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Dig into the past at hill

BUDDING archaeologists are being invited to take part in a dig at one of the north-east's best-known beauty spots.

Members of the Bailies of Bennachie hope to uncover the rich past of the Aberdeenshire hill.

Over the weekend, the group will dig small pits and then carefully sieve out the contents in an attempt to discover how people lived in the area down the centuries.

Bennachie is known to be rich in history with previous sites unearthing Pictish and Iron Age hill forts and a Roman camp.

It was a site of tension between 19th-century squatters, who settled on unoccupied common land around the slopes of Bennachie, and neighbouring landowners who eventually took court action to divide up the land. This forced the colonists to either leave the settlement or become tenants.

Senior bailie Jackie

Cumberbirch said there were still traces of the colonists on the slope.

She said: "Much of the settlement activity can be still seen today in the form of ruined stone dwellings, garden plots and enclosures and we hope that this investigation will add to our understanding of how the colonists lived.

"We might even dig up some clues and traces of earlier inhabitants of the hill, which would be a real bonus."

Anyone over the age of 10 can take part in the dig, which will run tomorrow and Sunday from 10am to 5pm. Children aged under 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

To take part head to the Bennachie Centre, near Chapel of Garioch, for 9.30am and take a packed lunch.

For more information, e-mail Colin Shepherd on bennachielandscapes@scottish-heritage.org.uk



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