

A Great Highlander - Captain Bob Grant, Dornoch

Captain Bob Grant, last of the family of four sons and three daughters of the late Mr and Mrs John Grant, went into partnership with his brother, Charles, to run the firm of John Grant and Sons, farmers and butchers, who were to play such a vital part in the economic life of the Royal Burgh of Dornoch before and after the last war, with the labour force standing today at over 80.

Charles and Bob gradually expanded the scope of their business and were naturally helped considerably in their efforts when they were joined by their respective sons Donald and Glen.

The two brothers had dovetailed into a formidable business team — Charles the practical butcher, and Bob the efficient administrator.

It was remarkable how that pattern was to be reflected so closely in their successors when Captain Bob retired in 1973. Joining the firm recently was Donald's son Stuart, who represents the fourth generation of Grants.

Now designated Grants of Dornoch, this 140-year-old family firm began a new era in 1975 when they opened a substantial new slaughterhouse on Dornoch Links. Tenants of Cuthill Farm, they own Eaglefield holdings, Lonemore Links and the Glebe.

After serving in the Armed forces — Capt. Grant went to France in the First World War with the 5th Seaforth Highlanders — later, in 1916, he was commissioned with the Scottish Horse at Dunkeld, and was for a time with the 41st Indian Cavalry. He returned home to Dornoch in 1924 to join his brother Charles.

Captain Bob never allowed his dedicated commitment to work to dominate his life. He had an abiding interest in the community life of Dornoch and was ever on the alert to guard the Royal Burgh's interests.

He was the last surviving member of the committee who revived the Dornoch Highland Gathering, and for some years was their president, to be succeeded in that appointment by his son Glen in 1967. He then became a vice-president.

His sprightly presence will be missed today at the Games in the Meadows, where, with

that other great Highland figure, the late Pipe-Major Angus Macpherson of Achany, he showed so much enthusiasm and gave the Meeting a sense of dignity and charm.

A great sportsman, Captain Bob, besides being a first-class angler and rifle shot, was an enthusiastic curler and up to a year or two ago, despite his years, he travelled as far as Aviemore to enjoy a game.

Captain Bob was at his best on social occasions. He had a great sense of camaraderie and he liked nothing better than to renew old acquaintanceships, although these became increasingly fewer with the passing years.

One old friend still survives, Mr John S. Mackay, of Corry, Rogart, who will be 91 in December. Johnny Corry was deeply moved when he heard of Captain Bob's death.

Captain Bob was distinguished by an irrepressible sense of humour, breadth of vision, tolerance and broad-mindedness, and added to all these virtues his dedication to duty made him one of Sutherland's most respected businessmen. It was indeed a joy to spend an hour or two in his company. His hospitality was legendary.

Capt. Grant had gone into hospital in Inverness a few weeks ago and had recently been transferred to Cambusvie Hospital to be near his family in his last hours. He died just a few days before his 90th birthday.

He is survived by his wife and two sons, Hamish, the elder, who is a school teacher in Germany, and Glen.

Dornoch Cathedral was crowded with mourners at the funeral service conducted by the Rev. James Simpson. It must have been the biggest funeral ever seen in the Royal Burgh.

The funeral was to Proncnain cemetery, and the chief mourners were — Glen (son), Donald Grant, John Anderson, and Jackie Grant (nephews), Ian Sutherland (Poles), Stuart Grant (grand nephew), Colin Campbell, Gordon Rutherford, Neil Gunn, John Mackay, R. A. Murray and Capt. W. W. Stewart-Fitzroy.

The Countess of Sutherland was represented by her husband, Mr Charles Janson.