



Coch a tuadh news

Vol. 22 No.1

APRIL 2018

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Spring has Sprung!



In this month's issue you can find:

- Part 2 of the District's Centenarians
- A Royal Invitation
- Coinneach aig Baile

Plus: *Back in Time, Old Photos, Back FC* and much more!

Fàilte

Welcome to your April issue of *Loch a Tuath News*! Spring is here and it is lovely to have such longer and brighter days, and also Easter holidays to look forward to! In Col Uarach we are looking forward to a wee break from school and work, and to a few days break in lovely Harris! Here's hoping the weather works in our favour!

This month we have a jam packed magazine to keep you going through the Easter break. We find out from Jayne



Macarthur about the lambing season, Kenny Maciver shares his recent trip with us, Iain Murray has Part 2 of the District Centenarian's and all your usual favourites are there too!

As you will read in the Upper Coll As na Bailtean section this month, Anna Tucker is hanging up her hat as Upper Coll correspondent - LATN would like to thank Anna for all her support and dedication over the last six years in

post! This means another vacancy for correspondent has come up - so now we are looking for someone for both Vatisker and Upper Coll - please get in touch with the committee if you feel you or someone you know would be interested!

Hope you have a lovely Easter filled with family, friends and of course - Easter eggs!

Wishing you all a blessed April,

Melanie

Cover pic by Jayne Macarthur

Faillte pics from Pinterest

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How to submit an article or a photograph to the *Loch a Tuath News*

By email: latneditor2@outlook.com

By post: Taigh Gone, 27 Upper Coll, HS2 0LS

Contributions are preferred in digital format if possible. If you need to have an article typed, please contact the secretary.

Have you missed any issues of your *Loch a Tuath News*?

If you would like a copy sent to you, then please get in touch with Ishbal Maclean, 42b Coll, Back, tel: 01851 820503 and enclose £3.04 to cover cost and postage.

We need you...

to keep us informed of any news you would like to share with the rest of the community. Please get in touch with your local correspondents, who give their free time each month to collate all the news items. They are the 'eyes and ears' of the district, but they need your help.

See the contact details on this page.

Thanks

The views expressed in the *Loch a Tuath News* by named individuals, unless otherwise stated, are not necessarily endorsed by the LATN Editorial committee.

BACK

90th Birthday

We send our warmest congratulations to Mrs Dolina Lawson (*Dolina Sheoidhein*) who celebrated her 90th Birthday at her home in Marlborough, Wiltshire on 4 March. A former schoolteacher she spent much of her working life in Salisbury, Rhodesia where she met her late husband Bernard. Her niece Fiona and sister-in-law Nan travelled to Wiltshire from Back for her milestone birthday where they were given a most cordial welcome by Dolina and her family.

It is interesting to note that Dolina is the fourth nonagenarian in the family of the late George Stewart, 17 Back. Mary Jane, the eldest daughter was aged 96 when she passed away in 2016; *Ciorstag*, who resides at Yamba, Vatisker is 94 while Chirsty Mary, 17 Back, is 92. We would like to take this opportunity to send our best wishes to Chirsty Mary who recently moved to Blar Buidhe. She was a patient at the Western Isles Hospital for several weeks following a period of illness before Christmas but we are delighted to hear that she is much improved and is enjoying her new residence.

Get Well Wishes

We are pleased to report that Maureen Stewart, 12 Back is recovering in hospital in Glasgow following major surgery at the end of February. At the time of writing Maureen and her husband Iain are expected home soon and we send her our very best wishes for a speedy recovery.

Condolences

We extend our sympathy to Alex Macneil (formerly 3 Back) and family following the passing of his sister Sally in Fleetwood, Lancashire in February.

New Home

We extend a warm welcome to Laura and Andrew Burns who have recently moved to 29 Back. Laura is very familiar with her new neighbourhood as her granny Catriona (*Bean Chaluim Sgaoidh*) lives across the road at no. 31. We hope the young couple will be very happy in their new home.

The Way We Were

The recent national weather event labelled 'The Beast from the East' had relatively little impact on our district, other than a biting easterly gale which is not uncommon for the beginning of March. We had a lucky escape however - just across the Minch in Ullapool four days of almost continuous snowfall resulted in the deepest drifts seen in a generation.

With the clocks going forward and the brighter evenings now upon us it is tempting to think that the extremities of winter are consigned to memory but a cautionary tale lies in the archives from exactly fifty years ago.

Monday 1 April 1968 dawned warm and sunny in the Loch a' Tuath district with children out playing and making the most

of the good weather for the start of their Easter holiday. By early afternoon however the temperature plummeted and a blizzard unexpectedly came in from the north resulting in impassable roads, stranded vehicles and the loss of livestock. The severity of the Arctic storm led to a considerably depleted attendance at the evening church service which brought the Back Communion season to its conclusion. Although we often hear of 'Lambing Snow' this was generally considered to be the worst April weather event in memory with a penetrating frost forming in its wake. The upside of the tale is that 1968 saw one of the island's driest and warmest summers on record. After enduring a much colder than average winter this year we live in hope.....

COLL

Birthday

Happy Birthday to Emily Currie, (*nighean Alice and Jim*), who celebrated her 21st birthday on the 27th of February. In our very first issue of Loch a Tuath News we reported her birth in the Southern General Hospital in Glasgow - it's not every one who can say they are the same age as the local newspaper! Emily celebrated her birthday with all her family and friends and a surprise visit from her Grandpa, Granny, Auntie, Uncle and cousin all the way from Islay.

GRESS

Congratulations

Luke Macleod (Sandra and Nena's son) won Junior Musician of the year in a Junior Musical Competition. Well done Luke you are following in the footsteps of your granddad Dondy and Uncle Dolangie. They were both very good accordion players.

Condolences

We think of Chriselle, Lena, Dol Alasdair and Ishbel on the death of their aunt and sister in law, Katie Ann (Shawbost) in Blair Buidhe where she had been well cared for a number of years. Our thoughts are with the rest of the family.

TONG

Village Condolences

We extend our sincere sympathy to the family of Mary Ann MacLeod, 6 Aird Tong, who passed away recently. We especially remember her two boys, Alasdair and Roddy, and their families at this very sad time for them all.

We also extend our condolences to Annie Macleod and her family, 21 Tong Road, following the passing of Annie's sister Katie Ann MacDonald. We also remember the extended families at home and away at this time.

As Na BAILTEAN

Golden Wedding

We congratulate Anne and Donald (*Churchill*) MacLeod, 15A Aird Tong who celebrated their Golden Wedding along with their family.

UPPER COLL

Wedding

Congratulations are sent to Cameron Jon Maciver and Aisling Granhan who were married on 17 November 2017 at Tankardstown House, Slane, Co. Meath, Ireland.

Cameron, the son of John Maciver (*Seonaidh Beag*), 24 Upper Coll and the grandson of Ciorstaidh Jessie, formerly of 24 Upper Coll, was born at 8 Upper Coll and spent his early years there. He now lives in Birmingham where he and Aisling have set up home. We send our very best wishes to Cameron and Aisling for their future happiness.

Golden Wedding

Murdina Macdonald (*Glen*), 32 Gress, and Robert McMurdo from Stornoway celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on 21 March 2018. They were married in Back Free Church. Murdina and Robert now live at 12 Upper Coll. Many congratulations are sent to the 'golden couple' on reaching this milestone in married life and we wish them many more happy and healthy years together.

Highland Dancing Success

Seven year old Hannah Stewart, Cealasa, 19 Upper Coll, was delighted to win the 'Trophy Fling' Trophy for beginners at the recent Mackinnon Highland Dance Festival. Well done Hannah. Keep dancing! (as they say on Strictly!)

Situation Vacant – Upper Coll Correspondent

I have enjoyed being Upper Coll Correspondent for the last six years, part of which time I was also editing Loch a Tuath News. However, our lives and responsibilities change and the time has now come for someone else to take over the role. Please contact the editor if you or someone you know would like to take over this very important duty of recording the Upper Coll News.

As na Bailtean Pictures



▲ Cameron Jon Maciver and Aisling Granhan (Upper Coll)



Murdina and Robert McMurdo on their wedding day 21 March 1968 (Upper Coll) ▶



◀ Hannah Stewart, winner of the Spring Fling Trophy for highland dancing (Upper Coll)

Mrs Dolina Lawson celebrating her 90th birthday ▼ (Back)



Kenneth Macleod, son of Iain & Donna Macleod, Shiloh, ▲ Aird Tong, completed his Royal Airforce Training at RAF Halton on 27th February 2018.

He next moves onto RAF Cosford to commence Trade Training in Aircraft Maintenance (Mechanical).

Kenneth is the grandson of Ishbel & the late David Grant, 10 Aird Tong, and the late Ken & Rachel Macleod, 12 Melbost

REV KENNETH MacDONALD 1935 - 2018



Many worthy tributes have been paid elsewhere to the late Rev Kenny MacDonald yet it is appropriate that here in the Loch a' Tuath district we also would wish to place a stone on his cairn. Kenny Sgitheanach, as he was known locally, made a lasting contribution to the well-being of our community and was appreciated and esteemed in equal measure. A native of Skinidin, Skye he moved with his wife Reta and their young family to Lewis in 1967 following his appointment to the customs and excise office in Stornoway. Initially he lived in Gearraidh Ghuirm before then moving to 81 Coll (*Taigh a' Bhrann*).

He immediately immersed himself in village life in a home which was a hive of activity, reminiscent of the self-sufficient times of old, with cattle, sheep, hens and ducks all occupying their space on the croft. A physically fit and disciplined individual, his regular runs to and from the peats impressed a neighbour who contacted Back Football Club who, in turn, signed him as a midfielder.

In his youth Kenny was capped for Scotland's amateur side - he also played for St Johnstone and was approached by Tottenham Hotspur to join their books. When he signed for Back his first priority was to hold keep fit classes in the school comprising circuit training, rigorous exercises and several miles of running. This regime greatly benefited the team and was one of the reasons that they won a memorable league campaign and the Eilean an Fhraoich Cup in 1972. His considerable knowledge and interest in the game extended to the administrative aspects also. Following the levelling of the Upper Coll park a proposal to build changing rooms with showers was superseded by the construction of the Back Community Centre thanks to the vision of Kenny and other club stalwarts.

In those early years he demonstrated his commitment to public life by offering his services as a councillor with the newly formed Western Isles Council. He was duly elected to represent the Coll ward in 1974 and among the initiatives he championed was the 'meals on wheels' service which was so beneficial to families caring for the elderly and infirm.

He sensed the drawing power of the Gospel during this period and publicly professed his faith at the Spring communion in 1975, the last before Rev Murdo Macaulay retired to Carlaway. Many of us remember Kenny as an inspirational Sunday School teacher whose carefully prepared lessons and charismatic delivery endeared him to his young charges. It came as no surprise when, in 1980, he commenced training for the ministry at the Free Church College in Edinburgh.

The MacDonalds' departure from Coll was a poignant moment for the community as each of the family members was very popular with their contemporaries. Mairi and Sam attained the Leadership Cup in Back School for their respective year groups while Alison was the Dux in 1976. Derek, the youngest of the family, left for Edinburgh while still in primary school.

A year later in August 1981, the devastating news emerged that Alison was missing in the foothills of the Himalayas during a walking holiday to India. In common with many other villagers the writer well remembers listening to the

fragmentary radio reports from this remote region on the nightly news, each of us desperately hoping for a joyful outcome to this most anxious of circumstances. The perseverance and dignity which Kenny and Reta showed in their long quest for their daughter earned them admiration and respect far beyond the confines of our district. It was Kenny's earnest hope and belief that he would meet Alison once more during his lifetime but sadly that wish was not fulfilled.

In later years he made occasional visits to the island and was invariably accorded the warmest of welcomes. His lifelong affinity with Back FC was demonstrated when, despite his failing health, he came to open the all-weather football park in 2000. His preaching engagements were always eagerly anticipated - Kenny will be remembered for the fluency of his speech, the power of his delivery and for the passion he brought to his mission to save unconverted souls.

In the mid-1990s he began to lose his sight and he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. This seriously impaired his balance and mobility and he became increasingly dependent on his loving family for assistance. The positive frame of mind and can-do attitude for which he was renowned gave him the strength to face his final illness with resilience and fortitude, guided throughout by his unwavering faith.

The merited tributes which followed his passing on 21 January are equally applicable to his wife Reta who led her family through experiences of trial and affliction which few of us can enter into. Kenny MacDonald was laid to rest in Rosskeen, the parish he faithfully served for eleven years. The words of the Psalmist surely apply to this dedicated man of God, "Then are they glad, because at rest and quiet now they be: So to the haven He them brings, which they desir'd to see." To Reta and her family we offer our sincere condolences in their considerable loss.

Iain Murray and Donald A Stewart

Following on from last month's profiles of nine local centenarians from the Loch a Tuath district we hereby give an account of the other eight known individuals who attained this milestone age. If readers know of any omissions from the following or preceding list please contact any Loch a Tuath News committee member and a correction will be included in a future edition of the magazine.

Catherine Maciver, 41 Coll

Katag Mhurchaidh was born on 6 February 1898. Her sisters included Annie Martin (*Bean Solid*, 63 Back) and Catherine Maciver (*Bean Sheonaidh 'an Alasdair*, 57 Coll). Her younger brother John (*Ullaigean*) was a passenger on the Metagama in 1923, eventually settling in Detroit. Katag trained as a teacher and began her career in Back School in 1918. Apart from a short time in Laxdale and Leurbost Schools she spent a remarkable span of forty four years teaching in Back, latterly as Infant Mistress and retired in 1962. She was a familiar figure as she walked in all weathers from Outend Coll to school until she bought a car in 1953. She shared the family home with her sister Ishbel and latterly she was cared for by her niece Katie Bell Campbell (*Bean Ailig Twèed*). Katag passed away on 6 March 1998, exactly one month after her one hundredth birthday.

Katie Bella Stewart, 29 Coll

Katie Bella Sheòrais Portair - *Bean Dhòmhnail a' Charagain* was born on 16 February 1898. During WW1 she worked at the fishing on the East and West Coast and also on domestic service at a Stornoway hotel. Two of her brothers were killed in the same week in 1915 - Alex in a railway accident in Canada and George on the Western Front in France. Following her marriage to Donald Stewart, 26 Coll she brought up their family at the address she lived at all her life - Kirsty Mary died young, Dòmhnall Alasdair who was married at 28 Upper Coll was headmaster at Back School 1990-2000, George was married in Stornoway and Jane who was unmarried lived in the old family home. Katie Bella's retentive memory ensured that an account of Coll's history was recorded in an extensive interview she gave in her latter years. She passed away on 9 February 2001, just one week short of her 103rd birthday.

Footnote

A third lady from Back was also born in February 1898, the same month as Katag and Katie Bella, and she too lived to a great age. Peggy Stewart, 10 Back (*Peigi Dhòmhnail Ruaidh*) emigrated to the United States in the 1920s and settled in Santa Barbara, California with her husband Bob Carroll. She passed away on 28 October 1997 aged 99 years.

Margaret Macinnes, 27 Aird Tong

Born in 1901 *Peigi Choinnich Alasdair* was the daughter of Kenneth and Margaret

The District's Centenarians



Catherine Maciver 41 Coll ▲

Finlayson. As a young woman she emigrated to the United States and settled in Detroit where, in 1934, she married Frank Macinnes, who was originally from Canada. Frank passed away in 1987 - the couple had no family. Peggy was one of many Lewis emigrants who lived in Michigan; her brother Donald also settled in the area with his wife Isabella Martin, 63 Back (*Iseabail Solid*). At one time the Lewis Society of Detroit was a thriving organisation where those with island connections would meet and organise social evenings and functions. Peggy passed away in Detroit on 12 February 2002, one week short of her 101st birthday. She was the last of *Teaghlach Choinnich Alasdair*. Her sister Mrs Chirsty Ann Maciver inherited the family croft in Tong where she and her husband *Domhnall an Eòin* brought up their family of three sons.

John MacIennan, 52 Coll

Born on 13 October 1899 John was the son of Donald MacIennan, 60 North Tolsta and Annie Thomson, 52 Coll (*Anna 'an Sheumais*). He was only a few months old when his father was killed in Cairo while serving with the Seaforth Highlanders. His widowed mother then moved with her infant son from Tolsta to her home in Coll for a few years before later relocating to Stornoway. It was in Stornoway that John became known as *Iain a' Mhaori* - Iain from the country - a nickname which remained with him all his life. During WW1 he

◀◀ Katie Bell Stewart 29 Coll

◀ John MacIennan 52 Coll





▲ Catherine Guest 5 Tong

Nancy Maclean 75 Coll ►

enlisted in the Royal Navy and attended the gunnery school in Portsmouth. He returned to Lewis after the war was over, but then emigrated to Canada in 1924, where he worked on a farm near Toronto until the great American depression forced him home again. For thirty years prior to his retirement in 1970 he was the Stornoway Town Hall caretaker and Town Officer. John passed away in Nairn in August 2003 aged 103 and was buried in Gress. He is the only male centenarian to be interred in our local cemetery.

(The above information was kindly supplied by Seachas, the North Tolsta Historical Society magazine, who profiled John MacLennan around the time of his 100th Birthday)

Catherine Guest, 5 Tong

Born in 1901, Catherine was one of ten in the family of Malcolm and Mary Macleod (*Calum Alasdair Uilleim*). She emigrated to Canada in 1927 with her husband David Longmuir and later married Frank Guest after David passed away. Throughout her long life she was no stranger to adversity. Three of her four children died prematurely: John aged six, May aged twelve and Malcolm aged thirty three. Catherine enjoyed good health in her latter years; she worked with elderly people at a care home in Victoria, British Columbia while well into her seventies and was an active member of the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Royal Canadian Legion. She was a frequent visitor to Tong when her health permitted and last visited when she was aged 83. Catherine passed away on 2 November 2003, ten days short of her 102nd birthday and was survived by her son Gordon and



Mary MacDonald 35 Gress ▲

his family. Her most famous relation is her nephew Donald John Trump, the 45th President of the United States.

Mary MacDonald, 35 Gress

Màiri Sheumais Eachainn was born in Shulishader on 24 July 1907. She was the daughter of James MacGregor, 59 Back who moved to Point following his marriage to Kirsty Murray. As a young woman Mary worked on domestic service and as a fishing girl on the East Coast. Following her marriage to Allan MacDonald (*Ailean Hector*) in 1942 she moved to 35

Gress where she raised their three daughters and one son. Shortly after her parents' deaths she composed a poem entitled *Ag Ionndrainn* which was published in Gairm magazine in 1989 and which was sung to her on the occasion of her one hundredth birthday in Blar Buidhe. Her special day was celebrated by the villagers of Gress who organised a collection for her. Mary was predeceased by her husband in 1985. She passed away on 17 April 2008 aged 100 years.

Nancy Maclean, 75 Coll

Born at 7 Upper Garrabost on 28 June 1908, Nancy was the daughter of John and Annie Macleod. Two of her brothers died prematurely; John Murdo was lost at sea during WW2 and

Donald died of TB at a naval hospital in Leith. Nancy was one of the last of the Lewis herring girls, *Clann Nighean an Sgadain*, who each summer would follow the fishing fleets from Lerwick to Yarmouth working long hours in arduous and inhospitable conditions. She later worked on domestic service at the Free Church Manse in Kingussie for Rev Angus Mackay and his family. Following her marriage to Kenneth Maclean (*an Clàrc*) in 1935 she moved to 75 Coll where she brought up their three sons and three daughters. Nancy was predeceased by her husband in 1991. She passed away on 6 April 2009 aged 100 years.

Katie Ann Macleod, New Park, Vatisker

Katie Ann Pheideir was born on 22 December 1913, the daughter of Alexander and Henrietta Macleod. From a young age she expressed a desire to become a teacher and following her graduation from Jordanhill College, Glasgow she gained her first teaching post in Gairloch Primary School followed by North Tolsta (1937 - 1949) and finally to Back from where she retired in 1974. She shared the family home with her sister Etta and her brother-in-law Roderick Mackay (*Ruaraidh a' Chèic*) before moving to Dun Eisdean in her latter years. When she passed away on 5 March 2015 aged 101 she was, by many years, the most senior citizen in the district and was the longest surviving communicant member of Back Free Church. With her passing the community's final link with The Great War ended - Katie Ann was the last of our citizens to have lived through WW1 and to have a memory of that time in our history.

Iain Murray

Katie Ann Macleod New Park Vatisker ►





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From the Manse

Easter Reflections

Easter has the resurrection of Jesus as its great focal point. The following poem by C Cannons gives a fitting Easter perspective for us to reflect on:

On the resurrection morning
Jesus came forth from the tomb,
Met His doubting, sad disciples,
Banished all their fear and gloom.

'He is not here,' said the angel:
'See the place where He was laid.
Death by Him has now been vanquished:
There's no need to be afraid.'

On the resurrection morning
When our Lord shall come again,
All the dead in Christ shall meet Him
And the living with Him reign.

Christ the first fruits, we the harvest,
Fruit of all His toil and pain:
What a gathering of the ransomed!
What a triumph He will gain!

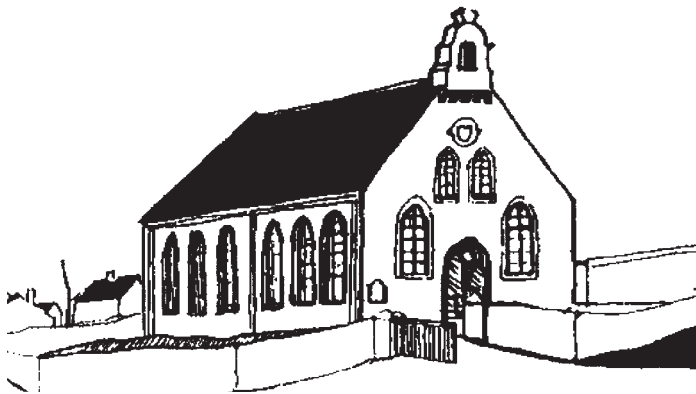
While we wait for His returning
'Mid the conflict and the strife,
Let our lamps be brightly burning
In this resurrection life.

In Him we shall be victorious
As we pass along life's way.
What a prospect! None so glorious
As the resurrection day.

'He is not here, for he has risen, as he said'
(*Matthew 28:6*)

Wishing you all a blessed Easter.

Calum I Macleod



April Service Times

A warm welcome is extended to everyone in the community to attend Back Free Church of Scotland. Services in Back and Tong during April 2017 are as follows:

Back

Sunday 1st April (Easter Sunday)

11am: Rev Calum I Macleod
6pm: Rev Calum I Macleod

Sunday 8th April

11am: Rev Hugh Ferrier (High Free Church)
6pm: Rev Kenny I Macleod (Stornoway)

Sunday 15th April

11am: Dr Adam (International Mission Worker)
6pm: Rev Kenneth M Ferguson

Sunday 22nd April

11am: Rev George Macaskill
6pm: Rev George Macaskill

Sunday 29th April

11am: Rev Calum I Macleod
6pm: Rev Calum I Macleod

<p>Meets every month in the Hall at Back Free Church</p>	<p>CEARCALL</p> 	<p>Next meeting Monday 23rd April from 2:00pm - 4:00pm</p>
<p>CARING and SHARING</p> <p>Come along for an afternoon tea to the hall at Back Free Church. We are looking forward to welcoming everyone. Our speaker will be announced in the bulletin before the meeting.</p>		
<p>If you require transport contact Ishbel MacLachlan on 07748090955 If you would like to find out more about this event contact Ishbel on the above number or Janice MacDonald on 07446333918</p> <p>ALL WELCOME</p>		

Coinneach aig Baile

Well the world is indeed a small place, as I said last month. Then I was speculating. Now I have seen it for myself.

It took 27 hours travelling the 13000 miles from Auckland, New Zealand, to Glasgow, and that included a 2 hour break between connecting flights in Dubai. At the time it felt as if it would never end but as I look back I can only reflect how different it was for me and those who landed there over the last 200 years.

They faced the real hardships of many weeks at sea on sailing vessels and, as I understand, 6 weeks when powered by engines. What determination they must have had. For them the world must have seemed a very big place. All a matter of perspective.

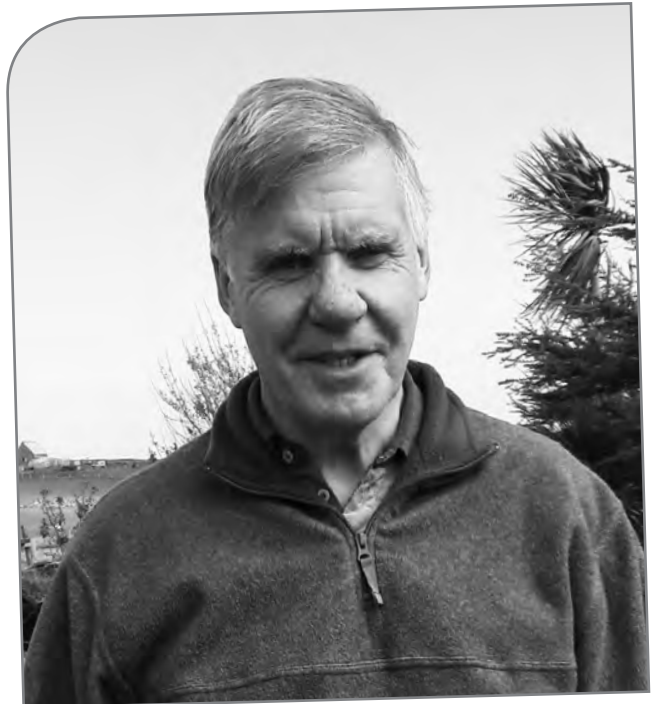
The reward was the opportunity to build a new life and raise families in a new country which was very similar to our own, with the real possibility of never seeing loved ones again.

New Zealand is a very welcoming place. It is easy to drive there as they drive on the same side as us and the roads are good. I kept forgetting though that the cars are mostly automatic, which sounds good, until you you try to drive off from the traffic lights and change the gears and the press the non-existent clutch and of course stall, with a long row of cars behind you and a navigator beside you telling you "*cha robh còir agad siud a dheanamh*". It is a very cosmopolitan place and shows much tolerance, borne of people having come there from different backgrounds and cultures. And thankfully one of the manifestations of that was that there were no horns blaring at the take-off failure.

I had been told to find the Snakebite pub in Auckland. I asked, but it has long since gone as have many from our shores who knew it.

I had no idea Auckland was so large. Over 1.5 million. By far the largest city in New Zealand, which has a total population of 4.8 million.

The second largest is Wellington with about 0.5 million. It is still a very busy place. The port so well known to generations



of island seamen still there, but very different to what it was when many of them sailed into it. No longer the industrial look to it, more the developed leisure waterfront with facilities that attract many to it from land and sea. It is a very scenic port and I sat, looked out over it and reflected on the many young men from previous generations who found it so attractive they decided to stay there and not return to their island homeland.

There are very few of them left, although their families are now an integrated part of the New Zealand community.

Christchurch, the biggest city in the South Island is where I met Iain Macleod, *Iain Tohan, Gress*.



185 Empty Chairs

a temporary art installation
reflecting on the loss of lives, livelihood and
living in our city following the earthquake of
22nd February 2011

The concept of The Empty Chair depicting the loss of
someone has been used repeatedly across time and
culture.

When artist (Samuel) Luke
Fildes (1844 - 1927)
learned of the death of
Charles Dickens for whom
he had illustrated a book,
he drew "The Empty Chair,
Gads Hill - Ninth of June
1870" showing Dickens'
empty desk and chair.

It was inspiration to Vincent
Van Gogh when in November
1888 he portrayed the
differences between his
temperament and approach to
art and life, and that of fellow
artist Gauguin in two separate
paintings.



Queenstown



Wellington

We recollected and shared Sgoil a'Bhac stories and saw in our minds' eyes the old school that has long since gone along with most of the people who made it so much part of our early lives.

Christchurch makes the visitor feel uneasy. The visible marks of the earthquake in 2011 which took 189 lives are still there to see. Much remedial work has been done but much more has to be done. And the people live in the knowledge that such destructive power is under their feet at all times. One stark reminder of the last earthquake is a display of 189 empty chairs, all painted white, representing each life lost. Yet people live there, are happy there and just accept the situation and get on with their lives like any other place.

New Zealand is a pleasant place to visit. We only saw one example of rudeness all the time we were there. A small cafe/shop that specialised in pies in a small place called Springfield. We thought it was us, but an American couple got the same, and we all laughed about it at Arthur's Pass, when we saw them an hour later. Pity about the rudeness as the pies were really nice.

We took photos of all the cafes. We enjoyed stopping and sampling their wares. Not a bad score the three weeks we were there.

There is much to see on the west coast of the south island. One of the favourite ways of viewing it is from

One of the roads, South Island



a helicopter. Not for me, and the navigator preferred to sample the Hot Pools in Frans Josef.

We also liked and found the Maori names so interesting, although I hadn't realised the Maoris hadn't come to New Zealand until the 9th century, but one of the nicest towns had a very English name, Queenstown.

Much of the land is very fertile. Sheep and cattle by the thousand. They make good wine. They are great rugby players. They have some of the fastest sailing boats in the world.

Oh they have their arguments. They have interesting politics. Much talk about the different philosophy of the new government. House prices too high.

We left one of the most interesting places until the end of the trip. Waipu is a 2 hour drive north of Auckland. That is where Rev Norman Macleod, a native of Assynt and his followers landed in 1853. Others followed them, first to Cape Breton, Canada, then Australia before settling in Waipu. His and their stories are kept alive in the museum, the church and the cemetery to this day. I also saw that Rev Angus Macdonald from Keose was a minister there early last century. I had never heard of him.

I can understand for myself, regrettably too late, how life there had so much to attract Bacaich, Tungaich and many others over the years.

Iain Tohan & Coinneach



Back Football and Recreation Club - What's on in April?

International Women's Day Celebrations are back!

March saw the Women take over Back Football Club for International Women's Day again this year.

Women of all ages and backgrounds came together with their families and friends this week to celebrate International Women's Day at Back FC and Rec. Club.

The hall was transformed by a team of volunteers into an art exhibition and conference venue ready to host a fantastic collection of artwork from more than 20 different local female artists. The exhibition titled "Celebrating our Women" was officially opened at a breakfast launch on Saturday 10th March

"We were really pleased to host the exhibition again this year and pleased to see some new artists taking part too." said Terri Davies, Sport and Community Project Co-ordinator "It was really inspiring to see the quality and diversity of work produced locally by women."

The art exhibition remained open to the public during the following week attracting a steady stream of visitors some of whom stayed for tea and cake.



On Saturday afternoon around a hundred and fifty women came to the Glow Day. There was a fantastic range of classes and stalls for people to try out new activities and products. Workshops were diverse, with something for everyone and visitors were able to choose from classes in yoga, salsa, bellydancing, flamenco, jewellery making, relaxation/mediation, a selection of beauty treatments, massage, golf tuition and a wide range of stalls selling crafts, beauty products etc. The raffle raised over £150 for Western Isles Women's Aid.

"There was a lovely atmosphere" said Terri "It was just great to see so many women in one place, engaged in interesting and challenging activities and discussions."

"There was a lot of volunteer effort that went into the week's events and we were really grateful to the Back Community Council who did the lunches for us at the conference." commented Terri "feedback from everyone involved has been really positive with folks already talking about plans for next year."

If you'd like to get find out more about activities happening at Back FC and Rec. Club please contact Terri on 01851 820745 or visit our website www.backfrc.org.uk



Dates for your diary:

Family Fun Day	Monday 2nd April, 11am-3pm
Beginners Bowls	Fridays, 1pm
Archery	Wednesdays, 7-9pm
Bike Club	Thursdays, 12-3pm (no club in Easter Holidays)
Book Club	Last Weds of the month, 7pm
Yoga	Monday, 6-7:30pm, 4-wk block starts 23rd April
Get Fit For Summer	6 wks, starts 17th April, Tues 7pm or Thurs 10am

For more information or to make a booking contact Terri on 820745 or visit www.backfrc.org.uk

Bowls

The last open competition of the bowling season, the Kenneth (*Titan*) MacDonald competition took place on Saturday 24th February with 24 players taking part, in two sections of triples, four triples in each section, playing as a round robin format.

When the draw was done there were some interesting games in each section. In section two there was an unbelievable score in the first end, but in the end that team reached the final. The teams that were expected to do well were not as successful as expected in both of the sections, so some of the scores were unpredictable, and a nail biting finish transpired as to who would qualify for the final.

After the break for lunch the scores were tallied and going through to final in section one were T Condie, C MacLean and Anna MacLeod, From section two were P O'Donnell, Agnes Munro and Malky MacLeod, who were the eventual winners. Congratulations to them and to everyone who took part. After the presentation of the trophy, Duncan thanked all who took part and those who provided the soup and sandwiches, and the many donations for the raffle and the sponsors of the event. So ends this bowling season, except for the club championship which took place on the 8th of March. Twenty players enrolled for this competition, and the draw paired some interesting games. In the preliminary round, the four going through were C I MacDonald, James MacLeod, Malky MacLeod and Kenny MacLeod. The players that won in the next round were C I MacDonald, D A Stewart, James MacLeod, P O'Donnell, Malky MacLeod, Iain MacLeod, Kenny MacLeod and Willie MacLeod. The survivors going into the next round were D A Stewart, James MacLeod, Iain MacLeod and Willie MacLeod.

In the semi-finals James convincingly won against D A Stewart, and Iain MacLeod just prevailed against Willie. A very close game, the last game of the competition, the final was contested by James and Iain, with Iain having the upper hand from start to finish, and in the end it was Iain that won. These orange bowls that he plays mesmerise his opponents! Congratulations to Iain and thanks to all the players who took part.



Terry Condie, League Champion 2018



Back Bowls Singles Champion Iain MacLeod

The final placings in the league were Terry Condie winning, and Malky second. Thanks to all the bowlers and especially Duncan for organising all the competitions.

D A Stewart

Haggis Tournament Winners Terry Condie & Sheena Macdonald - as reported in last month's issue ▼



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Our Visit from an Evacuee

On 21st February, we were delighted to have a guest speaker in with us to discuss her experience of evacuation. Mrs Pat Macleod was welcomed in by EP5-7 who were eager to hear all of Pat's stories about the evacuation process and what life was like during the Blitz. Pat was evacuated from London to Lewis during the Blitz, when she was just 3 ½ years old. We would like to send a warm thank you to Pat for taking the time to come in, tell her story and also share lots of exciting pictures and books with us.



◀ Our Visit from An Evacuee

Charlie P6 and David P5

Some comments from the children included:

"I enjoyed listening to all of the stories because I could imagine what life was like back then." - Mairi EP7

"I really enjoyed learning about evacuation, we got to see her ration books and she told us that the gas masks had pictures of Mickey Mouse on them." - Kyla EP6

The Diary of Anne Frank & WW2

EP5/6 has been studying 'The Diary of Anne Frank' and learning about what life would have been like during WW2. It has been a very interesting topic. Below are comments from the children detailing their personal highlights.

We enjoyed the day our friend's dad came in to tell us about the Morse Code and how it is used. We even got to send three letter words to each other using an original Morse Code Box.

I really enjoyed studying the Anne Frank story. It has been a great experience to learn that such a young girl who started off with a happy life ended up having such a sad one. She loved writing in her red tartan diary 'Kitty' every day.

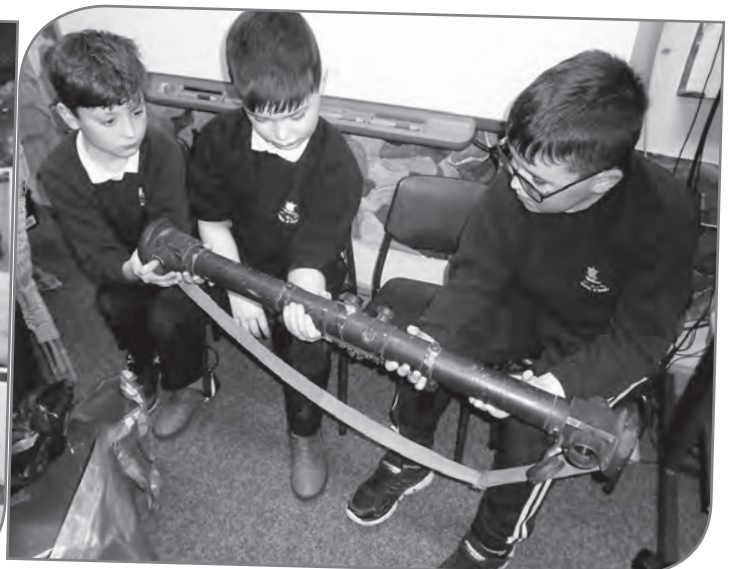
Joel P5

We could not believe that Anne Frank was in hiding for over two years. We learned that Anne wrote a diary during WW2 and we have been reading that diary in class. Our favourite part was when Mr Dussel (Mr Pfeffer) came into hiding and shared a room with Anne.

Luc P5 and Emily P5

I enjoyed when Jess' dad took in his range finder and told us how it had been used and why. The range finder was used to find out how far away the target was. It was so interesting.

Oscar P6





What we enjoyed most was making our WW2 plane models. Some made bombers, some made spitfires. There was also a model of the Walrus seaplane (made by Jess) which operated from the slipway at Cuddy Point. The seaplanes were used for air sea rescues and submarine hunting in the Minch.

Ross P6 and Jess P5

I could not believe that a real live WW2 evacuee came



to speak to our class! Mrs Macleod was evacuated twice during the war, once to Leurbost in Lochs then later on to Bedford. We all loved listening to her stories.

Mark P5

We enjoyed making the WW2 timeline which starts in 1933 when Hitler first came to power.

Kieran P5 and Deacon P5

Rotary Global Swimarathon - Swim to End Polio

The Rotary Club of Stornoway co-ordinated a Swimarathon as part of a Rotary International event. The purpose of the event was to raise funds to help towards finally eradicating Polio.

Five of our pupils participated in the Rotary Swimarathon this year which was held at the Lewis Sports Centre on Saturday 24th February. Money collected so far through sponsoring is £385. As well as raising money the pupils had a fun day and were delighted to be part of the world's biggest one-day swimming event.

Well done to Bella Wilson, Kelsey Gillies, Oscar Sobul, Luc Smith and David Finlayson for their participation in this event.



Tong School



Roving Reporters

Edith, Naomi, Rosena, Charlotte, Arran and Sarah have been responsible for this month's news.

Nursery News

The youngest learners in our school are always very creative and we have included two photographs showing their art work. The children in the Gaelic nursery have been reading Katie Morag stories and decorating her welly boots! The children in the English nursery were busy making big daffodils to celebrate St David's Day.



◀ Beautiful daffodils

mhuir breagha.
Bha an taigh aice àlainn. Air an t-slighe air ais chaidh sinn gu Tursachan Calanais, bha e cho sporsail.

Tchoukball

Two teams consisting of seven players participated in a local Tchoukball festival on 28th February. Our reporters asked why this team game is so enjoyable. Neve, P7, commented that the game involves everyone. Naomi, P7, added that it is a good way to show everyone's strength and team work. Ruby stated it is all about team work and fun!

Le Lylya, GM 2.

World Book Day

World Book Day was celebrated in the school on Thursday, 1st March. Everyone could dress up as a character or bring in a favourite book to share. We were amazed at some of the costumes as we had Cinderella, Snow White, Anna/Elsa from Frozen, The Big Bad Wolf, Mr Stink, Matilda, Mr Twit, Harry Potter and many more characters with us on the day! World Book Day is promoted in the school to encourage everyone to read, read, read. Once you become a reader you are always a reader.

Turas gu Taigh Ceitidh Mòrag / Our trip to Katie Morag's house

GM 1 + 2 have been reading about Katie Morag and her adventures for their class project. One day they went away to visit Katie Morag's house! Lylya has written about their fun trip:

Chaidh sinn gu taigh Ceitidh Mòrag air bus beag comhla ri Miss Munro agus Mrs MacIver. Chunnaic sinn an taigh aice agus a

▼ GM1+2 outside Katie Morag's house



Bring and buy sale

We held a Bring and Buy sale to raise money for the Primary Seven trip to Fairburn Activity Centre. Many people donated toys, games, teddy bears, books and delicious home baking. An amazing total of £520 was raised and will be a great boost to the fund. Thank you to all who donated and purchased items.

Animals from the Arctic and Antarctic

P2,3,4 have been discovering about Arctic and Antarctic animals as part of their class topic. The creative pupils have designed and made homes for animals living in the polar regions.

They have also examined similarities and differences between the Arctic and the Antarctic. P2,3,4 are using the homes they have designed to generate ideas for story-writing and they also hope to write interesting fact files.

We can't wait to read all of this exciting writing!

Special homes designed by P2,3,4 ▼





▲ New welly boots for Katie Morag!



Lorne and Martin in the middle of the navigation course ▲

Navigation Bronze Star Award

As part of their class project on orienteering, P5/6 recently took part in the Young Navigation Bronze Star Award scheme. Each pupil was given a map and challenged to find different spiky orange tags around the playground and the garden. The orienteering course was fun and all pupils received their Navigation Bronze Star Award. Well done P5/6!

Weather Focus

Primary One and Two have been learning about Weather for their class project. We have included Erin France's super story about a stormy day:

A Stormy Day

It is a stormy day so I can't go out to play today. The wind is howling like a worried wolf. The rain is cannon balling down! The thunder is as loud as a lion roaring in the jungle. The lightning is as scary as a fire ant. The sky is as black as the new dinosaur in the new Jurassic World movie. I feel excited.

By Erin, P2

Pàrant 's Pàiste

We are having lots of fun at our Pàrant 's Pàiste group each Tuesday where we take part in craft activities, song and play. Why don't you come along to join us? Everyone is welcome.



Celebrating our Island

Primary Six and Seven have been discovering all about our own island for their class project. They gave their brains a good work - out by thinking of alphabet acrostic poems to promote our island to visitors. Read Joel's persuasive poem below:

Isle of Lewis

Amazing beaches, so many to see
 Brilliant views for you and me
 Callanish Stones are very nice
 Dine out in Style at Bangla Spice
 Excellent restaurants all over town
 Fabulous Food so come on down
 Great shops to choose from if you'd like to buy
 Hundreds of things for you to try
 If you're looking for somewhere to stay
 Just head to the Caladh Inn or the Caberfeidh
 Kind people everywhere you go
 Loads stop to talk to you, even people you do not know
 Many nice people for you to meet
 Not many people you won't want to greet
 Overall, Lewis is a great place to be
 Popular attractions for you to see
 Quickly you will get to love our island
 Rarely, you will be getting tanned
 Spending your days, having fun
 Though you might not see the sun
 Unbelievably tidy, it's almost spotless
 Very clean, you won't find much mess
 Why not come to Lewis, you'll love it so much
 X-rays in the hospital if you need to get in touch
 You will definitely want to come back
 Zero hesitations to go and pack

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Adventures in Lambing!

Jayne getting involved at an early age!

As spring approaches, Jayne Macarthur, (*nighean mac Bomie*), tells us of the highs and lows that come with the arrival of the lambing season!

It's approaching the end of March as I write this and that can only mean one thing for those of us who have sheep: lambing time has arrived and so starts about a month or so of early mornings and late nights, highs and (hopefully not too many) lows, laughs and escapades, and many, many miles walked up and down the croft checking progress and keeping the sheep happy (my knees are crying in protest already). Lambing time is the most important time for crofters as it is the culmination of many months of hard work over the winter looking after the sheep and keeping them alive and healthy to have lambs that they can sell in the autumn.

Ever since I was a wee girl I've been around sheep and have many memories of sick or orphaned lambs getting warm in front of granny's stove, and bottle feeding the pets. When I moved home in 2012 I found that I enjoyed going down the croft again and helping out. As I work at home and spend a lot of time working on screen all day, I found the break beneficial and started spending more time with the sheep and being outdoors.

To paraphrase Charles Dickens, lambing is the best of times and it's the worst of times. I am definitely not a morning person but, unfortunately for me, early starts are a must during lambing. Sheep like to lamb in the early hours and when the weather is bad (how inconvenient) as their instinct is that predators are less likely to be around then. Like most crofters on the island, our sheep lamb outside unless there is a problem or the weather is really terrible. Thankfully, we don't have things like badgers or foxes to worry about, but crows and buzzards are always a risk. A weak lamb could easily fall prey to a crow but if you are on top of things and see the lamb is poorly, it can be taken inside or to a safer place for a couple of days to build up its strength.

For this reason, regular 'lamb patrols' are carried out during peak lambing time. This is made a bit easier by the colour



coding system used when the sheep are with the rams in the autumn, so come the spring we have a fair idea of who is due to lamb when. Most sheep are happy to lamb by themselves and everything goes without a hitch, but sometimes they need a helping hand. The lamb might be particularly big or, if there's twins, the first one might be coming breach. It helps if the sheep are a wee bit friendly as it can be hard trying to catch them in these situations when they are already in distress.

Some of the ewes are fiercely protective of their lambs and won't let you near them, others are happier to let you pick up the lambs as soon as they are born to spray their belly buttons with iodine (to prevent infection), some haven't a clue what's going if they are lambing for the first time and can run off for a wee while until they figure out they have a lamb to look after, and some are just terrible mothers full stop (rare). We had one a few years ago that hated every lamb she had and in the end we had to sell her as it was more hassle than it was worth to persist with her.

As I've got to know the sheep I admit I have a few favourites: Meg the Keg, Diana, Number 61, and Sammy, to name a few (only the special ones get names – we've also got a Dotty and a Shirley). Sammy is a law unto herself and one of our lambing escapades from last year involved her and her lamb (Sammy Jr) escaping from the croft and up the steps at the back of Shen's old *bàthach* and up onto the roof. That was a close one!

Lambs are only cute until they are about 3 weeks old. At that point they run riot and are impossible to catch when they are going at 100 mph. The only exception to this is seeing them bouncing about and running their 'wacky races' up and down the croft in little gangs. That's when you know spring is definitely in the air!

Finally, my top tips are eat when you can, sleep when you can, make sure you have iodine spray and gloves on you at all times, and don't scrimp on the handcream: you will need it.

You can keep up to date with Jayne's crofting by following her on twitter @jaynemaebac



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Ross County Hospitality Trip

Last month Kenny Maciver told how the Ross County X1 v Lewis & Harris Select fundraising football match for Bethesda Hospice came about. This month D A Stewart covers the hospitality package enjoyed at Ross County by some Bacachs who were the successful bidders for it at the charity Auction!

When Bethesda held their fundraiser organised by K A MacIver, included was a visit from Ross County football club, and an auction of football items in the evening. The items collected by Kenny included two hospitality packages from the Chairman of the football club, along with other items from most of the SPL clubs.

When the hospitality packages were on offer two or three of the Back committee decided to bid, and were fortunate to receive one of the packages! The package was for six people to attend a game of their choice at any time at Victoria Park. We thought it would be a problem to persuade another three people to go, but we were surprised at the enthusiasm to go along!

The six who went were Kenny (Fiadh) MacIver, Duncan (Suggan) MacLean, A J (Moley) MacLeod, D A (Cab)Stewart, Kenny (BBC Radio) Maciver, and Iain (Gress) MacLennan. Anything that Kenny organises is always well done - he contacted Ross County and organised everything with them - and also the ferry, transport to and from the game, and accommodation for all of us. We boarded the ferry full of enthusiasm to see the game with one member of the squad supporting the opposition - but it was all about enjoying our visit! We were warmly welcomed by the officials of the club, especially as we were from Back - who have sent a number of the young talent in the development club to improve their football! In fact we saw a bounce game that involved at least one of them, and he gave a good account of himself!



The game was not very entertaining but the hospitality after the game was second to none. They could not do enough for us, plenty food and plenty refreshments all included in the package, and a tour to meet some of the players and to see the facilities available. As I mentioned at the beginning, the demand for the opportunity to be there was great, and others will, I am sure, be going too. Mr MacGregor was apologetic that he could not spend as much time as he would wish with us, but what he did will forever be appreciated by the lucky six who had an unforgettable time with them. The result favoured one of the six, but win lose or draw it was very enjoyable! A huge thanks to Kenny for all the work he put in to make it a day to remember.

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Proposed Assingnation of a Croft

Donald Angus Stewart is applying to assign the tenancy of the croft at 10 Back, Stornoway, to Derek Stewart of 24 Springfield Road, Stornoway.

Written comments from those with a relevant interest (which may be made public) to:

Crofting Commission, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW, info@crofting.scotland.gov.uk by 5 May 2018.

Please note that any comments you provide are part of an open process and will be made available to interested parties. Your comments would also be released under a Freedom of Information enquiry.

Old Photos

1.



2.



3.



4.



This Page:

- 4. Ian Murdo, Mardo, Jackie & Seumas Iain
- 5. Mardo with his niece and nephew, Duncan & Claire Cook
- 6. Anna & Murdo Macdonald 40 Gress

Opposite Page:

- 1. John Morrison & Shogan
- 2. Swannie's Granny Macdonald, Outend Coll
- 3. Swannie, Murdo & Jock MacIennan

5.



6.

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Back in Time

April 1948

On Leave

Home on leave at present are Alexander Maclellan, New St, Back; William Macdonald, Church St, Back, both from the army and John Mackay, Merchant Service, 23 Back.

Obituaries

The death took place in Back recently of Miss Catherine Macleod, eldest daughter of the late Malcolm and Margaret Macleod. She passed away peacefully at her home 16 Coll, Back and the funeral took place to Gress cemetery.

The death of Mrs Catherine Macaulay, wife of the late Murdo Macaulay, which took place at her home, 19 Coll, Back recently, has left a void in the religious life of the community. A woman of strong character she was a daughter of the late Murdo and Margaret Smith, Tong, and was one of a family of nine, of whom only one, a sister, Mrs Donald Macleod, Oakland, California, survives. Her husband pre-deceased her eight years ago, and two sisters and two brothers died within recent years.

Mrs Macaulay, who was 80 years of age, had been confined

to the house for a number of years, but her indomitable spirit triumphed over her bodily infirmities, and she maintained a lively and helpful interest in all that went on around her. From an early age she was a member of the church, and it was a sad blow to her when her health failed and she was not able to attend the services, but her fellow members of the Church did not forget her, and drawn by her calm acceptance and deep faith, they were seldom for long without paying her a visit. She found great joy in being among those with whom she had so much in common. Many visitors to the last communions felt keenly that she was no longer in her usual place by the fire, waiting to welcome them, but they take comfort as her family may in the knowledge that she is at last free of the fetters of this world, and is reaping the reward of a just and blameless life, a shining example to those she has left behind. In addition to her sister, Mrs Macaulay, is survived by two sons and a daughter at home, and by three sons and three daughters all of whom are abroad, Angus is in Canada and the remainder in the United States, as well as 17 grandchildren and one great grandchild. The funeral, which was largely attended, took place to Gress cemetery, and the community join in expressing their deep sympathy to her family in their sad loss.

Back Needs a Historical Society – Food for Thought

In February I had the privilege, as a representative of Stornoway Historical Society, of attending the Outer Hebrides Heritage Network Conference in Benbecula. The Conference was hosted by the Heritage Team from Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann officers based in Lewis and in Uist.

The conference consisted of visits, presentations and discussions. We were given a tour of Taigh Chearsabhaigh, the museum and exhibition space run by Comann Eachdraidh Uibhist a Tuath, followed by a visit to Carinish Old School. This building has recently been bought by the said Comann Eachdraidh and we were told about their hopes for the project.

We also visited Kildonan in South Uist and were shown round the wonderful museum there and its new extension. This museum is run by and was set up by volunteers. On our final day we visited Ceann na h-Airigh, Grimsay, a newly converted church which now houses an archive, community space, the Post Office and a café. Our final visit was to the old Nurse's Cottage in Berneray, where the local Comann Eachdraidh has an archive and permanent exhibition. All these visits showed just what can be achieved by willing volunteers, support from the Museum Service and knowledge and experience of the varied grants for which applications can be made.

In addition to these visits, a day was spent in Griminish where presentations were given by representatives of the Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann staff and also by two members of the Highland Museums' Forum, a support for small museums in the Highlands.

Delegates at the conference represented Comainn Eachdraidh and other groups with similar interests from the Butt to Barra. The following groups from Lewis and Harris – Urras nan Tursachan (Callanish), Kinloch Historical Society, Bernera Historical Society, Scalpay Historical Society, Comunn Eachdraidh Loch Roag an Ear, Tolsta Historical Society, Comann Eachdraidh Nis, Comunn Eachdraidh na Pairc,

Comann Eachdraidh an Taobh Siar, Comunn Eachdraidh Uig. Representatives from Point Historical Society, North Lochs Historical Society or Carloway were unavailable to attend.

From the list above, it is obvious that only one area of Lewis, and indeed the whole of the Outer Hebrides, does not have any Comann Eachdraidh (Historical Society) or archive, the district of Back. This lack of a Comann Eachdraidh was commented on with some surprise by a number of those at the Conference.

In the past there was a Comman Eachdraidh in our area led by Kenny Tweed, Seoras Shoidhean and Domhnall Alasdair Stewart along with other volunteers. For a variety of reasons this sadly fell by the wayside.

Loch a Tuath News helps to contribute to our knowledge of the past by publishing articles and old photographic memories. MANY people have said that an area this size should have a Historical Society where archives can be stored and exhibited and our past can be preserved for the benefit of future generations. We can only understand our present if we have knowledge of the past.

There is a wealth of knowledge, many artefacts and records which need to be retained. The further time goes on more of this knowledge will be lost, records and artefacts will be lost or destroyed. Do we want this to happen?

I hope that this will be a starting point for discussion and that there are people of all ages with enthusiasm who might be interested in getting together and forming a Comunn Eachdraidh Steering Group. I am sure help and advice would be given from neighbouring groups and the museum services.

Please contact Loch a Tuath News if you are interested in being involved in the development of a Historical Society and help could be given in coordinating a meeting.

A. T.

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Back Brownies

Brownies

On Saturday 25th February, Back Brownies celebrated World Thinking Day with a trip down to Tarbert to join with Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Seniors and Leaders from all over Lewis and Harris, in a fun afternoon of games, singing and dance from around the World.



World Thinking Day is celebrated around the world on 22nd February by all members of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. It has taken place since 1926 and is celebrated worldwide. It is a day to think of each other and recognise the impact girls can make both in the closer community and the big wide world. The date is significant as it is both the birth date of Lord Baden Powell, founder of the Scout and Guide Movement, and his wife Olave, who served as World Chief Guide.



If interested in helping out as an adult helper then please get in touch.....we are always looking, it's great fun and without helpers we would not be able to run Back Brownies.

Brownies is for girls aged 7-10 years - if you wish to join our fabulous, funny, funky group then go online at www.girlguiding.org.uk and register!

Kate Muir

kate@oorhoose.co.uk

Our own girls had a great day in Harris, we bussed down after lunch on Saturday with members of Stornoway and Point Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Leaders. On arrival at Sir E Scott School the girls were very impressed... a school with a pool, huge gym and a dance studio! We then met up with the other girls and split into smaller groups where we learnt dances from Denmark, songs from Africa, and various games from around the world. It all ended with a 'campfire' sing song and a hilarious mass dance line!

Back Brownies that managed to make it down were Jess Muir, Amelia Mackay, Chloe Dempsey, Maree Martin, Evie Magee, Victoria Sobul, Ava Mackenzie and Hope Campbell.

Huge thanks to all the organisers!



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A Royal Invitation

A Memorable trip to the Palace

Last December I was busy opening Christmas cards, when I noticed amongst them a really fancy envelope. To my great surprise, I realised it had a Buckingham Palace franking mark! I quickly dropped the other cards and opened it only to find an invitation from HRH Prince Charles - to a reception at Buckingham Palace, for services to MacMillan Cancer Support. I found out that another member of our committee had also received an invite and we would be amongst 150 other volunteers who had been invited.

We travelled down to London the day before; just to make sure that we got there in time. About 4pm we all met in the conference area of our hotel and were taken by bus to Buckingham Palace. After being checked by the police, we all walked in through the front gate and under the balcony where you usually see the royals standing on special occasions. As we made our way through the

courtyard into the palace, I realised that I was about to walk up the same steps as dignitaries do when they meet the Queen! We walked up the stairs and looked around this beautiful building, steeped in history. Having been checked again by security, we were escorted to the main picture gallery room, where we were continually served canapes and Highbury champagne – this room was spectacular, full of all types of paintings.

Prince Charles arrived through huge doors and was introduced to the MacMillan Cancer Support Chief Executive, before circulating. We had been informed that we would all be leaving the palace at a certain time and apprised of the protocol for meeting him. HRH had been making his way through the room for well over an hour but was still a bit away from where we were standing. We thought that he would not manage to talk to everyone, within the timespan, but a member of the MacMillan staff came over to say that he would not be leaving after all and wanted to have a chat with everyone at the event. It didn't actually feel that long until we were

being introduced as being from the Isle of Lewis and he went straight into conversation with us. "You have come a long way" he said and asked if we had come over by Calmac ferry. I told him we had flown to Glasgow then on to London City and he asked if we flew Loganair or Flybe to Glasgow – he seemed



pretty clued up on island travel! He went on to chat about various things, including Harris gin and the beautiful bottle that it was presented in. He said he liked gin and that it was also his grand mama's favourite tippie. He also spoke of his love for tweed and I still can't believe that I had such a laugh with him. He was so down to earth (although smaller than I thought) and made me feel at ease, as I was rather nervous. He thanked us for what we did with all our fundraising for MacMillan.

It was an honour for us to represent the Lewis committee who all volunteer their time to fundraise for MacMillan and help those in our community who are going through a cancer diagnosis. It was a day I will never forget and I feel truly honoured to have been invited to the palace and to have met him.

Mabel Macleay

Mabel is Katie Ann Gheddie's daughter from 48 Back and her dad Murdo Murray (Peh) was from New Tolsta. She also lived at 6 Gress with her Auntie Ishbal & Uncle Alex.

Golden Wedding



Pictured are our parents Donald and Anne MacLeod of Aird Tong on their wedding day on the 23rd March 1968. Married in Elstow Abbey Church in Bedford, England. Donald, better known as Churchill, youngest son of George (*Cruinnag*) and Mary Anne MacLeod, Aird Tong, and Anne, eldest daughter of Eric and Agnes Frobisher, Morrison Square, Tong, returned to the island shortly after their marriage, built their house and settled at 15a Aird Tong. Here they raised us four girls, poor Da living with 5 females all these years. Their family has expanded to 8 grandsons and 5 granddaughters ranging in age from 3 years to 25 years old, it's a busy corner at 15a Aird Tong! On the 23rd March 2018 we celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary with a gathering of family and friends for a lovely meal in the Croft Room at the Caladh Hotel. As their lovely picture shows, the 50 years have been very kind to them, I hope we get their youthful genes!

Congratulations from all the family on reaching this milestone, wishing you many more years of blissful married life. Love from Mandy, Donna, Elaine and Annismarie.



Caley Thistle

Seumas Grant was recently the mascot for his favourite football team, Inverness Caledonian Thistle. Seumas is the son of Andrew and Eilidh (nee Macdonald) who live in Avoch. Seumas' granny is Mary Macdonald (nee Campbell of 85 Coll) ►

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