

Hospital in Oban.

'In 1938 we moved to Newport Place, Dalintart and I attended Rockfield Primary School and Oban High School where Angus MacLeod was the rector.

A strong memory from his high school days was when he was summoned to see the charismatic composer and Oban Gaelic Choir conductor, John MacDonald in the build-up to the 1945 General Election.

A Liberal enthusiast, Mr MacDonald had been tasked by Lord John Banerman to be the Liberal election agent for the area.

Archie said: 'Mr MacDonald was not fit to do it for he was an old man but still full of good fun.

'He called me to his office and told me I would have to do it for him and I would cycle around Oban and as far as Taynuilt delivering literature to promote the party.'

It was in Oban that Archie met his future wife, Catherine, and they married in 1952.

Archie had gained a Master of Arts Degree from Edinburgh University and prepared for the ministry at New College. In his final year he did a student attachment in Bristo, Edinburgh.

He was ordained on Islay, also in 1952, and served Kilchoman for nine years. He had previously served his probation year in Ardchattan.

After Islay he was called to Castledon and Saughtree Parish in the Borders before moving to Letham Kirk, Perth where he served an enormous congregation of 1,800.

Sadly Catherine contracted Multiple Sclerosis in Perth and the couple decided to leave the busy Perth church for the parish in Kilcalmonell and Skipness in 1971. Catherine died 18 years later and, after 20 years in Mid Argyll, Archie retired to Taynuilt where he lives today. He has three sons Duncan, who was born in Oban, Douglas and David.

Archie's career in choirs has been longer and even more varied than his ministerial work and it all started in 1938 with Oban High School Gaelic Choir. However, because of World War Two this was to be his only Mod with the school choir.

Archie returned to Mod competition with Oban



*Archie Lamont*

Gaelic Choir from 1948 to 1951.

Archie said: 'In 1948 I was in university in Edinburgh so on the agreement of both choirs I practised with Edinburgh and when I came home for the summer I sang with Oban.'

Archie's Gaelic choir CV also reads: Oban, Tarbert, Kilchoman, Taynuilt and the Argyll male voice Gaelic choir Coisir Ceann an Tuirc.

He returned to Oban Gaelic Choir in 1991, 40 years after he left. Archie said: 'There were still a few in the choir that were there in 1945!'

And through his Mod career he has sported one of the most famous sporrans on the circuit, the much-loved badger sporran.

Archie set the record straight about its origin: 'My grandfather, who was groundsman at Dunnach near Oban.

'Ian MacNab of Kilbride Farm, Lerags, had killed and skinned a badger on his farm and tried to cure it but it didn't work.

He gave it to my grandfather who was experienced enough to clean it up and cure it properly. He then sent it up to MacPherson's kilt fitters in Inverness who made it into a sporran and my grandfather gave it to me in 1948.'

Archie missed last year's Mod in Stornoway through illness but his love of choirs and the Gaelic language is as strong as ever and he continues to sing in three choirs.