

# Family firm has stood the test of time

Donald Matheson is rightly proud the family has been in business in three different centuries!

**PERSON BEHIND THE BUSINESS**

Inverness  
**BID**  
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

PRESENTED BY

**Q** How would you describe your business?

**A** D. Matheson and Son are a long-standing family business in plumbing and heating which was started by my great-grandfather way back, pre-1895, on his return from the USA. So I have great pleasure telling folk we have been in business in three different centuries. We offer high quality products and strive to give a high quality service with our small team of dedicated tradesmen



Donald Matheson of D. Matheson & Son plumbing and heating.

Picture: Callum Mackay

from our firm and other local trades. We have stayed in the town centre for all those years moving down to Fraser Street from our old shop at the end of Church Street where Stratton Dairy used to be. My great-grandfather and his wife stayed above the shop in Church Street and when my grandfather got married to Mollie they moved to a house in Academy Street before moving to Fraser Street with the flat above being their home.

**Q** What led you into the business?

**A** Great-grandfather Donald started the business followed by grandfather Donald, father John and uncle Donald then to myself (another Donald!), brother Neil and Neil's mum Jennifer. I stepped up to co-owner last year when we lost dad suddenly. It is a bit of a family tradition. I always knew I wanted to do it from a very young age when I was taken out on trips over to the west with dad. So in my 45th year working now! My son Darius is a plumber and heating engineer, so a fifth generation working in the company. My role has changed in the business as David Darge retired last August and I took over his role as estimator which is a massive change from being a hands-on tradesman to being a fingers-on-a-keyboard man.

**Q** What makes Inverness a great place to run a business?

**A** It is the friendliness of Inverness in general and because we have been in business so long it is

generational with family members becoming customers and I like to think to a certain extent friends. As the population changes in town we have a lot of new faces from all over the country and the world which only expands our knowledge of where they are from and we reciprocate with our local knowledge for things to see and do and recommendations if looking for other trades.

**Q** What is your greatest achievement?

**A** Work-wise it is still getting the pleasure of seeing customers faces when your and their ideas come together to give, say a wonderful bathroom completed and then going back years later and seeing the same bathroom looking as you left it. On a personal point it would be being married to Susan for 41 years, an achievement in itself! And having family and grandchildren.

**Q** Who do you admire in business?

**A** Local family-run businesses as we all sing from the same song sheet wanting to better ourselves. Also my father and my uncle as I was young when my grandad passed away and didn't know much about how it worked. Getting trained up by my dad and other journeymen and getting an insight to how the business ran from my uncle in the office has given me an insight into both sides of

how it works which has been a huge advantage for me.

**Q** What's your advice to budding entrepreneurs?

**A** It was different for me as a family firm but if you have an idea look into it and check all avenues, build your confidence and go for it. If you don't try you may regret it later in life and that is something which you don't want. There are so many people that have started off their idea and gone onto bigger and brighter things, it is worth the hard work. The more you put in the more you get out.

**Q** Can you tell us more about yourself?

**A** My hobbies involve photography in quite a big way; personal pictures and I have even ventured into a few weddings for family friends (very nerve-racking!) and not having the luxury of digital pics in the old days, just loads of film. My other main hobby (like a second job) is being involved with my local football team Nairn County. I started as match secretary, up to chairman for six years, then president of the club which I am immensely proud of. By some strange quirk my great-grandfather was a member of New York Clachnacuddin when he worked in the States back in the late 19th century and my grandfather was involved with Citadel down by the harbour back in the 1930s so footy runs in the family too.

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