



After a grey and cold start, the sun shone regally for the opening of the bridge ceremony, with the Queen Mother cutting the ribbon with silver scissors handed to her by nine-year-old Alasdair Barnett, son of the resident engineer.

Favourite Granny

Like a granny everyone would have been proud of, the 91-year-old Queen Mother charmed each of the hundreds who watched her officially declare open the Dornoch Firth bridge on Tuesday afternoon, with even the sun shining for the occasion.

The great-grandmother, who arrived by helicopter from the Castle of Mey, was presented to officials, bridge builders and local dignitaries, but she kept her warmest smiles for the very young and the old folk.

Dressed in a silk dress and coat of deep coral, with grey accessories, she performed the tape-cutting ceremony and unveiled the plaque to mark the event, saying that "The shorter journey from Caithness and Sutherland will, we hope, help to foster closer ties between local communities on either side of the firth."

Arriving in Tain by Daimler after a brief stop at the Glenmorangie Distillery to receive a special commemorative bottle, the Queen Mother was greeted by cheering crowds lining the High Street.

In a brief walkabout, she spoke with residents from local nursing homes before stepping under the wrought iron "Royal Burgh of Tain" archway to visit the rose garden she last inspected 25 years ago.

The garden now features the new "Queen Mother



Magnificent was how the Queen Mother described this Caithness Glass present, an engraving of the bridge, handed over by works manager Dennis Bremner from Golspie, with consulting engineer Don Fraser (right) snapping the unique occasion. On the left is Lord James Douglas-Hamilton, Minister of the Scottish Development Department, and Mrs Moira Bremner is standing behind her husband.

Rose" blooms, and birthday girl Mairi Mackenzie (7), a pupil of Craighill Primary School presented a bouquet of roses from the garden.

After lunch at the Morangie Hotel, and the handing over of a gift of Tain Silver from Ross & Cromarty District Council, the bells were rung to

welcome her to the St Duthus Memorial Collegiate Church.

She spoke personally to each of the 28 ex-Servicemen of the Tain and District British Legion line-up before inspecting the church with Mrs Jane Durham, chairman of the Tain Custodiers Trust, and Mr David Robertson, to

see the restoration work done there.

The day ended with a visit to Number 8 Quarry Lane, a home occupied by Mrs Marjorie Ross (63), and one of a new district council housing scheme for the elderly. Mrs Ross's grandchildren Lynsay (7) and Lisa (4) handed over poses

before the Queen Mother spoke with some other residents and friends in the Quarry Lane courtyard.

After showing her royal guest through her one bedroomed home, Mrs Ross relaxed and summed up everyone's feelings after such a happy day: "It was just great. Marvellous."



In a brief walkabout in Tain's High Street, the Queen Mother chatted with residents from Duthac House, Tain and Redwoods Nursing Home, Alness.