

Peter Gardner

**Peter Boyd Gardner, JP,
headmaster; born December
9, 1920, died January 4, 1999**

PETER was born in Aberdeen and moved to Paisley in 1928 when his father became headmaster of the Kibble Approved School. He attended Paisley Grammar School and latterly the High School of Glasgow, before graduating as a Master of Arts at Glasgow University.

A distinguished war service followed. When commissioned into the 2nd Lothians and Border Horse tank regiment, he was posted to North Africa. While Tank Commander, he was wounded at the battle of Kasserine Pass, Tunisia, and taken prisoner to Camp PG49 at Fontanellato near Parma. In spite of being injured due to shrapnel in his leg, he escaped from the camp in October 1943, and trekked more than 300 miles in winter, over the Alps to Switzerland, and eventually into Allied lines. By the end of his Army service he had attained the rank of Major.

Peter met his wife, Jeanne, while serving at Arborfield camp and they were married in 1946 and moved to Scotland, where Peter took up a teaching post in the Kibble. Following the retirement of his father, Peter was appointed headmaster in 1952 and remained in that post until he retired in 1982.

The period of Peter's headship was very much a time of change. He was one of the first in residential care to ban corporal punishment, yet he was no "soft mark". He led his staff from the front, and regularly took part in serving meals to the pupils himself, knowing that this meant each boy had the opportunity to approach him every day without the formality of having to ask for an interview. Many a potential problem was solved by the proximity of the relationships

which he established and sustained. He placed high demands on his staff, but asked nothing which he would not undertake himself. He could be very firm, but always respected the personal dignity of pupils and colleagues.

As headmaster, Peter also oversaw the physical transformation of Kibble from the original institutional type of building to a modern personalised house unit complex, and was very involved with the design and finance of the changes. He was a most accurate and conscientious custodian of the public purse, and was respected by the Scottish Office for the professional manner in which their funds were disbursed, always within the budgets laid down.

Peter held numerous offices in the Approved Schools (Scotland) Association, including secretary, and for two years was its president. He negotiated with the Scottish Education Department for improved salaries and conditions for all grades of staff and proved himself to be a convincing advocate. Peter also served the community faithfully as a Justice of the Peace in Paisley, bringing the same respect, dedication, sincerity, and common sense to his duties in that capacity.

St Mirren Football Club attracted his support, and, with his sons and grandsons, he would regularly attend the games at Love Street on a Saturday afternoon. He was also an authority on cricket and many other sports, having been a rugby player in his youth.

In retirement, Peter loved tending his garden and devoted much of his time assisting neighbours and friends to keep their gardens in order, if unable to do so themselves. He is survived by his wife, Jeanne, with whom he celebrated their golden wedding in 1996, together with their three sons, daughter-in-law, and two grandsons.