

## Angus MacLean 1923–2013

It was with great sadness I learnt of the death of Angus MacLean of The Coolins, Scarinish, on my way out to Tiree 2 weeks ago. I was fortunate enough to be in Tiree long enough to attend the funeral and say goodbye to a true highland gentleman and friend.

Angus MacLean was born 29<sup>th</sup> May 1923 Barrapol and was the youngest of a family of four.

While still a baby his mother died and he was sent to live with an aunt and uncle at Caolas while still seeing his brothers and sister regularly. All three brothers were interested in the history and culture of Tiree and as a result of the family being split between the East and West end of the island there was not a lot the MacLean brothers did not know about Tiree. Angus was a scholar of the Gaelic language with a great love of traditional music, playing both the pipes and the fiddle. As a young man he was instrumental in starting the volunteer fire brigade in Tiree and served as a special constable for over 35 years.

He was one of the founders of *An Iodhlann*, and past chairman along with Dr Holliday. He contributed a huge amount of information to the archives from his vast knowledge of the island. The majority of Gaelic place names collected by Dr Holliday for Caolas and many areas of the east end of Tiree were because of Angus.

He married late in life to Mona, who sadly died in 1993 leaving Angus on his own. A few years later Mary MacLean, a Canadian cousin appeared in Tiree and was a great companion for Angus for the last 17 years. Their shared love of history found many of us asking for their help with questions about Tiree and our families which they always so willingly helped us with.

Angus had a vast knowledge of the people who had lived in the area where he grew up and could be relied upon to identify the people of the 19<sup>th</sup> century from the census especially the 1881 census. I was told he confided in a fellow historian that he might not be too good at 1851 census and was worried that this might disappoint people.

He was a generous, kind man who would always make the time for you and was very much a Tirisdeach. He will be missed not just by the many who knew him and enjoyed his company, but also by the many he helped with their endless historical questions who never had the pleasure to meet him.

When we bought our house in Tiree 18 months ago I consulted him about what to call the house. We thought we might call it after a family member although there was a ruin with the same name and we asked his advice on the wisdom of this. "But the house has already got a name" came the reply. Having asked countless questions about the people and houses in the area over the years I was a little taken aback as it was the first I had heard about a name "you never said" I replied "Och well" with a glint in his eye he said "you never asked".

This was my last conversation with him and not only does it make me smile but it is a memory of him that I will always treasure.

Angus MacLean died on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2013 and was laid to rest in the Kirkapol graveyard with his wife Mona.

*Catriona Smyth*