



Flower of Scotland: Prince Charles accepts three red roses from 10-year-old Donna Cowie at Dornoch

Prince reveals he is no piper but can sing praises of malt

THE Prince of Wales yesterday revealed his favourite tippie — and how he failed as a piper at Gordonstoun School.

Chatting to a group of old people in a new geriatric wing in a hospital at Golspie, Sutherland, Prince Charles told 79-year-old Joseph MacDonald that his favourite dram was Laphraoig, the Islay malt whisky.

To a former piping instructor, Kenny MacRae of Dornoch, 69, who has met several members of the royal family, he confessed that when he took up piping at Gordonstoun his tutors gave him up as a failure.

He congratulated 92-year-old Mary Barclay from Rogart on her birthday, the first since all 30 patients were transferred last week from their tumble-down Cambusavie Hospital, near Dornoch, to the new £750,000 wing of the Lawson Hospital.

He sat and enjoyed *The Rowan Tree*, a romantic song

sung by 98-year-old Georgina Baillie from Brora.

In the general ward of the hospital he autographed the plaster of a patient who is a namesake of that well known critic of Royalty, Willie Hamilton (this one from Golspie). And to another male patient he gave this racing tip: "Bet on the jockey — not the horse."

The prince's day in sunny East Sutherland started with his reading the lesson in the 13th century Dornoch Cathedral, this year celebrating 750 years of worship, and ended with a 10-year old schoolgirl presenting him with three red roses from her garden.

Donna Cowie, from the Bungalow, Rogart, had travelled ten miles with friends to Golspie to get a glimpse of the prince, smartly dressed in kilt and tweed jacket. "I could not believe it when he came over and accepted my flowers," said the delighted youngster.

Another little girl, four-year-

old Sally Macaskill, granddaughter of the cathedral minister the Rev James Simpson, made a presentation of a book to Prince Charles at the end of the morning service which saw him unveil a plaque following the dedication of a stained glass window depicting Bishop Gilbert of Moray, the founder.

The prince also met the cathedral appeals committee who raised funds not only for the remembrance window, but an additional £31,700 for named charities. Lord Strathnaver, chairman of the committee, handed over £15,000 for deprived children in a hospital in Malawi, £15,000 for the church's eventide home in Dornoch, and £1,700 for mentally handicapped children in Sutherland.

In his sermon, the minister justified the "extravagance" of the church window, "provided, like Jesus, we also have a concern for the poor, for those whose needs are greater than our own."