



THE ST. ANDREW SOCIETY OF SÃO PAULO

Sandy Roberts

Iain Alexander McLaren was born in 1942 at Selkirk Cottage Hospital, once the home of Andrew Lang, famous for his children's fairy tales. After a spell at Galashiels Academy, Sandy went to Craigflower prep school then on to Merchiston Castle in Edinburgh, becoming Head Boy there. He played in the 1958 Centenary rugby match against Edinburgh Academy. This match is renowned as the longest continuously played rugby match in the World! Don Burrell, an international referee, forgot to limit each half to 35 minutes, so it was particularly memorable and crippling for both sides. Sandy comments that Merchiston won simply because they were fitter and, in those days, had no access to beer!

After the proverbial best days of his life, he spent the next proverbial best days of his life reading Mechanical Sciences (Engineering) at Cambridge, joining Plenty & Sons Ltd, Newbury as an Engineering Apprentice, to learn the basics of the trade. In 1967 he moved to Glasgow, Clydebank and the West End, where he was introduced to Glasgow patter and red Clyde trade unions with work-ins. Booker transferred him to Brazil in 1973 where he worked with Hero Equipamentos in Vila Guilherme, SP. He continued when they were sold to the North Group of Australia in 1992. In 1995 he joined Global Industries of Dallas to wind down their loss-making subsidiary and continues as a Consultant to the company.

Very soon after landing in Sao Paulo, Sandy "was joined to" the Committee of the Society, then Secretary for two years, and Vice President for a year before becoming President in 1979. Sandy, known as the "Grace" of the Society, maybe for his rendering of "*Some hae meat*", or because he was born in Selkirk, is renowned for his epic rendering of "*Ode to a Haggis*" all memorised and spouted perfectly every Burns Supper. He admits to keeping a copy of the words up his sleeve just in case words fail him, but, so far, they never have! He married Kathy in 1978, and had two children, George and Patricia.

Where did Sandy learn his excellent country dancing skills? - At school from Iain Robertson Brown who started "The Kilt is my Delight" on UK television. Hence came the expertise, passed by Sandy to Kathy and then to everyone before Ladies Nights. In 1979 was it a nail-biting occasion, because Sandy had also to toast the Lassies? His remark that Anita Drummond was to reply for four minutes alarmed him, as we men "all know what 'just a minute means!"

Sandy had to step in to organise the Banquet & Ladies Night when Duncan Renwick left Sao Paulo. It's worth noting that the excellent Banquet speeches that year were all made by "Linhas" men - Norman Munro, Arthur Grosset and Dr Julio Cruz Lima, with The Boss, James Ruffle, President of the St. George's Society replying for the guests. This year the British Caledonian Band arrived in the city for Independence Week activities, creating a stir at St Paul's School and the London Tavern.

On the sports side, Sandy, a keen golfer and a member of Guarapiranga, won the Quaich twice in 1976 and 1977.