

MacLeod memorial unveiled in North Uist

Iain Smith

“CHOIMHLION iad an dleasdanas gu buileach - They excelled in their duties.”

Just a few words that reflect the affection, respect and gratitude felt by the people of North Uist towards doctors Alexander, Julia and John MacLeod, who served the island community as GPs over seven decades.

The words are inscribed on a four foot tall stainless steel plaque erected at Claddach Illeray as a memorial to the much loved MacLeod family doctors.

Up to 100 people gathered to see the the memorial being officially unveiled by North Uist born Dr John Gillies, chairman of the Royal College of General Practitioners.

Twenty-two members of the MacLeod family attended the unveiling ceremony. Dr John's daughter Beth spoke of the family's pride at seeing the doctors being remembered in this way.

“It's been a very emotional though also a very happy day for my mother and I as well as for the rest of the family,” said Beth. “We all feel so proud that my father and grandparents



Dr John Gillies unveils the MacLeod memorial. Photo: Iain Smith

have been honoured and that their work here has been commemorated in this way by our friends, neighbours and the entire North Uist community.”

Following the unveiling, a

reception was held in the church hall at Clachan. The gathering there heard a succession of speakers from North Uist fondly reminiscing about the care and attention



Lorna, David and Beth MacLeod. Photo: Iain Smith



Margaret MacQuarrie and Dr John Gillies. Photo: Iain Smith

they received from the MacLeod doctors and of the dedicated and unquestioning commitment shown by them to their patients.

Dr John Gillies, who was

delivered by Dr Alex, also referred to the commitment shown by the MacLeod family doctors: “I have known the MacLeod family for many years and they undoubtedly

cared passionately both for their profession and for the people of North Uist.

“I'm personally delighted that their work has been recognised in this way.”

Margaret MacQuarrie, who worked as nurse along with all three doctors, was behind the fundraising effort. She spoke of her delight at how generously the people of North Uist responded to the fundraising appeal: “We had initially planned to erect a small plaque in Lochmaddy, but such was the response to the fundraising appeal that we were able to produce this larger, more fitting, memorial.

“The fact that so many people turned up to witness the unveiling is evidence, if any were needed, of the high regard in which Alex, Julia and John were all held. I can't thank the people who donated money enough. I'd also like to thank all the contractors involved in the preparation of the site who all willingly gave their time and services for free.”

Margaret also revealed that there are now plans to produce another plaque to be situated alongside the new memorial. It is hoped that this will feature photographs and some biographical details on all three doctors.

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