



## Western Isles Lieutenancy Newsletter - Number 19 July 2024 to December 2024

### INTRODUCTION

It is encouraging and heartening to see HM The King and The Princess of Wales returning to Royal duties, following a challenging year for the family.

A Royal visit is always a great honour, helping to bring recognition to the tremendous work being done by some of our community organisations and businesses in the Western Isles. It was therefore my privilege, on Thursday the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 2024, to receive HRH The Princess Royal at the opening of the Carloway Community Centre and *Aros an Rubha*, as well as visits to *ishga* Organic Seaweed Skincare Company and Bethesda Care Home and Hospice.

The Western Isles Lieutenancy is always keen to recognise those who carried out exceptional voluntary work in our communities. In 2024, we had three people from the Western Isles on the UK Honours lists, 32 attending the Royal Garden Party at the Palace of Holyroodhouse and six enjoying The Princess of Wales' Carol Service held in Westminster Abbey, later broadcast on Christmas Eve on national television.

Throughout the year, my Lieutenancy colleagues and I met with some truly amazing, community-minded people, of all ages, all of them committed to supporting and strengthening their communities in so many ways.

Towards the end of the year, Betty McAtear Vice L-L with 26 years of service and Annie MacSween MBE DL with 13 years of service, retired as serving DLs. Both have done a tremendous amount of voluntary work for the Lieutenancy and the wider Western Isles community over many years and their contribution, commitment and distinguished service has been greatly appreciated.

In September, at our AGM in Barra, we welcomed Christine Galbraith from Ardveenish in Barra and Maggie Mackay from Ness in Lewis as new Deputy Lieutenants. Both are very active, well known and respected members of their local communities.

Work continues on the production of an archive publication to mark 50 years since the Western Isles Lieutenancy was formally constituted in May 1975 and we plan to complete this work by the summer of 2025.

Finally, I also take this opportunity to thank the many outstanding statutory, voluntary and community organisations, too numerous to mention individually, that did so much good work throughout the year to support the Western Isles Lieutenancy in so many ways.

### INVESTITURE

Malina Macleod MBE, Lochportain, North Uist and Norman "Dokus" Macdonald OBE, Uig, Lewis with their families after receiving their honours from King Charles III at an Investiture service in the Palace of Holyroodhouse.



**ROYAL GARDEN PARTY** We fulfilled our full invite quota of 32 names for the Royal Garden Party at The Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July. Many thanks to all the DLs for your nominations and to guests who have shared photographs of the special day.



Among the guests were Lewis and Harris Development workers from the Volunteer Centre Western Isles (VCWI).

Bellann O'Brien and Kathleen Duce are pictured speaking to HM Queen Camilla.



Also attending was Andrew Sim of Achmore in Lewis. He was invited in recognition of his services to children and young people as a Children's Panel Practice Advisor and is pictured here with his daughter Laura.



South Uist attendees at the Garden Party

More of the Western Isles attendees at the Royal Garden Party at the Palace of Holyrood



Representatives from Long Term Condition Hebrides in Lewis and SHARE from South Uist also attended. Both organisations received their King's Award for Voluntary Service Award earlier in the year.



Adele Wright and Dr. Gail Cunningham from Long Term Condition Hebrides



Rena Mason and Margaret Walker from SHARE

### ST GILES CATHEDRAL THISTLE SERVICE in Edinburgh on 3<sup>rd</sup> July



As retiring Vice Lord- Lieutenant, Betty McAtear and her husband Danny enjoyed The Scottish Thistle Service at St Giles Cathedral.

King Charles III, Queen Camilla, the Prince of Wales, and the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh attended.

The Order of the Thistle is the highest order of chivalry in Scotland and is personally bestowed by the King to his 16 Knights, as well as to Scottish men and women who have held public office or have made significant contributions to national life.

### ANNIE DELIN'S RETIREMENT

A lovely retirement celebration was held to honour Annie, marking the end of her remarkable career as a highly regarded and popular local journalist. Friends, colleagues, and community members came together to wish her well.

Fred Silver for Events/Welovestornoway led proceedings and praised Annie for her professionalism, dedication, and high standards of work throughout the years.

Annie was always great to work with and on behalf of the Western Isles Lieutenancy, I wish her all the best for a happy and healthy retirement.



Photo credit Welovestornoway

## HRH THE PRINCESS ROYAL'S VISIT TO LEWIS 29TH AUGUST



A memorable day for the Western Isles, during which The Princess Royal spoke with a large number of people and heard about their work and the developments taking place in their communities. In addition, HRH enjoyed listening to the Carloway Gaelic Choir perform *Àite Mo Ghaoil* and children from *Sgoil an Rubha* Gaelic Primary Choir singing the Runrig song " *Cearcall a' Chuain*"

I personally thanked HRH for taking the time from her busy schedule to spend a day in the Western Isles and for her support and interest in our islands.

The visit was extremely successful, with everyone impressed by the phenomenal level of engagement The Princess Royal had with everyone she met throughout the visit. Afterwards, I received a letter from Buckingham Palace to say that HRH, The Princess Royal thoroughly enjoyed her day in Lewis, thanking everyone for such an excellent visit.

### Bethesda Care Home and Hospice



*Aros an Rubha*

### ishga Organic Seaweed Skincare Company



Carloway Community Centre



## MERCHANT NAVY DAY

A well-attended service was held at the Ferry Terminal on Saturday 31st August to commemorate Merchant Navy Day.

Wreaths were laid by L-L Iain Macaulay and Angus MacLeod of the Merchant Navy Association.

Rev Gordon Macleod of the Stornoway High Church, himself a former officer in the Merchant Navy, conducted the service.

Photo credit to Donald MacDonald MNA



**RNLI 200TH ANNIVERSARY BALL**



Photographs by SandiePhotos

It was a pleasure and a privilege for Anne and I to be invited to the Stornoway RNLI End of Summer Ball which took place in the Caberfeidh Hotel on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September. Held in celebration of the RNLI's 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the occasion raised the magnificent sum of £8,023, and was an excellent evening of entertainment, good food and good company. Events like this provide us with an opportunity to acknowledge the dedication and commitment of the RNLI crew, and its network of volunteer supporters, in providing lifesaving services at sea for our communities.

**ROYAL REGIMENT OF SCOTLAND'S FREEDOM OF THE WESTERN ISLES CEREMONY** On 7th September The Royal Regiment of Scotland was granted the Freedom of the Western Isles in Stornoway by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Convener, Cllr Kenny MacLeod. This is the highest award that the Comhairle can grant and was presented to the Regiment in recognition of their eminent service to the Western Isles and the country.



The honour of parading through the streets of Stornoway fell to 2 Scots, with the formal ceremony taking place in Perceval Square. The Comhairle Convener in his speech said "... it was fantastic to see the public line the streets of Stornoway in great numbers and show their support to the regiment. I would like to thank them all for their attendance and contribution to the event"

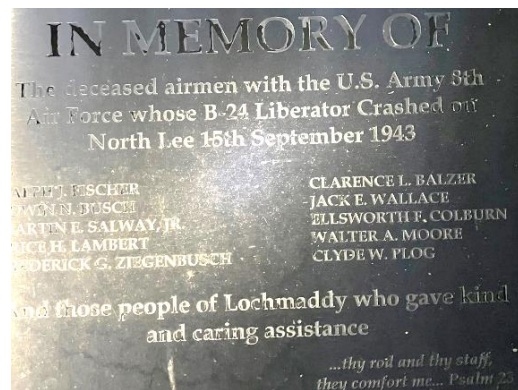


Maj. Norman MacLeod MBE, former L-Ls Donald Martin CVO and Sandy Matheson CVO OBE with Brig. L. Drummond MBE and L-L Iain Macaulay



Colin George Morrison, CNES, Paul Steele, CNES Leader, Rev. Colin MacLeod, Kenneth MacLeod CNES Convener, L-L Iain Macaulay, Brig .L. Drummond MBE

**POPPY CROSS DEDICATION SERVICE AT CLACHAN WAR MEMORIAL** On 16 September, Alasdair MacEachen DL attended the Poppy Cross Dedication Service that took place at Clachan War Memorial, to mark the 81st anniversary of the loss of the US Army 8th Air Force B - 24 Liberator and its crew of ten airmen, when the aircraft crashed on North Lee, Lochmaddy, North Uist on 15th September 1943.



The Dedication Service was organised by Mrs Pat Holtham, Welfare Officer for the Royal British Legion Scotland (Uist Branch) and led by Rev. Alen McCulloch, Church of Scotland Minister for North Uist and Berneray

### BATTLE OF BRITAIN WEEK

RAFA Local Celebrations 9<sup>th</sup> September  
 Along with Comhairle Cllr Iain Macaulay, I attended the flag raising ceremony in Perceval Square of the 'Stornoway RAFA Branch Ensign' at the start of 'Battle of Britain Week'.

The battle, which was fought entirely in the air, and lasted over three months, finally came to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1940. The day is commemorated each year to honour the hard work and determination of "the many" and the courage of "the few."



A well-attended Battle of Britain Thanksgiving Service was held on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September at St Columba's Parish Church, conducted by Rev. William Heenan. The previous evening, I was honoured to be a guest at the RAFA hosted 'Battle of Britain' dinner, this year held in the Caladh Hotel.

The following day, Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September, a lowering of the flag ceremony brought the Battle of Britain celebrations for 2024 to an end.

**SEPTEMBER 11TH LIEUTENANCY 2024 AGM IN BARRA** This year's AGM and annual dinner was held in the Heathbank Hotel in Barra. The weather was favourable which meant travel arrangements were straightforward.



**Attendees at the Western Isles Lieutenancy 2024 AGM in Barra**

As has been the practice over the years, we took the opportunity of being in Barra to visit some volunteer-led community organisations. Our first visit was to *Gàradh Bhàgh a Tuath*, an award-winning community volunteer project, now located in first class purpose built, modern premises. Here, we enjoyed a lovely lunch and as always, we enjoyed meeting several friends and former colleagues.

Afterwards, we visited *Comunn Eachdraidh Bhàrraidh agus Bhàtarsaidh* where we were given a guided tour of their Homecoming Exhibition, marking the occasion of the centenary of emigration to Canada between 1922–24.

We were pleased to welcome Terri Thompson and Julie Forrest from the Protocols and Honours Team at the Scottish Government to our AGM. They gave a detailed and informative presentation on the Honours systems and processes, followed by a very informative Q&A session.

Seven DLs were able to attend the AGM, including Vice L-L Betty McAtear (26 years of service) and Annie MacSween MBE (13 years of service). Both retired before the end of the year and so attended their final AGM as serving DLs.



During this busy AGM two new DLs were commissioned.

As Lord-Lieutenant, I was delighted to appoint as Deputy-Lieutenants Christine Galbraith, for Barra & Vatersay and Maggie MacKay, for the Ness area.

L to R: Christine, L-L Iain and Maggie

We also took the opportunity to celebrate Betty McAtear and Annie MacSween's imminent retirements and thank them for their tireless volunteering commitment to both the Monarchy and the Western Isles community.

Betty McAtear gave the Lieutenancy 26 years of dedicated service, serving four of the six Lord Lieutenants (Lord Dunrossil, Sandy Matheson, Donald Martin & Iain Macaulay) with distinction during this time and as Vice L-L since 2017. Annie's Lieutenancy service began in March 2011 when she was appointed by the then Lord-Lieutenant Sandy Matheson CVO OBE, as one of his Deputy Lieutenants.



Betty McAtear, L-L Iain Macaulay, Annie MacSween MBE and former L-L Donald Martin CVO

To mark their retirement, Betty and Annie were presented with gifts and flowers, thanking them for their service and wishing them a well-deserved, long and enjoyable retirement. Additionally, gifts were also given to Danny and Iain, for their encouragement and support over the years. Retired L-L, Donald Martin recalled many happy and memorable times working with both Betty and Annie in various roles over the years.

It has been another busy and satisfying year for the Western Isles Lieutenancy, taking part in nearly 70 engagements since the 2023 AGM, and thanks go to Betty, Maggie, *Garadh Bhagh a Tuath*, *Comunn Eachdraidh* and the Heathbank Hotel for all the excellent local arrangements, which meant everything ran smoothly. Next year's AGM will be held in Harris in September 2025.

#### LEWIS WAR MEMORIAL CENTENARY 1924–2024



A special service organised by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar was held on 21 September to mark 100 years since the unveiling of the Lewis War Memorial. Amid a heavy mist, the service was conducted by the Rev William Heenan, with wreaths laid on behalf of the community by myself and Comhairle Convener Cllr. Kenny Macleod. In total, 1151 men from across Lewis perished during WW1 and WW11.

The Convener, Cllr Kenny Macleod, said: "It was great to see so many in attendance to mark this important event in our community's history. The service gave us an opportunity to gather to remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice serving our country. I would like to thank all present for their attendance and participation."

On the evening of 23<sup>rd</sup> September, I attended an interesting and informative illustrated lecture by Stornoway Historical Society archivist, Ken Galloway, entitled 'Lewis War Memorial (1924–2024) A Century of Memories'. The Comhairle Chambers was full, demonstrating the impact these terrible losses had on the Lewis community.



**UHI OUTER HEBRIDES GRADUATION CEREMONY** On the 20 August, I was honoured to attend the 2024 UHI Outer Hebrides graduation ceremony of its students, together with their friends, family and staff. In her role as UHI Chancellor, HRH The Princess Royal, wrote in her message to students “As you begin a new chapter of your life, it is important to remember you have the ability to make a valuable contribution to your community, to our nation and the world”. Guest speaker at the event was Margaret Ann MacLeod Chief Executive of Harris Tweed Hebrides.

**WESTERN ISLES CADET COMPANY ACF DINNER & AWARDS** Alasdair MacEachen DL attended the annual Western Isles Company ACF Dinner and Awards Presentation at Congreve House, Balivanich on 30<sup>th</sup> November.



Alasdair with Major Norman MacLeod MBE and fellow Company instructors



Alasdair presented The Queen's Jubilee Medal to SSI Innes MacLeod, Stornoway Detachment.

**STORNOWAY PORT'S NEW DEEP-WATER TERMINAL** I was delighted to be invited by Stornoway Port to attend an informal evening at Lews Castle, marking the successful progress of the New Deep-Water Terminal. Comhairle representatives, members of the Scottish Government, and other key partners and stakeholders were given an update on this significant development and learned about its potential economic benefits for the Western Isles.

**ST PETER'S, STORNOWAY AND ST MOLUAG, EOIPAIDH** On 30 October, I attended the licensing of The Reverend Jody Szoke as Priest-in-Charge of St Peter and St Moluag's. The moving service, to a full congregation, was led by the Right Reverend David Railton, Episcopal Bishop of Argyll and the Isles. Rev Szoke originally comes from Canada and on behalf of the Western Isles Lieutenancy, we wish her well in her role and on her time in Lewis.

**DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD CEREMONY** The annual Duke of Edinburgh's Award ceremony took place in the Nicolson Institute on 29<sup>th</sup> November. Over 80 young people were presented with Certificates, highlighting their commitment and hard work in achieving this prestigious award.

The Western Isles Duke of Edinburgh's Award Committee is supported by the Comhairle's Community & Development Service. Awards were presented by Alasdair Allan MSP. Margaret Doig DL is thanked for representing the Lieutenancy and for her closing remarks at the ceremony. Congratulations on their well-earned achievements.



**SGOIL NAN LOCH GAELIC LEARNERS P5-7**



On 4 November, I had the pleasure of spending time with Mr David Gray's Gaelic Learners P5-7 class at *Sgoil nan Loch*, speaking about the role of the Lieutenancy in the Remembrance events taking place in our islands to mark Armistice, as well as sharing other areas of responsibility that the Lord-Lieutenant carries.

A lively Q & A session followed. All the children are a credit to their parents, the school and the community.

**ARMISTICE DAY REMEMBRANCE SERVICES 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

*"Aig dol fodha na grèine agus aig àm dhith èirigh, bidh sinn a' cuimhneachadh orra". "At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them"*

The Lieutenancy was represented at 17 wreath-laying ceremonies from Ness to Barra during Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th November. Here are some pictures of those who gathered over the Remembrance weekend.



Annie MacSween MBE DL laying the wreath at the **Cross** service on the day of her retirement



For the first time, newly appointed DL Christine Galbraith laid the wreath on **Barra**



**Tarbert, Isle of Harris**



**Leurbost**

This year I attended the Remembrance service at St Columba's Pargh Church, followed by the normal parade and salute by the Lord-Lieutenant at Càrn Gardens in Stornoway, prior to the service at the Lewis War Memorial, where a large crowd attended.



**Remembrance Service at the Lewis War Memorial in Stornoway, Isle of Lewis**

Photograph by Esther Chlad Photography



**Barvas and Brue**



**Back**



**Griminish, Benbecula**



**Melbost and Branahuie**

Photo credit to Donald MacDonald MNA

**DONALD STEWART TRUST AWARD**

The 2024 Donald Stewart Memorial Trust award for "Outstanding Achievement " was won by Ellie Denehy, a former 5th year pupil in Castlebay Community School.

Photo shows Ellie being presented with her award by Betty McAtear Vice Lord- Lieutenant.



## PRINCESS OF WALES CAROL SERVICE IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

It is always a pleasure to be able to nominate individuals who have outstanding records of volunteering from our community to attend national events such as the Princess of Wales Together at Christmas Carol service at Westminster Abbey. I am very pleased that we were able to fill our Western Isles allocation of six places.



**Ceiteag and Catherine Ann MacNeil from Barra**, who commented “...It was such a special experience. The Carol service itself was lovely, the Abbey was a stunning setting, and our seats gave us a clear view of the altar, the musicians and the readers.

The atmosphere at the event was fantastic. People were so friendly and there was a real sense of camaraderie and kindness as we shared stories of our communities and the ways in which we’re all trying to our bit. It was inspiring to hear how so many are responding to the challenges they face and we were reminded how fortunate we are in our island communities where everyone pulls together when times are tough. All in all, an unforgettable experience.



**Carole Miller**, whose Hebridean Harmony band provides regular voluntary music sessions at WICCI, Solas and Bethesda, was accompanied by her husband Donald.

She said, “...All around were life affirming stories where people went above and beyond but where people were convinced that they only did what was needed.

I felt, as I also do at WICCI, surrounded by very special people who care! There was a personal message from Catherine, the Princess of Wales, and indeed this was her aim to bring together people who care, who show love, empathy and support to others”.

**Kenny MacLennan DL and his wife Seonag** also attended the Carol Service in recognition of the wide range of voluntary and caring roles they both undertake in their community.



## WINDSOR CASTLE RECEPTION



Following the pattern set by Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II the King held a reception for new and retiring Lord-Lieutenants in Windsor Castle.

In the splendid surroundings of the Grand Reception State Room we met the King and other members of the Royal Family.

L to R in picture is:  
Former L-L Donald Martin CVO, retiring L-L Patrick Stewart and new L-L Jane MacLeod from Argyll and Bute with L-L Iain Macaulay

## ALASDAIR MACEACHEN DL AND ST. KILDA



Donald Martin CVO DL always explains to people that St Kilda is part of the Western Isles Lieutenancy area so we are therefore delighted that Alasdair MacEachen DL was elected as President of the St Kilda Club at its AGM in Edinburgh in November.

The St Kilda Club has been in existence for over sixty years and has a worldwide membership of nearly 800 members. It works alongside the National Trust for Scotland to support ongoing conservation work on the Island, both financially and in providing help through volunteering.

The Presidential term is for five years, and during this time, Alasdair and the Board will be putting plans in place to mark the centenary of the evacuation of St Kilda that took place on the 29th of August 1930.

## KNOWN LIEUTENANCY EVENTS AND ENGAGEMENTS JANUARY TO JUNE 2025

HMY Iolaire Remembrance Service and wreath laying: New Year's Day

- Two BEM presentations, Lewis/Harris: to be arranged
- Scottish Lord-Lieutenants' Association AGM Holyroodhouse Palace Edinburgh: 27 March
- HFRCA AGM Dundee: 5 April
- St Valery & Dunkirk Memorial Service at Griminish War Memorial in Benbecula May/June
- Armed Forces Day Flag Raising Events – end June
- Association of Lord-Lieutenants AGM & Seminar: London May
- Royal Garden Party 2025, the Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh: Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> July
- Western Isles Lieutenancy 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Publication: May/June

**WEBSITE** Any member of the public interested in the Western Isles Lieutenancy or enquiring about Honours Nominations, King's Award for Voluntary Service, King's Award for Enterprise etc can find links to these topics on the Lieutenancy website at [www.westernisleslieutenancy.org.uk](http://www.westernisleslieutenancy.org.uk)

**CONCLUSION AND THANKS** Once again, I take this opportunity to acknowledge my continued appreciation to my Lieutenancy colleagues, Clerk, staff at Anderson MacArthur and Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar and many other members of our community for your support and encouragement throughout the year.

*Moran taing agus Bliadhna Mhath Ùr*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Iain Macaulay".

Lord-Lieutenant Western Isles