stencilling. The interior was further enhanced in 1875 with redecoration and the installation of a new organ, while later alterations in 1926 saw the pews and dais renewed and the organ moved to its current position.

A particular highlight is the church's Conacher organ, built in 1872, which continues to play an important role in the building today. Since opening as a community facility in 1997, Forgue Old Kirk has become a popular venue for concerts, music events and community gatherings, ensuring that this historic building remains at the heart of local life.



The building also reflects the challenges facing many historic places of worship. Current conservation priorities include the replacement of the Scottish slate roof covering and repairs to the organ bellows, helping to secure the future of both the building and its musical heritage.

Activities:

- Guided tours of the kirk
- Displays on the history of the building
- Music and heritage exhibits
- Free organ recital on Saturday at 7.30pm

Visitor Information:

- No booking required for daytime visitors
- Organ recital: Saturday, 7.30pm, advance booking required via Eventbrite
- **Link to book tickets on Eventbrite:**
[BOOK YOUR RECITAL](#)



friendsforguekirk.org.uk



[FriendsOfForgueKirk](#)

51 Huntly - Christ Church

Provost Street, Huntly, AB54 8EB



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10.30am - 1.30pm

Sunday 20th 11.30am - 12.30pm

Sunday Service at 10.30am to which all are welcome to attend

Christ Church is a charming Category B Listed church and part of the Scottish Episcopal Church, a member of the worldwide Anglican Communion. Although modest in scale, the church is noted for its beautiful stained glass, elegant proportions and richly detailed interior.

The roots of the congregation stretch back to 1719, when the Episcopalian minister in Huntly was ejected from the Parish Church. Supported by many local worshippers, he established a meeting house in "the Raws", and a school for Episcopalian children soon followed. During the Jacobite period, the congregation endured significant hardship. The meeting house was damaged during the events surrounding the 1745 Rising, and during the years of the Penal Laws, worship often took place secretly in remote outdoor locations, sometimes under cover of darkness.

The present church was built in 1849 to a design by architect Thomas Mackenzie. Its simple nave-and-chancel plan is enhanced by an attractive octagonal spirelet beside the porch. Inside, visitors can admire painted roof panels depicting open Bibles with scriptural texts, while the chancel features the Creed, Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments displayed on a decorative gilded background. The church's architectural and historic significance is recognised through its Category B listing, reflecting both its distinctive design and its importance in Huntly's religious heritage.



Following restoration work, the Christ Church Garden was created as a peaceful outdoor space that complements the simplicity and beauty of the church building.

Visitors are invited to explore the church, learn more about its fascinating history and enjoy its welcoming atmosphere.

Activities:

- Guided tours of the church
- Learn about the history of the Episcopal congregation in Huntly
- View the stained glass, painted ceiling panels and historic interior details
- Tea, coffee, cake and biscuits available
- Sunday service at 10.30am (all welcome)

Visitor Information:

- No booking required
- Ground floor accessible; balcony and sanctuary have limited access



[islaspeydeveron-churches.org](https://www.islaspeydeveron-churches.org)

52 Number 30, The Square, Huntly

28-30 The Square, Huntly, AB54 8BR



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 11am - 4pm

Located in the heart of Huntly, Number 30 sits within the town square, a place that has been central to community life for centuries. Once a bustling hub for gatherings, events and daily life, the square has seen both prosperity and challenge in recent years as changing habits and economic shifts have impacted the town centre.

Now revitalised for the 21st century, Number 30 offers a vibrant multi-use space for learning, leisure, enterprise and connection—reinvigorating the square as a place for all and helping to shape a confident future for Huntly.

Originally built in 1875 as Cruickshanks shop, the building expanded over time into a large department store of more than 1,250 square metres across two and a half floors, trading successfully for over 140 years until its closure in 2018. In 2019, Huntly Development Trust secured funding through the Aberdeenshire Town Centre

Fund to bring the building into community ownership and transform it into the facility seen today.

Activities:

- Join a guided behind-the-scenes tour of the building
- Learn about the history of Cruickshanks department store
- Discover the building's recent renovation and transformation
- Explore the space from its historic origins to its present-day community use

Visitor Information:

- Booking is essential as this is a guided tour event
- Saturday tour times: 10am, 11am, 12pm, 1pm, 2pm, 3pm
- Sunday tour times: 11am, 12pm, 1pm, 2pm, 3pm
- To book email: Number30@huntly.net

 number30.org

 [number30](https://www.facebook.com/number30)



53 Rhynie - Books Abroad

Richmond Avenue Industrial Estate, Rhynie,
AB54 4HJ



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 10am - 4pm

Books Abroad is a charity that recycles good-quality donated books from schools, colleges and libraries, redistributing them to educational establishments worldwide in response to specific requests for support. These books provide a valuable resource, improving literacy and supporting education, which in turn helps to alleviate poverty.

At the Rhynie warehouse, volunteers sort, select and package books, preparing them for shipment overseas. Recycling these books gives them a useful second life while helping to reduce landfill.

Visitors are invited to come along during Doors Open Days to see behind the scenes at Books Abroad.

Activities:

- Take a guided look around the warehouse
- See how donated books are sorted, selected and packaged
- Speak with volunteers about the charity's work
- Donate suitable books (please check the website for requirements)
- Browse a selection of specialist books, available for a small donation

Visitor Information:

- No booking required.

 booksabroad.org.uk



54 St Ternan's Scottish Episcopal Church, Banchory

High Street, Banchory, AB31 5TB.



Opening Times:

Saturday 19th 10am - 4pm

Sunday 20th 2pm - 4pm

Visitors are welcome to join the 11am Morning Service and the 7pm Taize Communion Service

Situated on the High Street, partially hidden behind a large chestnut tree planted in 1851, St Ternan's Episcopal Church was consecrated on 29 October 1851. An Episcopal congregation has worshipped on the site since 1793. The church features a traditional design with plain white walls, brown pews and a number of beautiful stained-glass windows.

The church hall, designed by Jim Hammond in 1985, won a Kincardine & Deeside Design Award.



Activities:

- View the stained-glass windows
- Admire kneelers and pew cushions stitched by church members over the past 30 years
- Take part in a children's trail
- Purchase a book covering the first 150 years of the church's history
- See a display showcasing the last 25 years

Visitor Information:

- No booking required.

 stternansbanchory.org

 [StTernan'sScottishEpiscopalChurch](https://www.facebook.com/StTernansScottishEpiscopalChurch)



Further Information & Updates

Every effort has been made to ensure the information in this leaflet is correct at time of print. For up-to-date information on our venue listings and for any changes to the programme, updates, amendments and additions, please look at the national website and on our Facebook page at the addresses below:

 doorsopendays.org.uk

 aberdeenshire.gov.uk/doorsopendays

 [AberdeenshireArchitectureHeritageDesign](https://www.facebook.com/AberdeenshireArchitectureHeritageDesign)

If you would like any further information about the event or have any queries, please email the Aberdeenshire event coordinators at: doorsopen@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Please note that visitors entering buildings do so at their own risk. Children must be accompanied. None of the participating buildings or organisations are responsible for any accidents or damage that might be incurred. The owners/custodians of the buildings retain the right to refuse access.

Share your experience of Doors Open Days Aberdeenshire

We would love to hear from you about the event, the buildings you visited and your feedback. Please send us your photos of your favourite buildings and share your experiences of the day by posting them to our Facebook site.

 [AberdeenshireArchitectureHeritageDesign](https://www.facebook.com/AberdeenshireArchitectureHeritageDesign)

Doors Open Day 2027 and beyond

If you are involved with a property that you think would make a good addition to Doors Open Days in the future, please get in touch. We look forward to hearing from you!

Clare Tierney, Aberdeenshire Doors Open Days Coordinator

Mandy McKenzie, Aberdeenshire Doors Open Days Project Officer

With so many buildings to visit across Aberdeenshire
on Doors Open weekend, there's something for
everyone – what better excuse to explore the region!

www.doorsopendays.org.uk

DOORS
OPEN
DAYS

