



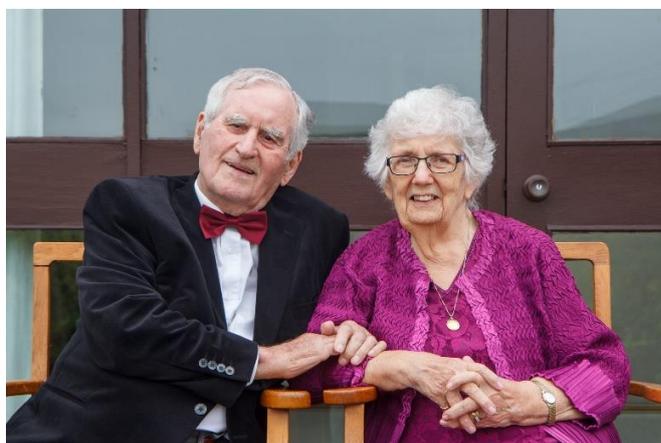
FREE CHURCH of SCOTLAND

Portree and Bracadale Newsletter 1

Contributions to PortreeandBracadaleNewsletter@outlook.com

Celebrating 100 years

King George V was on the throne, car tax discs were introduced and the first public performance of a magician sawing a woman in half took place. Comedian Tommy Cooper, land and water speed record holder Donald Campbell and Christian author John Stott were all born. Albert Einstein received the Nobel prize for physics and the British Legion was inaugurated.



Amongst all of this in 1921 was the birth of a baby boy in Tarbert, Harris. One of six children whose family moved to Kilmuir on Skye shortly after his birth, Murdo MacDonald endured early tragedy in his life with the untimely death of his father but he went on to study, serve his country, teach and find love and faith.

On 23rd August 2021 Murdo was delighted to receive a card from the Queen to help him celebrate his 100th birthday in style. We were privileged to spend some time in the company of Murdo and his wife Marie to learn more about his century of life.

Murdo enjoyed a childhood in Linicro and was schooled at Kilmuir. There were 75 pupils on the roll in those days and Murdo describes himself as a good boy who was never in trouble for anything serious.

History and geography were his favourite subjects and he recalls having to always salute the head teacher. He was the dux of the school and remained there until age 15 ½ before going on to an apprenticeship in gardening in Fort William as one of a team of 7 estate gardeners.

Although Murdo was exempt from being called up for military service due to working the land

he volunteered to sign up and became an armourer in the air force. After service at various UK stations deployment abroad followed as part of the South East Asia Command during which he experienced the total devastation of Hiroshima. The volume of innocent civilian deaths and destruction caused him to question the value of war and left a lasting imprint on his mind.

During one deployment Murdo had been tasked to form part of a mission to bring supplies to troops under fire from Japanese forces. Shortly before he was due to embark on the mission on his Sunderland flying boat Murdo was withdrawn from the mission without reason and was replaced by a fellow airman. Tragically, the crew did not return from their mission and

were lost. Murdo, having been just hours from a similar fate, was able to complete his service.

Murdo and Marie met on the boat from Portree to Kyle whilst Murdo was on his way to work in Inverness at a fruit farm and Marie returning to Glasgow to continue her domestic science studies. Despite having grown up a short distance from each other they had not previously spent time together but the chance meeting on the boat was to pave the way for a marriage which at last count had reached 64 years (they think!).

Marie, a Christian from a young age, had always known the presence of God and talks fondly of Faith Mission events in her beloved Uig. Murdo, on the other hand, although having spent many years attending church had not yet been converted and found himself struggling whilst working away in Fife. Just as Marie was finding herself writing a letter explaining that they couldn't continue together unequally yoked Murdo knelt down at his bed to pray to God and ask for forgiveness. That same night he wrote a letter to Marie confirming his faith, these letters crossed in the post and the rest makes very happy history.

The couple married in Inverness and Murdo gave his first ever speech in public. As he stood to speak all the heads before him bowed and he wasn't sure if he was to give a speech or lead a prayer meeting! At that time a couple would receive a tax rebate if they married before 1 April, Murdo explained, with a grin, the reason why they married on 31st March – before visiting Jersey for honeymoon.

In the early 1970's Murdo and Marie returned to Skye where they attended Kensaleyre Church of Scotland where Marie especially helped to rejuvenate the congregation resulting in one communion day when 13 people came to faith aged between 14 and 76.

Sons Ivor and Eric arrived and have since blessed the couple with 6 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. Murdo and Marie live in Kensaleyre where they continue to enjoy their garden and making each other laugh.

Quickfire round:

Secret to a happy marriage?

Murdo – Meeting Marie and being a Christian

Marie – Being with the right person. Never letting the sun go down on your wrath.

Secret to a long life?

Both agreed – Being content with what you have and having faith no matter what troubles you have in your life.

A tip for young people today?

Murdo – Have faith in yourself and the Lord and avoid temptations

Marie – Hear the gospel.

Favourite food

Murdo – Porridge (a meal he has had almost every day for 100 years!) or haddock

Marie – She is easily pleased and hasn't got a favourite.

Favourite part of the Bible

Murdo – He has recently been thinking about what Peter saw when he looked into Jesus eyes when he denied him.

Marie – The Lord is my shepherd, no want shall I know

Thank you to Murdo and Marie for spending time with us. We wish them both many more years of health and happiness and also a **very happy 90th birthday to Marie** who celebrated her special day with family on Monday 13th September 2021.

Donnie's Devotional (in (almost) 100 words or less).



This morning I was reading psalm 84. It was a psalm that was very poignant when we first went into Lockdown last year. I remember highlighting to you verses 5-7,

*⁵ Blessed are those whose strength is in you,
whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.*

*⁶ As they pass through the Valley of Baka,
they make it a place of springs.*

At the time I said that we would be surprised at the blessings we would experience when we were passing through the Valley of Covid, and so we were. Likewise now, we walk through another valley but as we put our faith in God and find our strength in him, as we set our hearts on travelling with him and for him in the coming months, we will find many springs of blessings for which we will praise God. Trust him.

Running their race

Congratulations to all who took part in the Skye Half Marathon 2021 on



Saturday 11th September. The competitors were blessed with a dry day but faced some challenging winds in addition to the notorious hills on the course. It was great to see so many local faces smiling through the pain after having missed out on the race in 2020. Plenty of time left to start training for 2022 so get those trainers on!

Pictured are I-r Helen MacLeod, Caitlin and Maureen MacLean and Abby MacLean

Gillie takes charge

Our very own John Angus "Gillie" Gillies, who is accustomed to directing the congregation in worship took charge of an altogether different gathering on Saturday 18th September when he was given the honour of refereeing the 125th Camanachd Cup Final in Oban. Having



Credit to Stephen Lawson Photography

been part of the 1990 Skye side that famously returned home successful Gillie found himself on the other side of the whistle to become the first Sgiathanach to take charge in 107 years. Well done Gillie and eventual winners Kinlochsheil.

Baptism – Glen Mackay

Sunday 29th August 2021 saw the baptism of Glen Mackay aged 19 months, son of Grant and Irene Mackay and little brother to Hamish. A much delayed event due to Coronavirus restrictions it was a real blessing to be present with the family. Donnie G spoke from Acts 2:29-41 explaining the purpose of baptism, the welcoming of Glen into the church family and the promises made to Glen by God.



New Arrivals!

Congratulations to Rolf and Katherine Napoli on the arrival of their first grandchildren and to Mary MacDonald on more great-grandchildren.

Pictured (l-r) are Lydia & Mitch Turner of New South Wales, Australia with Sullivan Jude Napoli-Turner born September 11th 2021 and Holly & Ross Hunter of Auchterarder with Isabel Winnie Napoli Hunter born 18th June 2021.

Six in sixty with.....Mairi Ferguson

Each edition we will be asking one member of the congregation 6 Mastermind-worthy questions in 60 seconds.



Favourite place on Skye: Breackrey, Culnacnoc where I spent all my childhood holidays at my Granny's.

Happiest memory: A holiday in Austria which our family booked for Alistair and me to celebrate my 60th birthday. We spent a week in Vienna then a week in the mountains.

Favourite Bible verse: I have a few – Psalm 61 v 2&3; Isaiah 26 v 3; Proverbs 3 v 5&6.

Best piece of advice ever given to you: Always begin the day with God.

Favourite subject at school: Definitely maths.

Red sauce or brown sauce on a bacon roll: Neither! I think that these sauces are an insult to good food and hide the true flavour of the food. I like a little touch of mustard on a bacon roll.



New Building update – the Church on Shepherd’s Way.

Now that the darker nights are returning, the six lampposts at the site at Bealach nan Ciobairean light up every night, just to remind us that the land is still there with all its potential. However, the only activity that seems to be taking place is the growth of the weeds, undisturbed and flourishing.

What are the reasons for the delay in progress?:

- The Building Warrant promised for August last year did not come through until December
- Because of Covid-related delays in the building world, our project manager was not able to invite building companies to consider the project until May this year. Consequently, these companies could not deliver their estimates to the Building Committee until one month ago (mid-August)
- In the meantime, costs have increased ridiculously over the last 9 months, more rapidly than in any period in the last 30 years – a sheet of plasterboard in December last year cost £5.50, now it costs almost £8; a wooden ceiling joist at £1.25 per metre now costs nearly £2.50; plywood has doubled in price during the same time
- The outcome is that the New Building cost estimates are much higher than we had expected (we are not allowed to disclose the actual figures until the contract is placed).



What next?

- We continue to work on the basis that we shouldn't embark on a project without sitting down to see if we can complete it (as per our Lord's advice, Luke 14:28)
- As our minister has already explained, on 20th August the Building Committee reviewed the New Building project in light of these greatly increased costs. We asked ourselves searching questions about the whole purpose of the project
- At the end of our meeting, despite the gap in our funds, we considered that it was right to go ahead. After our decision had been made, the minister spoke words of encouragement to us, then his phone buzzed with the message that a donation of £100,000 was on its way. We take heart from this evidence of God's perfect timing. Since then, there have been donations amounting to another £20,000
- As ever, it is also gratifying to see the regular £2000+ per month that you, the congregation, continue to give.

Therefore, in principle we are proceeding. We expect to review the outcome of the various professional discussions in early October, and as soon as possible after that to invite a specific company to carry out the work. At this stage we cannot predict when the work will actually commence.

At the end of the day, it's not really about a building and its costs, it's about our desire to worship God in a secure and identifiable situation in the community that we seek to serve. As our minister keeps reminding us, we worship the Good Shepherd who wants his kingdom to include everyone in Portree and Bracadale. It's our privilege to be a small part of that kingdom-building.

Dr Charles L Crichton
Chairman, New Building Committee

Kitchen Corner – Ginger Fudge

Thanks to Mairi Ferguson for one of her favourite recipes (no red or brown sauce in sight!). Credit to the WFM Favourite Recipes book. We are available for taste tests!

Ingredients: 4oz (100g) margarine
Small tin of condensed milk
2 tablespoons syrup
3oz (75g) sugar
8oz (225g) ginger nut biscuits,
crushed
1 teaspoon ground ginger
5oz (150g) cooking chocolate,
melted

Method:

1. Put margarine, syrup, milk & sugar in pan.
2. Bring to boil and simmer for 8 minutes.
3. Remove from heat, add ginger and biscuits and mix well.
4. Press mixture into a greased Swiss roll tin.
5. Cover with melted chocolate.
6. Cut into squares when set.

A Royal Appointment

The future King of Great Britain recently had the privilege of meeting Elder Peter MacDonald on Thursday 16th September whilst on a whistle-stop tour of Portree and Dunvegan. This comes almost twenty years after Peter's father met the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh at the same location during their Golden Jubilee tour of the Highlands in 2002.

Thank you

Duncan and Lydia wish to thank everyone for their kind donations on their recent departure to Helensburgh. A generous sum of over £2800 was raised and Duncan said "We're humbled by your generosity and really appreciate the gift and your prayers for us".

Your Newsletter Needs You!

We hope you have enjoyed edition 1 of the new look newsletter.



We plan to publish every 2-3 months but we need your help. If you have a story, poem, picture, recipe, prayer point or anything else you think would be suitable please let us know. The newsletter can be contacted on PortreeandBracadaleNewsletter@outlook.com



