

Welcome to the February 2026 newsletter containing project reports, information about Highland Heritage Day 2026, forthcoming projects and events and other news. Do check out the [ARCH website Events page](#) for a range of talks, workshops and events taking place in the near future.

Highland Heritage Day 2026



The fourth annual Highland Heritage Day will take place on Saturday 14th March at Dingwall Academy. It's a chance for heritage groups, museums, projects and anyone interested to meet up, promote their work, and discuss common concerns and solutions. Past events have been exciting and informative. This year focusses on Collaboration—working with others.

If you are a member of a group, do think about coming and having a table to showcase your organisation. For those able to do so, the day is £5 per participant, to be paid in cash or card on the day. This will help us to fund the venue hire and lunch. Booking forms and the programme are available from the ARCH website [Library](#).

Scanning Old Estate Maps

ARCH is currently working on setting up a project to scan old estate maps held in collections and archives in the Highlands. The inspiration came from the [NoSAS project](#) in 2018 where a large flat bed scanner was hired, and the Lovat Estate maps were scanned by volunteers and then placed on the wonderful National Library of Scotland [maps website](#). Since

then several people have expressed interest in either having their maps scanned or helping in a similar project.

There are advantages to owners in having a high quality scan, so that fragile originals no longer need to be handled. The benefits for researchers and those interested in local history are enormous, and especially because the maps often provide information not known before. Having them on the NLS website means they will be freely available to all.



Over the next months ARCH will finalise funding arrangements and reach out to those who might have maps to be scanned. If you are interested in being involved in the project, whether in loaning your maps for scanning or helping with cataloguing and scanning, do get in touch with us. All going well, we hope to roll this out in late summer.

Grassroots Gatherings

The final online networking sessions organised by Scottish Community Heritage Alliance's Grassroots Heritage in Scotland project will take place on 10th February (focus on Heritage Tourism) and 12th March (Next steps for SCHA: What do you want to see?), both 7-8pm. Further information and how to book from their [website](#).

Project Report: Norwegians in Edderton, Tain and Nigg Area in WWII

After investigating in 2024 the presence of the Norwegian army in the Contin area, ARCH turned its attention to the Edderton, Tain and Nigg areas, with sessions held in Edderton and Tain, culminating in a well attended open day in November 2025.



After the invasion of Norway in World War II, the Norwegian government relocated to the UK. Norwegian men and women joined the Norwegian army, navy and air force, and there was significant military training in the Highlands by the army.

Initially based in Dumfries and Hamilton, the Norwegian Brigade moved to Edderton and Tain area in summer 1941. Photographs from the Norwegian Archives, together with some memories and military documents, allow us to identify where troops were stationed.



The Independent Mountain companies were based at the disused Balblair Distillery. Four rifle companies were housed in tents at a 'nearby farm', which from photographs is Broombank Farm just beyond the distillery (see above).

The battery and machine gun company were initially based at 'Nigg Camp'. Photographs allow us to determine that this was at Newfield near Nigg Station, not Nigg ferry. Substantial remains of the foundations of this camp still survive.



In autumn 1941 the Norwegians moved to Aberdeenshire for the winter, a move which makes more sense considering the men housed in tents. The troops returned in June 1942, first said to have been stationed at Tain, and then again at Nigg Camp. But most troops by this time had moved to Contin and Dingwall, with headquarters now at Brahan Castle. However, the three independent mountain companies rotated their times between Contin, Dingwall and Nigg Camp.



From 1942 some Norwegians were also stationed at Fort Nigg as part of the Coastal Artillery Unit, watching for enemy ships. Fort Nigg was situated half way up the North Sutor. The unit moved to the South Sutor in 1943.

In November 1943 the Norwegian army left the Highlands, locating in Stirlingshire.

While in the Edderton and Tain areas, the troops trained for liberation. They also helped the Home Guard at lookouts. Photographs from the Norwegian archives show them also assisting with harvest at Hilton Farm, Portmahomack. There were probably several hundred men, and some women, a substantial group, but mixed with British, Polish, Indian and Czech soldiers in the area, together with Canadian and Newfoundlander foresters – and even foresters from Honduras in Golspie.



King Haakon and Prince Olaf made visits to help with morale, bringing official photographers. There are a number of pictures of a substantial parade in 1941, and memories of a similar one in Tain. The lines of parading troops gives some indication of the numbers involved.

Norwegians were integral to the filming of a British propaganda film in Portmahomack in 1943. Around 15 Norwegian soldiers and 15 women and children were drafted in as actors, some of the soldiers to play the Germans. In addition around 60 Norwegian fishermen in nine boats were used on weekends. The film is a fictionalised story of Norwegian fishermen resisting Nazi occupation. Copies of the film and a book, *Before the Raid (1943). History of a war propaganda film* by Tom L. West can be purchased from Tarbat Discovery Centre.

The group researching this interesting story spent much time pouring over the Norwegian archive photographs, identifying a number of sites. While few remains survive of their presence in Edderton, the substantial remains of Nigg Camp deserve further survey and recording!

As with the project investigating the Norwegian presence in Contin, this project benefitted from the collaboration with three Norwegian researchers George Michael Bratli, Kjell Johansen, and Oddbjørn Johansen who are writing a book about the Norwegian Brigade in this area. They shared their findings and some Norwegian sources, and we again had a pleasant zoom session. In turn we were able to identify some places in photographs, and results from newspaper searches. While we had no firsthand memories, many people contributed stories – and fortunately Tain Museum has a recording where Forbie Urquhart, Donnie Macleod, Paul Lippock and Wattie Loudon share their memories of Norwegians in Tain.

A display with results was created, and an [online version](#) is now available on the ARCH website. The physical display is currently at Tain Library and will travel. A binder of resources has been deposited at Tain library. A summary of results is also available in the [ARCH Document Library](#), in the Norwegians in the Highlands folder.

Scottish Power Renewables Beinn Tharsuinn Community Fund (Tain and Edderton Community Councils) provided help towards funding venue hire. Thanks to all those who attended the sessions and helped research this little-known history of the wartime Highlands.

Golspie Fishertown Project Signboard

The final output of the Golspie Fishertown Project—a signboard telling the story of Fishertown—was launched in November 2025 near the pier. Do check it out if you are in the area.



Inverness YAC Dig

Inverness Young Archaeologists Club has organised a dig to explore a possible roundhouse near Dingwall on March 21/22 and 28/29. Open to all YAC members, aged 8-15—and membership is free. For further information see the [Inverness YAC website](#) or contact Invernessyac@gmail.com.



Writing and Adapting Texts on Wikipedia

If you missed the opportunity to find out more about writing for Wikipedia, the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) Local Highland Association is repeating the course, run by Sara Thomas from Wikipedia. There are three sessions, all at Inverness Library. The first session on Wednesday, 25th February 1-4pm will provide an introduction and get all logins sorted out. Then on 4th and 11th March 10am-4pm Sara will guide you on how to edit and write new texts. We have so much information about the Highlands that people have researched—let's get some of this on Wikipedia! For further information and how to book see <https://www.ambaile.org.uk/wikipedia/>



Marking Time

Intriguing exhibition at Fort George running 20 March to 28 June, focussing on markings such as graffiti and carved stones, and the messages, sometimes hidden, behind them. Free with admission to the Fort..

Dingwall 800

Dingwall is marking the 800th anniversary of becoming a royal burgh with a number of special events throughout the year. Events will be posted on the Fèis Rois website and their facebook pages. You can also subscribe to a monthly newsletter to keep informed of events.

Heritage Events

The ARCH website posts any events we know about. If you are member of a local heritage society, or know of something interesting, forward the details to ARCH, and we'll post them on the website and include them in our monthly newsflashes.

Friends of ARCH

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