

A WORD FROM THE AUTHOR

A number of things happened that formed the background for my decision to compile this journal. At the annual meeting of the Friars' Briar Association held following the award banquet in Saskatoon in March 1989, Don Amos resigned as President and I assumed that office. At the annual meeting held in Portage la Prairie the following year, Hugh Christmas gave up the office of secretary-treasurer. Later that spring in 1990 he arrived at my door in Winnipeg with a box of neatly kept files containing material about the Briars from the first held in his home city of Calgary in 1980 up to the 1990 one. When Don Amos died in 1995, his widow, Grace and son, Bruce mailed me a scrapbook which Don had compiled containing letters, pictures and newspaper clippings about the Conspiel in 1978.

These events proved very helpful to me when I made the decision to try and write down the events of our Friars' Briar Association. When I moved from Winnipeg to Tsawwassen B.C. my preparation for the move included weeding out a great amount of materials from my Friars' Briar files. The fine stewardship of Don and Hugh was used to good advantage, then, in writing about the first ten years.

Details are not as complete as they might have been had I known I was to undertake this project. The addition of pictures was a last minute thought. I wanted to complete the first twenty years of our history for the Toronto Briar in 1998. My thought is that another year may be too late for many of our founding members. Also that if winning rinks or local committees have pictures they might send them to me for publication another year. Also, chapters of subsequent Briars can be written and made available in yearly or five-yearly intervals. The binding can always be removed and then reinserted. All writing is done with an element of interpretation. I apologize if too much of the author's interpretation shows in this writing.

Without the hours and hours of help with the computer by my friend, Earl Wilson, whom many of you met at the Tsawwassen Briar, the input and goodwill of his wife Florence, the cooperation of the local newspaper, the Optimist, in reproducing photographs, and the generosity of the Kinsmen Seniors' Centre with their copying equipment, the project could not have been completed. I thank them for you all.

It wouldn't truly be a church document without some hint of a call for money. I'm suggesting that each person taking or ordering a copy of this document might consider remitting a five dollar bill. This would mean that necessary costs paid out by the Association would be recovered and future updating and mailing expenses would be covered. Shalom,

Cliff McMurtry

The Canadian Clergy Curling Association

How It Got Started

The Reverend Don Amos of Brampton, Ontario was one of the most enthusiastic of all the clergy curlers in the annual All-Ontario bonspiels. Musing with some of the church professionals and their spouses, just before the 1977 event, he said, "Wouldn't it be great to have some of the clergy from the West enter a rink or two, and curl with us? We could have a playdown between a team from the East and a team from the West for the Observer trophy."

The result was, that Don was authorized to write letters to such known curlers as Grant Smith in Winnipeg, Cliff McMurtry in Saskatoon and Hugh Christmas in Calgary, to test the waters. None of these were able to respond on short notice to this new and seeming expensive suggestion.

However, Don being the optimist and promoter that he was, phoned Grant Smith, secretary of the Winnipeg Clergy Curling Club and arranged to spend three days in Winnipeg in August of 1977. During this time he met with Grant, Fraser Muldrew and Cliff McMurtry (now resident in Winnipeg) and proposed that a few rinks come from the East to Winnipeg and an equal number from the West be recruited to curl together and foster an East/West competition.

Don was excited by the response he received from the West. When he returned home, he began recruiting rinks from the East who would be prepared to travel to Winnipeg the week following Easter in 1978. On the golf course, he recruited Presbyterian Andy McKenzie from Acton and Bill Maxwell from London. He began organizing a team from his own club, and recruited Frank Whiteley from the Sarnia area, Gerry Ward and John Griffin in the St. Catharines/Niagara region, Mel Boyd and Gray Rivers from Kitchener/Waterloo, Bob McNaught and Andy Denholm from the Toronto clubs. Not only did Don line up church professionals and spouses from the East, but also the West. He got the ready consent of Wes Bray to get the word around in British Columbia. Within days he had the commitment of the Calgary clergy curlers through Hugh Christmas and Bruce Vanstone to send two rinks.

Grant Smith agreed to head up the Winnipeg event, and, along with Fraser Muldrew, Ian Macdonald and Cliff McMurtry, lined up five local rinks. Reg Wright recruited a team from Saskatchewan. Because of travel costs, no curlers were recruited from Quebec, the Maritimes or Newfoundland.