

# Eleanor (Timmy) Munro of Foulis



We regret to announce the death of Eleanor (Timmy) Munro of Foulis, peacefully at her home Foulis Castle, on 20th October 2018, aged 93. Much loved mother of our Clan Chief Hector, his sister Charlotte, brothers Harry & John and mother-in-law, grandmother, great grandmother and aunt. Friend to many, including hundreds of Clan Munro members who had the privilege to know her. Chatelaine of Foulis Castle for over 40 years, she will be greatly missed. Private funeral service.

## Memorial Service

MUNRO OF FOULIS Eleanor (Timmy) A Thanksgiving Service for a full and happy life will be held at Foulis, Evanton, Ross-shire at 2.00pm on Thursday 3rd January 2019, all welcome. Donations if wished to Scotland's Gardens Scheme.

## Clan Munro widow dies at 93

The Press and Journal (Wednesday, October 24, 2018)

The widow of the former chief of Clan Munro who helped restore the family seat and received an MBE for services to charity has died, aged 93.

Eleanor - or Timmy, as she was typically known - Munro came from a privileged Irish background, but found her way to Ross-shire via a stop-off in Aberdeenshire and made the Highlands her home.

The third child of the Hon William French and Louise Dalglish-Bellasis, for Timmy and her sisters schooling was a series of governesses and five different convent schools.

In 1943, Timmy travelled to Scotland to join the WRNS and was posted to HMS Owl at Fearn in Ross-shire to pack parachutes and inflatable dinghies for the Fleet Air Arm.

She got to know the Munro family at Foulis Castle long before she ever met Captain Patrick (Pat) Munro of Foulis, TD, DL, chief of the Clan Munro. He was repatriated in May 1945, they met soon afterwards and were married in January 1946.

The young couple set up home at Ardullie Lodge, where they immediately started farming, firstly as P & EM Munro and latterly as Foulis Farms when more land became available. Timmy threw her energies into farming, running the household and bringing up four children. She became involved in the local Girl Guides, The Highland Home Industries, King George V Fund for Sailors and for years Scotland's Garden Scheme. She was on the executive committee of The National Trust for Scotland. She attended St Lawrence's RC Church in Dingwall for over 70 years.

In 1978 she and Pat finally moved into Foulis Castle. Timmy improved the grounds and created a charming flower garden within the courtyard.

Once in residence she and Pat continued with the charity events started by her mother-in-law. When Pat died in 1995 Timmy remained in the castle and in 2013 was awarded an MBE for services to charity.

She leaves four children, Charlotte, who lives at Balfron near Stirling; Hector, a chartered surveyor who succeeded his father as chief of the Clan Munro and manages Foulis; Harry, a retired QC from Nova Scotia; and John, who manages Ledreborg in Denmark, their spouses, 15 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren, and many nephews, nieces and friends.

# Eleanor (Timmy) Munro

## MBE (1925-2018)

### Obituary

Ross-shire Journal (Friday, November 2, 2018)

ELEANOR, or Timmy as she was always known, was brought up in Shropshire and her father's beloved County Roscommon in Eire where she enjoyed an idyllic rural Irish childhood.

The third child of William French and Louise Dalglish-Bellasis, hers was a privileged, if not particularly affluent upbringing. Both her parents came from large Roman Catholic families and she could boast no fewer than 56 first cousins despite four of her uncles being killed in World War One.

Her father, the third son of Arthur 4th Baron de Freyne of Frenchpark, was for a while a Lloyds underwriter before returning to farm in Roscommon.

For Timmy and her sisters (an older brother had died young and her younger sister in her teens) schooling was sporadic with a series of governesses and five different convent schools. Her indulging parents were in the habit of taking their daughters out of school to travel, and Timmy, a self-confessed rebel, maintained that she learnt far more on these sojourns than she ever did in a classroom.

Despite her poor education she was blessed with that rare commodity in today's over-regulated world, of having a wealth of straight-talking innate common sense.

In 1943 at the age of 18, Timmy travelled to stay with her married aunt, Mary Lumsden, in Aberdeenshire in order to join the WBNS and was posted to HMS Owl at Fearn in Ross-shire to pack parachutes and inflatable dinghies for the Fleet Air Arm, At the time Ross-shire was home to several thousand service personnel and through the generosity of the local community she got to know many of the Easter Ross farming families and via a shared family connection, the female members of the Munro family at Foulis Castle and Ardullie Lodge.

She and fellow WRNS thought nothing of bicycling the 40-odd mile round trip on their days off for a meal and some home comfort. Two of the male members of the Munro family, like so many of their Highland contemporaries, if not in reserved occupations, had been captured by General Rommel at St Valery en Caux while serving with the 51st Highland Division at the fall of France in June 1940 and were prisoners of war. So it was that she got to know her future husband's family long before she ever met Captain Patrick (Pat) Munro of Foulis, TD, DL, Chief of the Clan Munro.

He **was** repatriated in May 1945, they met soon afterwards and were married in January 1946.

Pat's uncle Hector, the only son and heir to Foulis Estate, had been killed in action less than three weeks before the armistice on October 23, 1918, so on the death of his grandfather Sir Hector Munro of Foulis 11th Baronet in 1935, Pat's mother and ultimately Pat inherited Foulis, but by 1946 following the ravages of two world wars and lack of proper management, both the castle and the estate were in poor shape. The first decision was where Timmy and Pat should set up home, and with the castle roof leaking and an outbreak of dry rot, it was decided that his mother should move back into the castle, her childhood home, as it might just see her lifetime out, while Pat and Timmy moved into the dower house Ardullie Lodge.

They immediately started farming, firstly as P&EM Munro and latterly as Foulis Farms when more land became available. Post-war, it was nigh on impossible to borrow money from the bank, so a decision was made to sell off two thirds of the estate in order to preserve the core, Timmy putting her foot down when it was proposed that the home farm be sold.

She then threw her energies into farming, running the household and bringing up her four children. She reared chickens and turkeys, besides overseeing a productive vegetable garden. Not content with bringing up her own four children, when a nephew's mother became terminally ill, he too for a while was reared as her own. She became involved in running the local Girl Guides, the Highland Home Industries, King George V Fund for Sailors and for many years Scotland's Garden Scheme. She was also on the executive committee of the National Trust for Scotland and helped with other charitable organisations.

Timmy was equally at home helping to move cattle and sheep around the farm, and when it came to doing up or altering cottages and other buildings on the estate, Matheson & Mackenzie the local architects drawings were soon covered in practical improvements to the internal layouts.

A highly talented self-taught cook, chickens and game were plucked, skinned and dressed with speed and aplomb, and the regular cutting up of whole sheep carcasses on the kitchen table turned into a family task with everyone joining in.

Timmy instilled and handed on her vast practical abilities to her children. She was as adept at mending a piece of furniture as she was at turning out water colours, articles of clothing or curtains on her sewing machine, including the mammoth task of making 50 pairs of fully lined curtains, when in 1978 she and Pat finally moved into Foulis Castle. Her faith meant a great deal to her and she attended St Lawrence's RC Church in Dingwall for more than 70 years.

The government, realising after WW11 that many of Britain's stately homes were being lost due to the ravages of war, time and taxes, set up The Historic Buildings Council for Scotland (now Historic Environment Scotland) and in 1958 Foulis Castle was the first building in Ross-shire to receive a grant to repair its roof, which undoubtedly saved it. Three further phases of work were undertaken supervised by Pat and Timmy, who on the death of Pat's mother sold the dower house Arduillie Lodge in order to bring the Castle up to a more modern standard. Timmy improved the grounds and created a charming flower garden within the courtyard. Once in residence she and Pat continued with the charity events started by her mother-in-law. When Pat died in 1995 Timmy remained in the Castle and in 2013 was awarded an MBE for services to charity.

Both at Arduillie Lodge and at Foulis Castle, the door was warmly open to all-comers, from every background including the travelling people who visited each summer in the 1950s 60s and 70s to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother whom she had the privilege to call a friend, and who lunched at both houses every year from 1958 to the year before her death in 2002 when journeying between the Castle of Mey in Caithness and Birkhall in Aberdeenshire.

Clan Munro Gatherings were regularly hosted, and annually hundreds of Munros from all over the world made visits to Foulis to be welcomed and given a very informative and amusing tour by the chatelaine herself, many became friends. When her children were growing up the house was never anything but full of their own friends and relations, for all of whom Timmy seemed to cater effortlessly. Very good company, with a wealth of stories and an Irish sense of humour, she had time for everyone but especially her large family.

She could be exasperating and opinionated, but you always came away with some good common sense and this she passed on in bucketfuls to her four children - Charlotte who lives at Balfron near Stirling, Hector a chartered surveyor who succeeded his father as Chief of the Clan Munro and manages Foulis, Harry a retired QC from Nova Scotia, Canada and John who manages Ledreborg in Denmark, their spouses, her 15 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren, and many nephews, nieces and friends.

# Eleanor ‘Timmy’ Munro of Foulis

Chatelaine Known for her charity work who entertained people from all walks of life,  
including the Queen Mother

THE TIMES November 29 2018

Timmy Munro was an exceptional Highland chatelaine, at home entertaining travelling folk, lunching with Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother or running up 50 pairs of curtains for Foulis Castle, clan seat of the Munros.

She was imbued with a wealth of common sense, a rebellious streak and a penchant for straight talking, all attributes that contributed greatly to her ability to get things done. As a result she embraced the life of farmer's wife, mother and hostess, custodian of her husband's historic home and energetic fundraiser and volunteer with numerous charities for 60 years.

Named Eleanor, but known as Timmy after her childhood nickname of Tiny Tim, she was the third child of the Hon William French and Louise Dal-glish-Bellasis and was brought up in Shropshire and Co Roscommon in Ireland where her father, a former Lloyds underwriter, had returned to farm.

It was a privileged, idyllic Irish childhood in a large Catholic family — a faith that was always quietly at the core of her life—and where she had a somewhat sporadic education with governesses and five convent schools.

Her parents — her father was the third son of Lord de Freyne of French-park, Roscommon — regularly took the family out of school to travel in Europe.

During the Second World War, when Ireland was neutral, she travelled to Aberdeenshire to stay with an aunt and join the Women's Royal Naval Service at the age of 18. Posted to HMS Owl, the Royal Naval Air Station at Fearn, north of Inverness, she packed parachutes and inflatable dinghies for the Fleet Air Arm.

She came in contact, through the local community, with many of the Easter Ross farming families and, via a shared family connection, the female members of the Munro family at Foulis Castle and Ardullie Lodge.

She and her fellow Wrens would cycle 40 or so miles to dine there on their days off. Many men in the family had gone off to war and been captured at St Valery during the fall of France in 1940, among them Captain Patrick (Pat) Munro of Foulis, chief of the Clan Munro and her future husband.

Although she was yet to meet him, she already knew his family and the couple were introduced soon after he was liberated and repatriated in the summer of 1945. He was suffering from duodenal ulcers after five years in German prison of war camps but she nursed him back to health and they married in January 1946.

His uncle Hector, the only son and heir to Foulis Estate had been killed in action less than three weeks before the armistice in 1918, so on the death of his maternal grandfather Sir Hector Munro of Foulis in 1935, his mother, and ultimately Pat, inherited Foulis. After the war, the castle and estate were both in poor shape and as his mother lived in the castle, the newly-weds set up home in the dower house, Ardullie Lodge.

They began farming and the bride threw herself into the new way of life, running the house, raising four children, rearing chickens and turkeys and overseeing a vegetable garden. She taught her children how to darn a sock, sow seeds, repair plugs, mend a bicycle, and write thank you letters. She was a talented, self-taught cook who could pluck and dress chickens and game and was not averse to butchering a whole sheep on the kitchen table.

She could mend a piece of furniture or produce clothing or curtains on her sewing machine — including dozens for the castle where she and her husband and family moved in 1978 — as well as help to move cattle and sheep around the farm. She passed this commonsense attitude on to her children: Charlotte, who lives near Stirling;

Hector, a chartered surveyor who manages Foulis; Harry, a retired QC in Nova Scotia, and John, who manages Ledre-borg Palace in Denmark.

In the late 1950s Foulis Castle became the first building in Ross-shire to receive a Historic Buildings Council grant, for roof repairs. More renovation work was undertaken, supervised by Pat and Timmy Munro who, on the death of his mother, sold the dower house to modernise the castle.

In addition to instigating practical improvements to cottages and other buildings on the farm, she enhanced the castle grounds, creating a wonderful flower garden in the courtyard. After moving into the ancestral home she organised charity events, raising thousands of pounds each year through teas for charities including the RNLI, the Red Cross, and Highland Hospice.

The annual Red Cross lunch was hosted at Foulis for many years and concerts were held in aid of the hospice and Marie Curie, which also benefited from a biennial plant sale, and for Feis Rois, a charity fostering participation and enjoyment in the traditional arts and Gaelic culture.

She was badge secretary for the Guides, helped and supported Highland Home Industries, chaired the local branch of the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts, was a member of the Royal Horticultural Society and the RNL1, ran the Scottish Garden Scheme for Ross-shire for 16 years and served on the council and executive committee of National Trust for Scotland. Each year she also hosted hundreds of guests from all over the world at the Clan Munro Gatherings, when she would conduct informative and amusing tours for visitors. She was made an MBE in 2013 for her services to charity.

She was a warm and welcoming hostess, both at Ardullie and Foulis, be they travellers who visited each summer, or the Queen Mother—en route from the Castle of Mey in Caithness to Birkhall near Balmoral — who lunched at both houses annually for more than 40 years.

**Eleanor "Timmy" Munro of Foulis, MBE, was born on March 8,1925. She died on October 20,2018, aged 93.**