



THE ST. ANDREW SOCIETY OF SÃO PAULO

Duncan Renwick 1978

Duncan, born in Edinburgh in 1928, went to boarding school in Durham and then on to Edinburgh University where he studied agriculture. He returned to the Northumberland family farm but unfortunately this was lost in 1948. How did Duncan get to South America? It's a fine story. He went to the bull sales in Perth and he and some friends decided to 'accompany' some bulls going to Argentina. A cousin had mentioned prospects in Brazil and from Buenos Aires, Duncan moved to São Paulo state to the Swift King Ranch, before spending 10 years in Paraguay from 1960 to 1970. From 1970 to 1980 saw Duncan on ranches in the Prudente area, later sold to Brascan, and then in 1991 he moved to Fazenda Mosquito, leaving Swift in 1992, moving to Brotas.

In March, 1978, a churrasco and dancing evening heard Andrew Cockburn piping, and he and Venetia, his wife, who taught Scottish Country dancing to St Paul's pupils, were presented with mementoes in recognition of their work for the Society before their departure up the road to Rio.

It was World Cup year in 1978 and in April our Society footballers beat the Danes 6 – 1 in the Ferguson Trophy (best of 3 games). In November the Danes won 3 – 2 and finally the Scots beat them 4 – 2 so winning the trophy for the first time on 23 December 1978. What a Christmas present! However, the World Cup hopes were dashed when Scotland lost to Peru 3-1, drew with Iran 1-1 and beat Holland 3-2, with a famous goal from Archie Gemmill, which FIFA considers a classic. Teddy Lindsay, piper, appeared on the Silvio Santos show on TV so we had our shining moment too!

Still on the musical side, "*Manchete*" magazine of September 1978 showed a photo of Brás Baun member, Willie Anderson, playing his trombone with the São Paulo Dixieland Band, founded in 1959.

In Paraguay, Duncan, one of the founders of the rugby union, confused the São Paulo medical profession after a game with the Barbarians where he broke his nose. The doctor treating him complained that he couldn't get it straight, only to be told it never was!

On to other sports. The cricketers beat SPAC and the Quaich was at Gurapiranga, Andrew Strachan winning and 18 golfers taking part. The School Competition attracted 100 posters depicting what Scotland had to offer visitors.

The AGM minutes tell of 4 sets of bagpipes, one of which was given to the Society. Although the Rio Society had enquired about ownership of this set, Andrew Cockburn assured everyone that this set had been given to the São Paulo St Andrews from the Society in Lima, when they were disbanding during political troubles.

When Duncan moved up country, Sandy Roberts stepped in to organise the Ladies Night and Banquet. Ladies Night returned to Buffet Torres, where it had been held from 1970 to 1972. Apart from the 223 guests, the waiters also greatly enjoyed the evening as they had well and truly sampled the Atholl Brose, which someone had forgotten to padlock! Maybe that was why the service left a lot to be desired! Rosemary Dow designed the programme, which sported a single flowering thistle bending in the wind.

The 50th Annual Banquet was held at SPAC. The Historical Committee established that this was in fact the 50th although "Fiftieth Banquet" appears on the previous year's programme and menu. The cover of 1978's Banquet programme was a reproduction of the oldest programme in the Society's files. Father John McGuire said grace. Murray Dods, whose father, Toby, a great Society stalwart, and Chairman of



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the original Historical Committee, proposed “Our Fiftieth Banquet” and Pat Hughes gave “Our Native Land”.

The second Burns Supper in 20 years was held at SPAC. Sandy Roberts addressed the haggis, Pat Hughes gave the speech to the Lasses, Renee Wilson replied, and Murray Dods gave us the Immortal Memory. Afterwards, Norman Munro sang many songs, including his unbeatable “A Scottish Soldier”, Margaret Hughes was accompanied by her husband on the accordion and John Crawford on the piano, and Libby Grosset recited “Holy Willie’s Prayer”. Libby was an accomplished actress and theatre director and gave a dramatic version of Tam O’ Shanter at another event.

In 1978, the Society reached its intellectual peak by winning the Brains of São Paulo. The team consisting of Mrs Godward, Hugh Millar, Alasdair Kerr and Ted Perkins won against numerous rivals! Another first was the Quarterly Newsletter on Society Affairs sent out to members in April 1978.

Sadly, Jack McIntyre, a founding and the oldest member of the Society died in this year. A missionary in Goias Velho at the turn of the century, long before Colonel Fawcett made the headlines, and before the Villas Boas brothers became famous for their expeditions, he was apparently much loved by the Indians. Jimmy McIntyre, SPAC Director, used his brothers’ contacts in 1932 to go gold prospecting in the area. It took him 6 weeks to get there.

In the Times of Brazil, 1957, the following announcement was made: “Social. Congratulations to Duncan Renwick, of Fazenda Mosquito, who left recently for the Old Country – and matrimony wi’ a wee Scots lassie.” That wee lassie was Margaret.

In the mid-seventies, on the first Saturday of May, the King Ranch held an annual sale of Santa Gertrudis cattle and Quarter Horse at Fazenda Bartira, Rancharia (SP). A train was rented with three or four sleeper coaches to bring guests and buyers from São Paulo to the fazenda siding, leaving on Friday and arriving back in São Paulo on Monday morning. The coaches served as accommodation for those who travelled up for these few days of revelry and partying as well as the serious business of hoping to purchase some of the renowned SG cattle or Quarter horses. The guests were met at the platform at Estação Luz with caipirinhas and other “light” refreshments and dinner was served on board. One particular year, our friend Duncan, always one to get a party going, gathered everyone together in one carriage and started a singsong. Drinks flowed freely and when the train stopped at around midnight in Assis for an hour, Duncan decided that he should, “out of duty”, visit some of his old haunts in the city from his single days. Margaret thought this totally inappropriate and barred the door. But Duncan, a resourceful guy, started for the window, whereupon Margaret caught hold of his legs and said: “---if you go, my lad, you go without your boots”. This was not enough deterrent and Duncan got to the platform but left his boots in Margaret’s hands. However, all the old haunts were closed, and Duncan returned in time to continue the journey to Rancharia.

Duncan, as everyone would agree, was very “simpatico” and had limitless patience as President, together with a great knowledge of things Scottish. Unfortunately, he passed away on 21 March 2000. His lovely wife, Margaret, a very friendly person added a perfect glow to the Presidency. They had 3 children, Heather and Karleen and Andrew, who were seen at various Caledonian Balls.