



# **The Edderton Newsletter**

**New Year 2026**

# Community News



A MASSIVE thank you Ewen Simpson for the lovely tree and the lights display, with a special hat tip to Maureen Simpson for her help in the artistic department. Special thanks to Michael Brown for his evergreen work in sourcing such a beautiful tree for the village as ever.

## Remembrance Sunday

THIS year the Remembrance service was conducted by the Reverend Graeme Muckart at the request of the Community Council. The service began at 10:45



## Christmas Has Been — Doesn't Mean the Goose isn't Getting Fat

THE Senior Citizens dinner is normally held in January. If you are 60 or over, you are entitled to attend the Christmas dinner (date and venue to be arranged) if you do not attend the dinner you will receive a gift voucher.

All vouchers have been distributed now, but if you think you have been left out, please get in touch with Nikki.

## Edderton Community Council Grants Available

### Skill Seekers Grant Up To £300.00

THIS grant is available annually for anyone that doing some form of training/re-training, these include University costs, driving lessons, the list goes on...

### Smoke Alarm Grant Up To £200.00

THIS grant is available to help with the costs of installing smoke alarms to the required Scottish Government legislation.

### Energy Conservation Grant Up To £300.00

THIS grant is to help with the costs of installing insulation, double glazing and anything to help energy conservation.



### Start Up Grant

A grant to try and encourage new groups to use the village hall to provide different activities for villagers has been launched. Setup grants of £300.00 available now.

For more information on any of these grants or a copy of the application form, please contact Nikki on [eccsecretary@aol.com](mailto:eccsecretary@aol.com) or 07483234172.

Up Coming Event

# CREAM TEA AT EDDERTON COMMUNITY HALL

STATION ROAD EDDERTON

FANCY A  
BLETHER,  
COME AND  
JOIN US



22ND JANUARY 2026  
AT 2PM

## The Kindness of Strangers

### Cathy Kaptyn

Prior to starting a seven-day trek along the West Highland Way with my friend, Anne Sutherland, my first trip to Scotland took a surprising and rewarding turn. I had two days before we commenced the hike to explore my Scottish ancestry. I was anxious to see several places near Inverness that had been so dear to my mother and her two sisters.

After arriving in Glasgow from Toronto, Canada, I caught the bus to Inverness and then was off to Conon Bridge to find Conon Main where my Great Grandpa Ellis had been the property manager. As my cousin Shan Landry instructed, “Just follow the main street out of town”, and sure enough on a blue bird day I walked

and walked and—with the reassurance of a local man stepping out of an autobody shop—I learned I was almost there. I found the property manager’s house and thought it largely unchanged from photos I’d seen. It was beautiful under the glistening sun. I could visualize Great Grandpa Ellis there with his family, including my grandmother, Margaret Aird.

Back to *Conon Bridge*. It was time for a coffee break at a café at the top of the hill. A friendly couple served delicious coffee and directed me to the next bus stop that would take me to *Dingwall*. I saw a store called *Cormacks and Crawfords* over 100 years old and thought I was likely walking the same street my ancestors would have shopped. Another thrill.

My next goal was to locate *Westerlea* in Tain, a home my mom spoke of often as she had such fond memories of family she visited there. Well, once again, according to Shan’s instructions, I followed the main street out of town and sure enough I came across a beautiful stone home overlooking Dornoch Firth with sheep almost in its front yard. I stood at length admiring the gorgeous scenery.

Back into town with one more mission – to find a bus to Edderton where I wished to see the Aird family headstone. Alas, I found out it was too late in the day to catch a bus. I enjoyed exploring the lovely town of Tain and friendly townsfolk directed me to a bus stop where I could return to Inverness.

It was there that my adventure took a serendipitous turn. As I stood chatting with two friendly locals; one a young woman on her way to Inverness to attend a music festival she highly recommended, and another older woman who warmly engaged in a conversation curious to know how I found myself at this bus stop, I explained I had wanted to visit the Edderton Cemetery to see the gravesite of Aird



relatives. Janey Clarke as she introduced herself, pulled out a book she had just purchased with a picture of the *Edderton Old Parish Church* and pointed to the Aird family headstone. I was aghast. Janey then says. "You *must* go! We must get you there."

I looked at this stranger thinking, "What? You don't know me?" The next thing I know she says, "I know there is no bus, but I know someone who might be able to help."

Five minutes later a lovely young woman named Kelly showed up to drive me to Edderton. Not only did she take me to the cemetery, but she also informed me that she knew the store the Aird family used to own and manage. I was so excited as Kelly pointed it out as well as the War Memorial across the street.

The way everything fell into place I had to think my dear Grandma Aird was watching over me.

While standing in front of the Aird family headstone reading the names myself, I heard a voice behind me say, "Aird". I turned and saw an older man and a younger man nearby. I asked if they knew any Airds, and the older gentleman responded that he went to school with Donald Aird. He was on holiday from Essex, England. He sang Donald's praises. Here we were - two visitors, one from

Canada and one from England on the same spiritual journey to reconnect with our family histories, me almost 70 and he, I was to learn, 91. I took a photo of them and am trying to share it with him as I write this.

In the meantime, Janey, who I met so randomly at the bus stop, also put me in touch with a descendant of our family. I learned it was a second cousin of mine, David Thompson, who generously shared further family history and even a picture I had never seen. Now, I must return to Scotland with my curiosity about our past peaked!

By chance, a bus stop in Tain, and many helpful community members, I was able to trace some of the steps my dear mother and her two sisters took the year before she died all too young in 1982.

This fostered a deeper connection not only to her but to my ancestral heritage. I am forever thankful to those community members who too have valued their heritage and invested in the restoration of a small cemetery that could never have anticipated future impacts such as I felt.

On a side note, I am also grateful for everyone who shared hiking tips. Anne Sutherland and I finished the West Highland Way blister-free!



## Edderton Old Church Preservation Trust

### *Janey Clarke*

The new season for the church began with the Gollans kindly taking the winter weather waterproof cover off the preaching ark. We are very lucky to have this ark in Edderton. It is one of only three remaining preaching arks in Scotland. The other two are in museums, one in the National Museum for Scotland and one in Gairloch Museum. Our ark is the only one with full provenance – it is the actual ark used by the congregation of Edderton Free Church for services in the Edderton Burial Ground after the Free Church adherents and minister walked out of the new Church of Scotland, further up the road, in a Scotland wide movement known as the Disruption in 1843.

The lairds had built the new church in 1841 to provide them with more spacious and comfortable accommodation, and the congregation had only just moved there. Because the old church belonged to the Church of Scotland, the Free Church congregation were unable to worship in the church, but after a few months of outdoor services, using the ark and communion benches, the minister got permission to use the old church and it continued to be used up until the 1980s. The ark may also have been used for an overflow of congregations during a revival in interest in the church in Easter Ross in 1840.

The church itself is the oldest unaltered church in Scotland. The T-shaped extension on the north side was added in 1814 and since then no further building work has been added. In 2004 the newly formed Edderton Old Church Preservation Trust raised £500,000 under the guidance of vernacular architecture enthusiast Jane Durham of Scotsburn and the church was restored. The church has no electric or water, the lights are paraffin lamps.

At the end of June, the Friends of Archaeology for Rural Communities in the Highlands chose Edderton Old Church as part of their annual outing. About 20 people enjoyed an interest-



ing tour of the church, Pictish stones and ark ably led by Trust secretary Duncan Finlayson.

A tour for six neighbours of the church took place about a month later, and neighbours were asked if they would like to be involved in opening the church to visitors or in maintenance tasks. We were very lucky to build up a group of five supporters who all live within half a mile of the church. Ian Hallford cleared out the gutters which was greatly appreciated, Christine and Jerry Hockett cleaned the Laird's stairs at the rear of the church and a group of people helped with getting the ark and communion benches ready for winter. David Williams and Dorothy Christie have very kindly agreed to be key holders and show people round the church.

Passers-by will often see visitors to the church in the graveyard and quite a few local people and adherents of the Free Church in Tain have also expressed an interest in the church. The excellent guide to the church, preaching ark and Pictish stones has been republished by Rev Graeme Muckhart and is available for £5.00 at the church and at the village hall and at outlets in Tain such as Pipers Café and the Museum (when it is open) or by post or collection from Trust members. If anyone would like to see round the church, or to show relatives or friends round the church, please phone Dorothy Christie, David Williams or Janey Clarke. Contact details below. We plan to offer tours to interested groups in the New Year and anyone wishing to use the church for an event is welcome to phone Trust secretary Duncan Finlayson.

Twenty people attended a lovely carol service in the church on December 18th, led by the Provost of Inverness cathedral, the Very Reverend Sarah Murray who has a house in Balleigh with her husband Morgan. She kindly stepped in at very short notice when Father Mel was unable to take the service due to illness. Ruairidh Gollan and Ainsley Gilmour played the carol music beautifully for us on accordion and clarsach. Christine and Jerry Hockett from what used to be the Laundry Cottage on the Bogrow Road decorated the church with holly and ivy. £120 was raised for the Highland Homeless Trust and the church. Thanks to everyone who contributed to making the service so special.

Dorothy Christie 07709 625607 David Williams 07740904684

Janey Clarke 07519 503635 Trust Secretary  
Duncan Finlayson 01997 423232



## Life Long Learning with Lairg



THE Lairg & District Learning Centre have approached the Edderton Community Council about potentially bringing some of their courses to the Edderton Community Hall. Exactly which ones will depend upon levels of interest. If you would like to know more, please get in touch with Nikki on [eccsecretary@aol.com](mailto:eccsecretary@aol.com) or 07483234172

## Edderton Community Car

GORDON Allison, Community Council Chair, took delivery of an 8-seater electric vehicle courtesy of the Sutherland Resilience Initiative.

The photo shows Allison receiving the car from Highland Councillor Richard Gale who is responsible for the vehicles which are now in Bettyhill, Brora, Lairg, Scourie and, of course, Edderton.

Please contact Nikki on [eccsecretary@aol.com](mailto:eccsecretary@aol.com) to make a booking.



# Edderton Community Council Needs You...

Can you offer some time to drive our new Community vehicle.

You need to be 25 years old and over and have a clean driving licence.

You will also need to become a member of Sutherland Resilience Initiative for insurance purposes.

Please contact Nikki on [eccsecretary@aol.com](mailto:eccsecretary@aol.com) if you can volunteer your time.

## Little Monsters On the Prowl

Halloween saw some of the local monsters out on the prowl for tricks (and a few treats...)



## Edderton Primary School History Day



Rebecca Taylor presents a bunch of flowers to Mrs Maureen Simpson, teacher at Edderton Primary School as part of the school's History Day. Looking on, from left to right, is Duncan Mackay, former Edderton Primary Headmaster in the 1980s, Alan Ross, Logan Urquhart, Matthew Taylor, Mandy Munro, Gary Urquhart, Morven Taylor, Innes McHardy.

**Edderton Old Church  
Preservation Trust  
Membership Form**

Name(s):

Address:

Email:

Mob phone:

I am interested in volunteering: Yes/No

Showing people round the church: Yes/No

Doing maintenance jobs: Yes/No

Being a trustee: Yes/No

Membership fee per annum: £5.00 person



*Please return form to Janey Clarke, Lower Hill of Edderton, Bogrow Road, Edderton IV19 1LJ*

*or email to [janey@lowerhill.co.uk](mailto:janey@lowerhill.co.uk)*

*Bank details: Edderton Old Church Preservation Trust, Sort Code 80-06-36  
Account No. 00307249*

Registered Scottish Charity No: SCO23641

