

Ceremony of remembrance and  
celebration of the life of



**Edna Elizabeth Welford**  
(née Payne)

27th November 1913 - 21st December 2011

Mortonhall Crematorium,  
Pentland Chapel, Edinburgh  
4th January 2012

Presented by  
Alex J MacLeod  
Registered Celebrant  
Humanist Society of Scotland  
Registered Charity SC 026570  
[alex.macleod@humanism-scotland.org.uk](mailto:alex.macleod@humanism-scotland.org.uk)

# Edna Elizabeth Welford (née Payne)

1913 – 2011

*Music: "HMS Pinafore, Overture", Gilbert and Sullivan*

## Welcome and introduction

Good morning and welcome.

We are here to remember and to celebrate the life of Edna Elizabeth Welford who died on the 21<sup>st</sup> of December 2011. You have come to say your farewells together and to share these quiet moments in tribute to her. She was unique and so is her ceremony. With reminiscences from her family we will share some of the defining moments in her life and some of the happy memories you have of her.

My name is Alex MacLeod and I am honoured to have been asked to conduct this ceremony. I am from the Humanist Society of Scotland and this will be a Humanist ceremony. Humanism has ancient roots and is not concerned with religion; it is a philosophy which focuses on making sense of the world using reason, experience, compassion and shared human values. Consequently there will be no religious content in this ceremony but there will be a Pause For Reflection, a quiet interval when you may wish to say your own farewells privately according to your own convictions. There may be those among you for whom religious faith is a central part of life and who are familiar with a different form of ceremony. However I hope that we can agree that there is a common human bond that unites us in support for each other at times of difficulty, and in sympathy and compassion at times of grief. I hope that when we leave at the end of this ceremony you will be glad that you have taken the opportunity to say your farewells together to someone who in the course of her life has touched all your lives in one way or another.

Death is the inevitable consequence of being born and living, every living thing has a beginning and an end. We all know this, but even with this clear and certain knowledge the death of a loved one is still the most distressing and stressful of all experiences. Grief is the price we pay for loving and caring. This is a time of grief; it

is a time to mourn. However by expressing and sharing grief and sorrow and in comforting and supporting each other you may eventually come to accept what has happened and come to treasure the true riches of a full life well lived. In doing this there is no greater honour that we can pay to those whose lives are over, no greater demonstration of our love for them, than to turn back to life and to live it to the full. This does not imply lack of respect or forgetfulness. It simply means that we have learned, through living with them, that life is for the living. The best way to face the reality of death is to turn back to life and to embrace it with all our power. This is especially true when thinking of Edna, one of her defining characteristics was that she was “full of life”.

This sense of acknowledging loss while recognising life goes on is expressed in a piece based on the writings of Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh.

*We should not speak of our love in the past tense. Love is a thing that does not fade in a faithful heart and our love for someone does not die with them. This being true our lives must be a continuation of theirs, with all its significance. We must reflect on all that was beauty and nobility in that person and make sure that those around us and our surroundings do not lose anything through their death so that the seed that has fallen onto the earth may give a hundred fold harvest in the hearts and lives of others.*

Living together on this planet we are all members of a global human community and through this we are all concerned, directly or indirectly, with the life and death of any human individual. In the course of our lives we may fill many different roles within this great community. Thus Edna was variously, amongst other things, daughter, sister, wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother; schoolgirl, shop-keeper and, especially, friend. It is through this community that there is continuity in spite of death, continuity in the form of our lineage and our heritage. Our lineage is those to whom we are related, our family. Our heritage is the various ways in which the lives of others both within and beyond our family have been shaped, to a greater or lesser extent, by our attitudes and actions. Thus each of you holds a part of Edna’s heritage in the various ways in which your lives have been affected by knowing her and in the memories that you have of her. With this each of you remains close to her.

## Tribute to Edna

You are here today as members of the community shared with Edna. By your presence here each of you is paying a great and most eloquent tribute to her, to the woman and her life, and the esteem and affection you had for her. Now, together, we will remember Edna, the story of her life and her great joy in being alive.

Edna had a long and colourful life. She had mostly a good and enjoyable time but certainly also faced significant challenges. She was born on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 1913 to Samuel and Mary-Ann Payne living in Old Hartlepool on Teesside. Edna was the youngest of their four children, following her sister Emily, the eldest, and brothers Edward and Howard. Edna was 13 years younger than Emily and was essentially brought up by her as their mother appears to have been a chronic hypochondriac for much of her life and was content to leave the management of the household to her daughters. The eve of the first world war was certainly not the most auspicious of times to have been born and this was certainly brought home to the inhabitants of Hartlepool when on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 1914 it was the first place on the mainland of Great Britain to be attacked by German forces. Three fully armed battle cruisers sailed into the bay and bombarded the harbour and the town killing 86 and injuring 424 of the townspeople. Fortunately Edna's family were not directly affected by this episode and in general it appears that she had a happy childhood, she enjoyed a great deal of freedom and recalled playing on the beach. She was lively and high spirited, her family were not poverty stricken and she was well cared for. Although the evidence of her later life is that she was clearly highly intelligent and bright enough to have taken her education much further she was not selected for grammar school, something which seemed to have haunted her for the rest of her life.

Edna's life changed dramatically when she was 14. Her sister Emily married so Edna had to leave school to keep house for her long suffering father and her two brothers as well as her difficult and demanding mother who was clearly not going to do this. Edna obviously felt this was highly unfair and it soured their relationship until her mother died in 1956.

Edna met Tom Welford at a mutual friend's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday party. They were immediately attracted to each other and were married in 1936, setting up home in West Hartlepool. At first Tom was a traveller for a confectionary firm, taking and delivering orders to shops in the area. However Tom developed Type 1 diabetes at a time when controlling the condition using insulin was only just becoming possible and the management of the treatment was not well understood even by members of the medical profession. Tom was the first patient in the area to receive insulin and his doctor seemed to be prepared to proceed on a "suck it and see" basis. Edna was not satisfied with this and found out a library book that gave her more structured information about the condition and so she became in effect an unpaid nurse, keeping an ever watchful eye on Tom's diet, his sugar level and demeanour.

With his diabetes Tom was unable to continue his job as a traveller and so in the late 1930s he and Edna set up a corner and grocery shop in West Hartlepool. At first they lived in the fairly cramped accommodation behind and above the shop. They worked hard and made a great success of the shop which became a focal point in the local community. The shop had one of the few phones in the area which brought people into the shop regularly to use it.

Edna and Tom's children were born when the family was living at the shop, Barry in 1937, John in 1940 and Sue in 1944. Edna was a loving and caring mother, she was proud of her children's achievements and was pleased as they set up their own families. In due course Edna was delighted with the arrival of her grandchildren. And she was later thrilled when Katie, Kim and Phil were followed by her great-grandchildren Aidan, Sam, Beatrix and Holly. She took a great and close interest in all their lives and enjoyed their company. She certainly liked a good joke and a good laugh so she enjoyed the occasion when her two young grandchildren visiting from Canada discovered that her name was Edna. Their only previous knowledge of this name was through the cartoon character the mean minded "Evil Edna" and so there was a lot of good natured fun over that discovery.

It is a tribute to Edna's skill as a mother that in spite of working almost all hours in the shop and with little money to spare her children recall very happy childhoods and all three made it to Grammar School. Edna was a good cook and an excellent baker.

Her scones were legendary and people very much looked forward to spending the morning at the Welford's. There was a very strong community spirit in the area around the shop and Edna and Tom were very much part of it. The adults had fortnightly whist drives followed by dancing to gramophone records. There was a trip for the children every year and at the end of the war there was a huge street party. Edna encouraged her children to get involved in social activities, in the Scouts, the Guides and the church choir. Barry and John went with the choir to sing at the Festival of Britain on the Southbank in London in 1951. Edna was rather more laid back in her approach to running the shop than Tom was. Edna would grant herself extended lines of credit when using items from the shop for the family. Tom was much more rigorous about managing the shop, which was only closed on Wednesday afternoons and Sundays, and he would even spend the Wednesday afternoons doing the books. When Sue and Paul got married they had to have their wedding on a Wednesday afternoon - early closing day.

Edna was a health adviser's nightmare. Apparently she went to see the doctor during her 40s and was advised to diet and lose weight. She never returned and continued to enjoy her fatty food with a high salt content, her cigarettes and her regular glass of sherry. With this she was physically robust and as we know lived to be 98.

In the late 1960s Edna and Tom sold the shop and Tom took a less strenuous job in the Civil Service. It was typical of Edna that in her 40s in the 1950s she had learned to drive and they bought a small car. This gave Edna a real sense of achievement, she loved driving and was a good, confident and spirited driver. Freed from the restriction of running the shop she was able to drive Tom on holidays to Scotland which she came to love. She said she loved the Scottish people and scenery and that she wished she had been born in Scotland.

Edna loved music of all kinds, including popular classical music, especially Gilbert and Sullivan and in her later years she welcomed the annual trip to the King's Theatre in Edinburgh to see the latest G&S amateur production. She also enjoyed joining in any sing-song, for example when going on bus and car trips. One story goes that the young daughter of friends of the family, Marion, preferred to travel with Edna and Tom, rather than her own parents, "because the singing was better".

Tom died in 1983, and then in 1992 Edna moved to Scotland to be closer to her children and their families. At first she lived in sheltered housing but as her health deteriorated she moved into the Thornlea Nursing Home in Loanhead where she lived for the last six and a half years of her life.

Now Edna's grandson-in-law Iain Cram would like to speak with tributes the family have received from some of the many people who knew her.

## Condolences and tributes from others

*(Iain speaks)*

*The family have received many condolence messages. The following are a few extracts which it seemed appropriate to share this morning.*

**From her son Barry Welford in British Columbia**

*To her family, she was a shining example of how to enjoy life and we all learned from her. It seemed as though she would live for ever and she almost did. Now we only have great memories of all the good times together. We'll miss you terribly, Mum, but I'm sure you'll be looking out for us as you did throughout your life.*

**From her nephew John Witty in Darlington**

*I liked her very much. She was always so kind to me: I particularly liked her happy disposition and sense of humour. I have very happy memories of staying with her in Welldeck Road.*

**From her niece Liz Roberts in London**

*So sorry to hear the sad news about Auntie Edna. She was a great lady and my favourite auntie. She taught me all her bad habits, and her memory will live with me for ever.*

**From a friend of the family Bill Orley in Teesside**

*Edna Welford was a common-sense, intelligent woman who was helpful and friendly. She was very level-headed and had a great sense of humour - as well as baking wonderful chocolate cakes! She will be greatly missed.*

**From another friend of the family Marion Agar in Hartlepool**

*She sends her condolences and recollections of Edna's singing, especially in the car on her holidays to Scotland.*

*And finally from granddaughter Kim Welford in Newfoundland*

*I am grateful to have known my Gran, despite the distance that separated us.*

*There were fewer memories as a consequence but all so very dear.*

*It was a privilege to spend time with her.*

*Her wit, her good cheer, her social butterfly ways.*

*I only hope that I have inherited some of these traits to go along with our physical likeness.*

*Marrying a Scot was the best thing I ever did; for among other things, it allowed for more frequent visits with her over the last few years, and it allowed for my son to meet his Great-Gran.*

*My only regrets are that she did not meet her Canadian great granddaughter and that she never got her centenary letter from the Queen.*

*Trifles really when compared with the happiness that she spread and the loving life that she led.*

*Rest in peace, dear Gran, with your fondest memories restored.*

*We will treasure your memory always.*

*Much love from those of us floating around on a rock in the North Atlantic,*

*Kim, Colin, Sam and Beatrix*

## Pause for Reflection

We have been remembering the character and life of Edna, a woman who loved her family dearly and unconditionally. In spite of the many challenges in her life she remained a remarkably cheerful and positive person. She was definitely a “glass half-full” person although when it came to her sherry a full glass would undoubtedly have been more welcome.

We will now take a short Pause for Reflection when you may choose to say your own, private, farewells to Edna.

*Music: “Für Elise”, Beethoven*

## The Committal

With love and affection we have been remembering the life of Edna. We have already committed her safely and warmly to our hearts. Now it is time, in quietness of spirit to let her go. We move towards committal when her body will be taken from our presence.

If you are able to do so will you please stand.

*Every living thing has a beginning and an end.  
For each of us there is a time to be born and a time to die.  
And so death has come to Edna  
Now as we bid her farewell,  
we commit her character and personality to our memories  
and her love and friendship to our hearts.  
Finally we commit her body to its natural end,  
To rejoin the great cycle of nature.*

Thank you, please take your seats again.

## Closing thoughts and thanks

Edna's family would like to thank all of you, family and friends, for your comfort and support at this difficult and distressing time and for coming today which is greatly appreciated. They would also like to thank the staff of the Thornlea Nursing Home whose care and attention to Edna made her final years as pleasant and comfortable as they could be. You are invited to join the family in the Toby Carvery, directly opposite the entrance to this site, after this ceremony to continue your celebration of Edna's life. As you leave at the end of this ceremony in a few minutes there will be a collection in aid of Alzheimer Scotland.

The music we have heard today has been chosen by the family to reflect something of Edna's tastes and life. As we entered this chapel we heard the Overture to Gilbert and Sullivan's "HMS Pinafore". During the Pause for Reflection we heard Beethoven's "Für Elise". Tom was a pretty competent pianist and if the family were going out once he was ready he would pop into the front room and start playing while the rest of the family got themselves ready. This piece was one of his favourites. When we leave we will hear "I could have danced all night" from the musical "My Fair Lady". Edna loved romantic musicals and also loved to go dancing. This piece, with its sheer exuberance, mirrors Edna's life-long joie-de-vivre and her unquenchable enthusiasm for life and for living.

Family and friends, the comfort of having Edna as a close, caring and loving companion and friend may indeed be lost, but the consolation of having known that love will never be lost; the consolation of having known her, of having shared in her life and of having shared yours with her. A consolation of which you become especially aware at this moment as you fix her living image in your minds and recall the personal qualities that made her unique, that made you love her. Continue to remember her and to talk about her, recall her in anecdotes with a laugh, she would have liked that. You know her better than I do and I have no doubt that you can tell the stories better relaxed together in your own homes. Hold on to the things about her that made you love her and you will find that she will never be far from your side.

With these thoughts of Edna in mind I would like to bring this ceremony to a close with some lines by Anne Brontë.

*Farewell to Thee! But not farewell  
To all my fondest thoughts of Thee;  
Within my heart they still shall dwell  
And they shall cheer and comfort me.*

*Life seems more sweet that Thou did'st live  
And women, more true that thou wert one;  
Nothing is lost that Thou did'st give,  
Nothing destroyed that Thou hast done.*

Finally, I wish you all a safe journey home, take care.

*Music: "I could have danced all night" from My Fair Lady*