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How I Got My Royal Scoop

by David Henderson (11)

Most people will have read by now that my Dad, editor of this paper, is as "sick as a parrot" over missing an interview with the Duchess of York last Friday.

Let me explain how I managed to interview red-haired Fergie in his place, and won the headlines instead.

The Royal yacht *Britannia* every year sails in the seas of the West coast of Scotland, with the Queen and her family having picnics in different spots on islands and sea lochs before they meet up with the Queen Mother at the Castle of Mey in Caithness.

Because the tail end of Hurricane Dean was looming, they went straight up the coast without stopping and anchored at Scrabster near Thurso on the North coast. The next day they visited the Queen Mother and then sailed down the East coast and anchored again early on Friday morning, this time at the mouth of Loch Fleet, not far from Golspie.

I was in the middle of my breakfast when Dad came in and said excitedly: "Come and look at

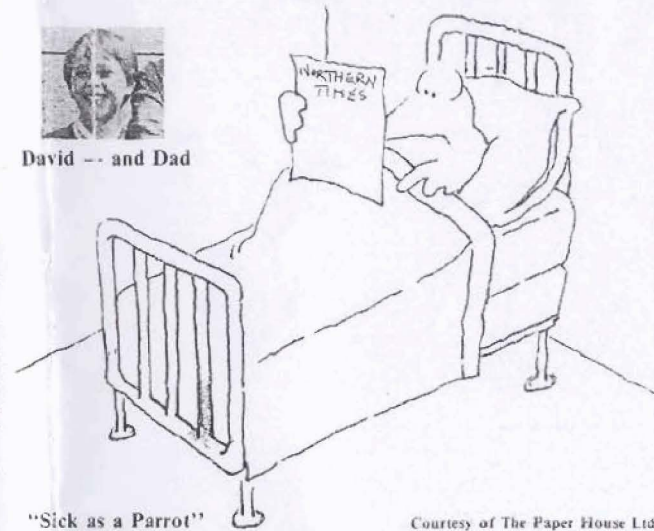
this." Out of the house we all trooped and he pointed out into the firth. I couldn't believe it — I don't think any of us could. The Royal *Britannia* was about a mile away from our house at Littleferry. Of course it was being escorted by a mighty battleship called *HMS Amazon*. There was a Lynx helicopter at the back of this vessel which flew out over us and away into the bad weather beyond us. It was away for about an hour and a half.

Father and Mother, today of all days, had earlier agreed to judge photography and handicrafts at the Assynt Games at Lochinver. The rest of the staff were already at something or other, so he couldn't get someone else to stand in for him. So, swearing a bit I'm sure, he set off with Mum to Lochinver, in the belief that the weather was so bad nobody would come off the yacht.

Nothing active happened until 11



David -- and Dad



"Sick as a Parrot"

Courtesy of The Paper House Ltd.

am when the Duchess of York was spotted on a launch coming ashore. I watched in amazement with our neighbour, Mrs Taylor, with her son and daughter Oliver (13) and Alyson (10). We saw the launch stop in the shallow water. A dinghy was thrown out and the Duchess, her lady in waiting and four detectives got in, with two sailors.

The dinghy reached land quite quickly and the passengers walked along the pebbly beach towards Lit-

tleferry. When they reached the road a small distance from the pier Mrs Taylor, Alyson and myself were standing right in front of them. I was quivering with excitement. Wait till my friends at school hear about this, I thought to myself. I was hoping so much that she would come and talk to us and, as if she was a mind reader, she asked Mrs Taylor how old their dog was. She asked other questions about the dog and began to pat him. I thought to

myself: "Sparky is going to be all over the papers tomorrow, and I won't get a mention unless I do something about it now."

I said: "I bet my Dad will be as sick as a parrot because he is the editor of the local paper and he has gone to Lochinver to cover the Highland Games." "Oh what a pity for him," she answered. Of all the things to say, why did I say that? That's what got into the papers!

I was hoping that after lunch some more of the royals would come ashore. The Prince of Wales did, but it was on the other side of the loch. He was there for quite some time painting and had to be quite rude to the band of Press photographers who kept trying to sneak pictures of him.

Really I wanted the yacht to stay overnight, so that perhaps Dad would get a story after all, but at five o'clock it sailed away. That night I was hardly off the phone answering questions from London reporters, like what was the Duchess wearing and was she slim and other stupid things like that. I quite enjoyed it, even though I didn't get to watch the TV programme I wanted because I was up and down all the time.

The next day the papers were full of the story about the editor's son scooping his father, so he told me I had better write this report, parrot-fashion.

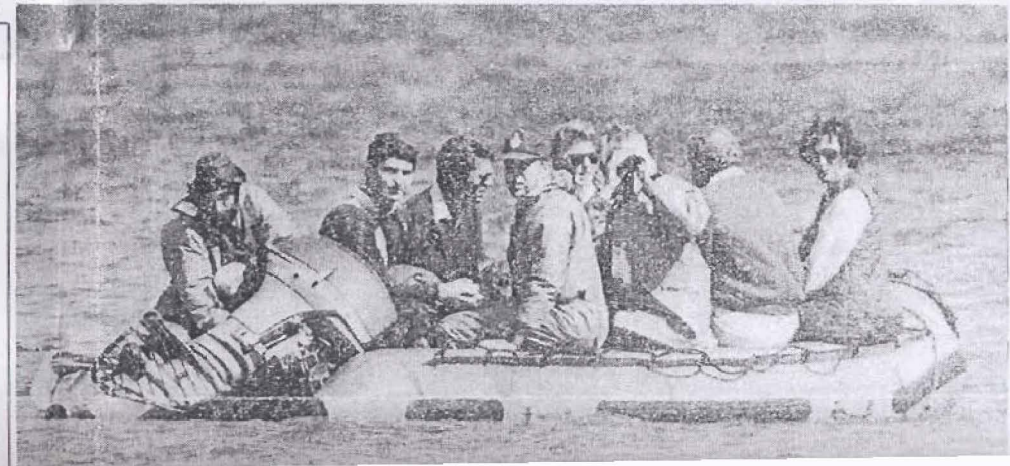
Our Cathedral goes Nationwide — and Berlin Singers Rejoice

Two big events at Dornoch Cathedral on Sunday will be the televised morning service, broadcast "live" throughout Britain, and a visit at night of the Berlin Mozart Choir for "Songs of Praise".

Grampian Television cameras will film the morning service, which will celebrate 750 years of worship in the hallowed building, for all ITV channels.

Said the minister, the Rev James Simpson: "A live broadcast has its own draw-backs — the timing has to be absolutely right, and we have to keep our eye on the clock. You have to have alterations all ready in case the programme is running behind or ahead of schedule."

One of the great choirs of the world, the Berlin Mozart Choir will be paying their second visit to the Cathedral in two years. It was standing room only on the first occasion, and the "Songs of Praise" service at 8.30 pm is expected to be another popular occasion.



* Prince
Lear

of Fleet Street photographers.



was sketched the old
1 shells in 1989.

PHOTOS: Harry Page