

Eliza Bella Duncan

Newspaper Articles from the Aberdeenshire Press & Journal and Turriff Advertiser on Eliza Bella Duncan nee Gammie b.1892 – d.1994 reaching 100 years old on the 1st April 1992

100 years young - Eliza celebrates her century



A century on: Auchterless woman Eliza Duncan celebrates her 100th birthday with daughter-in-law, Turriff pianist Margaret Duncan and staff nurse Anne Duffus.

QUEEN Victoria was on the throne, the Forth Bridge had not long been opened and neither the diesel engine nor the cinema had yet been invented.

But it was the year when local woman Eliza Duncan first made her appearance.

For the grand old lady of Auchterless this week celebrated her 100th birthday.

And the occasion was greeted in style when the former farmer's wife - surrounded by an array of floral tributes - received a telegram from the Queen before enjoying a family party and concert at the Badenscoth Nursing Home.

The day was all the more memorable with a specially timed visit by her grand-daughter Maureen Duthie from her home in Saudi Arabia.

Born in Grange, Mrs Duncan has lived most of her life in the Cuminestown area where she farmed at Sealscrook, with her late husband Harry, for many years before retiring to the village.

She moved to Turriff's Erroll Court sheltered housing development in 1975 where she stayed for eight years.

The sprightly old lady - who boasts 10 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren revealed: "I wis gaan about dee'n my ain hoose wark until I wis 95."

And she puts her longevity down to plain hard work and devotion to family.

"Haird wark nivver killed onybody, and I've hid plenty o'it!" she told the Advertiser.

She added with a laugh: "I've nivver hid a holiday in my life.

"I eence went to Edinburgh but I wis soon needing hame.

She recalled: "I grew up in a thacket hoose - een o' a faamily o' nine.

"I baked my first piece fin I wis 11. Mony o' the quines today canna e'en bake.

"At Sealscrook, in the spring I warked from sax in the mornin' till ten at nicht tendin' the deuks, turkeys and the like.

"The only time ye got a rest wis fin ye milked the coo."

And her hundred years have witnessed many vast changes in rural Aberdeenshire.

Of greatest note, she said was the disappearance of the horse, plough and binder and the advent of the tractor and combine harvester.

The decline of farming fortunes has also been significant.

"Back then the bigger fairmers' wives hid twae maids. Now they hiv to wark themselves.

"An' we nivver hid carpets. It wis jist steen fleers - Neen o' today's luxuries," she said.

Still mobile and able to read at speed without the aid of spectacles, the lively centenarian was asked how she kept going?

"If ye nivver stop, ye hanna tae begin!" she replied philosophically.



■ Centenarian Mrs Eliza Duncan with Badenscoth matron Mrs Judith Munro and Turriff Community Council chairman Mr James Dawson.

It's party time for Eliza (100)

PARTIES were the order of the day yesterday for Mrs Eliza Duncan, who celebrated her 100th birthday in style.

The sprightly Auchterless centenarian had a party in the afternoon — and another in the evening for her family.

As well as receiving a host of cards and a telegram from the Queen, Mrs Duncan was presented with a pot plant by Turriff and District Commu-

nity Council chairman Mr James Dawson.

Staff at Badenscoth Nursing Home, where she stays, organised a special Highland concert and invited North-east broadcaster Robbie Shepherd along to perform the party piece.

Keith-born Mrs Duncan moved to Methlick when she married Harry, a blacksmith. The couple bought Sealscrook

Farm, Cuminestown, where they farmed for 40 years.

Mrs Duncan later moved to the Errol Court sheltered housing complex at Turriff, before going to Badenscoth.

She said the secret for long life was to "never stop working."

Mrs Duncan has two sons, a daughter, 10 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.