

# Hobnobbing with Royalty from 15 feet

I can't say I'm a fanatic about royalty.

Nothing like my wife and mother. They're so dedicated, they got up in the wee hours of the morning to see Charles and Di tie the knot on TV 10 years ago.

Not me. Sleeping has higher priority.

But last Sunday, I admit, I was bitten by the "Royal Watchers" bug.

I covered the Duke of Kent's visit to the Civic Centre where he planted a tree commemorating the 125th anniversary of the Lorne Scots Militia, of which he is the Colonel-in-Chief.

I wasn't taking any chances to stay back 15 feet and "dress appropriately." Simple.

Armed with cameras and dressed in my best "bib and tucker," I attended the event.

The Duke arrived at 11 a.m. and was greeted by the Mayor. I stood back and took my photos, from 15 feet. I followed into the council chambers where he was introduced to councillors.

I shot those proceedings, always keeping the 15 feet required for protocol between myself and the Queen's first cousin. I was sure some of those big well-groomed fellows with British accents and bulging jackets had to be from Scotland Yard. And besides, an ample supply of over-sized Lorne Scots were sprinkled around keeping an eye on things.

I wasn't taking any chances to upset the Duke or Lorne Scots.

After signing the guest book, the Duke was piped down the stairs and outside, following a red carpet

to the tree he was to plant. Again, 15 feet separated us.

The ceremony took a few minutes, and he returned to the Civic Centre for a reception.

Mayor Russ Miller introduced everyone to the Duke, and I took several shots as people shook hands while he replied with a proper "Good morning."

One of his party, a young man in a dark brown uniform, wandered over to me and we chatted briefly.

He was polite and professional with his typical stiff upper lip manner. I complimented his uniform decorated with gold braid rope.

"Thank you sir," he returned, "I'm proud to wear this uniform, as it represents the Royal Scots, the Duke's own regiment."

It was made of fine British wool, and he told me of his pride in the regiment.

"There's only one small factor about this uniform I don't care for," he continued.

"What's that?" I returned. "It's bloody hot, sir."

I laughed at his candidness and agreed, as I had a wet spot running down my back from the day's humidity.

"Well I'll tell you this, sir" he went on, "If you have a wet spot in the centre of your back, I'm quite certain I have a bloody river running down mine."

We both laughed as the last well-wishers meeting the Duke filed through.

I had spent the entire event, complying with Royal protocol, so I thought, "What the heck, why not

## A TED BIT

By TED BROWN



meet him myself?" After all, he's only human, even if the Queen is his cousin.

I removed my camera equipment and had my new-found friend from the Royal Scots keep an eye on it, and got into line.

While I waited, I wondered to myself. What do you say to a Duke? Do you ask him how Elizabeth and Philip are doing? Or Charlie and Di? Maybe I should ask about Andrew and Fergie. No one ever asks about them. I mulled it over.

The Mayor introduced me.

"Your Royal Highness, I would like to introduce Mr. Ted Brown, a photographer with *The Georgetown Independent*, our local newspaper."

I suddenly felt uncomfortable. How would he accept that? Everyone knows royalty distrusts media. How could you do this to me, Mayor Miller? I had hoped to slide into line as a resident, not media.

The Duke looked me square in the eye and shook my hand.

"Ah yes, Mr. Brown," he replied slowly, "I noticed you taking a number of photos earlier."

I was ready. The icy cold comment was coming, I could feel it.

But it never came. He went on.

"I would like to thank you, Mr. Brown, for your professionalism. So often, members of the media are only interested in shoving a camera in my face and flashing away. But you maintained a discreet distance making this event thoroughly enjoyable."

I told him I enjoyed meeting my subjects, instead of just shooting and running. I also said it was a great pleasure to meet him, a member of the Royal family.

"No Mr. Brown, I must correct

you. The pleasure has been all mine."

Wow! Coming from a duke, no, coming from The Duke of Kent, I was walking 10 feet tall!

He was tipped back to his Rolls Royce, and I watched as his entourage drove out. He nodded to me as he left the parking lot.

Later, I learned he wants to be present for the opening of the new armoury, if possible, when it is built on Todd Road.

If he is, I hope to be there, taking in all the pomp, majesty and ceremony.

Of course, standing back 15 feet.

### Youth charged

A 15 year old Georgetown resident has been charged with break and enter and uttering threats. Police believe the youth stole a dirt bike from a Jocelyn Cres. house on Sept. 1. and then allegedly threatened two youths, one who lived in the home and owned the bike, police said. The youth will appear in court in Milton on Oct. 18.

### Stereo stolen

A car stereo was taken from a car parked in the driveway of a Norval residence Tuesday. The Sanyo stereo, valued at \$500, included an equalizer, police said. They have no suspects in the incident.

### Computer stolen

Three boxes delivered to M.Z. Bennett School in Acton were removed from the school sometime between Aug. 25 and

## Police Beat

Sept. 3. Police said the boxes contained an Apple computer and a 12 inch monitor.

### Impaired driving

A man was charged with impaired driving following an accident on Saturday at 11:40 p.m. The Georgetown resident was driving a van on the 5th Line when it left the road one km north of Steeles Ave., Halton Hills. The car struck a culvert and came to rest against a hydro pole, police said. There were no injuries in the accident.

### Electronics B&E

Police responded to a break and enter call at a Georgetown electronics store at 3:30 a.m. Thursday morning. A window was broken to gain entry and a 20-inch television was missing, police said.



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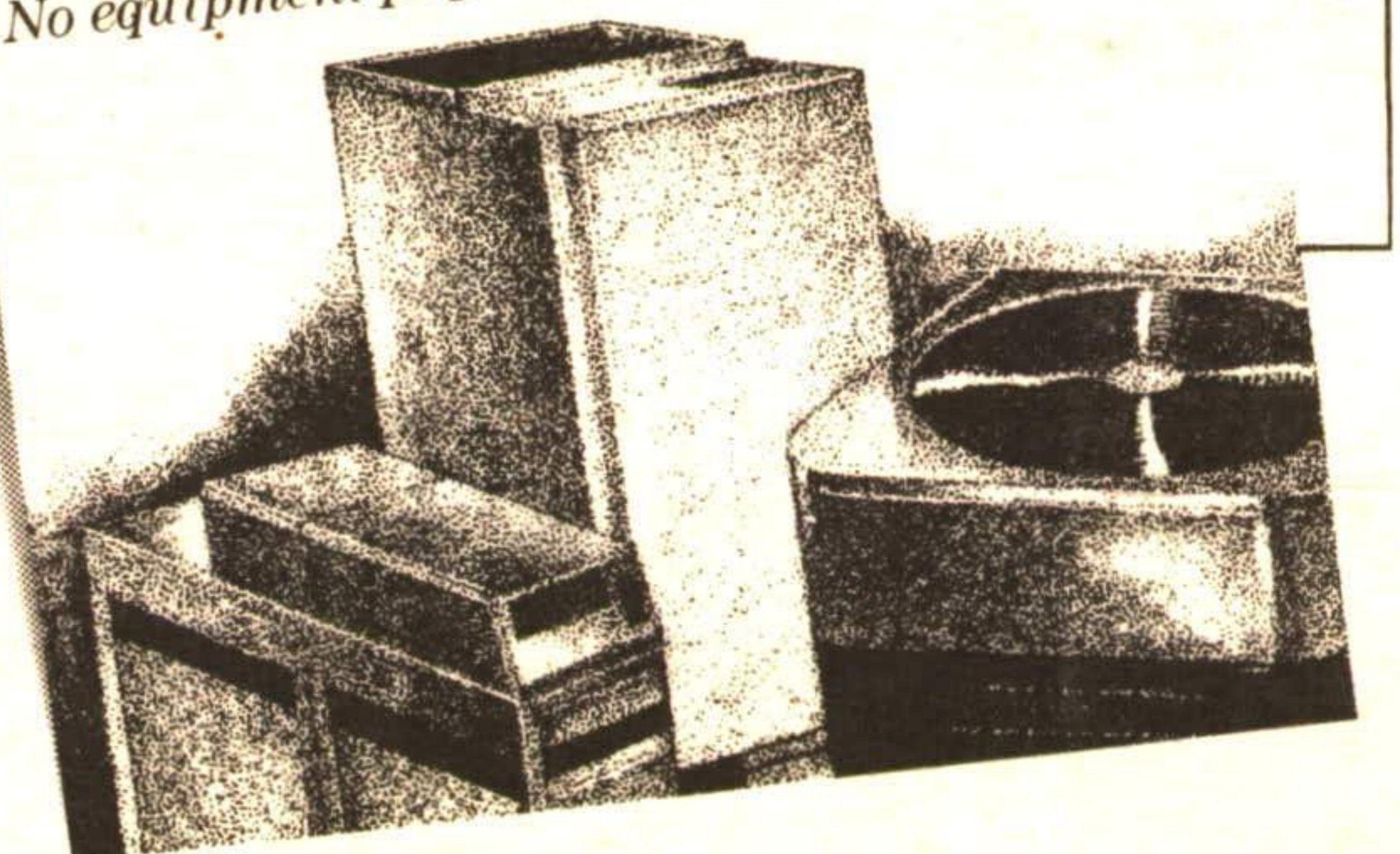
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