

Duncan Grant **1933-2021**

Duncan Grant was the father of Tiree genealogy. He was a true gentleman - erudite, generous and self-effacing. He loved helping people, and he set me and very many others on the path to discovering our Tiree ancestry. The help that he gave me so generously to sort out my Tiree ancestors planted the seed that grew into the Isle of Tiree Genealogy website.

- *Keith Dash.*

From Dr John Holliday, Chairman of *An Iodhlann* since its inception:

Having been a leading light of the Gaelic community in Glasgow, Duncan was there at the establishment of the Tiree and Coll Gaelic Partnership by Strathclyde Regional Council in 1996. Duncan was a founding member of *An Iodhlann*, and after we set up *An Iodhlann* in the old Reading Room in Scarinish in 1999, he quickly established himself as an expert genealogist in the days when data retrieval meant hours of spooling through reels of microfilm, and information storage meant keeping thousands of family connections in your head.

Duncan – using his local knowledge, infinite patience and prodigious memory – handled hundreds of enquiries from the Tiree diaspora, and played a big part in establishing *An Iodhlann*'s reputation around the world.

From his time in Ruaig School during the Second World War and many summers spent with his family on Tiree, he was a keen observer of island life and had a wonderfully humorous way of re-telling it to a new generation.

He 'retired' in 2016, although he was still able to come into the archive occasionally to help visitors with particularly difficult problems.

He was delighted when Flo Straker, with all her expertise, agreed to take on his role.

We will miss him.

- *John Holliday*

From Catriona Smyth, *An Iodhlann* researcher:

I always had such a good time in Duncan's company. He was such an interesting man and so interested in all those he met. He will be missed very much.

I can't remember when I first met him in person, but it must have been shortly after *An Iodhlann* opened. I used to go in and have great chats with him and Alasdair [Alasdair Sinclair, one of the 'originals' of *An Iodhlann*] about anything and everything. They were able to fill in many gaps about my knowledge of Tiree and were interested in what had happened to my Tiree family, to which I owed them a great deal.

Fleshing out the stories he collected over the years with the facts was always something that gave Duncan immense enjoyment. I would go into to *An Iodhlann* at the start of the summer and be met with "Do you know anything about ...?" It was often the opening line to a tale of some new discovery about a Tiree family that he had been unaware of, or he had been told a story and was trying to discover more and quizzing me about it just in case I had heard anything or come across anything in the graveyards that could help him on his quest for genealogical information for the Tiree diaspora.

At times like these we would get out the microfiche and look up the family we were discussing, Alistair would join in and occasionally Catriona [Catriona McLeod, *An Iodhlann* Archivist] would pop her head out her office and add something to the discussion.

I learnt so much for that generation who helped set up *An Iodhlann*, and the help they gave me was just wonderful.

His knowledge and recall of each family he researched was wonderful and stemmed from the fact he was just so interested in the history of the island. I have no idea how many of the diaspora he helped world-wide but I imagine it ran into the thousands.

The picture of Duncan on the *An Iodhlann* website and recently in the Tíre newsletter *An Tirisdeach* was just as I will remember him - with a smile on his face and a twinkle in his eye.

Catriona Smyth