

Citizen's Advice man awarded the BEM

Bryan Bain BEM



An Auldearn man with almost 25 years' association with Citizens Advice in Nairn and nationally has received the British Empire Medal in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours for services to the community.

Bryan Bain's links with Nairn CAB stretch back to 1994 when the idea of setting up a CAB was first discussed. And about the same time he had required assistance from CAB, but Nairn didn't have one and he had to go to Inverness.

"They were of great assistance to me," said Bryan. "And when I learned there was a group of people interested in forming a CAB for Nairn I volunteered to be part of it."

Shortly afterwards Bryan and a few other volunteers were soon helping with the internal building work on Nairn's new CAB in the High Street.

Bryan went on to train as a volunteer generalist adviser in 1995, undertook further training as a Welfare Rights Worker and trained as a tutor of new volunteers.

In 1996 Bryan took the part-time, paid-manager post, as well as continuing to volunteer.

During his time as manager he was elected chair of Highland Advice and Information Network. In 2003 he became the bureau's full-time manager, but again Bryan continued to volunteer.

In June 2010 he retired as manager and became a "full time" volunteer.

Bryan continues to support the Bureau's many 'out of hours' activities: setting up stands at the Farmers' Show, Armed Forces Day, Games Day etc.

His ongoing commitment to the fabric of Nairn CAB offices even sees him spending Christmas holidays decorating them!

Bryan was elected by CABs across Scotland to Citizens Advice Scotland Development Committee for four years — and in this voluntary role he has been involved

in bringing change to CABs across Scotland.

He is held in such high regard by Highland Bureau managers that he has been asked to undertake case checking to help them prepare for audits, including Scottish National Standards.

Again this was done in a voluntary capacity. He continues to volunteer at Nairn CAB five days a week.

"My initial reaction on receiving the letter advising that I have been awarded the BEM was absolute astonishment, quickly followed by the question: 'who is responsible for this?'" continued

Bryan.

"Discovering that the recommendation came from my colleagues is an extremely flattering and humbling experience as I believe that such an honour from one's peers is to be treasured.

"I have been very fortunate to have worked with such a diverse group of wonderful people over the years and this honour reflects on all of them for what we have achieved together.

"It has been a privilege to be involved with those in the community who give of their time to help those in need and I would encourage those who have

a few hours to spare to volunteer within the community. It really is such a rewarding experience."

As well as his commitment to CAB locally and nationally, Bryan was also a volunteer with the Children's Panel, youth clubs in Nairn and Auldearn and Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Gill Maclean, who succeeded Bryan as manager of Nairn CAB, said: "This empathy for clients, his dogged determination to ensure that they feel better after contacting a CAB adviser, has meant people's lives have been changed for the better."

at pleasure to Fiona Larrg when she joined UHI. Her first position was as assistant secretary, then deputy secretary. Seven years ago she became secretary and Chief Executive Officer of the UHI.

Her MBE citation is for 'services to education' Fiona told the Nairnshire: I am absolutely delighted to receive the award it has been a privilege to be a part of creating the University of the Highlands and Islands. It is a hugely significant project for the whole of the Highlands and Islands. In a relatively short time we have been able to create a leading UK university delivering both further and higher education.

She went on to spend three and a half years training as a chartered accountant at Ernst and Whinney in Glasgow.

She qualified in 1984 and went to work with the Highlands and Islands Development Board in Inverness where she dealt mainly with grant applications from Skye, Lochalsh and the Western Isles.

As the 1980s came to an end so the HIBB was transforming into the Highlands and Islands Executive composed of 10 local enterprise companies (LECs). Fiona became the HIBB representative getting the LECs up and running.

In 1991 she was appointed chief executive of one of them, Inverness and Nairn Enterprise. She was there till 1997 when she joined the call centre company Cap Gemini. In 2001 the company was taken over by Vertex and Fiona trans-

ferred to UHI. "I am absolutely delighted to receive the award it has been a privilege to be a part of creating the University of the Highlands and Islands. It is a hugely significant project for the whole of the Highlands and Islands. In a relatively short time we have been able to create a leading UK university delivering both further and higher education."

"I am privileged to have been part of that. It has not been me, it is down to a very large team and I am happy to have played my part in that.

"The great thing is that all the way through my career I have been able to live and work in the Highlands and Islands, and particularly around Inverness and Nairn. I've never had to move away and I've always had incredibly interesting and challenging jobs. I'm very lucky to have been able to do that.

"I hope that is a role model for other people: you don't have to leave the Highlands to have great career opportunities.

Fiona is now looking forward to seeing the UHI develop further.