

Peter Francis Scott, formerly Chairman of the Provincial Insurance Company, has died aged ninety-three in London. Few people can have had a wider impact on the business, social and cultural life of Kendal and Westmorland in the fifty years after 1945.

A grandson of the founder of the Provincial, he was educated at Winchester and Oxford. On return from war service in North Africa and Europe, he took up his family responsibility as Director of the company in 1946, working from its Head Office in Kendal and living at Long Dales, Matson Ground, Windermere. He followed his father Francis as Chairman in 1957 until 1977, when he became President of the Company until its sale to UAP in 1994. Peter therefore led the Provincial through its years of maturity as a leading general insurance office, when it employed over six hundred staff in Kendal and was well known for its innovative policies, extensive employee share ownership and good relations with agents and policyholders. Before he became Chairman, he oversaw the construction of the modernist Provincial office block, which has been such a distinctive feature of the Kendal skyline. As Chairman he supervised the creation of Provincial Life. Peter always saw his responsibilities as stretching beyond the door of the office. Through creative leadership and the benevolence of the Provincial and family trusts, he helped make Kendal an important centre of cultural life in the North of England. He was Chair of the Trustees of the Lake District Art Gallery Trust that developed Abbot Hall as a Gallery with a national reputation for its collections and exhibitions. He founded and was Chair of the Kendal Brewery Arts Centre, an innovative approach to community arts involvement. He also chaired the Trust that managed Brathay Hall, the Ambleside-based organisation that uses the Lake District to work with young people and provide professional development activities. In earlier years he chaired the Lake District Committee of the National Trust. Peter became deeply engaged in all these activities, especially the Old Brewery, and found great satisfaction and personal fulfilment in their success. Alongside these public roles, Peter created and steered the various family charitable trusts that have played such a major role in the social and community life of Westmorland.

This experience took Peter to wider roles. He was a member of the Northern Economic Planning Council, the National Standing Committee on Museums and Galleries and a Director and member of the Executive Committee of the National Theatre. When the University of Lancaster was established, he became the first and long serving Chair of its Finance Committee. Through his benevolence the Peter Scott Gallery, another institution with a national reputation, was established on its campus. The University later awarded him an honorary Doctorate of Laws alongside his Companionship of the British Empire (1982). He was High Sheriff of Westmorland in 1963 and a Freeman of Kendal.

Peter Scott was a man of wide interests and formidable, genuine charm. If free to choose, he might not have pursued a business career, but he recognised his duty to his family, their business, and to the community in which both were placed. He developed these responsibilities in a most imaginative and determined way, creating for the people of Westmorland a range of possibilities for social and cultural experience that was exceptional in its time. Peter married Prudence Milligan in 1953 and they divorced in 1974. In recent years he has pursued his artistic and cultural interests in London, but his children: Charlotte, Madeleine, Alexander and Rebecca, all retain a close interest in the Lake District.

Thanksgiving services will be held in London and Kendal. Details can be obtained from anna.fischelt@sandaire.com / 020 7290 5200

Written by Oliver M Westall
November 2010