Mesolithic Deeside is a group of archaeologists, students, and local volunteers investigating human activity in the river Dee area up to 14,000 years ago.

2021 Fieldwalking

Although we were ‘cabined, cribbed, and confined’ by THE COVID, we managed to walk 3 fields in March 2021. Our numbers and locations were restricted by the rules at the time.

This caused major headaches for Angela who had the unenviable task of randomizing to reach the permitted number in the group!

In May 2021, we were alerted to a target field that had been in grass for many years and was to be resown with grass – so Meemaw, Meemaw, we swung into action and got a small squad together very quickly.

So 4 fields walked and amazingly we collected 3,049 lithics!

See below for details of future events.

Get in touch for more details: mesolithicdeeside@outlook.com
Dates for your diary

September 20 - 21
Lithics workshop with Ann Clarke at Strachan Hall

September 30 - October 4
Test pitting at Kincardine O'Neil. We will need diggers, help with the finds, and people to help with school groups and to greet any visitors we may receive.

See Events section for further details

Mesolithic Deeside Lockdown Channel
26 talks, 219 subscribers, 10,170 views!!!
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPiHRglCCEeIXkJR9yawg/videos

Keep up to date with us on Facebook Mesolithic Deeside
https://www.facebook.com/groups/979549128814393/

On Twitter @mesodeeside

http://mesolithicdeeside.org
If you have been on a fieldwalk with us you will know that Ali is always in your face asking you to pose for photos with the lovely flints we find. The tables were turned in 2020 when Sheila took the photo at the top of this newsletter. Pre-Covid Ali cannot remember why she was waving her arms but the photo became a Covid symbol (as we walk the required 2m apart!) and was used on the back cover of Discovery and Excavation in Scotland the annual summary of digs and other archaeological work.

At our AGM in 2019, the Treasurer reported that Mesolithic Deeside was in a ‘perilous pecuniary position’ and in fact our funds were in single figures at that time yes, under £10!

Thanks to the hard work of our fund raising group and other individuals within Mesolithic Deeside, this situation has been dramatically reversed.

We are grateful to:

Bread of Life
Aberdeenshire Charities Trust
Aboyne Games
ScotMid Cooperative Community Fund
Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service
Highly Commended in the Marsh Awards for Best Volunteer Led Project 2020
Duncan Skinner Charitable Trust
Arnold Clark Community Fund
KGV Wind Turbine Fund
Marr Area Committee Small Project Grant
And of course to all of those who have donated!

It goes without saying that these were the successful applications and there were several unsuccessful applications too – per ardua etc......
New PayPal Button

As you know Mesolithic Deeside relies on grants, awards, and donations to survive. We don’t charge a subscription for you to become a member of our group but it was suggested a couple of years ago, that members might like to give a donation to our organisation instead. Quite a few of you did this by bank transfer and we are very grateful for the extra funds. Your donations are very welcome as they allow us to continue with this valuable work and of course they keep our group going so that you can come and enjoy learning much more about the Mesolithic period and the people who travelled the length of the Dee immediately after the last Ice Age 8000 – 4000BC.

To make it easier for you to donate we now have a PayPal Donate button on our website, www.mesolithicdeeside.org, you will find it just under the main photo on the home page. You don’t need a PayPal account to pay in this way, you can use a card instead. Click on the Donate button and follow the directions. If you have any problems with it or need more help, contact the Treasurer, Elaine Lindsay, elaine@somethingcorny.co.uk Thank you in advance and look forward to catching up with you in a ploughed field later on in the year!
Arnold Clark Community Funding Scheme

In late February 2021, the Funding Sub-Committee for Mesolithic Deeside became aware of a new funding opportunity with the Arnold Clark Community Funding Scheme. An application was made in early March 2021, requesting funding for match funding for test pitting at Potarch.

The application process was very straightforward and, it was very encouraging that, if an organisation is unsuccessful in one draw, the application is automatically put forward into the next month’s draw, with no need to re-apply.

Our application was unsuccessful in the first month’s draw but, to our great excitement and satisfaction, we were successful in gaining an award of £1,000 in the June draw.

Marr Area Small Grant

Early in May 2021, we were delighted to receive the following email from the Marr Area Committee:

"I am pleased to advise that the Marr Area Committee, at its meeting on 4 May, 2021, approved an award of up to £1,850 from the Small Grant Scheme to Mesolithic Deeside towards the cost of an archaeological test pit excavation at Kincardine O’Neil based on the information provided in your application."
Events

September 20 - 21
Lithics workshop with Ann Clarke at Strachan Village Hall

Ann Clarke workshop will continue training the group on identification of lithics, both the type of flint such as blade, flake or core, colour, date and use. The group will be divided into small working groups and this will be suitable for the beginner and those with more experience. We are hoping to be able to have coffee and cakes but it might be bring a picnic depending on current guidelines.

We are doing sessions 20 September in the afternoon and evening and 21 September in the morning. We will try to video some sessions with Ann so if you cannot attend there will be notes and videos to share with you. Then you will all be ready for identifying flints dug up the following weekend in Kincardine O'Neil!

September 30 - October 4
Test pitting at Kincardine O'Neil

The test pitting at Kincardine O'Neil which had to be, unfortunately, cancelled last year due to Covid-19 has been rescheduled for Thursday 30 September to Monday 4 October. Please pencil these dates into your diary – we will need diggers, help with the finds, and people to help with school groups and to greet any visitors we may receive.

If you wish to attend either the workshops or the test pitting, please email: mesolithicdeeside@outlook.com
Welcome to a quick bag-labelling guide for Mesolithic Deeside.

There is specific information required for recording the finds onto our Excel database. The information on this database is used by one of our volunteers to plot all of the finds onto a map of each field walked. All of this information is then sent on to our lithics expert for further analysis. It is therefore important that the bag is written out clearly and correctly. Due to the sometimes large number of finds to be recorded, this process is made much easier if everyone follows the same basic template.

So, here is a brief guide on setting out the text on your finds bags.

Each bag has three white text boxes.

In the top line we require the field code, and then the date, in the format Day-Month-Year. (It is important to include the year).

In the middle line, we require the Ordnance Survey Grid Ref letters. You should be advised of the Field Code and the Grid Reference at the start of each field walking session. In the Banchory area this is NO. Also on this line you would write the first half of the GPS coordinates (5 numbers).

In the bottom line you would record, the second half of the GPS coordinates directly underneath the first half, ensuring you leave some blank space on this line. When we record the finds onto the database we use this extra space for additional data. Each bag is given a unique number and we also record the number of lithics in the bag if there is more than one.
2021 Fieldwalking Results

After the fieldwalking, a group of volunteers lists the finds into an excel spreadsheet and Irvine Ross plots the results - see next page.

The mapping tells us where there are concentrations of finds and where within the scatter each find is located.