



8 August 2023

## **STEP BACK IN TIME TO DISCOVER ABERDEENSHIRE'S PAST WITH NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND**

- **Archaeology, battle re-enactments, history and pirate themed events taking place across Aberdeenshire**
- **Visitors invited to immerse themselves in history at National Trust for Scotland properties, including Castle Fraser and Leith Hall**

Dramatic battle re-enactments, swashbuckling pirates and the discovery of ancient artefacts are some of the highlights on offer as the National Trust for Scotland hosts a variety of different history themed events across the North East this summer and beyond.

The conservation charity which cares for Castle Fraser, at Sauchen and Leith Hall, near Huntly, is encouraging visitors to take a step back in time and explore the history of its properties through a series of activities including battle re-enactments, weapon demonstrations, archaeological excavations and treasure hunts taking place in August and September.

Leith Hall welcomes local author Carol Ann, a descendant of the infamous pirates Captain 'Calico' Jack Rackham and Anne Bonny, for a weekend of pirate tales and treasure trails from 12 – 13 Aug, that will capture the imagination of young ones, with stories from her forthcoming book, *Macgregor Island*, alongside a treasure hunt, obstacle course and crafts. In September, *The Jacobites are Coming*, will see actors from Alan Breck's Volunteer Regiment in period costume descend on Leith Hall to recreate skirmishes from the Forty-Five Uprising! The grounds will host an 18<sup>th</sup> century soldier encampments with crafts and drill training for young volunteers.

Castle Fraser will hold History Weekend and Archaeology Week from 19 August that will feature 15<sup>th</sup> century re-enactors, weapon displays as well as archaeology digs that will tell the story of the castle and its owners the Fraser family. National Trust for Scotland members can access each event for free, with tickets available to book online or purchased at each property on the day.

Scotland's largest conservation charity, which protects and shares the country's natural, cultural and historical heritage now and for future generations, hopes the history focused events will capture the imagination, perfect for history enthusiasts and families as the school holidays draw to a close and for September weekend.

Iain Hawkins, National Trust for Scotland Regional Director for the North East, said: "We're excited for these upcoming events that promise to be entertaining fun for all the family while offering the chance to brush up on the history of our properties. There is something for everyone with battle re-enactments, weapon demonstrations, treasure hunts and archaeological excavations alongside painting and rural crafts for our younger visitors. Events like Castle Fraser's History Weekend and Archaeology Week and Leith Hall's Pirates and Jacobite Uprising re-enactment support our vision to provide inspiring heritage visitor experiences and contribute to our vision to share nature, beauty and heritage with everyone, as outlined in our strategy, launched in 2022. This wouldn't be possible without the continued generosity of our members and supporters for which we are incredibly grateful."

- **12-13 Aug – Pirates, Leith Hall from 10:30:** <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/pirates-tickets-675364361987?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

The swashbuckling adventures of pirates will keep kids entertained this summer with a host of pirate themed activities taking place to shiver their timbers, with a treasure hunt around the pond walk, obstacle courses and a variety of crafts on offer. Author Carol Ann will join in the fun and talk about her links to infamous pirates Captain 'Calico' Jack Rackham and Anne Bonny, who sailed the Caribbean seas in the 1700s, and share extracts from her forthcoming book, Macgregor Island, released in 2024.

- **19-20 Aug - History Weekend, Castle Fraser from 10:30:** <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/castle-frasers-history-weekend-tickets-661857512637?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

History weekend kicks off with re-enactors from Northern Alliance who will recreate a 15<sup>th</sup> century encampment at Castle Fraser, one of Scotland's largest tower houses. With live sword and archery displays, visitors will be able to get up close to inspect the arms and armour on show, with the unique opportunity to see how the property's sword collection is conserved and cared for. Garden tours will take place from 1pm each day to discover the history of the castle's gardens and landscape alongside a variety of different children's activities.

- **26 – 27 Aug - Archaeology Weekend, Castle Fraser from 10:30:** <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/archaeology-weekend-tickets-667467993737?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

Join the National Trust for Scotland's archaeology team to uncover the history of Castle Fraser's past. The team returns to the castle after unearthing two large stone walls beneath the front lawn last year to expand the dig to see what else they can discover. Live archaeological digs will be taking place within the castle's grounds and visitors have the chance to get involved and learn from the Trust's experts – no experience is necessary. Items from the Fraser family's travels across Europe and interesting discoveries from behind the castle's walls will be on display in the Great Hall.

- **23-24 Sept - The Jacobites are Coming! – Re-enactment Weekend, Leith Hall from 10.00:** <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-jacobites-are-coming-tickets-682106417657>

Travel back in time to the 18<sup>th</sup> century to explore events surrounding the Battle of Prestonpans – a Jacobite victory on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1745. Discover more about this fascinating skirmish in which Leith Hall's own Jacobite, the towering 7'2" Andrew Hay fought, alongside 7 other members of the Leith family in the Jacobite Rising of 1745. Opposing Jacobite and Redcoat forces will be setting up encampments in the grounds where visitors can experience camp life as a soldier, witness weaponry and artillery demonstrations, volunteer for drill display or join lots of the other more activities on offer.

Events like these support the National Trust for Scotland's vision to deliver Nature, Beauty and Heritage for Everyone. The project is one of many contributing to its 10-year strategy, launched in 2022. Read more about the strategy at:

<https://www.nts.org.uk/our-work/our-strategy>

Further information about the events taking place at Castle Fraser and Leith Hall can be found on the National Trust for Scotland website, [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk).

## ENDS

### Notes to editors

**12-13 Aug – Pirates, Leith Hall from 10:30:** <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/pirates-tickets-675364361987?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

- Entry to the Pirates at Leith Hall cost £4 per child
- Obstacle course activity is weather dependent
- Normal property admission rates apply
- Booking fees apply via Eventbrite.
- Tickets available on the day from the castle's admission desk.
- No pre-booking required.

**19 Aug - History Weekend, Castle Fraser:** <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/castle-frasers-history-weekend-tickets-661857512637?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

- Entry to the History Weekend and 15<sup>th</sup> century encampment is free
- Normal property admission rates apply for access to the sword collection and further activities within the castle
- Garden tours cost £8 per person can be booked via Eventbrite. Tours are free for members.
- Booking fees apply via Eventbrite.
- Tickets available on the day from the castle's admission desk.
- No pre-booking required.

## **26 – 27 Aug - Archaeology Weekend, Castle Fraser:**

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/archaeology-weekend-tickets-667467993737?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

- Tickets cost £3 per adult, £2 per child and £6 Family ticket (2 Adults & 2 Children).
- Tickets available on the day from the castle's admission desk.
- Normal admission rates apply to castle entry.
- No previous experience required - anyone of any age can join in with the archaeology dig.
- There's no pre-booking required for the dig; turn up any time between 10.30am-3.30pm.

## **23 – 24 Sept -The Jacobites are Coming! – Re-enactment Weekend, Leith Hall:**

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-jacobites-are-coming-tickets-682106417657>

- Tickets cost £7 per adult, £4 for concessions, children under 10 go free and £15 for a family ticket (2 Adults & 4 Children).
- Booking fees apply via Eventbrite.
- Tickets available on the day from the hall's admission desk.
- Normal admission rates apply to hall entry.

### About the National Trust for Scotland

Established in 1931, the National Trust for Scotland is Scotland's largest conservation charity and cares for, shares and speaks up for Scotland's magnificent heritage.

Over the last 90 years the Trust has pioneered public access to and shared ownership of some of the most magnificent buildings, collections and landscapes in Scotland. It cares for more than 100 sites, from ancient houses to battlefields, castles, mills, gardens, coastlines, islands, mountain ranges and the plants and animals which depend upon them.

In March 2022 the National Trust for Scotland launched *Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone*, its ten-year strategy which sets out the ambitions of the charity over the coming decade. From speaking up for Scotland's heritage which doesn't have a voice, to improving the lives and wellbeing of people across the country, and responding to the climate and biodiversity crisis, the Trust will build on its work in recent years to grow its impact and conserve and restore more of Scotland's heritage, as it moves towards its centenary in 2031.

Scotland's largest membership organisation, the National Trust for Scotland relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work.

For more information on the National Trust for Scotland visit [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk).

The National Trust for Scotland is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number SC 007410.