

George Calder, of Dornoch and Inverness

THERE was grief in the Highland community last January at the news that George Calder, of Dornoch and of Inverness, had died so suddenly. The grief was all the keener over the passing of this prominent citizen, well-known as businessman and as golfer, because he was only 48, a young man in his prime.

Schooled at Dornoch Academy, George spent many of his early summer days on Dornoch Links with a golf club in his hand. It was natural for George to take to golf, first of all because he was a Dornoch boy; secondly, because he belonged to the Ross family, of St Gilbert Street, Dornoch. George's grandparents were Mr and Mrs Murdo Ross, the four members of whose family, all born before 1890, were Donald, Alec, Aeneas and Jean. Donald and Alec went to America before I began to go to Dornoch Academy, but George's mother, Jean Ross, was my contemporary there; and the names of his uncles, Donald and Alec, are written in bright letters in the history of American golf.

Golfing record

Senior citizens of Dornoch will remember, as I do, George's grandparents, Mr and Mrs Murdo Ross, a sterling couple, each a real individual belonging to a generation when the urge of one's own identity often shaped him or her into the form of a special "character." Murdo, well-known as a stonemason, was a friendly, forthright man, well endowed with native wit. Young George, his grandson, was also well equipped with the same good qualities and fully exercised these as a golfer and in the general affairs of the community.

A lifelong member of Royal Dornoch, George was a member of the Inverness Golf Club for 14 years; had been club captain for several years and president in the years 1968-70. As an administrator George served the golfing public as a member of the Council of the Northern District of the Scottish Golf Union. A first-class, all-round golfer, George was Inverness club champion in 1955, Inverness county champion in 1958 and, on two occasions, a member of the Northern Counties Cup-winning team.

Twenty years ago, when I managed to qualify for the Carnegie Shield match play at Dornoch, I met George in the first round. It is a match I remember with special pleasure because I was shot for

shot, step by step in friendly exchange and golfing fellowship with this fine, generous young man. I went out in 36 and was three up; George played the second nine holes in 36, and the match was square.

Pulled his drive

We played the first hole at Dornoch as "sudden death." George pulled his drive and failed to reach the green with his second from the rough; I had a good drive, and my shot to the green gave me a birdie 3. I knew very well that I, the veteran, was lucky to play so well. It was easy to play the game in the company of George.

In America George would be called George Calder II; for Jean Ross married George Calder, sen., whose people belonged to Spinningdale and Skibo. He is remembered as a careful, able sanitary inspector serving a wide community. George's father, too, died long before reaching the allotted span. George's young brother, Donald, is a top executive of a leading insurance company in Canada; true to his golfing heritage Donald Calder is vice-president of a well-known golf club in Montreal.

DONALD GRANT.