

# METCALFE: One of the fairest

More than 10,000 fairgoers clicked through the turnstiles in Metcalfe on the first weekend in October for the second-best attendance in recent times.

The Metcalfe Fair, now a Class 'A' event, introduced several new attractions which proved extremely popular.

"Although a few showers dampened spirits on Friday we had good weather the next two days," organizer Ida Craig said.

"Our indoor horse show on Saturday saw the biggest gate receipt ever and the Westberg Union band played to a sell-out crowd all night," she said.

Sunday's new western horse show was "a real crowd pleaser" Mrs. Craig said. "It will definitely be back next year."

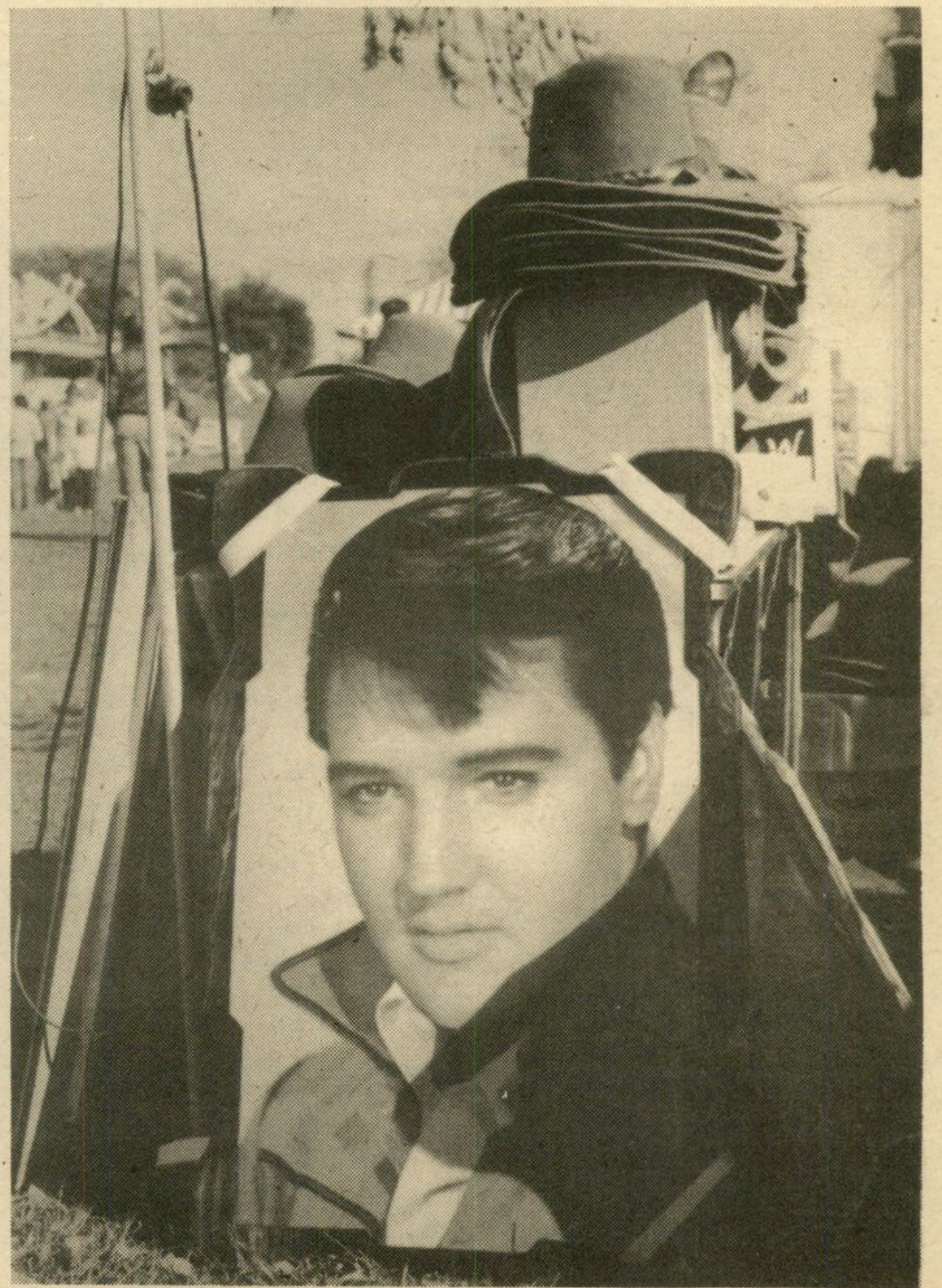
Mrs. Effie Morris organized the annual crafts show almost singlehandedly and, based on comments received by the fair's organizers, Mrs. Craig says "it was a roaring success". As was Sunday afternoon's fashion show.

Although the 1981 Metcalfe Fair did not top the attendance recorded in 1976 — which enjoyed brilliant sunshine all weekend — this year's version was thoroughly enjoyed by those attending.



Chris Bishop, of Metcalfe, was a sure shot and takes Teddy home to show for it.

Photos by Ian Darragh



The crooner's memory is framed at Metcalfe's Fair.

## Scrapbook

By Suzanne Schroeter

Russell has many pleasing sights to offer the casual observer. A feast for ones eyes and ears is the parrot owned by Mrs. Coombs of Russell. The other day I was introduced to Bert or Bertie as he's often called, and if I was skeptical in the past, I'm now convinced that animals and birds have intelligence.

Bert isn't just any ordinary, run-of-the-mill parrot, he is a talking parrot, twelve years of age, with the vocabulary of a six year old.

Bertie was bred in England and at the age of seven accompanied Mrs. Coombs to Russell to live with daughter Carol Webster and her family.

Already a fluent parrot specializing in Mother Goose rhymes. Bertie soon mastered all the names of his extended family right down to dog Lucky.

I guess you could say birds have always been in this family. Mrs. Coombs can recall a parrot that her uncle owned in England, and her grandmother was particularly fond of birds too.

But Bert fills the role of companion as well as pet. An 'African Grey', Bert is all grey with a brilliant red tail. Perched atop his

cage he is a handsome sight indeed.

After twelve years together, one can see the close bond between Bert and Mrs. Coombs. Throughout the day they are in constant dialogue, a type of mother and child nattering that can't fail to evoke laughter.

Learning by sheer repetition and mimicry, which explains Bert's pronounced British accent, Bert will comment on Mrs. Coomb's health, to the point of mimicking her sneeze; or let everyone know that he has a lot to do today; or at day's end, call out "Nightie-night" and "God Bless".

When visitors drop in, Bert stops his non-stop dialogue, but don't think he is ignoring you. With neck feathers raised, Bert will hop to the closest perch and take in all that's going on. If it appears that he's being ignored, then a little attention-seeking behavior will fix that. Clanging the glass

panels at the bottom of the cage is a sure-fire attention-getter. It makes lots of noise and Mrs. Coombs usually scolds and removes the glass. Next, pecking at his door hinge gets results too.

Sometimes his night-time blanket is put over half the cage to quieten him, but that only encourages blanket-chewing — quiet, but naughty.

Contrary to popular belief, Bert does not eat crackers. A herbivorous diet is his requirement, as nuts and seeds provide valuable oil for his feathers. A treat for Bert is a piece of orange or a cube of canned pineapple, which he will devour with glee.

A source of continuous delight, Bertie with a life-span of many decades, is going to be around making wise cracks for many years to come. If you should chance to be in his vicinity, try "Half a pound of tuppenny rice" and wait. If he thinks he is alone he'll reply "Half a pound of rye".

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