

... but I wish it hadn't been me!

# Santa interview re-affirms my faith

By ROBIN BAKEWELL  
Herald Staff

I wish it hadn't been me! Most of the staff here at The Herald believe I've been dipping into the Christmas spirits a wee bit early. If I'd have been I could shake the whole thing off, but sure as taxes, there he was.

Arriving early this morning at the office and unlocking all the doors it is customary for the first to arrive to turn on the Christmas lights, and start brewing the coffee.

Groping towards my desk I noticed the Christmas lights seemed somewhat brighter this morning and the fresh smell of coffee filled the air.

Something was definitely wrong! Someone was at my desk! Had they replaced me? If they had, this guy was far too big to mess with.

Approaching cautiously I came face to face with a man who needs no introduction. A journalist's dream! An interview with Santa Claus!

For the first time in seven months my desk was clean (no doubt with a twitch of the nose and a wink of an eye) and there were two cups of steaming coffee waiting for me.

My mind was racing with questions but the only one I could blurt out was, "There's no chimney, how'd you get in?" Boy did I feel stupid.

He smiled and I started to gain my composure.

"There's a few things I'd like to clear up about myself concerning my Christmas schedule and frequent appearances, Robin."

Wow, he knew my name! (Some poor carrier at The Herald must have a pretty rough paper route.)

"With parades, malls, parties and an extremely busy night coming up on Dec. 24, I'm spreading myself pretty thin and have to admit there are several surrogate Santas."

"There's no way I can be in two places at once and would like you to write a short article on at least one of the surrogate Santas I send down from the North Pole at this time of year."

Upon explaining himself he handed me a couple of contacts and while I was loading my camera for an exclusive Herald photograph, he vanished.

If it hadn't been for the two North Pole phone numbers he'd given me I'd have finished my coffee and dismissed everything.

A fifteen digit number! How would I explain the cost of this call to the publisher? Providing Santa hadn't been to every paper in town I figured I could risk the charges.

I dialed the number slowly and carefully and by the fifth ring the receiver clicked in.

"Hello, Surrogate Santa Centre, what district would you like?"

These guys were organized, I thought as I asked for a surrogate Santa from the Halton Hills area.

As a Santa servicing the Acton area introduced himself to me I was surprised to find out how much he sounded like the Santa I had spoken to just minutes before.

"I've been leaving the North Pole here for about the last eight years in order to make sure that Acton Santa Claus Parade is a big success."

"Between that, and appearances from Niagara Falls to Newmarket, I

keep myself and the reindeer team more than busy."

If this wasn't the same man who was just in the office he sure could've fooled me. "Why are you a surrogate Santa for the Acton area?" I asked.

"Acton's a wonderful place and that's where I take my summer vacation, but, Christmas is magic in Acton."

"Everyone seems to have the Christmas spirit. Even the older people

get just as excited as the children and seem to forget all their problems for a while."

"Any problem finding Acton around Christmas time?"

"No problem at all, although last year I arrived late due to weather conditions and couldn't find a place to land the reindeers. I had to land on the back roads and walk the team in."

"This year I'll be arriving a little earlier and after the parade hope to set up a camera at the Acton YMCA so the children can have their pictures taken with me."

"What about any advice to the children in the coming weeks before Christmas?"

"You just tell them not to ask for the whole world because there are other kids who need things too."

"As for you, Robin, finish your coffee and keep your desk clean."

What? Hmm, maybe there is only one Santa Claus!



Donald Greig of the Lorne Scots and Bud Shields of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers are seen here together on the cover of the album commemorating the tour to England by the Lorne Scots' band.

(Herald photo)

## Father, son travel with Lorne Scots to British Isles

Herald special

The massed Bands of the Lorne Scots, (Peel, Dufferin and Halton Regiment) visited England this past July. The bands consists of the Regimental Pipes and Drums and the Regimental Brass Band.

On arrival they reported in to St. George's Barracks, the army base headquarters of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers who were to be their hosts.

George Greig and his son Don from Georgetown were fortunate enough to be amongst the many bandsmen making the trip. George is a piper and Don the lead snare drummer for the Pipes and Drums.

After many rehearsals the bands of the Lorne Scots and the Royal Fusiliers played on the square outside Guild Hall, Ontario House and the Tower of London where amongst distinguished guests was the Duke of Kent who inspected the Canadian group and chatted briefly with George.

Concerts and a retreat ceremony were later staged at Nottigham and Sutton Coldfield. During the latter part of the first week the Massed Bands of the Lorne Scots and the Royal Fusiliers cut a record.

Don Greig and a friend from the Fusiliers, Bud Shield are indeed proud

to have their pictures on the cover of this recording. Four hundred copies of this record were released to Canada. If anyone is interested in buying one they could get in touch with anyone of the Lorne Scots.

The second week the bandsmen had to themselves and took full advantage. Renting a mini bus George and Don along with Duncan McCallum, Larry Birmingham, and Sam Lynn from the Pipes and Drums travelled to Scotland. They attended highland games in Luss near Lock Lomond also they visited Stirling Castle which is the headquarters of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, one of Scotland's proudest regiments.

They also passed through Glasgow, Dunbarton, Balloch, Aberfoyle and many other places.

They spent some time in Edinburgh staying on the famed Prince's Street and toured Edinburgh Castle where the Pipes and Drums have participated in the famous Edinburgh Tattoo in 1960 and 1970 and plan to return this next year (1985) the 25th anniversary of when they first played there.

The Canadian group had a memorable holiday and look forward to the Fusiliers visit here in 1986.



Diane Penrice of the Old Glen Mill stands with some of the items that were for sale three weeks ago when the Mill closed down for good. There were reductions on all merchandise in the store.

(Herald photo)

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