

The Selkirk Colonial Society

Bulletin 1995



COMMON RIDING 1995

THE amazing thing about Selkirk Common Riding is that every one seems to be the best ever! The 1995 certainly was great in every way. Even the weather, which has been unreliable for months, turned out fine just at the right times.

Our Standard-bearer, Duncan Stewart, arrived in Selkirk in time to take part in the flag casting practices on May 31st and June 6th so he was into the "swim" of things of things in good time along with the other standard-bearers. The practice on May 31 took place in Mungo Park Court, more commonly referred to as "The Bield", and he was able to mingle with the senior citizens therein, most of whom knew his father and his grandfather. The practice in the week prior to the Common Riding is performed to the full Silver Band so that, too, was a bonus.

Wednesday night was the big one for the Colonials, and Duncan received a rousing welcome from the capacity audience at the Bussin' concert, where he was installed with the sash of office and charged with the flag. The colour was graciously bussed by Duncan's Aunt Phyllis, Mrs Christie, before his Aunt Helen, his two brothers, his seven cousins and a great many more who all warmed to the occasion.

Our long-standing soloist, John Mitchell, was recovering from a severe cold, but managed to render one song to keep the continuity going for, I think, the thirty-seventh year. Dixie Scott, however, was in really fine voice.

The guest chairman was Andrew Anderson, carefully chosen because of the long friendship between the Anderson and Stewart families, and the opportunity was seized upon by Andrew for some cheery banter.

The Royal Burgh Standard-bearer, Duncan Lawson, was presented with the Edinburgh and Lothians Souters' medallion by Alan Elliott (son of Meta Eames) who is another intimate friend so there was a real party atmosphere abroad.

An extra feature of the Bussin' Concert came at near the closing when Duncan and brothers, James and Gregor, donated to the Colonial Society a gavel in memory of his father, Gordon, who was standard-bearer twenty-five years ago. This was gratefully accepted by the Society chairman, Jim Henderson, and promptly used by Andrew Anderson in introducing the final item on the programme. In all an excellent bussin' concert.

After the concert we all adjourned upstairs to the lesser hall where we enjoyed the fare which had already been spread on the tables before Jim Henderson got the jollity under way with a song or two. Highlight of the function was the presentation to Duncan with the Walter Waldie Memorial Medal by Alex and Dorothy Monks, who had just returned from an extended holiday with the Waldie family at Stringy Brae in Australia.

In introducing standard-bearer Duncan Stewart guest chairman Andrew Anderson stated that it was a particular privilege to do so. "Duncan has met the challenge of illness with great spirit, and overcome not only disability but also the attitude of others to it. He is highly talented, and one of the biggest people I know."

From your Chairman,

Monday, June 9th, 1995

As Souters contemplate the Common Riding just past on this following Monday morning, they must surely find themselves contrasting the anticipation and excitement of just a week ago with the weary tedium which invariably attends just a few days after the event. Nonetheless, this year we have again had a great week and there is always the consolation of another next year.

Perhaps it is this which is at the heart of our Common Riding tradition. Certainly, a tangible sense of continuity has been a prominent feature this year. First we had Standard Bearer Duncan Stewart reminding us of his father, Gordon, who came home to cast our flag twenty-five years ago, on the fiftieth anniversary of his own father, Buckham, he having been Royal Burgh Standard Bearer. Gordon's sister Phyllis was our Lady Busser this year.

Then we had the pleasure of welcoming to our Reception Mrs Kathy Smith, who bussed the Colonial Flag in the Pageant Year sixty years ago.

Finally, we had messages and good wishes to our Standard Bearer from exiles everywhere, including one from last year's Standard Bearer and Lady Busser, Ernest and Kathleen Hume and their family.

Continuity indeed. I hope that it will not be too long before all of you who were unable to be with us this year will be able to get back to Selkirk for another Common Riding. In the meantime, as we brace ourselves to deal with another year of anticipation, please accept the best wishes of all of us in Selkirk.

Jim Henderson



DUNCAN'S BIG MOMENT — An onlooker was heard to say: "He's the biggest man on that platform today."