

Iolaire 100

Margaret Ferguson

Look around the gallery at these paintings – at these people. Artist Margret Ferguson has painted these from photographs of the men that were on board the *Iolaire* on the 1st January 1919 when it ran aground.

You are surrounded by one hundred paintings – one for each year that has passed since the tragedy. Only a few of these portraits are of men who survived this disaster, but all one hundred portraits are still less than half the actual number of losses which reached two hundred and one.

Margaret feels that by painting these men she is honouring them - bringing them to our attention and asking us to look into the faces of those involved in the disaster and make a connection with them. Here are some activities that you may like to complete - you can do some of them, or all, in order or as you please.

As you walk around, surrounded by these men, you can read their names and ages. Choose one of the portraits to look at more closely.

Who have you chosen?

Why did you choose this picture?

What do you think his likes or dislikes were? (like food or hobbies?)

Imagine what made him special? (was he funny or strong, could he play an instrument?)

If you met, what would you have talked about?

Who do you think was waiting for him at home?

What do you feel when you look at his picture?

Here is a map of Lewis – can you find and mark on the map where you live, where your family are from or where you are staying?



Looking at the portraits and the information with them, you will see that they have a location to show where the men were from.

Who lived closest to your mark?

Which area or district were most of these men from?

Can you find who the youngest man was and where he came from?

Margaret has painted these portraits from looking at photographs of the men. She captures a sense of each individual. She uses different colours and mark making to build her paintings.

They are all pictures of men, but they are each different.

Use the mirror and pencils provided to draw a self-portrait (a picture of you) below.

Can you see what makes you the same as these men and yet, different – an individual?

The loss of one individual to a family and their community is hard. The loss of so many to this Hebridean community was a complete tragedy that impacted every single person who lived here and altered the shape and course of many lives and the history of the islands.

This is why we remember the Iolaire and as time passes, we hold on to these memories.

Try closing your eyes now and remember some of the faces in Margaret's paintings, you may find that you have images of these men in your memory – you now share a part in this story.

As you leave the gallery today, you can carry the images of these men, or one of their names or another image or fact in your mind with you. By doing so, the memory of them is kept alive.

Thank you for taking part and exploring this exhibition at An Lanntair.