

Robin Malcolm McCall, Inverbrora

OBITUARY

Robin McCall was a fine man and intuitive farmer, and well respected by others for his knowledge of livestock and good business sense.

He was born on 22 June, 1922, in Camberley, Surrey, the youngest of three sons to Ralph Leicester McCall and Dorothy Stewart Oxley.

As one can tell from his place of birth, Robin's background was firmly grounded in the military, his father being a colonel in the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders and having, at one time, commanded the First Battalion of the Regiment.

Robin was educated at Wellington College which instilled in him a great love of all sports. He formed and played in cricket clubs in Aberfeldy and Sutherland, and at the age of 55, was still playing hockey against the pupils of Dunrobin School at Golspie. He was also an accomplished squash player.

At the outbreak of war, he was too young to follow his brothers, Douglas and Allan, into the family regiment, even though he did try his darnedest.

On being turned down in the Army Recruitment Centre, he immediately

marched out and went next door to join up with the RAF. His training as a pilot took him as far afield as Rhodesia and South Africa, Egypt and Iraq. He loved the two former countries and revisited them in later years.

Robin served in the Reconnaissance Corp, dangerous work that entailed observing enemy positions behind the front line. One of his great friends in the squadron was Chris Jones who always maintained that Robin saved his bacon because Robin took his place in a fated reconnaissance run over the Anzio beach head during which his aircraft was shot down.

With his cockpit jammed, he thought he had done rather well in bringing his craft down on a friendly part of the beach. Managing eventually to get out of the plane, he sauntered up to a group of soldiers, only then to realize that their helmets were an odd shape and the uniforms were a dusky grey.

Noting his mistake with horror, he turned and ran like a scalded whippet, but bullets fizzed all around and with nowhere to go, he hit the deck, and there began a gruelling two year period as a prisoner of war. Having survived a long and hard journey from Italy up to Eastern Germany in cattle trucks, he was housed in a Stalag Luft camp.



Robin McCall

After the war, in 1946, Robin met Peggie Maclean at a village hall dance in Strathyre, Perthshire, where his parents were then living and where Peggie was working for the Forestry Commission.

They were married that same year, and there followed the year after that, their son, Malcolm, and 2 1/2 years later, daughter Kirsty.

After a stint working on his uncle's estate near Yeovil, Somerset, Robin moved back to Scotland with his young family to spend six years working on hill farms in Perthshire and Angus, often living in cold, damp and drafty cottages without heating or electricity.

In 1952, Robin acquired Ruskich Farm in Glenlyon where he farmed for six years and in 1957, through his good friend, Tom Finlayson of Finlayson Hughes, he came to Sutherland to manage Cambusmore Estate which had just been acquired by

Tim Abel-Smith.

But Robin's desire to be his own man was strong and when he was offered the tenancy of Inverbrora Farm on the Sutherland Estates, he jumped at it.

Four years later, Uppat and Carrol Farms were added to the tenancy before Robin created a partnership with his brother, Alan, who had come to farm at Culmailly and Kildonan. It was a sizeable unit at its peak, employing 12 people.

In 1986, the farming partnership was dissolved so that both Robin and Alan could form new partnerships with their sons, Malcolm and Angus respectively, and in 1992, it was decided that Robin and Peggie should swap houses with Malcolm, with them going to live at Uppat farmhouse while Malcolm and his family moved to Inverbrora.

Robin and Peggie loved Uppat, and not only set about adding a wrap-around extension to the property, but also Robin cast his magic green-fingered spell over the flowerbeds and vegetable plot.

With their 80s approaching, Robin and Peggie moved to the The Meadows in Dornoch where they spent two happy years together, but sadly, Peggie died in the Millennium year.

Robin lived on his own for the 6 1/2 years, but was kept company by his two loyal dogs, Josephine the daschund, and Hector, the brown and white collie. Robin had a great affinity with dogs and it would

seem that in every photograph taken of him in his youth, there was always a dog to hand.

So the life change was felt hard by Robin, his close companionship with Peggie now replaced with long walks with the dogs and a great deal of television watching. With the acquisition of Sky television, this meant all-year, round-the-clock cricket - if only he could master the remote control. Quite often Kirsty would call him to ask if he had the cricket on, and he would reply that it must be coming on after the strange young man on screen had finished selling his item of jewellery!

When his memory started to play tricks on him and he was finding it increasingly difficult to live on his own, Robin moved to Oversteps Residential Home where he immediately regained some of the joie de vivre that had been lost for the previous six years.

He was regarded by staff and residents as "the perfect gentleman", always going round to greet each person individually in the morning and springing to his feet when someone new walked into the room.

Robin was extremely fond of everyone in that home, especially the carers. He always liked pretty women - he had high standards, of course, being married to a West Coast beauty for over 60 years - and then he ended his days surrounded by them! - MM.

Russell Grant
HOROSCOPES

For a more in-depth horoscope reading for today, just call your star sign number.



Aries (Mar21-Apr20) 09065 154 436

Being torn between two equally exciting choices makes things difficult for you now. You must decide between one or the other and it won't be so easy as you think. Getting advice isn't a good idea either; friends will have their own private motives for wanting you to take a particular course. The decision should be yours and yours alone. Being a team player is sure to bring bigger, better results than trying to go solo and keeping your ideas to yourself.



Taurus (Apr21-May21) 09065 154 437

Stop telling yourself you're waiting until certain things happen before you make a move in new directions. Stay in this mind set and as soon as whatever you're waiting for does occur you will find another excuse to hold back. If there's something you need to do, hesitate no longer. There is no better time than now to strike out and explore new experiences. Life will be happier and more fulfilling once you take that all important leap.



Gemini (May22-June21) 09065 154 438

Someone you thought you were getting on well with seems to be giving you a wide berth now. The reason may be simple but if you aren't keen to ask, turn your attention to other people instead. You will soon get over your disappointment as confidence in your own sociability helps you roll with the punches.