

Dora Budge



Dorothy Elizabeth Budge was born at The Castle, St. Andrews on 12th July 1923, the first child of Robert Budge and Margaret Budge (née Laughton). Dora had a brother, Alexander (known as Sandy), and a sister, Mary (known as Bunty), who were both born at Lynnside in Kirkwall. The family spent most of the 1930s living in Whitehall village, Stronsay, where Robert worked as a cooper in the herring fishing industry, but when World War 2 started he was working as a cooper at Highland Park Distillery and the family lived in 11 Warrenfield Road (now 11 Holm Road) in Kirkwall.

The son, Sandy, left school in May 1939, aged 14, to start work as a Post Office telegram boy. His elder sister, Dora, left school aged 16 in September 1939 and also started work in Kirkwall Post Office. She was the second girl to join the staff there and was then the only typist, so spent day and night before the first Christmas typing greetings telegrams, mostly for the Home Fleet based at Lyness.

During 1940 Dora met Ian McHattie, who was then stationed at the Bignold in the Royal Air Force Police. Ian was born in Tulliallan, Fife in 1920. He volunteered to join the Royal Air Force aged 19 in November 1939 and completed his basic training at Uxbridge. After brief service at Hendon and Wick, Ian had started nearly two years service at Kirkwall.

Dora worked in telephones, then teleprinters when they were introduced at the Post Office. She spent nearly three years on writing duties, mostly tracing missing parcels and telegrams. By 1943 Dora had been joined by many other women and nearly half of the staff of about 60 in Kirkwall Post Office was female. Many of the women had come to Orkney to be close to husbands working in the islands in military and civil units. Dora trained in the duties of a firewatcher and learned to use a stirrup pump in that role.

Ian had been promoted to the rank of Corporal and spent most of 1942 in Gambia, returning on an unescorted ship via the coast of Greenland. After being stationed at Dyce, then Calshot in Hampshire, Ian asked for a posting back to Orkney. The RAF obliged by sending him to Lerwick!

Ian and Dora married in Orkney, while he was on leave in November 1944. When the war had ended, Ian left St. Eval in Cornwall and returned to Orkney. He served during the closing down of RAF operations at Kirkwall and at Grimsetter Airport, where he was demobbed at Easter 1946. Dora had left the Post Office in autumn 1945.

Dora and Ian started working in farming in Gloucestershire. They had a son, Ian, and daughter, Morag, who both followed their parents into farm management. Morag remained in Perthshire, where her parents spent most of their working life, while son Ian moved to Morayshire with his family.

