



Alford Heritage Museum



Preserving the rich heritage of Alford and Donside for future generations

Museum Newsletter November 2023

2023 SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

Now that we have closed for the winter, it is time to reflect on another successful season and to plan ahead for 2024. Overall, our visitor numbers (including events) rose by 7%, which is in line with other Scottish visitor attractions. Our most successful events included two outdoor markets; the national Doors Open Days weekend; the annual tractor run; and an evening of traditional music by Allan Taylor and friends.

The birthday of local poet Charles Murray was celebrated with the Hamewith Concerts when school pupils and their parents from around the area filled the auction ring with poetry, music and song. We were pleased to see school, and other, groups returning to the museum this year, and more requests are in the pipeline for next year.



Crathie School (left) study the Victorian post box, while Fernielea After School Club experienced what it was like to go to school in bygone days

Events for enthusiast agricultural model collectors and stationary engine operators also caught the attention of the public, and we plan to hold these events again next year.

MEMORY BOXES

Two of our volunteers visited Praesmhor Care Home with some of our Memory Boxes which contain museum objects on themes such as schooldays and farming. These help residents to chat about their memories and how the objects relate to their lives. The boxes can be borrowed by local schools, care homes or other groups at no cost and we would be delighted to lend them to any group with which you might have a connection.

EVENTS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

This year our volunteers ran several successful storytelling and craft events for pre-school children. These took place when the museum was closed to the public, so the children were able to visit all parts of the museum with their parents and to enjoy making craft items inspired by the collections. We were able to offer these events free of charge to local young families thanks to funding from Magic Little Grants (Postcode Community Fund).

SPONSORSHIP

A new sponsorship scheme for 2023 was well supported by local businesses. This scheme helped to pay the costs of printing our publicity leaflet and offset concert costs. We plan to extend the scheme in 2024 and sponsors will have the opportunity to associate their name with some of our events and activities. You can find the list of 2023 sponsors at the end of this newsletter and we thank them for their support.

FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM

We have a loyal band of valued Friends, many of whom have supported the museum for years. Each year we gain a few new members but, sadly, also say farewell to some of our older members. If you are a community member, please consider joining the Friends of the Museum. For a small annual fee, you will receive free admission as many times as you wish, plus the added benefit of discounted tickets for our events. Membership renewals will be sent out prior to reopening.

FUTURE PLANS

In our last newsletter we reported that we had been awarded a grant by the Architectural Heritage Fund. This, together with funding from Marr Area Committee enabled us to work with LDN Architects (Forres) to assess the repair work required to preserve our historic listed building and to produce design ideas for refurbishment of some areas and the creation of a more flexible interior heated space. We now have their reports which are being considered by the Board. The list of repairs is long and costly and will require substantial external grant funding to progress the work.

The small group currently working on the project would welcome any assistance from those with appropriate skills, interest and experience – such as construction, project work, fundraising and finance. If you have these skills, and would like to help, please contact us. There is a long road ahead of us to ensure that the Mart building survives to provide a community space and resource for future generations of Alford and Donside.

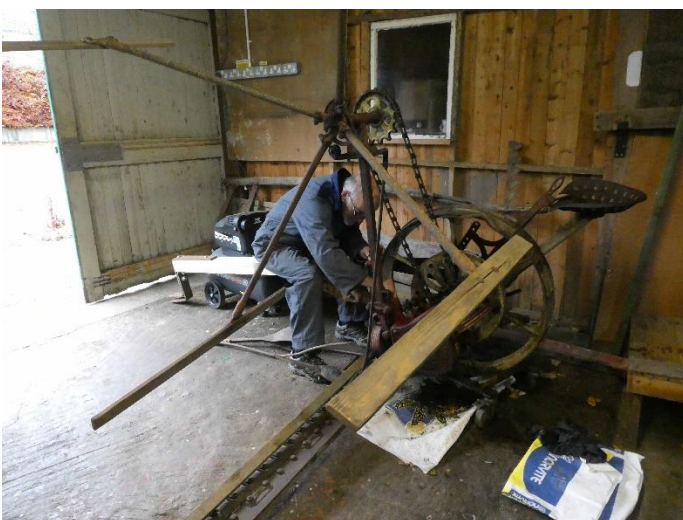


Architects' impression of possible new exterior for the building

In early 2024 we hope also to be in a position to submit our application for a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) of the Museum building to Aberdeenshire Council.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Every year we say a big “thank you” to our volunteers without whom the museum could not function. This year we organised an end of season volunteer lunch at Alford Golf Club. We now have over 30 active volunteers who carry out a wide range of tasks, from welcoming visitors to the museum; cataloguing and repairing objects in the collection; running our web site and social media; helping at events by making teas, car park duties or selling raffle tickets; organising children’s activities; and being trustees on our Board.



Volunteer Mark is cleaning a MacDonald reaper dating from around 1902 to make it ready for display, whilst Jean and Naomi examine items from the Royal Observer Corps display which are currently being catalogued

VOLUNTEERING

We are seeking more volunteers to help us reopen with a full-strength team in 2024, so if you are interested in helping, please let us know. We would especially like to hear from people who might be interested in helping at the front desk when we are open. Contact details are at the end of this newsletter. Our current volunteers enjoy finding out about some of the unusual items in our collection, posting details of, and questions about some of these on our Facebook pages.

WHAT'S COMING IN 2024?

We will once again be organising a programme of events. These will all be promoted on our web site and social media so be sure to sign up for updates. They will include:

Provisional dates

6 April - Car Boot Sale 10-12

17 May - Friends' evening and AGM 7-9

2 June - Tractor Run

23 June - Summer Fair 12-4

1 September - Autumn Fair 12-4

In addition, we plan to hold two concerts – the *Moray Suite* by Colin Campbell and an evening of music and song with Allan Taylor and friends. The popular schools Hamewith Concerts will again take place in September.



Steam roller at October Steam & Stationary Engine Day

Over the winter our volunteers will be working on refreshing some of the displays and we plan to have some new items on show for the first time for reopening at Easter weekend.

ALFORD IMAGES

Some of you may already be familiar with the website [Alford Images](https://www.alfordimages.com). As this valuable resource was in danger of being decommissioned, the Association decided to take over its funding from 2023, thus ensuring that it is still available for researchers and historians. We hope to add more to this site over the next few years and we would encourage those with additional family knowledge of the images to contribute to the site. If you are not familiar with the resource please have a look – you will be amazed by what you see.

Contact us at info@alfordheritagemuseum.com

Alford and Donside Heritage Association (SCIO) SC050799

ALFORD HERITAGE MUSEUM 2023 SPONSORSHIP



HUDSONS
CATERING



Kim mies

 **Alford Landscaping**



REPRO
OVERFLOW

JOHN P. DUNCAN

*Carpenter, Joiner,
Roof Tiler & Funeral Director*



Thank you

