

The Huntly Express

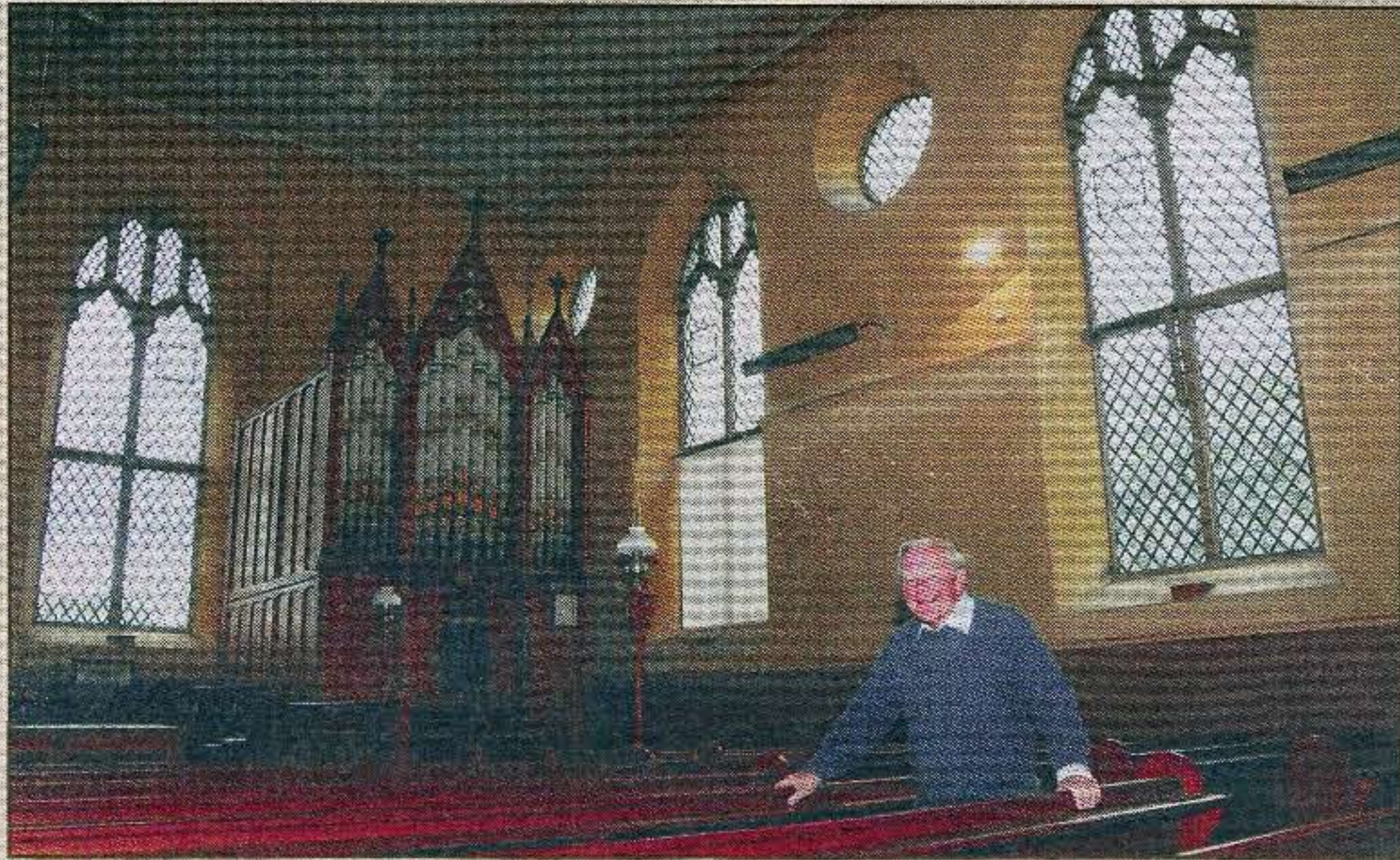
No 7721

Friday, October 5, 2012

Established 1863

Price 50p

CASH FOR KIRK AND WALK SCHEMES



Friends of Forgue Kirk founding member and current trustee and secretary Euan Richardson pictured in the heart of the church which it is planned to restore and refurbish with cash awarded by the LEADER programme. (H.E. Photo)

TWO local projects have received a share of the £350,000 paid out in the latest round of grants awarded by the Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER Programme.

Friends of Forgue Kirk, is to receive almost £18,000 towards the refurbishment of the B Listed Forgue Kirk while Deveron Arts has been awarded £30,000 to employ a project manager to develop a walking institute for Huntly.

LEADER is a rural development funding programme financed by the European Commission and the Scottish Government and is administered by the Rural Aberdeenshire Local Action Group.

Friends of Forgue Kirk, formed nearly fifteen years ago need to secure further funding to realise their ambition to create a local heritage centre within the refurbished church building.

The church, designed by Archibald Simpson, was built in 1819 and has been used by the community since being bought by the Friends group.

As well as restoring and refurbishing the inside of the church, Friends have a vision to create a local heritage centre where volunteers from the community would record the social history and safeguard photographs of the Forgue community.

It is anticipated that local school pupils would be involved through an after school club where they would take an active role in securing and learning about the area's cultural heritage.

Dr Eleanor Anderson who is Chairman of the Friends group said, "The LEADER grant will allow work to proceed on restoring Forgue Kirk. This will provide a very special legacy for the people of Forgue, for those who have family connections with the building and for anyone with an interest in architecture, local history and music.

"However, this project is not just about a building and its past, it is also about people in the present working together, young and old, long time residents and newcomers, contributing their skills and acquiring new skills to establish a local and family history centre in the Session House," she said.

Deveron Arts' plan is to employ someone to develop a walking institute which would promote Huntly as a walking destination.

The institute would deliver a programme of cultural, social and artistic walking related elements through a series of events.

The project also includes plans for a number of writers in residence and internships, the development of a website and the creation of a walking section within the Brander Library.

Deveron Arts Director, Claudia Zeiske said, "We look forward to embarking on a walking programme which builds on the Room to Roam branding of Huntly. The Walks of Life programme will bring together the universal act of walking with many other things environmentally, physically, spiritually and artistically alongside travel, exercise and recreation."