



Colonial News 2017

Message from the Chairman

Another successful year for the Society. Our membership is up, finances are healthy, the work to preserve our regalia is almost complete, the minutes/programmes from 1910/11 are being digitalised, and the Society is embarking on an exciting partnership with the Haining Trust to allow all our newly preserved regalia to go on permanent display in the Haining House. Sales of our newly released CD are excellent and we will be in a position to provide financial support to local good causes, and now in it's second year, the History Medal awarded for the best article on an "exile" provides the Society the opportunity to involve young people in the heritage of our town and the Society. All in all the Society is going well and we hope to continue our progress.

At the same time it is encouraging to note that interest from overseas in joining our Society is increasing mainly thanks to Facebook. We are grateful for the support from those overseas and look forward to meeting up with you at Common Ridings to come. We are nothing without our "exiles".

The Common Riding for the Society was thoroughly enjoyable with full houses for the Bussin', Reception and Foy. With overseas visitors and returning exiles, supporting our tremendously enthusiastic Standard Bearer and his Lady Busser, and the weather playing it's part, everyone had a great time.

Best wishes to you all and please keep in touch via email/facebook.

Ian Clapperton

Exiles and overseas visitors who attended the Bussin' and Reception

CSB/LB Martin & Fiona Murray with children Ruaridh & Sarah, John & Jane Graham, Jenny O'Flaherty, Gordon Kirkbright & Jennifer Begley, Donald & Marcus Waldie, Ken & Linda McWhinnie, John, Karen & Stephen Beveridge, Colin Heatlie & Lea Stikkelorum, Jane Newlands, Margaret & Alex Barnet.



Our new CD

Preserved Standard Bearer sash





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The Colonial History Medal

Now in its second year the Society History Medal was awarded at the Bussin' Concert. The winner this year was Abbie Linton, for her story of Jessie Camerer, and the presentation was carried out by Head Teacher Wilma Burgon. The winning entry is copied below –

"As close to Scotland as I can get"

Yince a Souter—Aye a Souter is a very true saying as Jessie Camerer can attest to, having been away from Selkirk since 1956. After moving to England when she just 20 years old to live with her Aunt, just to see what was beyond the Border after having lived in the wee town since birth. Jessie hasn't looked back and has lived away from Selkirk ever since but she regularly pays a visit to the wee toon when the roses bloom.

Jessie and her family moved to Thornfield Crescent when she was 5 yrs. old, the houses were brand new at that time, there was gas lighting where one used mantles which had to be lit with a match. The water was heated by the coal fire in the living-room and stored in a boiler in the kitchen. The coalman delivered sacks of coal and briquettes, her Dad and brothers chopped firewood for kindling, they all gathered round the fire at night listening to the radio and staying warm. Later on the Council put in electricity which was so much brighter and easier. But they still had the coal fire for many years; they used to toast bread in front of it which they had with hot cocoa before going to bed.

She went to Knowepark School then Selkirk High School; she made lots of friends whom she still visits when home for holidays. They had no TV so they made our own entertainment, went for walks on a Sunday afternoon. They played tennis and tried putting, at the courts where the Bield is now.

They danced at Lilliesleaf on a Friday night, a bus took them there and brought them back to the Market Place where they stopped up the close at Douglas the Bakers and bought a hot mince pie to eat on the walk home. Saturday nights the dances were held in Galashiels, you had to be sure to catch the last bus home at 11.35pm as Sunday was a day of rest and no buses ran after midnight on Saturday. She was in the Selkirk Opera for three years, what fun she had getting all dressed up in costumes and acting and singing lovely songs, putting on stage makeup, curling her eyelashes, feeling beautiful. She recalls it as "Great times".

In England she settled down and got a job at the Rovex Factory making toy trains. She soon made friends with the girls at work that induced her to go to Dreamland Dance Hall in Margate for the Saturday night dance, which was a popular outing amongst Jessie's age. It was there that she met her future husband, with whom she would soon travel further.

Jessie's husband Walter was an American Air force GI who at the time was stationed at the Air Force Base in Manston close by. When Jessie arrived at the Saturday Night Dance she was very shocked to realise that the American Air Force GI's had made an appearance. Following this Jessie met up with Walter at the local coffee shop and three weeks later they were engaged and two years after that married and then they went on to have two boys.

Jessie and her husband moved to the USA in 1961 and were stationed in Virginia, Florida and California, finally settling down in Washington State. Jessie had been gone from Scotland for 8 years when her husband was sent to Vietnam. Due to this, Jessie and her sons came back to Selkirk for a year to live with Jessie's parents in Thornfield Crescent. Her boys attended Knowepark Primary School and loved everything from the common riding, to long walks up the hill, to days spent in the Pringle Park and attending the Saturday matinee shows at the Picture house. They would get money to buy sweets at Nan Haldane's and loved how they could roam about with their pals unsupervised all day.

Jessie then moved to Washington State when her husband had ended his time in Vietnam. From then on her life settled in the USA with her family. There were so



many new experiences in the USA for Jessie and her family. Her husband was an avid fisherman and hunter, Jessie had never experienced this but soon became a dab hand at fishing for salmon, halibut, rockfish and trout. They had many boats over the years, some for rivers and some for the ocean. They went to Alaska to fish for halibut three times; she recalls it as "wonderful eating". She also learned how to cook venison and deer meat. They dug for clams, hauled up crab pots and shrimp nets, so different from Scotland.

They settled in Washington State, the great Pacific Northwest. She still portrays it as "It is so lovely here, very green with lots of evergreens and rhododendrons". It rains a lot and the climate is so much like Scotland, the same flowers and trees grow there, a little warmer in the summer and not quite so cold in the winter. They have lived there now 45 years, and as Jessie says "to me it seems as close to Scotland as I can get".

They have the gorgeous Cascade Mountain range which runs down through Washington and Oregon with Mt. Rainier always snow-clad and Mt. St Helens, the volcano which blew 1600 feet of solid rock into ash in 1980. They are both retired now but previous to retirement Jessie worked as a hairdresser for years and had her own shop. She has recently taken up art and now does watercolours. She has won ribbons and money, she has also sold a lot of paintings and the money goes into an account for her trips home.

Many members of Jessie's family have been to visit; so many lovely places to see. The Pacific Ocean is only 2 hours away from Jessie's house, the San Juan Islands lie just off the coast. Jessie takes picnic lunches all the time and they can enjoy eating surrounded by wildlife and beauty and she loves being a tour guide. Jessie has had a very good life and made many friends here but for her there is nowhere like home.

Prior to Jessie's travelling she held a job in Gardiner's Mill on the weaving when she was 18. As a result of this in 1954 she was asked to buss the Weavers Flag for standard bearer James Patton, she recalls it as "one of the proudest moments of my life". Ten years later Jessie's sister Moira had followed in her footsteps and

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bussed the Weavers Flag. Her brother George was also Weaver's standard bearer twice and Deacon of the Weavers Society. In 2004, Jessie was invited to the Weavers Bussin' to mark her 50 years anniversary of bussin the Weaver's Flag; she was presented with a bouquet of flowers to mark it. Then in 2014 both Jessie and her sister Moira were on the platform again, Jessie being 60 years since being lady busser and Moira being 50 years. Jessie's whole family has been entwined in Selkirk common riding and still continues to be. In 1997 Jessie's nephew Alan Wilson was the Burgh Standard Bearer

The journey from Jessie's current home to the wee toon is long and arduous taking a full 24 hours from start to finish. However for Jessie it is all worth it when she can once again take a walk across Selkirk hill, follow the silver band round the toon and hear the auld borders tongue. Jessie's husband, sons, daughter-in-law and granddaughter have all visited Selkirk many times, but usually Jessie comes alone to renew all the old acquaintances and shed a few tears when departing but Jessie hopes to come back at least once when the roses bloom again.

The Bussin' Concert

Crowds were out in force once again this year for our Concert, which was a great success. The Society Chairman charged the Standard Bearer Martin Murray to





undertake his duties, Fiona Murray bussed the flag and then both were given a rousing cheer.

Provost Wheelans, the Royal Burgh Standard Bearer Kieran Riddell and his



Burleymen and Attendants were then introduced to the audience. Jim Jackson and Margo Craig from the Edinburgh and Midlothian Souter's Society presented RBSB Riddell with the Society Medallion. Entertaining the audience in fine style were local singers Ian Wilson and Milly Coltherd with Dave Mackay at the piano. Not forgetting the High School and Silver

Bands under the baton of Colin Kemp.

A presentation was made on behalf of the Society by secretary Aileen Firth to Falconer Grieve in recognition of his 10 years of sterling service for the Society. Jim Bunyan (CSB 2007) was Guest Chairman.

The Reception was well supported and enjoyed by everyone



Presentations to SB and LB were made by Marcus Waldie and Rachel Houston.

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The Society Flag is well and truly cast



The Foy following the end of the Casting was greatly enjoyed by members and all Souters had a tremendous Common Riding and Sports.





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The Common Riding in pictures (no words necessary)





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Colonial Lady Busser Perspective: Qatar to Selkirk

Tuesday 13th June, after a 7 hour flight from Qatar our plane touches down at Edinburgh Airport. Finally it was my time to join Martin (Colonial Standard Bearer 2017) in the build up to Selkirk Common Riding. Mum and dad were there to welcome us at the arrivals gate and as we set off down the A7 dad played the Common Riding CD to get us in the spirit. Ruairidh and Sarah full of excitement sung their hearts out. Lindean passed us by and the kids got ready to holler 'Selkirk we are home' as the 30 signs came into view. The Toll greeted us with the true blue and scarlet bunting strung across the road ready in anticipation for the cavalcade that would charge pass on Common Riding morning.

Martin was waiting for us at home having been helping out with preparations in the Victoria Hall for the bussing ceremonies. He informed me that all was set for the evenings Merchant Company Bussin and that we were to meet the other Standard Bearers and their Lady Bussers at the Fleece at 6:30pm. Just then I received a lovely text message from my fellow Lady Bussers welcoming me home and looking forward to meeting up with me later. Already I felt part of something special.

All suited and booted ready to attend my first official Common Riding duty and about to head out the door when Martin realised that I was not suitably dressed. He then presented me with my Colonial Lady Bussers golden rosette to be worn above my heart and on the other side the Standard Bearers rosette along with flashes from the 4 other associations. My mum expertly pinned them to my chest. I must admit as she did this I felt sense of honour and pride and I eagerly awaited the proceedings to begin. Not surprisingly the 2017 Standard Bearers and Lady Bussers welcomed me into the fold and it was if I had been part of the group ever since appointment night.

The Merchant Company Bussin was a great night. To hear and see the honour and passion that Stuart has in his duties to fulfill his role as Standard Bearer was wonderful. As I listened to Isobel buss Stuarts flag I could hear the emotion and the pride in her voice and for the first time since I found out that Martin would be Colonial Standard Bearer it struck home what a privilege it is to buss his flag.

Bussing day arrived and our timetable of events was hectic to say the least. This was also the day that Martin carried out his first official community cast. Up until now casting had been carried out in the dusty streets and searing heat of Doha. Granted he did have ex Selkirk Standard Bearer John Beveridge as flag master to show him the ropes. What a grand turnout there was at Thornfield. Martin admittedly felt slightly anxious. He had need not worried as he cast the flag very well as did all Standard Bearers. To the crowds delight all Standard Bearers cast their flags together, which was a wonderful sight to see.

Our next visit was to Selkirk High School. Here I was transported back in time to my years at school, the building itself hasn't changed much. The 2nd years joined us in singing Common Riding songs as the Standard Bearers presented their flags and Deacons from Weavers and Hammermen explained the history behind each. From here Martin and I made our way down to the Victoria Hall for our Bussin rehearsal with Chairman Ian and his wife Pat. As I stood on stage and looked out across the hall, all I could think about was would I remember how to put on Martin's sash correctly and saying the word 'memorable' properly. Thankfully, Pat having bussed Ian's flag (for the Merchant Company) was able to pass on sound advice and after couple off practices I felt reassured. Both Martin and Ian were so relaxed and confident in their duties that it completely put me at ease.

Back at mums there was just time for a quick bite to eat, a drink to steady the nerves, a shower and change in to Bussin finery before heading up to Viewfield for the Standard Bearers final cast and official photos. Thankfully we were blessed



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with a lovely evening. As we made our way round to the Victoria Hall I could see the crowds of people queuing to get in and if I'm honest the butterflies did take flight in my stomach. It was great to see so many people turn out to wish Martin well and to take part in the Colonial Bussin.

Walking out on stage to the audience applause and seeing my family and friends beam with pride was one of the most honoured moments of my life. The Bussin itself went smoothly, I didn't feel nervous and could not stop the grin spreading across my face.



The entire evening was fantastic from the formal Bussin to the upstairs reception not to mention both my and Martin's solo turns!! It was humbling to hear other Colonial stories and the number of trips they have made back to the Burgh for the Common Riding.

With my formal duties fulfilled Thursday brought a welcomed interlude before the main event. It was my time to offer support and well wishes to fellow Weaver and Hammermen Lady Bussers. They too did the town proud and bussed their Standard Bearers flags in an honoured fashion.

Given the 24 hour day that lay ahead of us we agreed to an early night. Instead of the rude awakening that an alarm would normally bring at 4am we awoke with a spring in our step. With Martin in his suit and proudly wearing his sash we made our way to the war memorial to begin our magical day. At the sound of the first drum my heart soared. Martin collected the standard as the procession made its way to the County Hotel where it stopped and the band played Her Bright Smile. It was touching to see the appointed Standard Bearers carrying their flags aloft in straight line around the town and even more so to see our ribbon hanging gallantly from the Colonial flag.

We followed the flag down the Green to the waterside, watched the cavalcade of horses pass by on route round the burgh lands and marched back up to the town again for breakfast. The Colonial flag was passed round to other fellow colonials including our son Ruaridh who carried it with pride and eagerly announced, "one day mum I'll cast this flag"!!

'Boom' the 9am drum sounded and the procession made its way down to the Toll. Everybody had changed into their Sunday best, it took me back to when I was young and choosing my Common Riding outfit which we wore come rain or shine. My dad and brother both ex Flesher Standard Bearers chose to support Martin and followed the Colonial flag instead of the Flesher flag as did all our family which emphasized their support to us throughout the Common Riding. Both my dad and I even got to carry the Colonial Standard a proud moment for me and definitely one for the photo album.



In their usual spectacular fashion the horses came charging in at the toll, a truly fascinating sight to see. Like a well-rehearsed play the procession gathered in an orderly fashion and the band struck up for its final march to the Market Square. It was gratifying to hear the expressions of encouragement called out to Martin as he steadily made his way towards the Square. As we headed passed the Royal Bank the red dais came into view set boldly and proudly. Crowds lined the streets and the procession petered out as people tried to find an ideal spot to watch the final act. We continued up round the Kirk Wynd into the centre of the Market Square, my stomach churning with every step knowing that main event was upon us. Selkirk Standard Bearer Kieran Riddell bounded up the steps to the stage and effortlessly and calmly cast the flag setting the standard for the rest of the Standard Bearers. Soon it was Martin's moment, my heart was in my mouth as he took to the dais, with a nod of his head Colin Kemp launched into 'Up wi the Souters', in my head I was counting with him, unfortunately he had his back to me so I could not see his face, though I knew as he made his final cut that pressure was off and he was smiling within. The final act passed he turned and made his way down the steps towards us with a simple dignified hand raise to the crowd and sheer pride cast across his face. I myself was an emotional wreck completely overwhelmed and so proud of Martin and our towns history.

'Floors o the Forest' softly lamented, as Ex Soldiers Standard Bearer Alex Ballantyne stood motionless on the dais with the standard dipped, not a sound could be heard as the crowd paid their respects to the fallen. Standard Bearer Riddell took to the stage again and returned his flag to Provost Wheelans unsullied and untarnished. A fitting end to a truly marvelous morning.

Selkirk Common Riding 2017 for me will be one of the most memorable occasions of my life. I would strongly encourage any Colonial Souter to put their name forward to be Standard Bearer or to join the society and be part of our unique and magnificent heritage.

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Out and about



Dandie Dinmont



Band at Junior Rideout



Road repairs soon

Cross Keys to be demolished

Toll banking plans



Black Bob statue plan



Glen wall saga ends

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