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ADEN RESTORATION & REDEVELOPMENT & ADEN ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECTS

**NLHF PROJECT REF: PP-15-05717
HESAG PROJECT REF: HEAP17739253911**

ADEN ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT MANSION HOUSE (SITE 4) SUMMARY REPORT

ADEN COUNTRY PARK, ABERDEENSHIRE AB42 8FQ

29 APRIL - 12 MAY 2019

**NATIONAL LOTTERY HERITAGE FUND (NLHF)
PARKS FOR PEOPLE PROGRAMME &
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND (HES) ARCHAEOLOGY GRANT**

**Complied by
Neil Shirran – Project Co-ordinator**

Introduction

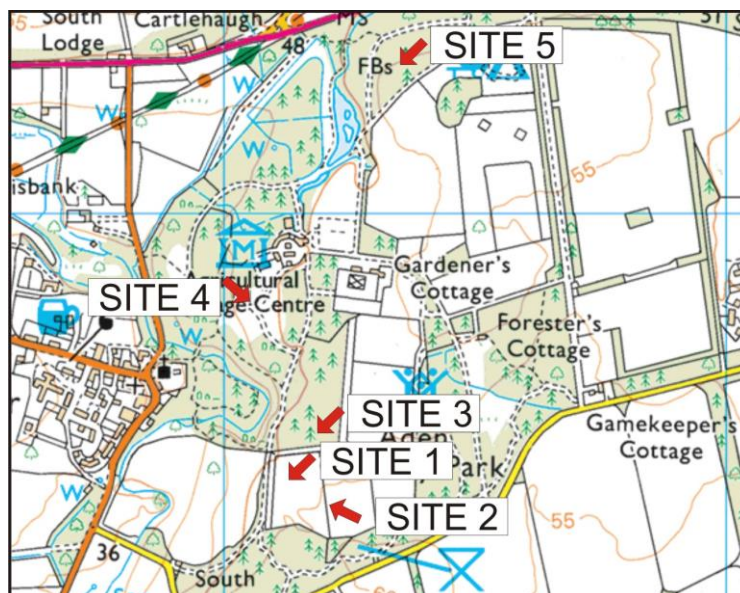
This report has been produced to provide a summary of the work and activities carried out as part of the Mansion House (Site 4) archaeological excavation, as part of the Aden Country Park Restoration & Redevelopment and the associated Aden Archaeology Project. These projects have been made possible with funding support from the Historic Environment Scotland (HES) Archaeological Grant, the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) Parks for People programme, Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service and in-kind volunteer support from the Friends of Aden Country Park group and additional volunteers.

The archaeological dig of the Mansion House site is being led by the experienced archaeologist Ali Cameron of Cameron Archaeology. Ali has led on numerous community-based archaeological excavations within Aden Country Park and as the commissioned archaeologist has extensive knowledge of Aden's historic environment.

Archaeological Investigations (29th April to 12th May 2019)

The one archaeological site which we will focus on in this report is at the Mansion House (Site 4) located at the following National Grid Reference point illustrated below, in the parish of Old Deer and at 40-55m OD.

Archaeological Site	National Grid Reference
Mansion House (Site 4)	NJ 98033 47833



Aden Archaeology Project Site Locations (Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2019)

Site 4 – Mansion House

Background to Research Aims

The Mansion House is an extremely popular ruined building in Aden Country Park. The recent geophysical survey (Rose Geophysical Consultants) around the ruin and ground radar within it, proved extremely popular with visitors but this building has never been studied and is poorly interpreted. The old interpretation board is out of date and is not based on archaeological work.

Trenches planned for around and inside the building, a standing building survey and historical research planned will help to reinterpret this building. The exterior resistance survey suggests that there is another building adjacent, possibly an earlier house which may have been the replacement for the Tower House (Site 3) and then the Mansion House was built replacing it. The geophysical survey revealed garden features which will be investigated. A research excavation over several seasons would help to interpret the building and its associated gardens and landscape. Geophysical survey suggests that features may be well preserved below ground and the possibility of a large number of associated finds is great. This will be important for post excavation analysis which will train volunteers and for future exhibitions about the site.

Aim 1 - Understand the site's chronological development

In the light of the excavation, research, and evaluation carried out by Murray Archaeological Services Ltd (2. Aden House - Excavation (2 - 15 July 2015)) and geophysical survey by Rose Geophysical Consultants (7. Aden (HLF) - Geophysical Survey (20 – 25 March 2017)), this aim will be addressed with a programme of targeted trenches inside and around building over a three-year period, to maximise the research, volunteer and public engagement. The exterior resistance survey suggests that there is another building adjacent, possibly an earlier house which may have been the replacement for the Tower House (Site 3) and then the Mansion House was built replacing it. Trenches are designed to both locate the site of the other building, along with garden features, and 'ground-truth' the results of the previous excavation evaluation and geophysical survey.

Aim 2 – Understand the site's archaeological conditions

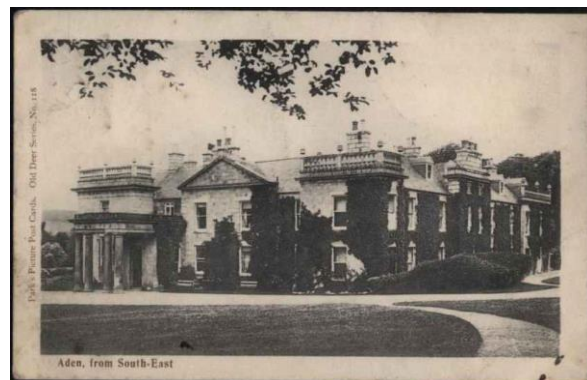
This aim will be achieved with an assessment of the samples as defined and recovered in Aim 1, using appropriate archaeological techniques to establish preservation and significance.

Aim 3 – Making recommendations, analysis, publication and interpretation

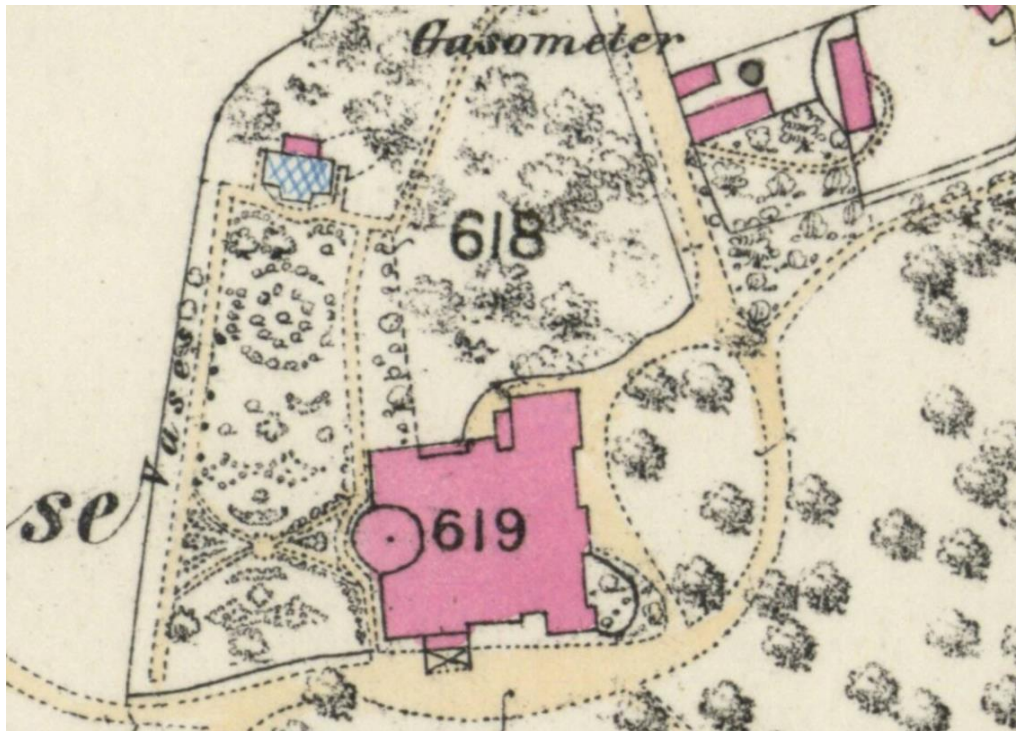
This aim will require all data from Aims 1 and 2 to be collated, with an integrated analysis of the archaeological resource at Aden Country Park, making recommendations to conserve, enhance, manage, maintain and interpret the historic significance of the site. Indeed, once post excavation has been complete at this, and the other archaeological sites, we will use the findings to help develop an historic environment timeline which will be used to develop interpretation on a new Aden Country Park website, microsite, smartphone app, signage, leaflet, interpretation centre, and heritage trail.

Background Research - Historical Images

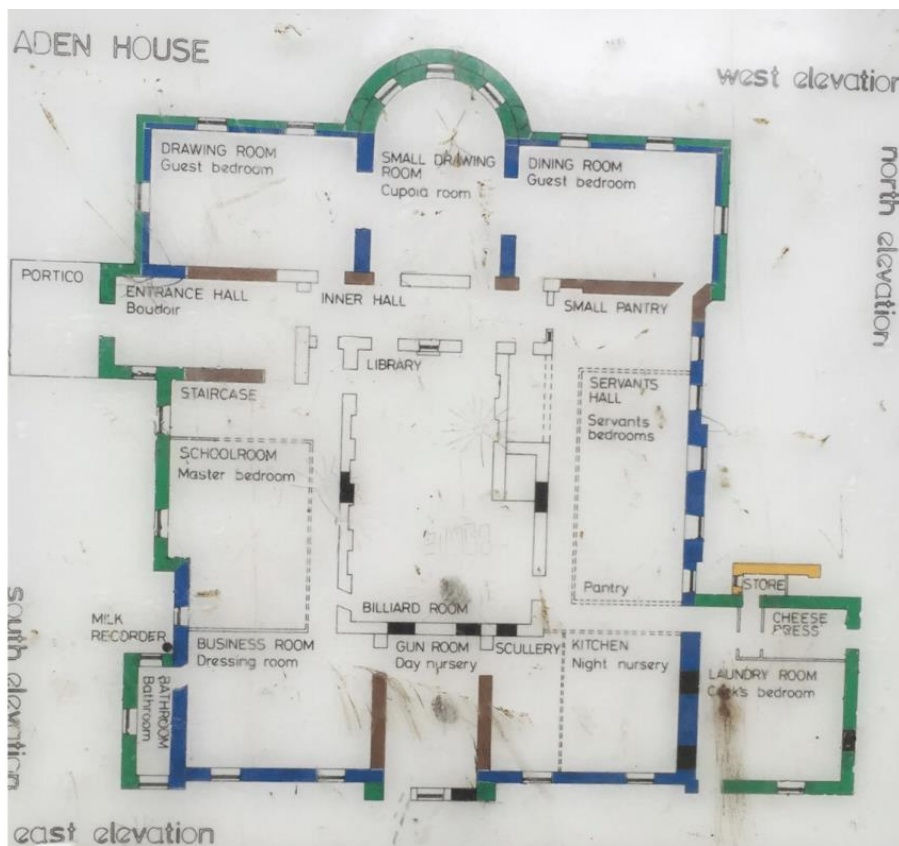
Prior to the planned archaeological dig at the Mansion House (Site 4) background research was carried out and the following images of the Mansion House were discovered. The photographs and postcards shown show signs of the garden design and original structure of the Mansion House.



A first edition Ordnance Survey map also shows the garden features which we hope to discover through the archaeological dig.



First Edition OS map showing garden layout (copyright National Library of Scotland)



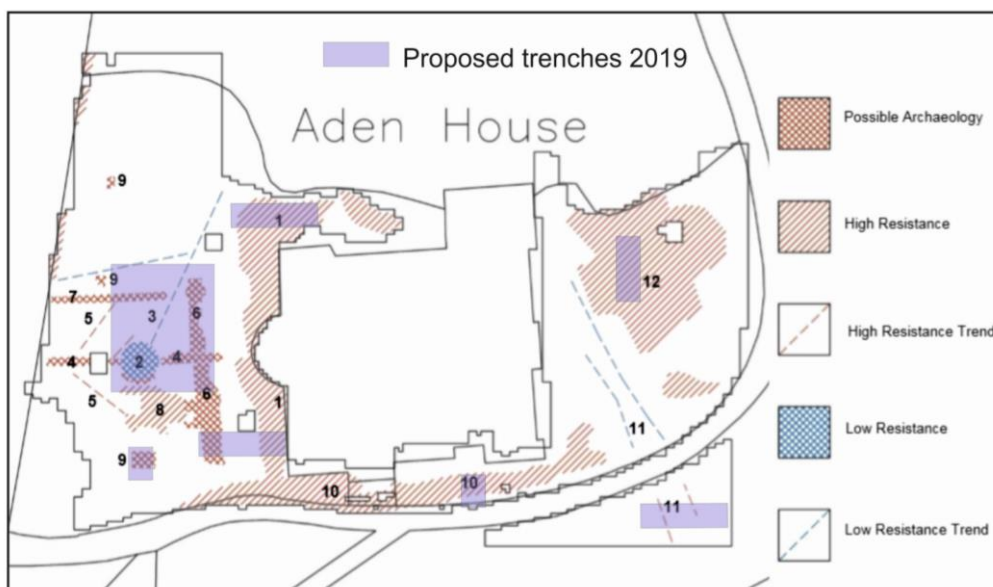
Interpretation board within Aden Mansion House showing room names

Geophysics Resistivity Survey Results

Using the geophysics resistivity survey carried out by Rose Geophysical Consultants as a guide the simplified map shows the positions of the proposed trenches to be carried out during the two week dig.



Resistivity survey results, Rose Geophysical Consultants



Interpretation of resistivity survey results, Rose Geophysical Consultants with proposed trenches

Marketing & Promotion – Before Excavation

In advance of the archaeological excavation, a variety of techniques were adopted to help promote volunteering opportunities through social media, press releases, posters and fliers.

Dig in the Park **aden** country park

18th to 19th century Mansion House Dig and open day



29th of April to 12th of May 2019

Open day 11th of May- Free to attend

As part of the dig we will be holding Aden history walking tours. These tours are free and will leave from the Mansion House at the following times:

Sunday the 5th of May at 2pm

Monday the 6th of May at 2pm

Saturday the 11th of May 10am and 2pm

For more information contact: justinetough96@gmail.com

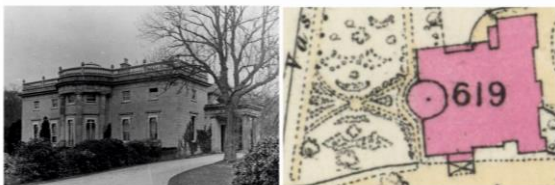


Signage

Along with the listed marketing and promotion of the dig and opportunities to get involved, boards were also put around the park to both direct and inform visitors of what was being planned and when.

DIG IN THE PARK Aden Country Park 2019

29 April-12 May
18th-19th century Mansion House & gardens dig



We have some great images of the Mansion House in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the early maps like the First Edition 1860s map above but is there an earlier house underneath? This dig hopes to find out. Below is the geophysical survey carried out by Rose Geophysics and we are investigating the 'anomalies' which appear on this survey.



Capturing the Archaeological Dig

For the purposes of this report, and for future evaluation and interpretation, we have included a range of images to help illustrate the lifespan and process undertaken at the Mansion House dig in Aden Country Park.



Archaeological dig begins with turf removal by Landscape Services colleagues



Heather, Derek and Justine volunteering to help remove turf in preparation for dig



Turf removed from biggest trench



Volunteers taking a well earned break



Volunteers removing earth from main trench



Peterhead Central Primary School getting stuck in



View from the Mansion House onto trench



Volunteer discovers Concrete fountain



New Pitsligo Primary School busy at work



Fountain segment will allow us to calculate the circumference prominent garden feature



Work continues at what is believed to be a tunnel or drain from the Mansion House



Volunteers helping to uncover the possible tunnel or drain



A busy day on site with one of the twelve school classes who attended the dig



One of the large capping stones removed shows the extent of the possible tunnel or drain



Volunteers set to work clearing entrance to possible tunnel or drain



First look inside the possible tunnel or drain



2nd trench shows how the now thought to be drain, connects and veers off from the Mansion House



Further trenches were put in around the Mansion House



Similarly a range of further trenches were put in to try and discover further garden features



One of our four legged volunteers keen to help out

Finds from Dig

A selection of finds were discovered throughout the dig, along with the garden fountain and substantial Mansion House drain, a wide variety of finds were discovered. These included coins, pottery, glass, tiles, hot water bottle, bullet shells and evidence of the workings of a big estate house. A selection of images show some of the finds.





Two of our happy volunteers



Ellon Brownies assisting with the backfilling after a morning digging



The big trench backfilled

Schools Engagement

The excavation took place from 29 April-12 May 2019 with a total of 15 professional, 115 skilled and 77 unskilled person days (total 207 person days) contributed to the project by 55 individuals. These included people new to digging as well as a number who have been excavating on other Aden project and other archaeological projects in the area.

12 school classes took part in the project including feeder primaries to Mintlaw and Peterhead, Dyce Primary and Anna Ritchie as well as secondary pupils from Clydebank High School Archaeology Club and Ellon Brownies totalling 304 school pupils in total.

The 12 school classes predominantly worked onsite at the archaeological dig site, coupled with some learning activities, worksheets and find handling sessions.

A further breakdown on the volunteer statistics is provided below.



Auchnagatt Primary School setting to work on the dig



Buchanhaven Primary School sieving for finds



Peterhead Central Primary School



Pitfour Primary School being filmed by Paul from the Media Unit



New Pitsligo Primary School



Buchanhaven Primary School completing archaeology worksheets

Clydebank High School Archaeology Club



Clydebank High School Archaeology Club start their first trench

Heritage Hero Awards

Clydebank High School have recently set up their very own Archaeology Club and the visit to Mansion House archaeological dig was one of the first of their digs which works towards gaining a Heritage Hero Award. The Heritage Hero Awards are an award scheme for young people in Scotland. Their focus is on 'cultural' rather than 'natural' heritage. They aim to encourage young people to connect with their past, and to reward their achievement. The Awards are based around participation in a central project chosen by each participating group but also sit alongside opportunities for individuals to develop personal interests.



Clydebank High School Archaeology Club with other volunteers in the team

Mansion House Archaeological Open Day (5th & 11th of May 2019)

As part of the Mansion House dig two open days was held on the 5th and 11th of May. The open days were an opportunity for families and individuals to come along and experience an archaeological dig. In addition to the digging, walking tours were held throughout the day. The walking tours were led by Archaeologist, Ali Cameron and Derek Jennings of the Friends of Aden who are extremely knowledgeable on the history of the Mansion House and Aden Country Park. The tours were free to attend and lasted approximately one hour. Helen Chavez, Collections Management Officer for Aberdeenshire's Museums Service was also in attendance delivering a talk on objects which were relevant to the Mansion House.



Marketing & Promotion – During Excavation

Throughout the two-week archaeological dig at the Mansion House (Site 4) social media was used to great effect. As shown below, archaeologist Ali Cameron, along with tweets by Aberdeenshire Museums and Aden Country Park, helped to both promote the school's involvement, the opportunity for anyone to get involved, as well as simply spreading the word about what was being found during the fieldwork excavation.

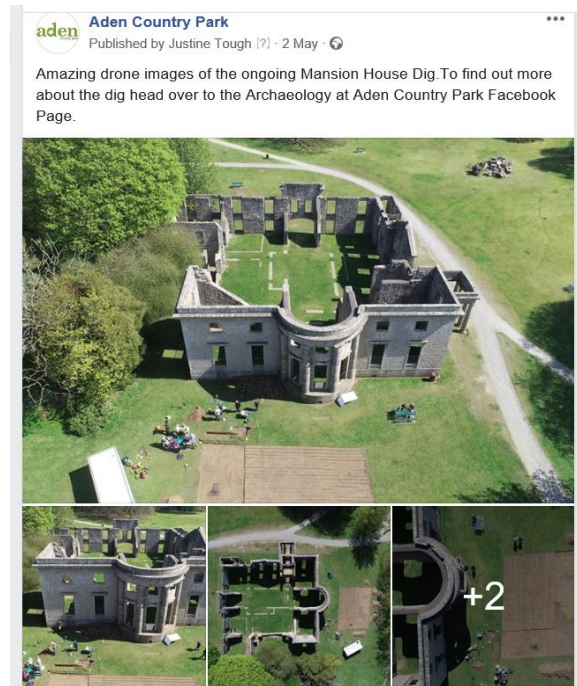
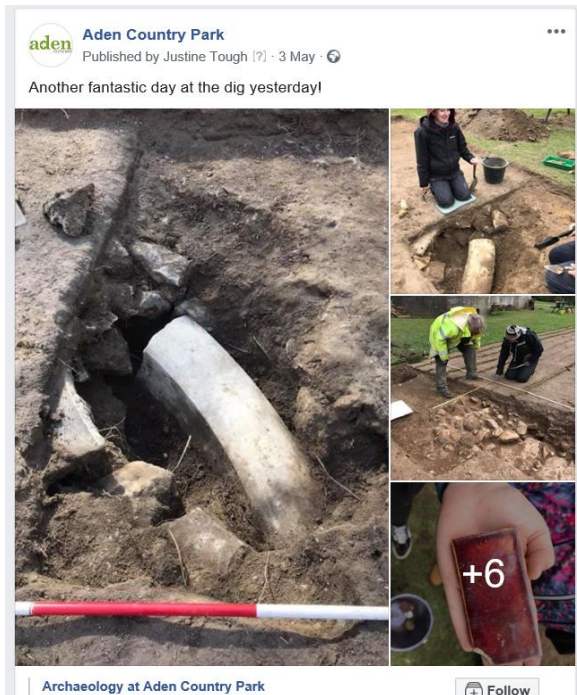
The image displays four tweets from social media accounts related to the archaeological dig:

- Top Left:** A tweet from Cameron Archaeology (@AliTheArchaeol) dated May 10. The text reads: "History walking tours at Aden with @AliTheArchaeol tomorrow Sat 11 May 10am and 2pm leaving from the dig. Free and no booking required. Come and see the finds all day. @AdenCountryPark @diggermann17 @archaeologyuk @DigItScotland @HistEnvScot @HeritageFundSCO @ArchScot". The image shows a stone archway and a woman at an information table.
- Top Right:** A tweet from Cameron Archaeology (@AliTheArchaeol) dated Apr 30. The text reads: "Another sunny day at @AdenCountryPark digging the features and drone photos #aberdeenshire #pubarch @diggermann17 @archaeologyuk @DigItScotland @HistEnvScot @HeritageFundSCO @ArchScot @scot_quine @iAntsair". The image is a collage of drone photos showing the excavation site and the Mansion House ruins.
- Bottom Left:** A tweet from Cameron Archaeology (@AliTheArchaeol) dated Apr 29. The text reads: "Great backdrop for our dig at @AdenCountryPark until 12 May #aberdeenshire #pubarch @diggermann17 @archaeologyuk @DigItScotland @HistEnvScot @HeritageFundSCO @ArchScot". The image shows the Mansion House building with workers at the dig site in the foreground.
- Bottom Right:** A tweet from Aberdeenshire Museums (@AbMuseums) dated May 10, retweeted by Cameron Archaeology. The text reads: "Mansion House Archaeological Dig Show & Tell, tomorrow Saturday 11 May from 11am-3pm. Helen Chavez, Collections Manager at Aberdeenshire Museums Service, will be at Aberdeenshire Farming Museum to show artefacts likely to be found in a mansion. FREE!". The image shows two views of the Mansion House building.

A specific "Archaeology at Aden Country Park" Facebook microsite has been created and used to full effect in helping target archaeological information to followers who have already shown an interest. The site has gained 550 likes in a relatively short period of time. It is hoped that this will grow over the lifespan of the Archaeological project and beyond.

The image is a screenshot of the Facebook page for "Archaeology at Aden Country Park" (@ArchaeologyatAden). The page features a profile picture of a hand holding a small object. The main cover photo shows several people working at an archaeological excavation site. Below the cover photo, there is a post from the page dated 2 May, which has received 550 likes. The page layout includes navigation links for Home, About, Photos, and Videos, and a "Community" section showing the number of likes.

The Aden Country Park Facebook site, with 8,391 likes, with a diverse range of followers was also used to help promote the Mansion House dig before during and after the excavation.



Filming & Promotion

As part of the archaeological investigations a GoPro camera was used to capture, record and provide a visual understanding of the archaeological excavation process undertaken. The GoPro camera was set up in 'time lapse' mode where the resulting films will allow a viewer to watch the entire excavation process in minutes. These short slideshow type films are to be used in the new interpretation centre, website, smartphone app and archaeological microsite.

Alongside the 'time lapse' footage, the Paul Barron from the Aberdeenshire Council Media Unit was commissioned to capture additional footage in the form of interviews, and real time recording, of the volunteer and school's involvement in the two archaeological excavations. Once edited it is planned that this footage will also be used in the new interpretation centre, website, smartphone app and archaeological microsite.



Drone Photography

To help understand the layout, structure, scale and dimensions of the Mansion House and that of the gardens and main trench site, a drone was used as a recording mechanism.



Front elevation showing the building possible garden features and main trench



The top elevation helps to illustrate the internal and external layout of rooms and features

Volunteers

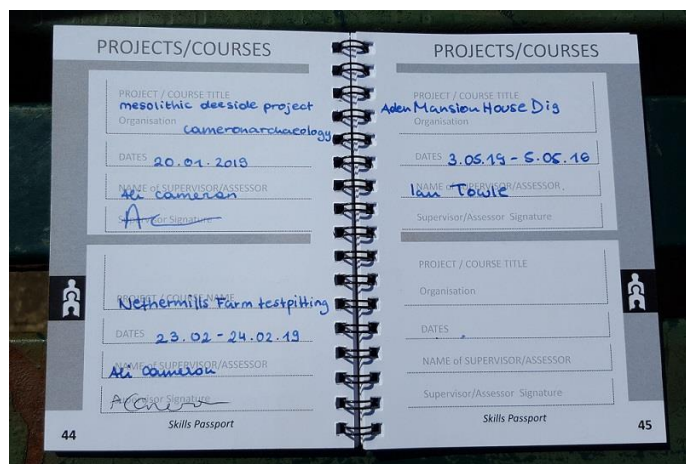
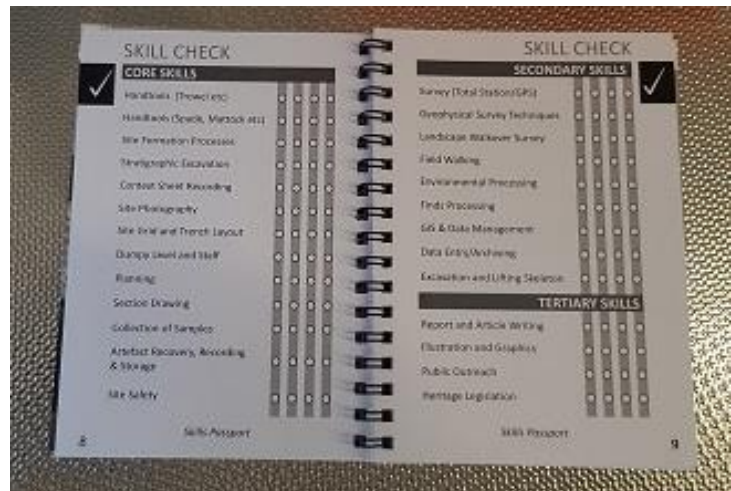
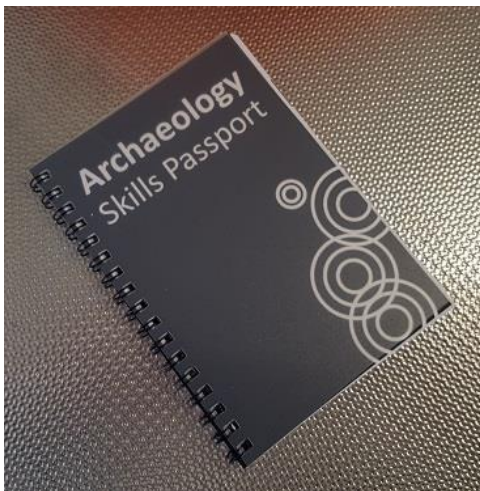
The full account of the number and frequency of volunteers is detailed in the Volunteer Statistic tables attached below. The quality, amount and value of volunteer input is not to be understated. The archaeological digs at both sites would not have been possible without their time, effort and enthusiasm.





Training & Skills - Passport

A further twenty Archaeology Skills Passports were purchased and provided to relevant volunteers. The 'Skills Passport' scheme is a recognised model for tracking, logging and assessing archaeological training. The project archaeologist, Ali Cameron, acted as the assessors, taking the time to discuss with participants the skills that they need to work on and helping to determine their level of ability. Ultimately the scheme is mean to help participants increase their employment prospects, gaining archaeological skills, using the experience as a steppingstone towards professional accreditation.



Example of signed Archaeology Passport at the Mansion House dig

Marketing & Promotion - Post School Involvement

Following their involvement at the archaeological dig at the Mansion House (Site 4), Dyce Primary School were featured in an “Just keep digging” full double page feature in the Press & Journal newspaper “Chalk Time” schools supplement, published in July 2019.

This supplement was designed to give each of the local Aberdeenshire Schools an opportunity to highlight any interesting and worthwhile activities which the Schools had participated in. It is therefore very pleasing that Dyce Primary School chose to feature their involvement in the archaeological dig in Aden Country Park as their showcase feature.



Volunteer Statistics

Children & Adults

During the two-week archaeological investigations at the Mansion House, a range of volunteers, archaeologists, children and adults attended the digs:

Date	29-Apr	30-Apr	01-May	02-May	03-May	04-May	05-May	06-May	07-May	08-May	09-May	10-May	11-May	12-May	Total	£ based on £50/£150/£350
Prof	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	15	£ 5,250.00
skilled	6	8	9	7	10	14	19	8	5	6	6	6	6	5	115	£ 17,250.00
unskilled	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	48	23	77	£ 3,850.00
TOTAL	7	10	13	8	12	15	20	9	6	7	7	9	56	28	207	£ 26,350.00

Schools

In all 12 school classes attended: Maud p5/6 (29 Apr) 14 pupils 2 staff; Pitfour p4/5 (30 Apr) 19 pupils 3 staff; Auchnagatt p6/7 (1 May) 15 pupils 2 staff; Clydebank High School (1 May) 7 S1-3 pupils 3 staff; Clydebank High School (2 May) 7 S1-3 pupils 3 staff; Peterhead Central (2 May) 8 pupils 2 staff; Clydebank High School (3 May) 7 S1-3 pupils 3 staff; Buchanhaven (3 May) P7 61 pupils; New Pitsligo (7 May) 20 P7 pupils 3 staff; Dyce Primary (8 May) 27 P5 and 3 staff; Mintlaw (8 May) P5 27 pupils 3 staff; Pitfour (9 May) P5 27 pupils 4 adults; Pitfour (10 May) P5/6 24 pupils 3 staff; and Anna Ritchie (10 May) 5 pupils 2 staff.

Date	29-Apr	30-Apr	01-May	02-May	03-May	04-May	05-May	06-May	07-May	08-May	09-May	10-May	11-May	12-May	Total	£ based on £50/£150/£350
Prof	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	£ -
skilled	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	£ -
unskilled	16	22	27	20	71	0	0	0	23	60	31	34	0	0	304	£ 15,200.00
TOTAL	16	22	27	20	71	weekend	weekend	pub hol	23	60	31	34	weekend	weekend	304	£ 15,200.00

Combined Totals

When the two totals are combined into one table this helps to illustrate the amount of volunteer input over the fourteen-day archaeological dig:

Date	29-Apr	30-Apr	01-May	02-May	03-May	04-May	05-May	06-May	07-May	08-May	09-May	10-May	11-May	12-May	Total	£ based on £50/£150/£350
Prof	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	15	£ 5,250.00
skilled	6	8	9	7	10	14	19	8	5	6	6	6	6	5	115	£ 17,250.00
unskilled	16	23	30	20	71	0	0	0	23	60	31	36	48	23	381	£ 19,050.00
TOTAL	23	32	40	28	83	15	20	9	29	67	38	43	56	28	511	£ 41,550.00

In total the value of the volunteer input was £41,550. Original estimates were £2,000. The actual volunteer input is £39,550 more than originally estimated.

Feedback

Schools, Participant, Volunteer & Training & Skills Surveys

During the archaeological investigations School, Participant, Volunteer, and Training and Skills surveys were distributed to the range of people who participated in archaeological dig. For those schools who couldn't complete the surveys on the day, the staff took away the surveys to complete in the classroom.

We have had a good response rate and the survey analysis is underway. An "Aden Archaeology Summary of Findings Report" is being developed and will be attached to the upcoming HES Claim and next NLHF Progress Report. This report will help support the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of both the Aden Restoration & Redevelopment National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) project, and the Aden Historic Environment Scotland (HES) Archaeology project.

Next Steps - 2019 Archaeological Digs

We are currently in the process of developing the next series of archaeological digs and associated activities/open days at Aden Country Park during 2019. The draft timetable for each of these are as follows:

1. Neolithic Structure (Site 1) – Second Dig

24th June to 7th July. Open days: Sun 30th June and Sat 6th of July.

2. Tower House (Site 3)

31st Aug to 8th Sept. Open day: Sat 7th Sept.

Similar to the November 2018 (Site 1 Neolithic Structure & Site 2 Stone Circle) and April/May 2019 (Site 4 Mansion House) archaeological digs, we plan to get as many schools, volunteers and interest groups involved with each of the planned digs. Contact with the local schools is well underway and already several schools have confirmed their interest and dates for attending the second planned dig in June/July 2019 at the possible Neolithic Structure site.