

**Service to remember the life of**

**Robert Hamilton (Bob)**

**St Ninian's Parish Church**

**Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2009 11.30 am**

**Thereafter Stonehouse Cemetery approx  
12.15pm**



**5<sup>th</sup> June 1927-17<sup>th</sup> April 2009**

Robert Hamilton

5<sup>th</sup> June 1927-17 April 2009

*Robert Hamilton, often known as Bob, and latterly as auld Bob, but more often recognised by his use of the colloquial term "well my lass!"... was a real character-one with inimitable bravado and a sense of old fashioned values about him. He was a noted storyteller, and could spin many a tale, though often quite risqué, and had such a stock of tales that you were unlikely to hear the same one again. He was a person with a positive outlook on life, full of humour and happiness. He was at his best when he had a small audience to hear and respond to his tales.*

*Bob was well regarded, as he was never seen in a bad mood, and one who was loyal to those whom he cherished, though conversely he did not suffer fools gladly.*

*His diverse knowledge of the countryside and animals was clear to all whom he met and for many he was inspirational in developing their appreciation, skills and love and empathy with nature.*

*Being tall, he often carried a presence wherever he went. He was a good looking man which did not diminish with age, though his bonnet may have hidden the head of hair as it diminished in later years.*

*Indeed, Bob was a Man of the Earth, who could turn his hand at anything. This hid a well developed intellect with a knowledge of how things work and how animals live, which enriched those who often came to him for help-to fix a broken vehicle or a mechanical part or advise on a sick animal.*

*How he came to have these attributes is clearer when you understand the background to his life and upbringing.*

Robert was born into one of the oldest Stonehouse farming community families-born at Kittymuir Farm in 1927, the son of Thomas Barr Hamilton and Peggy Letham, his mother being a daughter of Lethams of Blackwood.His

grandparents farmed Kittymuir, his father being the youngest son, joining his father-his elder siblings already having been established in other farms in Stonehouse.

He had an enjoyable childhood growing up with siblings and cousins, and was noted for his sense of mischief, even at a young age, which he inherited from his maternal grandfather Letham. He is remembered for the many tricks he played on family and friends.

He would be seen in the village with his sister Ellen and cousins with their Donkey, delivering farm produce. He found ways in moving the obstinate donkey with a pin and board which made it move, especially when it refused to budge from the Linthaugh watering trough!

An early experience in learning to manage animals was when he was 4 years old-and had to help his grandfather with a sow to deliver a breach birth piglet. As he had small hands he came to the rescue and delivered the piglet. For ever more he was a natural with all types of animals.

He made many friends at the Cam'nethan St School(The Dominie),before he left Stonehouse in 1939, after the farm was sold and his parents relocated to Basingstoke.

He spent the war years in Southern England, and continued to hone his knowledge of the countryside and animals, responsible for looking after a fine pedigree herd of Ayrshire cattle, which his father had established, before returning with the herd to Kirriemiur in 1947.

He married a local farmer's daughter Margaret Mc Kay in 1947, with whom he had five children-Sheena, Alistair, Ian, Brian and Robin, farming in Stirling and Fife and winning awards for his animal husbandry at the Scottish Agricultural Shows and building up a wide circle of farming community friends.

Finding farming and the economy difficult, with the need to maintain a large family, he returned to Stonehouse in 1958 and joined his cousins in the family Greengrocery business Hamilton Bros ..many still remember seeing him racing with his cousins in their buses as they headed back to Stonehouse in the evening. However this period was shortlived ,as his marriage broke up, and he moved to Fife and Kincardineshire as a Farm Manager.

These were difficult years without his children, with the need to rebuild his life. He coped by putting his significant skills and energies into animal husbandry and craft skills, and shepherding, and continued to develop his creativity in being able to turn his hand at anything. He was particularly keen in watching real craftsmen at work and learning their skills-something he carried throughout his life-for which his beautifully crafted scots walking sticks pay tribute.

In the late 60s, he once again returned to Stonehouse, living with his parents at Thorndale, Manse Road and joining Stewarts of Sandford, Haulage Contractors, whereby he met his second wife Moira MacFarlane and extended his family by three step children, Ewan, Rhona and John.

In 1973, he joined Galloway and Macleod, Grain Merchants, and honed his knowledge of the local farming community through his wide network and appreciation of agricultural affairs. He was a walking Scottish Farmer Journal! The task of visiting and communicating with a diverse range of farmers resulted in him being well informed and approachable for advice on farming matters and no doubt one who always had an opinion.

In 1980, he joined his son Alistair in a Hackney Carriage Taxi Service for which his considerable mechanical skills were often put to use. These were happy years, after the physical ardour of his previous occupations, and allowed him to relocate from Thorndale to Union Street, so that he had less responsibility for the small holding, and brought him into day to day urban life, living in the centre of the village.

In 1992 he had a major change in his life - his 21 year old marriage with Moira ended, he retired from the Taxi business and his daughter Sheena and family joined him. However, retirement was never his forte and he continued to work with Alistair in his window manufacturing company, often using his skills to build many craft built pieces of furniture, which many today still cherish.

In 2006, he was fortunate to meet Anne Tayler and started a new episode in his life-at King Street, where Anne encouraged his gardening and craft skills and he developed into a fine maker of walking sticks and shepherd's crooks with handsome carved heads.

At the pinnacle of his retirement he unexpectedly fell ill with a serious illness, but even at this challenging point in his life he was determined that he would not give up. He was truly supported by the family and friends and close Stonehouse network, all which gave him great fortitude and a sense of purpose .

He was still cracking jokes to the end .He will be sadly missed as one of the great Stonehouse characters.