

# FROM THE GROUND UP



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# EWAN'S WELCOME

This is the first W M Donald newsletter since my appointment as Managing Director at the start of February 2020. Willie will continue to take a keen interest in the firm and provide guidance as the CEO.

I am extremely proud to be leading W M Donald, a company I have served for nearly 30 years: 21 years as a director. I would also like to place on record my gratitude to Willie for giving me this opportunity and for the advice, guidance and support he has provided in the past and continues to provide today. There is no better role model.

Joining me on the board of directors are Willie Donald (Chief Executive Officer), Elaine Donald (Financial Director), Ian Gray (Operations Director), Derek Dunbar (Commercial Director) and Michael Meldrum (Engineering Director).

Civils construction, like all sectors, has had to adapt to the new realities brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. Our primary concern is for our workforce. We have survived several economic downturns in our history and our ethos has always been to share the pain and maintain jobs. A strong company is defined by its resilience: its ability to win through in a crisis and the loyalty, strength and skills of its workforce. As I write, despite the pressures and strains of lockdown, our workforce has increased in numbers from the start of the pandemic and the construction industry appears to be recovering strongly.

The increase in employment is due, in no small part, to the success of our new Inverness office led by Colin Crichton (see page 3). Although the W M Donald signage has only recently been put in place, the office already has an order book of some £12m. It was also instrumental in the success of our project at RAF Lossiemouth (see pages 8 to 10).

W M Donald now enjoys a broader geographical spread of work than at any time in our 43-year history: from Inverness in the North to Perth in the South. Our challenge is to embrace opportunities whilst maintaining our reputation for quality and value that we have worked so hard to build. To this end we have continued to invest in plant and machinery, including a Volvo EC300 tracked excavator and a Volvo EC140 tracked excavator with GPS control (see page 14).

Our new head office building has already paid dividends, providing the space needed to cope with the strictures of Covid-19 distancing guidelines.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to the new recruits that have joined us in 2020; several of them are featured in the pages of this newsletter. I would also like to thank our supply chain partners who have worked with us to ensure we have been able to source the necessary materials to complete works during lockdown.

I believe we have cause, collectively, to look forward to the next six months with a cautious optimism whilst remaining ever vigilant to the challenges that lie ahead.

'Work Safe'. I hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter.

**Ewan Riddoch - Managing Director**

## Huntingtower

**It's always a boost to the W M Donald team when, amongst all the hustle and bustle of a busy site, a client recognises the effort being made on their behalf.**

The following email was received by Ian Gray, W M Donald's Operations Director. It was sent by David Oliver, Contracts Manager for Barratt Homes. It relates to the Huntingtower development on the outskirts of Perth.

The W M Donald Site Manager is Scott McDonald.



**BARRATT**  
HOMES

\*Regional Managing Director

\*\*ISO certification body

Ian,

Just wanted to let you know how well your team performed at Huntingtower over the last few weeks.

We have had our RMD\* visit by Doug McLeod and the board of directors, and the Ocean\*\* audit this week.

On both occasions the WMD team stepped up and pulled out all the stops to ensure that the site was presented in the best possible way, which was quite a challenge when we are doing HV diversions, service lays and final surfacing.

Anyway compliments to your team, were always quick to criticise, and not easy to please, but a genuine pat on the back is well deserved for everyone.

Kind Regards

David Oliver

# Colin Crichton appointed to lead W M Donald's operations from its new Inverness office



Colin Crichton with Drew McDonald the Inverness estimator.



Phil Bowie Enjoying Life in Inverness

W M Donald has opened a new Regional Office in Inverness. The four-roomed office suite, located in modern premises at Beechwood Business Park just off the A9 south-east of Inverness, is initially home to a team of six: Colin Crichton, Area Manager; Shaun Sweeney, Site Supervisor; Drew McDonald, Estimator; Jake Crichton, Site Engineer; John Macdonald, Plant Operator; and Stephen Paulovics, groundworker. There are plans to recruit a further two or three members of staff before Christmas.

Colin Crichton was appointed to establish the office and lead operations from April 2020. He has almost twenty years' experience of working in management positions for both local and national contractors.

*'It's a very exciting challenge that W M Donald has entrusted me with. W M Donald has a strong reputation, but it is probably not as well-known in the north as it is in Aberdeen and further south. Our strategy is to foster a reputation for trust, reliability and quality by recruiting locally and building locally.'*

*It has been a good start in tough times. The RAF Lossiemouth project (see pages 8 to 10) has kept us on our toes and was completed in mid-September.'*

Colin's son, Jake, is one of the new recruits:

*'I stayed completely out of the recruitment process. Jake had to win selection on his own merits. He spent five years as an engineering apprentice with Balfour Beatty before moving home to a local Inverness company. I am sure Jake will be a great asset for W M Donald in the years to come.'*

Outside work, Colin and his family enjoy an outdoor lifestyle: sailing, fishing, hill walking. Like Willie, Colin has walked the West Highland Way. Colin used the walk to raise funds for Macmillan Cancer Support:

*'We're very fortunate. We don't have to go far to enjoy spectacular scenery and challenging walks. I wouldn't say we are Munro-chasers yet, but you never know!'*

# 'And though she be but little, she is fierce'\*



If you were to ask most people to paint a picture of what they perceive a typical site engineer to be like they would probably say; male, rigger boots, built like a brick outhouse, beard, at home in mud, masonry and concrete. And, they would be broadly correct. Female site engineers are, regrettably, few and far between.

Step forward one of W M Donald's newest recruits: Sarah Herd.

Sarah joined W M Donald in June as a Technical Engineer, looking after sites south of the River Dee. Whilst she is nominally based in the new W M Donald offices, Sarah spends a considerable amount of time on site responding to 'problem-solving' requests from project teams:

*'Before joining W M Donald, I was a self-employed site engineer and could typically be found 'knee deep' in concrete. I loved it. In fact, my biggest concern before I started was how I would react to not being out on site all day every day. To my surprise, I haven't found myself pining for site as much as I thought I would.'*

Small, blonde, size 3 feet and a Mum, Sarah acknowledges she is far from the stereotypical site engineer:

*'I enjoy surprising people, making them question their assumptions about female engineers. I'd love to see more women in construction. It's such an exciting and varied industry. When someone on site tells me to 'Come and look at this', I've no idea what I'll find.'*

As well as standing out because of her gender and diminutive stature, Sarah has not followed a traditional engineering education:

*'Although I spent a couple of years on a variety of training courses, I am largely self-taught. I am used to thinking on my feet in order to overcome challenges that present themselves on site. Planning is essential, but you can never plan for every eventuality.'*

Sarah says she has also learnt a lot from her ten year-old son, Kyeron.

*'Kyeron has autism. His brain simply works differently. There are no shades of grey. His world is very black and white, and he takes everything he is told very literally. It's fascinating to watch him grow and develop. He is developing his social skills and has an immense appetite for learning.'*

\*William Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night's Dream

# Work at Sunnyside is back on track



Sunnyside site with old hospital buildings to the left

In our Christmas 2019 newsletter we reported on the Sunnyside Estate project in Montrose. The project involves the creation of 450 homes on the site of the former Royal Sunnyside Hospital which, when it opened in 1781, was the first psychiatric hospital in Scotland.

Lockdown has delayed progress, but work at Sunnyside is now back on track and sales have been very promising. The site is a mixture of private dwellings and affordable housing.

However good the planning, most projects throw up one or two unexpected challenges, although such challenges rarely include a labyrinthine network of underground tunnels; the tunnels linked the various hospital buildings on the site. A further complication has been the need to remove asbestos from several of the structures.

W M Donald's Contracts Manager at Sunnyside is Adam Easton.



One of the tunnels that criss-cross the site



# The BIG Interview

**DAVID FINLAY**

**David Finlay has worked on the Duke of Fife's 1,600-acre Elsick Estate for 42 years. Starting out as Farm Manager, his job evolved over the years to encompass the management of the whole estate.**

Since it was first conceived in the early 2000s, David has been intimately involved with virtually all aspects of the Chapelton of Elsick development working alongside James Carnegie, the Third Duke of Fife who passed away in 2015, and his son, David Carnegie, the current Duke.

Chapelton is the largest planned new town\* in Scotland and, when it is completed, will be home to around 8,000 properties, 22,000 residents and a thriving business community.

## **How is the Chapelton development progressing?**

I think the most pleasing aspect is that the first of the seven proposed neighbourhoods, Cairnhill, already has a strong sense of community. The whole ethos of the Chapelton plan is to encourage people to walk, meet and mix as much as possible.

We've created walks outwith the current development to encourage residents to experience the farm and the landscape. We've worked really hard to develop a collective spirit and avoid a 'them and us' culture.

It's probably going to take another 30 or 40 years to complete the project, but the initial signs are that the Duke's vision is taking shape and is in good hands.

## **When did you first encounter W M Donald?**

I started work at Elsick back in 1978 and first used W M Donald in, I believe, 1979. The first job Willie did on the estate for me was to remove field dykes in order to make the fields larger, easier to farm and more economic. Ironically this work was in the area where we are now building houses.

It appeared that Willie and I never slept. We'd both be up and active in the early hours getting the site ready for the team arriving on site at 7.30am.



Willie also concreted the yard at Elsick over one Summer in the early 1980s, a job which at the time was undertaken by manual labour and hard graft.

W M Donald has subsequently completed a wide range of works on the estate. For example, it has built roads, undertaken general property jobs and installed sewers for Scottish Water through the grounds.

## **How did the Chapelton development come about?**

In the early years of the new millennium, Aberdeenshire Council created a long-term strategic development plan that included a substantial increase in new housing. The Aberdeen Relief road was also in the planning stages and the proposed route ran close to the estate.

The Duke felt it would be better for the planned houses in the area to be in one place where a community could be created and fostered.

Once the Chapelton development was zoned by the Council in 2010 we realised we had to get our act together. Our first step was to engage with the local community in a 10-day design and public consultation workshop, known as a charette.

The charette venue was the swimming pool on the estate which we drained and platformed. Bringing everybody on to the estate to discuss what people would ideally look for in a new town ensured that the local community had, and still has, an attachment to the project.



We cut the first sods in 2014 and W M Donald was on site from the very start.

### **Apparently, the appointment of W M Donald was far from a foregone conclusion?**

True. A detailed and exhaustive procurement process was put in place by our strategic consultants, Turnberry. Eventually, three companies were shortlisted. Two were large national contractors and the third was W M Donald.

Paul Roberts from Turnberry, the Duke and I discussed the options at length. There was certainly a difference of opinions. I suppose I was effectively given the casting vote and the contract was awarded to W M Donald. I believe the choice has been vindicated.

### **What were the key factors that led to you making that choice?**

W M Donald was a relatively small firm compared to the two national contractors. If I had a question or a concern, however, I knew I could pick up the phone and speak directly to the key decision makers, Willie and Ewan. They could be on site within five minutes. Furthermore, they knew the land, having worked on it for over 30 years.

Anyone who has ever worked on a construction site knows that there has to be flexibility. Success cannot be written into a contract; it comes from give and take. My experience of working with Willie is that he understands this. He is a man of his word.



People talk about price and about value. At the end of the day, however, your choice is governed by looking someone in the eyes and deciding you can trust them to deliver your project at a price you can live with.

### **What are your plans for the future?**

I'm now semi-retired and running the family farm in Fife. My son-in-law now runs the farms on the Elsie estate.

I'm still involved with everything 'below the ground': roads, sewers, infrastructure.

I'm proud of what we have started to create. We've maintained a tight, prescriptive code for housebuilders to ensure a consistency of look, feel and variety has been cultivated. We've also specified high standards of construction and finishes. It makes the houses more expensive to build and there's no doubt progress has been impacted by the financial downturn.

I believe we are right to stick to the ethos and culture we developed from the start. The difference with the Chapelton project is that the landowner, the Duke of Fife and his successors, is there for generations to come. He has a reputation to maintain. He is, and will remain, an integral part of that community.

*\*In the aftermath of the Second World War, the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1947 created five new towns: East Kilbride, Glenrothes, Cumbernauld, Livingston, Irvine. A sixth, Stonehouse, was designated in 1973 but never built.*



# ROYAL AIR FORCE

## RAF Lossiemouth



Excavator tandem lift



Excavating the cofferdam



Derek Dunbar (left) and Colin Crichton in the site office



Sewer construction

# W M Donald works through Covid-19 shutdown to ensure RAF Lossiemouth is ready for action

RAF Lossiemouth, located 11 miles north of Elgin on the Moray coast, is one of the two RAF Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) stations which protect UK airspace; RAF Lossiemouth protects the north and RAF Coningsby the south.

The aerospace and construction industries are working together to provide a state-of-the-art home for a fleet of nine new P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft which are due to be stationed in RAF Lossiemouth from late 2020. The total project cost is £470m.

To accommodate the new Poseidon aircraft, a substantial amount of new infrastructure has to be built and existing infrastructure upgraded. The runways are being resurfaced with the £75m contract awarded to VolkerFitzpatrick. Further works include new accommodation for personnel, an air traffic control tower, and improvements to both drainage and electricity infrastructure.

W M Donald Ltd was appointed as the drainage contractor on site by VolkerFitzpatrick and commenced works at RAF Lossiemouth in mid-April. The £3.5m works package comprised surface runway drainage with associated manholes and catch pits, surface linear drainage channels and the installation of six surface water interceptor tanks and two water storage tanks.

The project was made significantly more challenging by the announcement of the national Covid-19 lockdown at the end of March which caused many construction sites to close. The works at Lossiemouth were deemed to be important for national security and VolkerFitzpatrick was given clearance instruction from the Defense Infrastructure Organisation to proceed.

Detailed and comprehensive measures were implemented by W M Donald and Volker Fitzpatrick to combat the risk of Covid-19 transmission, however lockdown meant local accommodation was impossible to find. A further challenge was sourcing the required materials. Supplies of drainage channels and 225mm-1200mm diameter concrete pipe were particularly difficult to locate as most factories had suspended operations. W M Donald worked tirelessly with its supply chain to overcome these issues and succeeded in delivering 1,690 tonnes of precast concrete pipes, chamber rings and slot drainage to site in time for installation works to begin.

Ground conditions at RAF Lossiemouth are known to be difficult, comprising silty sands and clays with an exceptionally high water table. This prior knowledge enabled W M Donald to develop a dewatering plan in conjunction with SLD Pump and Power which led to the installation of several kilometres of well points. By planning this approach in advance W M Donald's site teams were able to progress pipe laying at a rate not otherwise achievable.



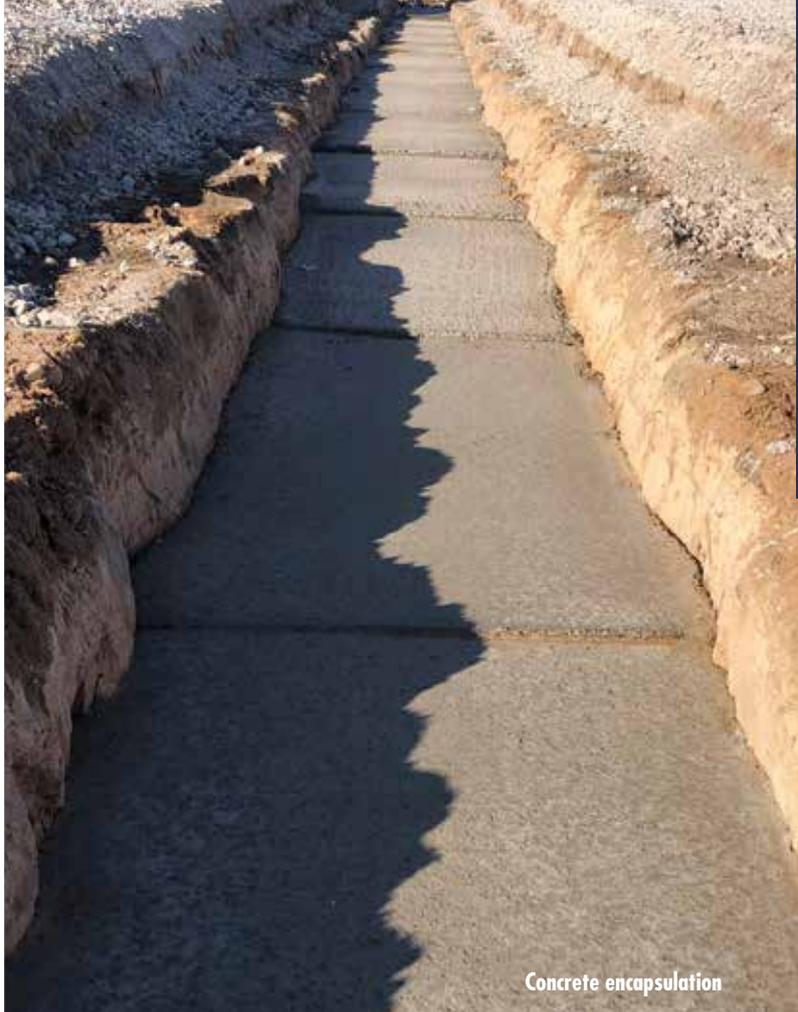
Where pipework was laid within 5m of a runway and below runway hard standings, it required a full concrete surround. On the 1200mm pipeline, for example, 6m<sup>3</sup> of concrete was required for every metre of pipe laid.

The quantity of existing underground service cables was a significant challenge to both site safety and progress. In one area of the works, over 100 service cables crossed the excavated trench over a distance of just 30m. W M Donald's suction excavator was used extensively to expose and identify existing services.

Large-scale cofferdams were required to allow installation at a depth of 7m of the six underground interceptor and surface water storage tanks. The three CNS800 tanks were each 27m long with a diameter of 4m. During the works planning stage, W M Donald investigated several installation options.



Sewer construction



Concrete encapsulation

However, the proximity of existing live services and sewers meant the cofferdam option was the only reasonable solution. W M Donald prepared a temporary works design brief for each tank installation. These briefs were used by our sub-contractor, Burnside Plant (WMD sub-contractor), to develop a cofferdam design.

Burnside installed the 12m long sheet piles using a 40t Hitachi excavator with Movax side clutch vibrating hammer and Beaver 84 whaler frames. W M Donald well pointed around the cofferdam prior to, and during, the excavation works to reduce the risk of uplift as the cofferdam was excavated.

The Premier Tech interceptor tanks\* were unloaded from the delivery transport using an excavator tandem lift and then swung into final position using a 120t crane and spreader beam. Concrete surround was pumped into place and the tanks ballasted to keep pace with water from the dewatering operation.

Despite the challenging ground conditions and the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown, all works were completed on time and to budget.

\*The 27m long tanks are the longest Premier Tech has transported on UK roads.



Kerbside drainage



27m Tanks

# It's not just the Bank of Scotland that is embracing the polymer option!

In our Winter 2018 newsletter we looked at the issue of plastics in construction:

***'The W M Donald position is that plastic in itself is not the problem. The challenge is how we manage our use of plastic more effectively so that waste, and the cost of waste, is reduced'***

W M Donald has recently switched from paper to plastic (polypropylene) paper for all drawings used on site. At first reading this might sound as though it is a retrograde step that contradicts the earlier statement. In fact, the switch reduces the amount of plastic waste, increases recycling and reduces energy consumption.

Prior to the switch to Océ IJM545 polypropylene paper, all site drawings were laminated. This ensured their durability, but also meant a huge amount of plastic and energy was used in the laminating process. Furthermore, laminated drawings could not be recycled and were sent to landfill.

Polypropylene paper is durable and widely recyclable. W M Donald's new Canon ImagePROGRAF TX-3000 is intelligent and knows when a drawing is destined for the head office, in which case it prints it on paper, or for a construction site, when it chooses the polypropylene option.

The new 'plastic' drawings are popular on site. They are more flexible and manageable than the previously laminated option.



# 30 years of service

Longevity is key to many of the most loved double acts: Morecambe and Wise, 38 years; The Krankies, 42 years (and counting!); The Chuckle Brothers, 51 years.

1990 was a momentous year: the poll tax riots; Aldi opening its first UK store; 'mad cow disease' was in the headlines; and, W M Donald's very own double act, Ian Gray and Keith Murray, joined the company on the same day.

**A big thank you from everyone at W M Donald to both Ian and Keith for thirty years of commitment, skill and camaraderie.**



(L to R) Ian Gray, Keith Murray and Geordie Cassie

# King Canute and W M Donald: Revetment repairs to turn back the tide on Greyhope Road



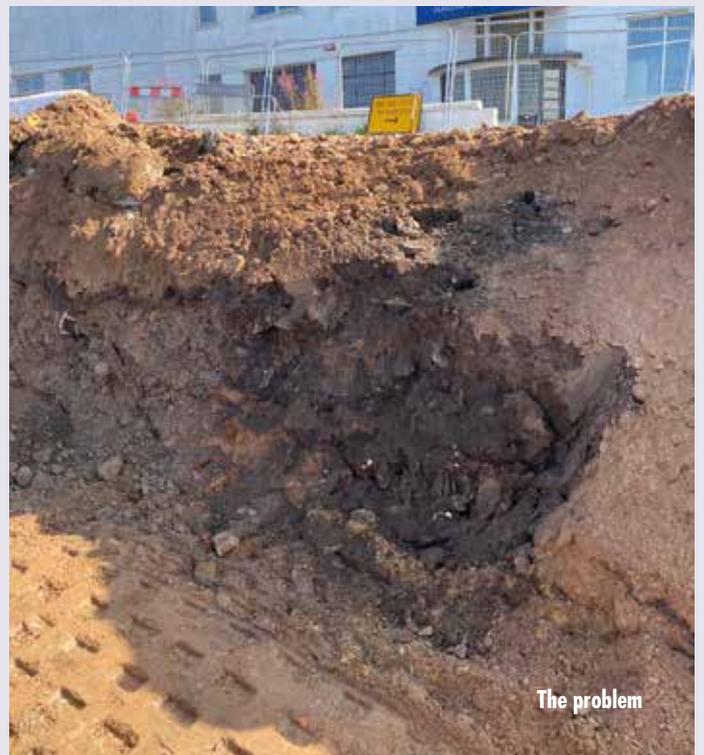
**W M Donald has completed a nine-week Aberdeen City Council contract to repair 100m of revetment on the south side of the River Dee at Aberdeen Harbour. The works were required to prevent a section of Greyhope Road subsiding into the harbour.**

The area in which the works took place ran from Campbell's Bar (formerly 'The Nineteenth Hole' Bar) to the intersection of Greyhope Road and Saint Fitticks Road.

Revetments are sloping structures often located on exposed coastal soil or rock inclines. Their role is to minimise the potential for coastal erosion by absorbing wave energy. They can be constructed from a wide range of materials including wood, masonry and stone. The term originates from the French 'revêtement' meaning coating.

The original revetments on Greyhope Road varied in height from 5m to 15m and consisted of an inclined pointed rock wall. Over time water found its way through the mortar courses and washed out the loose fines. Without support, the wall failed and wave action began to eat away at the exposed slope endangering road users. The rate of washout was also compounded by surface water run-off from St Fitticks and Greyhope Road. The implemented design incorporated the installation of road kerbing and positive drainage in order to channel surface water run-off to a formal discharge headwall.

W M Donald's first task was to dig a 1.6m deep anchor toe. The relatively small rocks from the original revetment were removed and 1,000m<sup>3</sup> of fill was installed to consolidate the exposed bank. The bank was covered with a semi-permeable geotextile matting that allows ground water to escape but prevents fines from being washed away. The matting was held in place with a layer of clean stone and then two layers of rock armour were placed on the sea face to dissipate wave energy. In total, W M Donald put in over 1,200m<sup>3</sup> of rock armour about half of which was recycled stone from the original revetment.



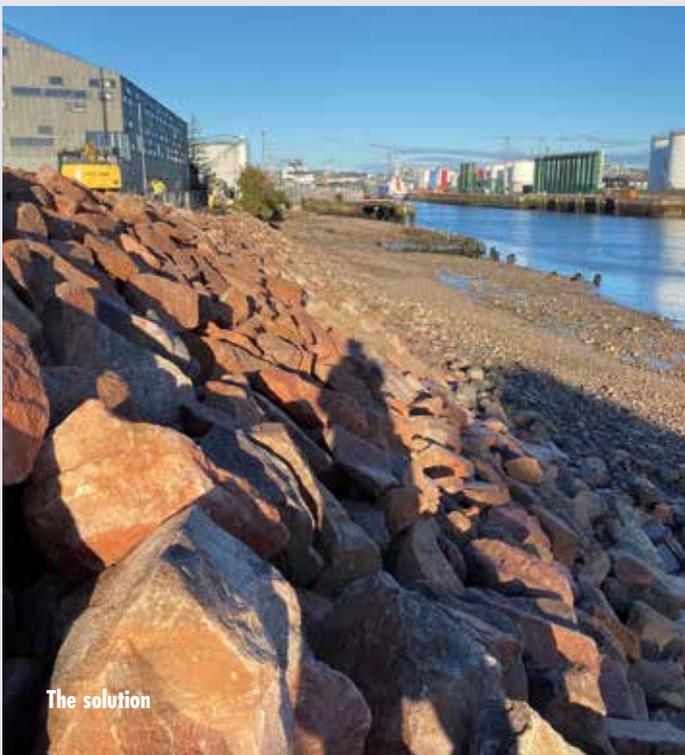
The problem



Willie Donald oversaw the works on site:

*'Our Doosan 40t crawler excavator was the main workhorse on the project. It has an 11m reach and excellent bucket capacity. It spent lots of time in the shallows at low tide during the 4-hour windows in which it was safe to operate. I can empathise with King Canute because the tide refused to turn back for me as well!*

*As with all works in and around the harbour we had to be alert to the potential presence of otters. Whilst we didn't see any otters, we did however receive a regular early morning visit from a fox whose footmarks could be clearly seen across the beach.'*



The solution



## Derek Dunbar: new Commercial Director strengthens W M Donald's management team.

Derek Dunbar joined W M Donald as Commercial Director in November 2019. Derek's construction industry experience has spanned site engineering, contract and project management, and commercial functions over a period of almost 30 years:

*'I started my career as an apprentice site engineer with Robertson Construction. I then moved on to Leiths, where I progressed operationally and became a Contracts Manager. A spell in Dubai with Bovis Lend Lease was cut short by the global recession in 2009.'*

By November 2011, Derek was back at Leiths working as a measurement engineer:

*'Over the next eight years I progressed to Managing Surveyor and then Commercial Manager. I found my experience of work on site was a huge benefit when I moved into the commercial side of the industry.'*

Derek's start with W M Donald has been far from straightforward. Just as he was getting his 'feet under the desk', Covid-19 struck:

*'It has been a challenging time for everyone at W M Donald. Even before I joined I was aware of W M Donald's reputation for having a high quality of staff. Having worked with the commercial team now for nine months, I would also add 'resilience' as one of their key strengths.*

*One of my goals is to think strategically about how we target contracts. W M Donald has more recently been known for its work with the region's premium housebuilders and developers. However, with experience spanning five decades in areas such as utility infrastructure, public works, commercial infrastructure, sewer inspection and rehabilitation, and road surfacing we have a broad-based portfolio of skills that will bring benefits for our prospective clients across the whole of the construction industry.'*

Outside work, Derek's time is devoted to his family. He has two 'young men' aged nine and six, and spends as much time as possible visiting sites as far apart as Grantown-on-Spey and Windsor with his family caravan.

## New Volvo EC140 arrives in Inverness

W M Donald's new office in Inverness has taken delivery of a new Volvo EC140 crawler excavator complete with ripper, buckets and forks.

The Volvo EC140 is equipped with the GEOfit (Gas, Electrics, Oil) single connector block. GEOfit avoids the need for multiple cables and hoses.

The Trimble Earthworks platform with the automatics module for tiltrotator attachments is being installed in the next few weeks. It will make the most of the Steelwrist X18 S60 tiltrotator already fitted.



## GIRS accreditation underpins strong performance from W M Donald's utilities division



W M Donald has a well-established reputation for work on water and waste water networks. Its utilities division has built on this and is now increasingly active in gas, underpinned by its GIRS (Gas Industry Registration Scheme) accreditation. W M Donald's accreditation encompasses CCCR: Construction, Commissioning and Connections.

This progress is shown by the fact that the utilities division has recently taken a client through the complete process from initial enquiry and asset value requests, through design, quotation and design approval. When this newsletter is published the team will be on site completing both the gas and water infrastructure for a housing developer based in Dundee.

It's not just the accreditation. W M Donald also has in place a connections agreement with SGN that allows it to connect on to their network. W M Donald also has asset adoption agreements in place with a number of the major IGT's (Independent Gas Transporters) operating in Scotland enabling it to obtain asset values, design approvals, construct gas networks and, most importantly, get them adopted on behalf of its clients.

Working in partnership with an accredited electrical contractor, W M Donald is now able to offer full design and construct services for water, gas and electrics. The full power of this offer is realised when a developer adds it to the existing civils services provided by W M Donald: enabling works, roadworks, foundations, drainage and more. With full control we can sequence works more effectively and safety is improved as tracks are remaining open for shorter periods, being backfilled and protected immediately on completion of the service laying.

W M Donald's utilities division is led by David Muir. If you'd like to know more about the services we can offer, you can call David on 01569 730590 or connect via email at [david.muir@wmdonald.co.uk](mailto:david.muir@wmdonald.co.uk).

# Countesswells: when two lanes become five

As this newsletter is published, the 13-week closure of the C128C Cults to Kingshill road will have just started. The closure will facilitate the completion of the final element of the new West Link road between the thriving new community at Countesswells and the Kingswells roundabout.

Preparatory works are already well advanced, despite the strictures of the Covid-19 lockdown. Work on the new element of the link road before it meets the C128C (see Google Earth image from April 2020) is nearing completion; drainage and kerbing to the first half is completed with surfacing programmed for the start of October.

The most dramatic element of the works will be upgrading the C128C from two lanes to five – three approach, two departure – as it meets the roundabout. Topsoil removal and levelling has already been undertaken in anticipation of the road closure.

Alongside the new link road is an associated shared footpath and cycleway.

This well-lit route will provide direct access to the A494 for pedestrians, runners and cyclists. In particular, they will be able to take advantage of the bus routes that run into Aberdeen and out to Westhill, Banchory and Braemar.

Other works associated with the new road have included the diversion of water and fibre-optic utility infrastructure and the upgrade of the traffic lights on the roundabout.



This project isn't the first for W M Donald at Kingswells. In 2013, it upgraded the roundabout to serve the Prime Four Business Park.



February 2020 ©Google Earth



April 2020 ©Google Earth



## W M Donald targets carbon neutral status

W M Donald has committed itself to becoming the first civil engineering contractor in North East Scotland to achieve carbon neutral status.

This is easy to say, but far harder to achieve in practice. To provide a datum point from which to work, W M Donald has commissioned independent environmental auditors, Carbon Zero UK, to undertake a detailed assessment to calculate its current carbon footprint.

Ewan Riddoch, Managing Director, recognises that the construction industry has a critical role to play in safeguarding the environment:

*'The Carbon Zero UK audit will be used to measure the impact of a number of projects and initiatives. One of the key focus areas is energy. We have a large fleet of vans and construction equipment and, over time, we will be transitioning away from diesel and petrol vehicles. We are currently reviewing the respective merits of electric and hydrogen-powered vehicles.'*

*'We recognise we will need to address some major challenges. For example, construction activities are particularly high in embedded carbon, and this is a subject we will have to address in partnership with our supply chain.'*

Embedded carbon refers to the cumulative GHGs (Greenhouse Gasses) released throughout the journey of a product from extraction through to its end of life. Depending on the product in question, this could also encompass transport, refining, processing, assembly, and in-use pollution:

*'As well as our supply chain we will be working closely with our clients, many of whom are also on the journey to carbon neutrality. We all have a responsibility to 'tread lightly on this earth', to leave it in a condition that means our children, grandchildren and subsequent generations can enjoy the wonder and enjoyment of the natural world in all its diverse splendours.'*

## Lockdown intervenes with Inter Marrlaine on the cusp of national glory

Those of you with a good memory will recall that there was a time earlier in 2020 when life was almost 'normal'. It was during this period that Inter Marrlaine and Borussia Donald challenged lesser mortals in the Business Fives Corporate Football Event held in Tayside.

Borussia Donald 'wuz robbed' and fell at the group stage. Inter Marrlaine, however, won their group and, led by Mark 'The Cat' Stewart, they subsequently progressed to the final where they overwhelmed their opponents with 'Total Football'. The score? 1-0!

Further glory beckoned with the national finals at SoccerWorld in Glasgow on, rather ominously, April 1st. However, lockdown intervened and, with it, the opportunity to impress scouts from Celtic and Rangers who would undoubtedly have snapped up half the Inter Marrlaine team...or maybe not!

The most important trophy won by the teams from W M Donald was that for being Top Fundraisers. Almost £4,000 was raised for Parkinson's UK and the Multiple Sclerosis Trust, charities with a particular resonance for certain team members. A big thank you to colleagues, clients, sub-contractors and suppliers whose donations made this possible.





## Scotia Homes, Brechin

This dramatic panorama captures work on a SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage Scheme) detention basin on a Scotia Homes development in Brechin.

The construction of the SUDS basin was delayed whilst an existing water main was diverted. The diversion was completed as long ago as February, but the intervention of Covid-19 meant the works were suspended for several months. The SUDS basin has now been completed.

## Retirement of John Scott



Back in January, John Scott retired after twenty years' service with W M Donald.

After leaving school, John joined the army. When his time in the military came to an end, John became an excavator operator with W M Donald.

John's career tracked the evolution of W M Donald's investment in plant and equipment. He started on a wheeled Liebherr 916, moving on to a Volvo EC240 tracked excavator. John's final machine was a Doosan DX380.

All at W M Donald would like to take this opportunity to wish John a long and happy retirement.

## And now, the 6 O'Clock News from W M Donald



Looking like seasoned anchor men, W M Donald's very own Ian Gray and Mike Meldrum took to news reading like ducks to water when they visited the set of the STV News in Aberdeen.

*'Mike and I attended an event relating to the annual Trades Awards. STV was running an advert for the Awards during a commercial break during the evening news.'*

*We were allowed into the control room during the live news broadcast and witnessed the professionalism of the presenters as they interacted with the production team.*

*Afterwards we had a short tour of the studio which is when we made our short-lived debuts on set. It was a really interesting night.'*



## Arthur Wiseman – W M Donald's new HSEQ Adviser

Arthur Wiseman, W M Donald's new HSEQ Adviser, spent ten years in the Royal Engineers, studying at the Royal School of Military Engineering, Civil Engineering Wing. He completed a tour of Iraq, spent over two years in Northern Ireland, was stationed in Cyprus and even travelled to the Falkland Islands to undertake construction works. His core engineering strengths were in activities such as bricklaying, concrete, roads, and bridge building: '...anything from greenfield to gable':

*'Like many soldiers, as I got married and started a family my priorities changed. Unfortunately, I took the decision to leave the forces in 2008 just as the global recession started.'*

*I spent two years combining the roles of stay-at-home Dad and student, studying Building Surveying at Adam Smith College in Glenrothes to add to my army qualifications.'*

Arthur's first civilian job in construction was as a Logistics Co-ordinator on a large gas project and he then moved to Dandara Ltd:

*'Whilst I was with Dandara I undertook further training and qualifications in health and safety management. I progressed to being Health and Safety Adviser for Dandara Ltd, looking after twelve or more active projects in and around Aberdeen. I then worked for Leiths in a similar role before joining W M Donald in August.'*

*My immediate priorities are to get round all of our sites and introduce myself. My aim is to get a grass roots understanding of how W M Donald operates and its HSEQ culture. I'm really looking forward to working with Eilidh (Eilidh Cameron - HR & HSEQ Compliance Manager) to build on W M Donald's strong HSEQ performance.'*

Outside work, Arthur has retained an active 'military' lifestyle:

*'When I turned 40, I decided to run a marathon, but ended up running two last year: first Glencoe then Loch Ness a month later. Glencoe is a 'mountain marathon' with a total ascent greater than the height of Ben Nevis and said to be one of the toughest in Scotland. The views were stunning.'*

*I live with my wife Hazel and our two boys who are now eleven and thirteen. We enjoy camping as a family in the Summer and hill walking when the weather cools.'*

Arthur's plays guitar and bass in a rock band. The band was due to give its first live performance earlier this year but this has been put on hold due to Covid-19.



**If you want to flex your creative muscles, Arthur's band doesn't yet have a name.**

**You can send your suggestions to:  
karen@wmdonald.co.uk.**



## W M Drainage Services employs Kaiser Whale to clear ducts under the Caledonian Canal

The Caledonian Canal runs for just over 60 miles (97km) from Inverness in the north to Corpach near Fort William in the south. The canal was designed by Thomas Telford (1757-1834).

A native of Dumfriesshire, Telford is one of Britain's most celebrated civil engineers and acquired the nickname of 'The Colossus of Roads'. Telford was elected as the first President of the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) in 1820.

The canal was completed in 1822 and is crossed by seven road bridges. This will shortly become eight with the construction of a second road bridge at Tomnahurich on the southwest side of the city. The new swing bridge will work in tandem with the existing bridge to ensure an uninterrupted flow of traffic on the A82.

Work started in 2019 and good progress was made until the site was closed due to Covid-19 in March 2020. At this point in time, two 450mm service ducts had been installed across the canal; the ducts are 75m long. At the start of lockdown, the ducts were sealed but heavy rainfall led to the bungs failing with the result that sand and ballast was washed down into them.

Work recommenced on the project in June and the main contractor, RJ McLeod, asked W M Donald's drainage services team to remove the debris from the ducts.

Jim Strang is W M Donald's Drainage Services Manager:

*'The main challenge we faced was overcoming a 16m drop from kerbside to the open duct spigots. This had already proved too difficult for a standard jet vac.'*

*We deployed our high-volume Kaiser Whale which has an incredibly powerful lifting capability.*



*The Kaiser is also equipped with a continuous dirty water recycling system to minimise the need for additional water requirements.*

*I'm not sure there was any alternative solution that would have been as effective as the Kaiser.'*

The new swing bridge forms part of the Inverness West Link Stage 2 project which has been described as 'the gateway to the Highlands'.



## ...and in other news...



### Running the London Marathon...in Aberdeen!

On Sunday 4th October, Karen Stephen completed the London Marathon 2020...in Aberdeen. Due to Covid-19, Karen was one of 43,000 people from 109 countries who completed 26.2 miles on a course of their own choice:

*'My route took me from Bielside to Peterculter, into town, past the beach, and back out to Bielside.*

*I managed to dodge most of the rain but the pavements were wet and there was a lot of puddle dodging! It was tough, but I managed to avoid blisters which would have made it much worse. Dad (Willie Donald) cycled the route with me and Ian Gray ran with me from the beach to Bielside. They were a great help.'*

So far Karen has raised £2,700 for the National Eczema Society. If you would like to make a donation, go to <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/karenstephenlondonmarathon2020>.

### NEXT EDITION...

If you have any ideas for content you would like to see featured in the next edition of the newsletter then please get in touch with us with your ideas, we are always looking for budding contributors! Email your ideas to Karen: [karen@wmdonald.co.uk](mailto:karen@wmdonald.co.uk)

### Back to school for Stuart

Back on 30th January, 100 second year secondary school students converged on Pittodrie to take part in the final of the inaugural 'Build Your Future' event. The event aimed to promote the construction industry as a buoyant and exciting sector to work in, and to show the breadth of careers available within the industry.

The final consisted of a series of practical construction challenges. Stuart Forbes, Supervisor, created a W M Donald drainage 'puzzle' for the students to resolve in a limited time period. Stuart also shared his practical experiences with the students.

The event, won by the team from Banchory Academy, was a great success. It is hoped, Covid allowing, to run the event again later this year.



### Christmas Party

It is with great sadness that W M Donald has decided to cancel plans for its much-loved Christmas Party. The risk of contracting and spreading Covid-19 and the uncertainty over whether such a gathering would be allowed in any event have sadly made the decision inevitable.

Hopefully, we will all be able to celebrate Christmas 2021 together as before.



**W M Donald Limited**  
Marlaine, Craigwell, Stonehaven AB39 3QN  
Tel: +44 (0)1569 730590 • Email: [info@wmdonald.co.uk](mailto:info@wmdonald.co.uk)



[www.wmdonald.co.uk](http://www.wmdonald.co.uk)