

OBITUARY : GAVIN RICHARD BORLAND (Powell House 1951-55)

Gavin died on the 22nd August 2024 in a Dumfries Hospital. The younger of two brothers- both excellent swimmers in the school team – Gavin left Sedbergh and returned to the family's hill farm south of Thornhill , Dumfriesshire.

After a spell of shepherding the 2000 acre hill Gavin, aged 20, unexpectedly inherited from a distant cousin a fertile farm on the east banks of the River Nith three miles south of Dumfries. However, such good fortune came with conditions: there were the estate duties to pay and under certain circumstances he could even have forfeit his inheritance.

But typically Gavin rose to these challenges; single-mindedly, and with business acumen belying his tender years, he quickly learnt to adapt to cereals, beef and potato farming and methodically re-structured the farm so as to achieve long-term profitability. Always keen to adapt, innovate and learn he gauged his results by benchmarking the business's results in the Scottish Agricultural Colleges annual Farm Business Surveys. Thus no surprises that his younger son continues to build on his father's farming legacy.

Off the farm Gavin played a number of seasons for Dumfries R.U. F. C. He also joined both Round Table and Rotary, holding a succession of senior honorary positions in both thereby helping to raise considerable sums for charities in Dumfries and Galloway over many years. Being seriously deaf from childhood Gavin was particularly keen to support the Dumfries and Galloway Hard-of-Hearing Group.

Gavin was married to Pauline – a former nurse – for 62 years. She survives him supported by their two sons, a daughter and eight grandchildren. To the latter he was the proud patriarch. It was perhaps Gavin and Pauline's greatest achievement to rear such a wonderfully caring and harmonious family.

Even at Sedbergh Gavin's lifetime characteristics were discernible; strong principles and values; integrity; loyalty; focus and persistence ; questioning of unnecessary rules and regulations ; once convinced of the merits of an argument unyielding to the point of stubbornness ; but a man of warmth and humanity and a strong sense of fairness . Generous, a bon viveur and staunch friend.

Gavin was of a generation of Sedberghians totally at ease with the ethos of ' Nura Virum Nutrix'. Yet as a family patriarch in these different times he would readily approve the ethics of ' Humility; Ambition; Resilience and Kindness. '

Rodney N Swarbrick. September 2024.