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Arnot Russell

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Born: 26 December, 1922, in Monifieth.

Died: 11 April, 2005, in Crieff, aged 82.

ARNOT Russell brought a zest to teaching and to his various interests outside the classroom. He ensured that many pupils at Trinity College, Glenalmond took their first faltering steps on the ski slopes under the rugged conditions of a sombre and wet sky on Ben Lawers.

Russell, with his unbinding enthusiasm, strode up hills with his potential skiers trailing behind as if it were a summer's day. In fact Russell was one of the pioneers of Scottish skiing and, long before chairlifts were built, regularly supervised parties on the slopes of Glen Shee. He was a mountaineer of much experience and a passionate golfer.

William Arnot Watterston Russell read chemistry at St Andrews after service in the army during the war. He came to Glenalmond in 1950 and was to spend his entire career at the school. He joined the science department and principally taught chemistry but he was in charge of the Combined Cadet Force (resplendent in full dress kilt for inspection days) for a decade. It was shortly after joining the staff that Russell started filling his car with pupils and taking them up Ben Lawers to ski.

The conditions were primitive in the extreme and the howling wind ensured it was a numbing experience. One member of an arduous training course held in the Cairngorms over an Easter recalls being introduced by Russell to "winter climbing and proper skiing". That, he discovered, entailed "walking up the hills as well as down". Such minor problems never worried Russell. He stormed off in front with the rallying cry, "Follow me".

Russell was housemaster of Skrines from 1960-74 and was always available for a chat with his pupils. Keen to see them do well at the various sporting activities, he was always on hand if things went awry with a comforting word. He had a way of setting boys of all ages at their ease and was a good listener. Russell gloried in the nickname of Zource. The origin, let alone the spelling, is lost in the Perthshire mists, but he was also known as the Galloping Major on account of his speed round the golf course and climbing the most challenging rocky ridge. Many recall his singing in chapel - "idiosyncratic and not always in tune with the organ or choir".

His last decade at Glenalmond was devoted to developing the uses of the new science laboratories and improving the condition of the school's golf course. He played the course and his beloved Crieff, where he retired with a determined commitment.

Russell married Virginia Kemp in 1958, who also worked at the college. She and their daughter and two sons survive him.
