

MELDRUM CONNECT



Connecting Kirk & Community
A Newsletter for the Meldrum Community

What a glorious event the Paris Olympics was, with so many people battling through physical injury & mental trial, to compete at the peak of their abilities.

Not all, but many of the competitors were willing each other on and seemed delighted when their own performance was beaten by a friend from another country. They acknowledged the pain, struggle and genius of their fellow competitors to surpass their own achievements! A display of empathy with the elite athletes who know what it takes to make it to the pinnacle of their chosen sport. What an example to set! (and the Paralympics will be ongoing when this edition arrives at your door).

On a local level, that same spirit compelled 200 competitors to race in the Barra 10k, stirred on to take heart and perform by two pipers at the summit!
Their excellent efforts made £7500 for Kayleigh's Wee Stars to support families.

The Olympian efforts of MAIG to showcase the best of Meldrum in The Beautiful Scotland competition will hopefully be rewarded with a podium finish in September. The flower displays are always Gold standard to us. Both MAIG and The Green Growers on the new allotments are working to harvest rainwater which is something we can all do off any handy roof.

It's fantastic that Meldrum has been selected for one of eight new benches in Aberdeenshire, designed by a cabinet maker, with a QR code to play music, specially written by a renowned fiddler/composer to reflect on our experiences of the Covid era.

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The Geordie Webster article inside gives a fascinating insight into how Law & Order was kept before the Police were formed. There are some great detective stories and a bit of dressing up as a gypsy woman to catch a poacher!

Is it too early to mention the Christmas Tree Festival?
Sorry. You do need a bit of planning to get the best out of your entry to promote your club or organisation.



Enjoy.





MELDRUM

Amenities Improvement Group



Over the past few months our volunteers have been working very hard to get our floral display out and we hope you all are enjoying our efforts. This year we entered the Beautiful Scotland competition, and we had our visit from the judges on Wednesday 31st July. We won't know the outcome of this until the beginning of September, but we can say that we have presented our efforts in the best possible way and we're happy with all we have done.

Our maintenance team have worked tirelessly to establish our rain water collection facility and we are hopeful that this will be in operation very soon. This means that we will be reducing our reliance on mains water and therefore improving our green credentials.

During the next few months our efforts will primarily be directed at maintaining the current display, i.e. dead-heading, weeding and watering.

If you, or someone you know has spare time and would like to help us we would make you very welcome. You don't need to know anything about flowers as we also need general maintenance skills, electrical knowledge, drivers, waterers and able bodied people to help with lifting and moving. If you just want to see what we do and the facilities we have, we are happy to arrange a guided tour.

Feel free to contact us on our Facebook page.- Meldrum Amenities Improvement Group - MAIG or email maigchair@oldmeldrum.org

Tony Dennison & Barbara Elliott, co chairs MAIG

CYCLING
WITHOUT AGE
SCOTLAND
OLDMELDRUM



For our community, by our community!



Create "Miles of Smiles"!

Volunteer to pilot (ride) a Trishaw.

Our Trishaws are easy-to-ride e-bikes! Full FREE training is given. Other volunteer roles are available too.



Stay active, change lives and achieve huge fulfilment and enjoyment.

Arrange a FREE ride for a loved one, friend, neighbour or anyone with a disability or mobility issues.

Sponsor a Trishaw.

Donate a Trishaw in memory.

To book FREE Trishaw rides for friends or loved ones or to find out how to volunteer with us or for any other information, contact us at:

07775 606 640 or cwas@oldmeldrum.org

Share our moments at [cycling without age scotland oldmeldrum](https://www.facebook.com/cyclingwithoutage.scotland.oldmeldrum)



Runs every Tuesday & Thursday morning

9.30-11.15 Oldmeldrum Parish Church Hall



Suitable from birth up to 5 years old

First session is FREE

5 sessions £12.50



Snack is provided- just bring a plate and a drink.

We also provide tea/ coffee & biscuits for the adults.

We have a dedicated baby area, crafts, themed activities and seasonal end of term parties!

Each session ends with song time led by a member of the group.

New families always welcome!



Kayleigh's Wee Stars hails 'best yet' Barra 10K

Local children's charity, [Kayleigh's Wee Stars](http://www.kayleighsweestars.co.uk) (KWS) welcomed over 200 runners to their flagship Barra 10K running event at the weekend. A total of £7.5K was raised, which will enable the charity to continue supporting families across Scotland where a child has a terminal diagnosis.



Saturday 25th May saw hundreds of runners, families and supporters descend on Meldrum Academy, which served as the race HQ for the family friendly event.

The youngsters were up first, as the penultimate event in the Active Schools Aberdeenshire Run4Fun cross country series kicked off. 150 primary school aged children took part, racing around the track at Meldrum Academy, to the deafening cheers and encouragement of their families and supporters.

The temperature had risen considerably by the time the 211 runners lined up at the starting line to tackle the multi-terrain 10K race which unfolded across the Garioch countryside. Just a couple of kilometres into the event, runners were faced with the challenge of climbing, and indeed descending the 633ft high Barra Hill. Fortunately the skirl of the pipes spurred them on, thanks to the musical talents of father and son piping duo Gavin and Lewis Cantlay (a former pupil of Jonathan's) at the hill's summit.



Fastest woman on the day was Rebecca Easton, with a time of 44.28, while Jonathan Gamble crossed the line in 36.56 to take the title of fastest male. The course record is held by Emma Murray - 44.16 (2022) and Myles Edwards who ran it in a blistering 34.22 in 2023.

Primary teachers Jonathan and Anna Cordiner established the charity in 2012 after losing their 20-month-old daughter, Kayleigh, to terminal illness. They wanted to alleviate the financial burden for those families caring for a terminally ill child, helping them to make the most of their remaining time together.

Over the past 12 years, KWS, which is based in Oldmeldrum, Aberdeenshire has raised over £1million, and helped hundreds of families during the most harrowing of times.

Jonathan Cordiner said, "The support we provide to the families through the charity is only possible with the incredible support we receive from the local community. Saturday's Barra 10K was a shining example of this. We are so grateful to all of our sponsors, corporate partners, volunteers, marshals, local businesses, fundraisers and of course the runners themselves, who helped us put on such a fantastic event. We even welcomed some families we have helped in recent years, who continue to offer their unwavering support.

"It's always a day that brings the KWS community together in the most incredible way to raise much-needed funds for families across Scotland. When caring for their terminally ill child, and probably taking time off work to do so, the last thing they should be worrying about is paying the bills. And that's where KWS comes in. We are thrilled to have raised £7500, with every penny raised from this year's entry fees going directly to families in need, helping them to make precious memories with their child.

"We are planning to build on the success of this year's event and come back even bigger and better next year! An additional 5K race is in the pipeline at what will be a fantastic festival of running. We thank everyone for their invaluable support, and look forward to welcoming them back in 2025."

Learn more about Kayleigh's Wee Stars at:
www.kayleighsweestars.co.uk





**North East Aberdeenshire National Trust for Scotland
Members' Centre**
(A registered Scottish Charity SC02422)

Our May event was a lively and informative NTS Gardener's Question Time. Head Gardeners and gardening experts from local NTS properties answered a wide variety of questions and dispensed advice on horticultural problems. Despite the cold and wet conditions during June and much of July we were fortunate to have a spell of better weather for our visit to the garden at Inverquhomery House. The garden has been lovingly created and looked after by Gordon Hay. In July we were privileged to have the NTS Curator for the North, Vikki Duncan, give us a private viewing of some of the wonderful art at Fyvie Castle. Tales of the paintings' history and family connections really brought the collection to life. As we move into Autumn our regular programme of talks will restart. I hope you can join us for some, if not all of those. Upcoming events are listed below.

- Tuesday 15th October 2:30pm** – Talk on the history of the Earls of Kintore by Eric Simpson at Haddo House.
- Tuesday 12th November 11am** – Talk by Jackie Ross on "The Heritage of Language" focussing on Doric at Haddo House (Coffee served before the talk from 10:30am)
- Sunday 1st December 3pm** – "Carols for Christmas" in Haddo House Chapel. Tickets £12 (includes tea/coffee, mince pies and shortbread in Haddo House Library) available on Eventbrite

If you are interested in attending any of these events email ne.aberdeenshire.mc@gmail.com for tickets and more information.

Non-members of the Members' Centre are very welcome to attend events. A £3 donation is requested for talks, which are free to members. Light refreshments are available to buy after talks.

If you are a member of the NTS and would like to get more involved and help support our local properties then join the North East Aberdeenshire Members' Centre. Annual membership costs £12. To join contact Dr. Alistair Flett, Easter Crichtie Cottage, St. Katherines, Aberdeenshire. AB51 8SR (01651 891620).

SHOEBOX APPEAL 2024

Since 1993 Blythswood's Shoe Box Appeal has delivered over 2.6 million boxes to people in need.

This years Shoeboxes will be distributed in Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine.

It's easy to choose gifts for people that have so little. Shampoo, a pair of socks, a notepad, a small toy, a bag of sweets - things we take for granted will seem like luxuries to people living in poverty.

By filling a shoebox with simple things you can bring hope this Christmas.

2024 Leaflets, with details, are available from Meldrum Parish Church or the Church Hall, for the convenience of groups using the Hall.

Filled Shoeboxes should be dropped off by Sunday 20th October 2024, to the Church, or by 27th October 2024, to the Church Hall.



MELDRUM SOLDIERS' LAST RESTING PLACE

A sign on the main gate to the old part of Meldrum cemetery indicates it contains war graves looked after by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. They are the last resting place of two Oldmeldrum soldiers, Private Alexander Murray and Trooper William Gordon, who served in World War II.

Alexander Murray was born at Lightnot, near Oldmeldrum, on September 23, 1913, the son of farmworker James Murray and his wife, Margaret. Alexander, who also became a farmworker, was living in Back Wynd, Oldmeldrum, when he joined the Territorial Army in November 1936. The following year, he married Isabella Taylor at Udney, and they later had three daughters together. Alexander's service as a part-time soldier in the 6th Battalion, Gordon Highlanders, stood him in good stead when he was called up on September 2, 1939. He was drafted to the 9th Battalion of the Gordons, who formed part of Britain's home defence. Less than a week after the fall of France, Private Murray was posted to Force Alabaster in Iceland and embarked for the strategically important island on June 22, 1940.

Force Alabaster occupied Iceland to deny it to the Germans. Eric Linklater described Army life in Iceland in a booklet, *The Northern Garrisons*, published in 1941. He wrote: "The troops in our sub-Arctic garrison have learnt a Spartan view of life. They have become acclimatised to bleakness, and in the farthest north they speak contemptuously of the relaxing air of Reykjavik." Spring gave the soldiers new energy and they "went about their duties with the utmost vigour". There was training for the gunners and "there was labour on the roads, unending labour, and new camp construction and the building of fortifications". The accompanying photo shows British soldiers playing football with Icelandic youngsters.



Alexander returned to Britain in October 1942 and was posted to No. 9 Infantry Training Centre, Aberdeen, and was later with the 9th Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders. He was discharged from the Army in June 1945 for fitness reasons. His health continued to decline and he died, aged 32, on January 10, 1946, at the County Hospital, Inverurie. Alexander and Isabella and their daughters lived latterly at Airyhillock. Bourtie.

Trooper William Gordon served with the 22nd Royal Dragoons, Royal Armoured Corps. His regiment was equipped with Sherman Mark IV tanks which were fitted with flails (see accompanying illustration) for clearing mines, a role which they performed when they landed on Sword and Juno beaches in Normandy on D-Day, June 6, 1944. The 22nd Dragoons saw action in the Odon, Caen and Falaise areas, including Operation Totalise, before later participating in the Allied advance through Belgium at the end of September 1944. Squadrons were spread over a large area at the start of February 1945 during the Reichswald offensive.



Aberdeen-born William was a patient at a military hospital in Oxford which specialised in treating head injuries, and where he died on March 24, 1945, aged 38. His funeral was held on March 29 at Oldmeldrum where the cortege left his home at 17 Kirk Street, where he had lived with his wife, Annie.

PASTORAL CARE

If you, or anyone you know would like a visit from someone from the Pastoral Care Team, please get in touch with either Eileen Oliver on 07775 606640 or Sheila Simpson on 07866 130175.

We are also looking for people to join our Team to provide occasional visits to people in the Community. If you have some free time and think this is something you would be interested in, please let us know.



One of the Lieutenantcy's roles continues to be to ensure that messages of congratulations are delivered from Their Majesties, The King and Queen to those celebrating their 60th, 70th or 75th wedding anniversaries and 100th and 105th Birthdays. Myself or one of my Deputies are also delighted to visit on the day of such special milestones and present a card and our personal congratulations. Recently I was delighted to visit Mr Peter Black in Fyvie to celebrate his 100th birthday with him. Deputy Lieutenant, Mrs Lorna Smith, visited Mr Eric and Mrs Maureen Ingram, Lethenty, Inverurie in July to celebrate their Diamond Wedding Anniversary.



Professor James N' Dow OBE



Lord-Lieutenant Sandy Manson and all of the Aberdeenshire Lieutenantcy warmly congratulate Deputy Lieutenant Professor James N'Dow who was honoured to be presented with his OBE, in recognition of his services to Cancer and Urology and to Voluntary Service, by His Majesty The King at the Palace of Holyrood House in July. James is a founder of UCAN, the Aberdeen-based charity which raises awareness of urological cancers, supporting and improving the quality of life of those affected. He also founded and is the driving force behind the Horizons Trust in The Gambia, a medical charity which is dedicated to improving maternity healthcare and reducing maternal mortality.



Honorary Degree

Congratulations to Lord-Lieutenant Sandy Manson who received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Stirling in June. Dr Manson received the honour in recognition of his services to the Scottish business and accountancy sectors and for services to the Crown.

Lord-Lieutenant Cadets



Each year the Lord Lieutenant usually appoints cadets from units in Aberdeenshire to assist him in his duties. This year one of the cadets appointed is PO Cadet Arran Mowatt (pictured left) of Peterhead Sea Cadets (No 269). Arran joined the Sea Cadets at the age of 10 and has a very distinguished career gaining the highest cadet rank in the sea cadets. The second cadet appointed is CWO (Cadet Warrant Officer) Reilly Brosnan (pictured right) of the 1990 (Ellon) Squadron Air Cadets. Many congratulations to both Cadets and we hope they enjoy their year as Lord-Lieutenant Cadets.



The Aberdeenshire Lieutenantcy is keen to know of any individual or voluntary organisation who have made an exceptional contribution for the wider benefit of others in their community and assist in giving full consideration for appropriate recognition. Please contact us at the email address below, in confidence, should you have any suggestions.

Please do look at our web site for further information:

www.lord-lieutenant-aberdeenshire.co.uk or contact us on info@lordlieutenant-aberdeenshire.co.uk



You can also follow us on Facebook and Instagram Lord-Lieutenant of Aberdeenshire

Very best wishes to you all,

Sandy Manson, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Aberdeenshire



Meldrum Bourtie & Daviot Community Council

August 2024

The Community Council held it's A.G.M. in June. Thank you to those who continue to be community councillors and to those who have joined. We would welcome new members and if you wish to join, please contact our secretary - secretary@oldmeldrum.org

As many of you now know, Westbank Care Home in Oldmeldrum will be closing. The care home was discussed and its future decided upon at the June Integration Joint Board meeting. The Community Council was permitted to speak at the meeting and our secretary and three of our elected councillors represented us with strong heartfelt requests to seriously consider not closing our care home. Unfortunately, they were unsuccessful but the Community Council is supportive of a small group that wishes to look at the care home building and its day-to-day business. More information on this will be updated when available. If anyone wishes to become involved with this matter, please contact our secretary.

The Community Council does not meet in July. Our next meeting is on Tuesday 20th August at 7pm in The Sports Pavilion in The Pleasure Park. Please come along and find out what's going on in your community. You are welcome to join us.

More information can be found on our website - <https://oldmeldrum.org>



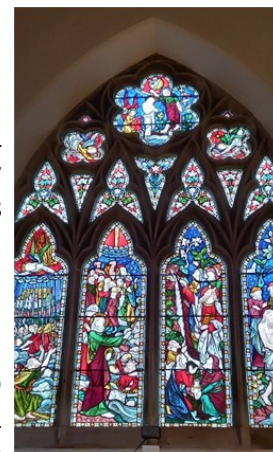
St Matthew and St. George, Scottish Episcopal Church, Oldmeldrum

We have been delighted recently to welcome an increasing number of visitors and some new, regular members to our services. It is a blessing and a pleasure to be able to worship together.

In the last few months, we have unfortunately been experiencing some antisocial behaviour in the churchyard. This has included littering, theft of a bench (subsequently recovered) and throwing of stones, threatening the beautiful and historic stained-glass windows, many of which have been dedicated by local families in memory of loved ones. It is very disappointing and distressing to have this happen and we know it is not an isolated incident. We are working alongside the Community Council and the Police, who have established routine patrols to monitor the property.

We are a small and growing congregation where all are welcome to share in our worship from whichever denomination you may come. Our services are open to all and you will be made very welcome. All are welcome to participate in Communion. Refreshments are served after the service and everyone is invited to stay if they can and join in this precious time of fellowship.

Regular Sunday Services: 10:30am: [A sung service with Holy Communion](#)



Dear Friends,

As the leaves begin to turn and the air takes on the crispness that signals the arrival of autumn, we are reminded of the rhythm of life - the cycles of change and renewal. This season invites us back into the familiar routines that bring comfort and stability, yet it also offers a chance to embrace new opportunities and growth. As we settle into the warmth of our community, let us focus on the love that binds us together and the love we extend to all those around us.

This love is at the heart of our community, especially as we gather for the special events and initiatives planned in the coming weeks. These gatherings are more than just dates on the calendar; they are opportunities for us to reconnect, to celebrate, and to strengthen the bonds that make our community such a vibrant place.



We are excited to invite you to our **Autumn Fayre on the 28th of September** from 10-2pm in the Church Hall. This event is always a highlight of the season, offering a chance to come together, enjoy good company, and support our church and local causes. There will be something for everyone, from stalls brimming with homemade goods to activities that will engage the whole family. We look forward to seeing many familiar faces and welcoming new ones as we celebrate the bounty and beauty of autumn.

As we move into November, our **Halloween/Bonfire Themed Messy Church** on the 3rd will offer a wonderful blend of creativity and fun. Messy Church is always a joyful time for families, and this themed gathering promises to be full of laughter, learning, and love. It's a chance for children and adults alike to come together in a space where the light of community shines bright, even as the nights grow longer.

Another exciting development is the reformatting of our **Story and Play sessions into more of a playgroup**. Starting on Fridays from 1:30 to 2:30, this new format will provide a welcoming space for young children and their parents or caregivers to gather, play, and connect. It's a small but significant step in fostering relationships within our community, and we hope many of you will join us.

We warmly welcome everyone to join us for our **Sunday worship services at 11:00 AM** in the church. We have a lovely, fun space where little ones can play and draw during the service, ensuring that our worship time is welcoming to families. On the 6th of October, we will hold our **Harvest All Age Service**, a special time for all generations to come together in thanksgiving. We will also be celebrating **Communion** on the 6th of October and the 1st of December, gathering around the Lord's Table as one body in Christ. On the last Sunday of each month, we hold our **Different Kind of Worship service** in the Church Hall, a relaxed and informal gathering that is inclusive to all, fostering connection and friendship. Additionally, our **Youth Bible Study** meets at 10:15 AM before this service, offering our young people a chance to explore faith together in a supportive environment.

In response to the community's requests from our recent survey, we are pleased to continue offering **Open Doors at the Kirk on the first Monday of each month from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM**. This is a space of quiet and reflection, a sanctuary where anyone can come to find peace, pray, or simply be still. This time and space are open and welcome to all, providing a much-needed pause in the midst of our busy lives.

We are also excited to announce the return of our very successful **Youth Club**, meeting from 6:30 to 8:30 PM on the second Friday of each month. This is a fantastic opportunity for kids from P5 to S6 to come together for fun, fellowship, and activities. We invite anyone from the community who feels called to volunteer with Youth Club to get in touch—we would love to have you join us in making this a positive and impactful experience for our young people.

Music has always been a powerful way to bring people together, and we're thrilled to share that new musical initiatives are in the works. These initiatives will offer fresh opportunities for everyone, regardless of musical ability, to participate and express themselves. Whether through singing, playing an instrument, or simply listening, we believe these new programs will be a source of joy and connection for all involved.

As we approach the holiday season, we recognize that it can be a difficult time for many, especially those who have lost a loved one or find the season challenging. With this in mind, we will be holding a **special Service of Stillness and Peace on the 1st of December at 2:30 PM in the Church Hall**. This will be a time of healing and peace, offering a gentle space for reflection, comfort, and quiet amidst the busyness of the

season. We invite all who seek a moment of calm or who are carrying grief or hardship to join us for this meaningful time of worship.

Lastly, I want to take a moment to thank everyone who participated in our recent community survey. Your input has been invaluable as we work towards the vision of a **new community space**—a place where all are welcome, where we can gather, grow, and serve together. This is an exciting phase for our community, and we need your help to bring this vision to life. If you have any skills, gifts, or simply a desire to be involved, we would love to hear from you. Together, we can create something truly special.

As we return to the routines that shape our lives, let us do so with hearts full of love—for God, for each other, and for our wider community. May this season be one of renewal, of deepening connections, and of shared joy. I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events and working together as we step into this new chapter.

With love and blessings, Rev. Alisa McDonald



Last Sunday of the Month
'A DIFFERENT KIND OF WORSHIP'
11.00am in the Church Hall

A Service for the whole family



The last Sunday of the month is our informal All Ages services in the Church Hall. And every month is *A Different Kind of Worship*, but always a place of welcome, friends, food, fun and worship. Come along and give *A Different Kind of Worship* a try yourself!

EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO
'A DIFFERENT KIND OF WORSHIP'
 Tea, Coffee, Fellowship & Friendship

Meldrum Church Hall,
 Albert Road




Sunday 1st December
at 2.30pm in the Church hall

A Service of healing and hope for those who find this season hard or have lost a loved one.
Tea/Coffee served




HEALING AND HOPE
All Welcome



YOUTH STUDY

Meeting for food, chat, and exploring how to be **Holy Troublemakers**

Last Sunday of the Month in the Church Hall before DKW Meeting at 10.15 am



HOLY TROUBLEMAKERS & UNCONVENTIONAL SAINTS

Everyone Welcome



MESSY CHURCH

Sunday 3rd November
 Come for a Halloween/Bonfire Themed Messy Church
 Crafts, Games, Fun
 3.30-5.00pm
 Costumes Encouraged!
 Meldrum Hall, Albert Road



A very warm welcome awaits you at any of our services or events. At Meldrum & Bourtie we believe a welcome to ALL has no limits.
All, means all.

For more information about anything please get in touch with
 Rev. Alisa McDonald
 Alisa.McDonald@churchofscotland.org.uk



Sunday Morning Worship at 11.00 am
'Different Kind of Worship' Last Sunday of the Month at 11.00 am

info@meldrumandbourtiechurch.com
Find us on Facebook and Youtube
 The Meldrum & Bourtie Parish Church of Scotland - Scottish Charity Number SC015960



We are inviting everyone in the community to take part again in our Community Christmas Tree Project. Any local businesses, clubs, charities, school classes, families and individuals, etc. are invited to contribute elegant, quirky, or entertainingly decorated trees which transform Meldrum Church into a Christmas wonderland. The church will be open for various events throughout the month of December for the trees to be on display. With an Open Day for tree voting later in the month.

So, would you like to make a tree? There is no cost to be involved, it is absolutely free!

All while you can advertise your group or organisation.



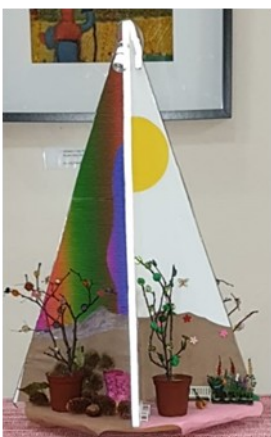
If you could let us know your expected height/width of your tree we can pre-select a suitable place. Ideally use of battery powered fairy lights are best - but don't let us hamper your creative flare! If you could note your interest, and proposed measurements by Monday 2nd December.

Set up would be anytime from 2pm-6pm on Friday the 6th December.

The last two years we have had the most imaginative and wonderful designs by individuals from the community as well as organisations including Co-Op Oldmeldrum, Physiotherapy and Pilates Company, Meldrum Health Walks, Ramblers, Oldmeldrum Green Growing Space, Meldrum Primary School, St. Matthew and St. George Church, Naughty Knitters, Meldrum Library and The Rotary just to name a few. This year we hope even more individuals/families/groups take part in bringing our community together for our Community Christmas Tree Project. **Open Day for Voting on 21st December 10-3pm** there will be tea/coffee/mince pies, crafts and more for the whole family during the Open Day.

Come join us for a Community Christmas Concert and Sing-a-long on Saturday 21st December at 5.00pm.

Do you play an instrument?
Do you have a band? Sing a song?
Have a poem or reading?



We are inviting anyone who would like to be involved in the Concert and Sing-a-long to prepare something special as we all come together and join in the Christmas Spirit!





On the 13th May 2024 The Guild had an outing to the Davron Hotel in Rosehearty.

We had a lovely meal served by friendly staff. The weather was sunny and we enjoyed the beautiful scenery in the

countryside and also down the coast. We had time for shopping at Simpsons (Happy Plant), in Mintlaw before we returned to Oldmeldrum. The outing was enjoyed by all members.

Members of The Guild all over Scotland collect money in Sunshine Bags and it is then allocated to their chosen projects. A total of almost £486,000 was raised over the last 3 years and distributed to Beat, Pioneers, Starchild, Vine Trust, Home for Good and Unida: A great achievement by The Guild and a massive help to these projects.

The Guild Dedication Service will be held on Sunday 8th September 2024, in Meldrum Church, at 11 am.

Our next outing is on Monday 30th September to the Broadstrak Inn and Dobbies. The bus will leave from the Church Car Park at 11.15 am promptly.

Our meetings are as follow:

9th September 2024.

Flower Arranging

Wendy Fretwell

14th October 2024

Garioch Home Start.

Mhairi Philip

11th November 2024

Talk on the Royal British Legion. Mhairi Watt

9th December 2024

Christmas Meal

All meetings are held in Morris's Hotel at 2.30 pm.

The Joining Fee is £16

New and old members welcome

VENUE FOR HIRE / CAFÉ / PICK A BOOK



OLDMELDRUM TOWN HALL

Our Community Café is open Thursday, Friday and Saturday
10am - 3:30pm.

Why not pop in for a coffee and a fine piece or a hot lunch?
Great Food - Reasonable Prices - Cash Only

We also have our "Pick a Book" that is open during café hours where you can help yourself to any of the books, no need to return.

Private Meeting Spaces available for hire - Lower Hall and Upper Hall are available for events

All Volunteers Welcome Stop by and Say Hi!

Enquiries: mmbcic@outlook.com
Market Square - Oldmeldrum - Inverurie - AB51

MELDRUM CAFE

Opening hours

Thursday. 10-3.30

Friday. 10-3.30

Saturday. 10-3.30

New volunteers are always welcome.

Contact mmbcic@outlook.com or speak to a volunteer in the cafe and leave a contact number for more information.

BEREAVEMENTS

Mr Hector Terrence (Terry) Will	14th May 2024
Mrs Margaret Josephine Addison	24th May 2024
Mrs Alison Ballantyne (Bodie)	12th June 2024
Mr Albert (Abbie) Reid	12th June 2024
Mrs Kathleen Duguid	19th June 2024
Mrs Penny Baker	25th June 2024
Mr Alex Cruickshank	13th July 2024
Mrs Mary Smith	21st July 2024
Mr Billy (Bingo) Morrison	12th August 2024



Oldmeldrum Green Growing Space

Progress down at The Oldmeldrum Green Growing Space allotments .

It's been a fruitful season with many plots full of wonderful produce, of which some has seen it's way to the local food pantry, with more to come .

Progress is underway with the environmental rain water collection system attached to the Polycrubs. With thanks to our community volunteer Sandy Davidson and committee member Angela Snowie ,with one side completed, material cut and ready to go in once the barrels have been cut for the next.

This will require more barrels as we now intend to fit this system to all 4 sides of both polycrubs, to maximise the potential for natural water collection, if anyone is able to help with donations of barrels please use the contact details below.

The polycrubs have had the addition of a walled flower bed and woodchip outside and spaces inside are full of plants producing cucumbers , courgettes, marrows , tomatoes and much more.

Fencing has started in phase 1, which is really starting to make the site come together. Work will be ongoing over the coming months with the labour being donated by several community volunteers running fencing businesses.

Our first fundraising event, a pub quiz held locally at



Morris's Hotel was enjoyed by all in attendance, and a great success raising £2189.00.

We were also awarded £750.00 through the Garioch Charity Shop which was gratefully received at a wonderful ceremony alongside many other successful local charities.



It's a wonderful sight to look at from above the allotments , and I have to say that we are extremely proud of our allotment members achievements after such a late start in the season due to the weather.

They are all looking forward to next year's growing season now that their plots are set up.

We still have one small plot and one full one available at no cost until next April if anyone is interested in taking one on.

Contact can be made at oldmeldrumgreengrowingspace@gmail.com or through our Facebook page.



OLDMELDRUM RAMBLERS

Oldmeldrum Ramblers are part of a group called the Grampian 50+ Network and they organise gatherings of ramblers from Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray. In July the highlight was a Ramblers Rendezvous at Balmoral when we chose activities from crafts, visits, sports or walks and got the opportunity to meet with lots of folk from other groups. The culmination was a ceilidh, dancing in front of Balmoral Castle.



This is the time of year when our countryside is at its best and Oldmeldrum Ramblers make the most of it. Recently we have visited Monymusk, Pitfour and Torphins and these walks have shown our area in its summertime glory.

Oldmeldrum Ramblers group meets every second Thursday to walk for around 5-7 miles in the local area. We are a very friendly group and would welcome new members.



If you are interested in finding out more about Oldmeldrum Ramblers and are aged over 50, please either phone Sandy McIntosh on 01651872656 or email him on sandy.mcintosh@gmail.com.

ARTICLES

Thank you for your enthusiasm in supplying the range of articles in the Meldrum Connect magazine.

If you have a story to tell or an event to advertise that you think would interest the community, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Please email us at meldrumconnect@gmail.com.

Deadline for our next
Meldrum Connect
is
3rd November 2024

ADVERTISING in Meldrum Connect

Local charities can advertise for free and local business for a small charge depending on size. Please contact Fiona Morris our Community Liaison at meldrumconnect@gmail.com

Cost per Issue		
Advert size (based on A4)	Black & White	Colour
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Quarter	£40	£80
Eighth	£20	£40
Sixteenth	£10	N/A
Discounts available for multiple issues		

Meldrum Connect reserves the right to refuse or amend any advertisements, or submission and accepts no liability for any omission or inaccuracy.

Published by Meldrum and Bourtie Parish Church and printed by McKenzie Print, Wellheads Crescent, Dyce. All issues available at www.meldrumandbourtiechurch.com

If you have enjoyed reading our newsletter and would like to contribute to the ongoing work of Meldrum and Bourtie Church you can make a donation via this QR code.



PRAISE

MENS PRAYER FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST

Saturday 19th Oct 2024 Special guest speaker **TBC**

Doors open 8:15 am


Location: Meldrum Church Hall, Albert Road, Oldmeldrum AB51 0DB

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FELLOWSHIP




PICNIC TO GO



As always it was lovely to see many familiar faces as well as some new ones visit Meldrum Church Hall for a free picnic during the summer holidays. We would like to thank our volunteers who prepared the picnics and Oldmeldrum Co-op Community Fund for their continued support with this project with the rest of the funding coming from Meldrum Kirk Benevolent Fund

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2nd Friday of the Month
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GEORDIE WEBSTER, OLDMELDRUM'S SHERLOCK HOLMES

"That's the han' that's grippet seven murderers," was the fond greeting to strangers from George Webster in his native town of Oldmeldrum. George lived at 14 and 15 Kirk Street from 1801 until 1883, four years after his wife, Margaret Rae, died. Three children, Mary, Alexander and Anne died in infancy and his surviving daughter, Mary, died in May, 1920. In 'A Criminal Officer of the Old School' George dictates to the "Editor" his professional life as a Sheriff and Sheriff's Officer in Aberdeenshire. At the beginning of his career there was no police force at all in the shire, although he teamed up with another sheriff officer to keep a watch at large gatherings such as the country fairs at Aikey Brae, the Lowrin' Fair at Old Rayne and St Sair's near Insch. George was also the Oldmeldrum Church Beadle or Kirk Officer from 1836 until 1840.

Mr Webster's account is narrated in his own native Doric, which is valuable in itself as a record of speech at these times. Moreover, it adds a colourful turn of phrase to his account. "My tongue runs freest i' the native Doric. An' so in place o' fine English, which was spoken by none but the gentry in my youth- though ye'll get it in ilka ane's mou' now-a-days- we'se leave the Editor to dicht it up as weel's he can in the rael vernacular o' the County."

Though not a model scholar himself, George praised the dominie, Baillie Cooper. "It was said that he pat about twenty ministers in o' the poopit o' them that he'd gone through his han's, an made mony a gweed scholar forbye." Cooper's home had space for fifteen or sixteen boarders, for example, two brothers from Bourtie, Adam and George Topp. They boarded to "polish off" their education, the schoolmaster at Bourtie being but a "feckless bodie." As for Geordie, "many a gweed thrashing' I got fae him (Cooper)." Perhaps George's tendency to make witty remarks had something to do with that.

From an early age, George wanted to work with horses and upon leaving school, he was employed at Barnett's Inn (Meldrum Arms) as a groom. Mr Barnett had six or seven pair of chaise horses and handled the mail from Aberdeen and elsewhere. Its central location on the turnpike road to Banff and elsewhere made Oldmeldrum an important hub for passengers, information and the post, so Barnett's Inn would have been a magnet for business, news and gossip.

George went on to be a groom at Parkhill in General Gordon's staff. 'I was there o a gweed file, an' fae that gaed to Fintry to Sir John Forbes, Sir William's fader. It was upo' his advice that I was ta'en to be a criminal officer.' It was Sir John that recognised Geordie's talents. As well as being physically strong and alert, Geordie had a finely tuned memory. He knew all the roads and coach timetables throughout the region and was able to gather information, noting the essentials (not least his expenses) in his pocket book. Sometimes the work was carried out beyond his "diocese" in the county:

'January 27th, 1836. being sent off to Dundee in search of James McKenzie and his wife, Janet McKenzie or Milne, both belonging to Aberdeen; apprehending them, and lodging them in Aberdeen jail, and recovering most of the stolen property.' The charge against the county, ye may see, was jist £2 for my service an' nae a penny mair.' The Aberdeen police had been unable to trace the housebreakers' whereabouts but Geordie got wind of this in a public house in the Castlegate as he listened in to a conversation from twa-three "knags."

Geordie fuelled the pair with a few drams. They had knowledge of a letter, which gave him the address of his suspects. He was not a man to waste time. Boarding the Union coach, he travelled through the night and with the assistance of the Dundee police, arrested the couple along with some of the stolen goods and pawnbroker's tickets. This was despite the fact that that he was expected in Aberdeen Court for its opening that day. He'd already sent a letter to the sheriff to explain his absence.

A case that caused some consternation at Oldmeldrum Parish Church happened in 1838 when Rev George Garioch was the minister. There were two collection plates laid out for offerings at the east and west doors with an elder in attendance at both but all the offerings from the east door were going missing! Suspicions were raised that James Crichton, who counted the money, was responsible. Geordie had a plan: 'So neist Sunday I puts in the minister, an slips awa' oot wi my hat I' mu han'. I tak's doon the road a bittie, doubles at the dykes, an' crawls upo' my han's and knees close up till I end get a gweed view of the east door an' the plate.'

'Fat but the figure o' a loon comin' crawlin' smairtly up to the plate fae the wye of the Commonty...Ere he cud gedder 'imsel for his crawl awa', I was upo' the back o' him wi a grip t' gart 'im loup half oot o's skin. He roar't an' roar't till they heard 'im i' the kirk owre the heichest notes o' the precentor twinin' up 'Aul' Montrose.'

After the service, Geordie was anxious to tell the minister that James Crichton was "an honest man" and had locked the "nickum Farquhar" up in jail. Mr Garioch pleaded with Geordie to let him off because of his youth but Webster stuck to his guns:

'I'm your kirk officer, Sir, but I'm the Queen's Majesty's servan' in this affair- he must go to jail.' An' he did go; an steed a punishment as he deserv't. The thing was a kin', o' sacrilege, ye ken; an it wud a been a vera bad example to lat 'im aff.'

In the 1840's the burning political issue in Scotland was the Disruption in the Church of Scotland. The argument was about patronage or the placement of a minister in a parish by a superior landlord. For many, the minister was their protector as well as their guide and comforter, a respected and educated figure that could intervene on their behalf, give a reference or a letter of introduction. In their protest against patronage, 451 ministers of the Church of Scotland left to form the Free Kirk, including all of the ministers in Aberdeen. In October, 1841 a crowd of two thousand gathered at Culsalmond and broke into the church to oppose the "settlement" of the Rev. William Middleton, who had to flee over a turnip field to the safety of the manse.

Geordie was overcome by the angry mob:

'But a the officers an' police there cudna stem ae grain; an naitrally steed a peer chance, for I was yarkit in aside the door and knockit doon. An' I suppose fifty o' them gaed richt owre me wi' their feet, the haethens.'

Geordie was put to bed in the manse and sent home in the sheriff's coach that night to nurse his broken ribs for a few days- with pay, he added.

Geordie's accounts are comprehensive and enlivened with a sharp wit but they also show how methodical he was in his detective work, searching out the key evidence that would pin the crime to the criminal. To catch an elusive poacher in the Earl of Kintore's grounds at Ley Lodge, John Rose or Ross, a shoemaker, Geordie disguised himself as an old gypsy woman to avoid suspicion and caught him red-handed along with the traps that he had laid to catch hares. In a case of rape and murder of Mary Smith in a cottage at Auchterless, he matched smoke deposits on the murderer's clothing to the "hangin' lum" by which he had forced entry. In another case, Geordie made a sketch of the criminal's footprint in the snow and was able to match it with a shoemaker's work in Oldmeldrum of which there were seven in the town at that time.

In July 1838 there was the rather unusual case of Jane Ritchie, a housemaid with an obsession for fashionable clothing and laundry and other things belonging to the house or servants employed there. The thefts were stashed away at the end of her term of employment and repeated when she obtained another position. The butler at Fyvie Castle noted that several items were missing and sent a messenger on horseback to Webster, who was at the Reform Ball at Inverurie.

Geordie was in full Highland attire but undeterred, he set out in "Braveheart" fashion to follow up the suspect. After a search at Fyvie Castle, he found out that a heavy trunk had been sent to Oldmeldrum. He forced it open to find the butler's shirts, towels, other items and a bundle of pawnbroker's tickets. His next step was to head for the pawnbroker in Aberdeen, where he discovered more stolen items pawned by Ritchie: "2 English blankets, 2 linen sheets, 3 linen shirts, a black shawl, an' some towels, an' a dizzen forks. In her bandbox an' bundle there was a bonnet an' a goon belongin' till a lass t'had been a fellow servan' in Aberdeen an a goon and shawl stow'n fae anither lass, a lot of napery an' other things- a' stol'n in Aiberdeen.'

Webster arrested Ritchie the next day at Barnett's Inn where she was being dolled up for her wedding day! She fainted, or pretended to, and a maid threw water over her face to revive her. "Hoot, hoot, said Geordie, "tak' care an' nae weet her ower sair, for though I 'm takin her awa' frae the bridegroom, I'm takin' er to Aiberdeen in a brow carriage.'

While in jail, awaiting her trial, Jane gave birth to a baby boy. Geordie could not resist another witticism; 'It was a laddie, an of coorse he grew up a freeman o' the toon, bein' born i' the jail. Jane Ritchie was sentenced to transportation to Botany Bay for seven years.

Transportation seemed to be common for serious crimes and repeat offenders. Sadly it could include

infanticide or "exposure" of babies and death of children caused by neglect. A case of concealment of pregnancy and secret burial of a "laddikie" at the north wall of the kirk at Auchterless prompted Webster to say that "sic peer unfortunates ha'e many queer thoughts...fan nae even partners o' their guilt, as the ministers wud say, hae the manliness to stan' by them wi' a word o' counsel or encouragement." Geordie acknowledges that it is not his place, "as her Majesty's servant", to make moral judgements. Nevertheless, he notes that the young woman was sentenced to six months imprisonment, "that wisnae vera heavy, but it was nae doot sufficient."

An unusual case happened at Cromlet where two brothers, George and Isaac Newlands, seven and nine years of age were apprehended for the death of a two and a half -yeat-old girl, Joanna MacAllister, "belongin' tae a set of tinclers." To begin with, they tried to blame her death to the "shalt", a Shetland pony, but a post mortem from Dr Ogston proved otherwise. In front of the sheriff in Aberdeen, they admitted that they had struck the child but without meaning to kill her. Perhaps the "harden't little scoun'rels" were let off lightly for the times. Each received nine months in jail.

The affair that really set the tongues a gagging in Meldrum was the trial of John Booth of Weavery Lane, originally a combmaker, now a pedlar, and thirty-seven years old with two children and a wife to support. He was convinced that she had been unfaithful but in the melee that took place, he murdered his mother-in-law. She, Jean Barclay, had a little shop selling pots and stoneware but she had a number of immoral sidelines that included fortune-telling- even on the Sabbath. As the Aberdeen Herald put it, reporting on the trial on 8th October, 1857:

"...he (Booth) was undoubtedly convinced that his mother-in-law, whom he murdered, was a woman of the most loose morals and that she had been only too successful in inducing her daughter, his wife to follow practices which foully wronged him as a husband."

On the eve of Aikey Fair, one of the few holidays on the Farming Calendar, Booth was drinking with his cronies when one of the company "taunted him that he would go to Booth's wife, where he would be made welcome- aye! And get a bed too! From words they came to blows and Booth drew blood from the fellow that was tempting him." (Morayshire Advertiser, 31st July 1857). The story was a "pitiful' ane" remarks Geordie.

Booth, wild with fury and drunk, returned to his home and confronting his wife Mary, ordered her to get out of her bed. When he brandished his long clasp knife at her, she ran out in her nightdress to seek the protection of her mother and father. As Booth broke down the door, his elderly father-in-law tried to fend him off with a spade or shovel; then Jean Barclay, his mother-in-law tried to beat him off with a rolling pin. This infuriated Booth even more; one of several stabs was fatal as it pierced her heart.

The first to be called to the scene was James Tarves, the local constable, who lived in a cottage with a lock up on Cowgate. Booth did not resist arrest and Webster arrived at the scene shortly thereafter but it was too late for Doctor Ingram to save her life. For extra security, Booth was led to Carle's Inn (Morris's Hotel) and manacled to a fire grate in an upstairs room. The following day he was taken by train to Waterloo Station in Aberdeen and by a circuitous route to Aberdeen East Jail (Lodge Walk) to avoid public disorder.

Booth was sentenced to death, despite a number of attempts to save his life and commute the sentence. He had the dubious distinction of being the last man to be publicly hung in Aberdeen.

The strongest themes running through Webster's reflections are dedication, local knowledge and rigorous methods. It might be a trifle boastful in delivery but it is not short of truth and balanced morality. As Sheriff Watson remarked in his pamphlet 'Vagrancy in Scotland; its Causes and Cure':

...the preservation o' the peace of this country was intrusted to a few sheriff's officers, distributed here and there among the large county of Aberdeen was done, in a most efficient manner, by George Webster, in Old Meldrum, who apprehended most of the murderers, housebreakers and thieves, then more numerous than they are now.'

Alistair Massey

REMEMBERING TOGETHER - FROM MOUNTAIN TO SEA - A BENCH FOR OLDMELDRUM

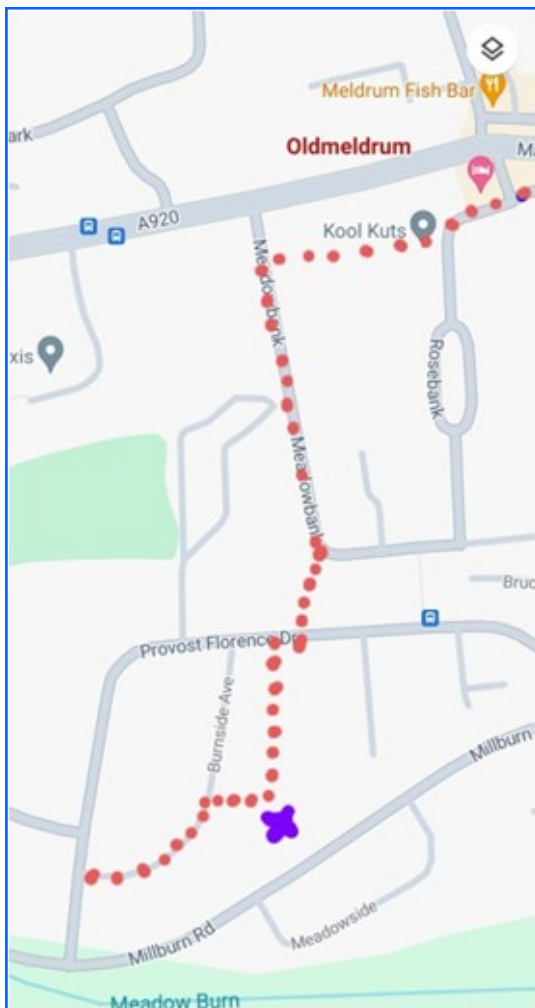
The Scotland-wide initiative, Remembering Together, has artists across Scotland co-creating with their communities fitting tributes to remember the impact Covid has had on us all.

Walking outdoors was a key part of many people's experience of the pandemic, and the collective vision that emerged from this phase was creating opportunities to walk across the region. Live Life Aberdeenshire's Cultural services commissioned 3 artists to create something unique for Aberdeenshire.

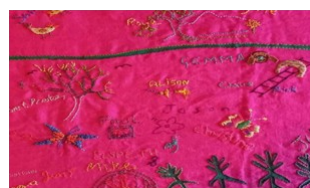
Following intensive community research, lead artist, Claudia Zeiske, sustainable furniture-maker Chris Nangle and native musician Paul Anderson, are creating artworks to allow people to appreciate what the county has on offer as a form of hope and healing.

Claudia Zeiske led the initial phase of this arts project, having walked a 250 km journey in the Summer of 2022 from the summit of Ben Macdui to the ports of Peterhead and Fraserburgh. Hundreds of individuals and groups walked and talked with the artist, discussing their experiences of Covid and sharing their thoughts on what a remembering piece could look like for Aberdeenshire.

Furniture-maker, **Chris Nangle**, creates ecologically responsible furniture. He has been working with Zeiske and the communities of Aberdeenshire to source locations for several unique structures that will be bedded into the landscape; places for people to visit, reflect and contemplate. Eight bespoke benches have been designed and scattered across a slice of Aberdeenshire, a new route from mountain to sea. Aberdeenshire's world-renowned fiddler, **Dr Paul Anderson**, has been capturing the stories and emotions that have been shared, and is currently creating new compositions authentic to the people and places he has been visiting. An album of tunes shall be made and shared. The album, when complete, will be able to be accessed from QR codes to be found on each of the benches.



Oldmeldrum has been chosen to receive one of the eight benches which can be reached from the path between Provost Florence Drive and Burnside Avenue. It has a grand view of Barra Hill which was part of the Inverurie, Oldmeldrum, Pitmedden, Ellon section of Claudia's Remembering Together Mountain to Sea walk.



Along the way, Claudia carried a bespoke printed pink tablecloth, encouraging those she spoke with to sign it and add drawings personal to them which she has since embroidered into the fabric.

More about Remembering Together from Mountain to Sea can be found on the Live Life Aberdeenshire website:- <https://www.livelifeberdeenshire.org.uk/arts/covid-memorial/>