

Local hero is honoured by Queen with an OBE

By Pat Scott

p.scott@huntly-express.co.uk

A WOMAN who has devoted a large part of her life to supporting two important north east charities has received an OBE from the Queen at Buckingham Palace.

Patricia Straughen, who will be better known in Huntly by her maiden name, McWilliam, described the awards ceremony as "amazing". She was joined at the palace by her husband Michael, sister Dorothy - who lives in Inch - and her nephew Niall.

Mrs Straughen, who was brought up in the Huntly area and attended The Gordon Schools, said: "It was an amazing day.

"I felt so pleased and privileged to receive the award at Buckingham Palace.

"There was a sadness that mum and dad were not alive to be there with me but I was delighted to share the day with Michael, Dorothy and Niall. It was grey and drizzly when we went in but the sun was beaming down by the time we came out and it felt very much like mum and dad were shining down on me."

Mrs Straughen was among a group of 70 people honoured in the new year's list who received their

awards on the day.

National hunt jockey Anthony McCoy was knighted during the ceremony and Niall was delighted when England's woman's football captain and the most capped female football player also received their awards and afterwards posed for photographs with him.

Mrs Straughen was recognised for her charitable work with the Archie Foundation and Maggie's Cancer Centre in Aberdeen.

Recently she has been involved in the High Ten appeal for Archie at the Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital to mark its 10th anniversary.

One of the projects, the creation of a

garden, reaches its conclusion with an official opening this week.

She said: "The reception area at the hospital has been refurbished and family accommodation upgraded. The creation of the garden has been a major project and it looks fantastic.

At Maggie's, 11,000 cancer patients and their families have used the facility since it opened in September 2014.

"Both charities have made an incredible difference but we could not have achieved what we have without the support of all the volunteers involved and the backing of communities such as Huntly."



Patricia Straughen with her OBE, which she received from the Queen.