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People

North-east peer had a rich and varied life

BY MORAG LINDSAY

Lord Forbes of Balforbes was a former minister of state for Scotland and the country's premier baron.

Wounded during the Dunkirk evacuation, he took part in the Queen's Coronation and forged a successful business career, making his mark on the worlds of brewing, broadcasting and farming.

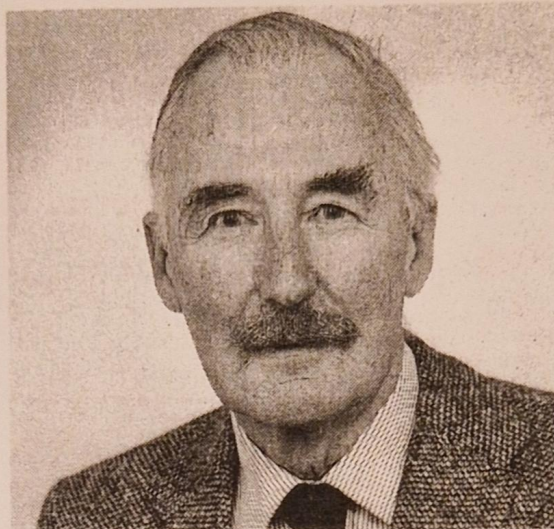
Through it all, he remained rooted to the north-east, working tirelessly to support causes from the local patient transport service to the Bailies of Ben-nachie - the volunteer caretakers of Aberdeenshire's landmark hill.

At his coming of age party at Castle Forbes, reported in the Press and Journal in 1939, he told his guests that if his wish to serve his country and make a career took him away from home "it was not that he lacked devotion to the country of his childhood".

It was a pledge he would honour for the remainder of a rich and varied life.

Born in February 1918, Nigel Ivan Forbes was educated at Harrow and the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, before

**Nigel Ivan Forbes,
KBE, Lord Forbes
of Balforbes,
1918-2013**



following his father into the Grenadier Guards.

He served in North Africa, Italy and France during World War II, when his leg was shattered by a mortar during the retreat to Dunkirk.

After recuperating, he served as adjutant and attended staff college, becoming military assistant to the high commissioner in Palestine before retiring from the Army with the rank of major.

In 1953, he succeeded to his title and, that June, he carried the coronet of Princess Mary, Princess Royal and Countess of Harewood, at the Coronation.

He and his wife, the Hon Rosemary Katharine Hamilton-

Russell, with whom he had two sons and a daughter, managed the 5,000-acre estate from Balforbes on the south side of the River Don.

Lord Forbes was a member of Alford District Council from 1955-1958 and chairman of the River Don District Board from 1962-1972. In 1955, he was made a justice of the peace for Aberdeenshire and, in 1958, a deputy lieutenant.

He entered the House of Lords in 1955 and was offered the job of minister of state for Scotland by Harold Macmillan three years later.

He accepted on condition that he would serve only to the next election, a year away, and he

used his 12 months to pilot through the Deer (Scotland) Bill.

His stint at the Scottish Office coincided with chairmanship of the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland.

He became a founding director of Grampian Television in 1960, remaining on its board until the late 1980s, and was a member of the Aberdeen and District Milk Marketing Board, deputy chairman of Tennent Caledonian Breweries and chairman of turf company Rolawn Ltd.

Scouts founder Robert Baden-Powell was a guest at Castle Forbes in the 1930s and Lord Forbes served as a scout leader in the 1950s and later as president of the Scottish Scout Council.

He was chairman of the Scottish branch of the National Playing Fields Association, and was active in the Friends of Inch Hospital, the Alford Car Transport Service and Books Abroad.

He is succeeded as 23rd Lord Forbes by his elder son, Malcolm Nigel, who took over the castle on the death of his grandmother in 1972 and has lived there since 1988.