



THE ST. ANDREW SOCIETY OF SÃO PAULO

John S Holmes

John was born in Coatbridge where he went to school, then studying for an ACWA at the Scottish College of Commerce. He joined Stewarts & Lloyds in 1958 as an Office Junior and Caterpillar in 1968 as a Layout Planner. Still with Caterpillar, he moved to Brazil in 1975 as Production Control Manager and was transferred to Leicester in 1985 as Logistics Manager.

John became Vice President in 1982 and President in 1983. He dislocated his hip as a child and shortly after taking office as President, he went to Glasgow for hip joint surgery. During his absence, Dougie Wilson, who had been President in 1969, ably filled the gap.

John held lunches at SPAC for male members, later mixed once lady members were admitted to the Society! According to some members, the most foundation-rocking event happened at a Special General Meeting on 17 November 1983. A motion was adopted that changed the working of paragraph 4 under section 111 of the rules and regulations from "Any male person..." to "Any person of Scottish birth or descent shall be eligible for membership of the society". John clarified in his letter on 25 November "In short gentlemen, ladies can now become members of the society." The anticipated flood of women vultures in fact turned into a gentle stream of volunteers.

The Quaich was played at Lago Azul and won by Alastair Steel, son Arthur Steel who was President in 1955. John was a very active and successful bowler and "frequenter" of the Inverary Inn at SPAC. A 1983 newspaper, while reporting the closing of 11 of 45 distilleries in Scotland, continued "*me lamenta confidencialmente não termos sido descobertos pelos homens de saia, porque então a nossa pinga seria outra ...*". He claims he was the first President who was also the bowling champion but would like to hear from other contenders! Jim Brown, committee member, returned to Glasgow but not before working out the recipe for winning the tug o' war at the Munro Cup. What a memorable, "Hold, hold, hold... One, Two, Three, PULL, Lads, PULL..." The "Hold... Hold..." was repeated by Mel Gibson in the film "Braveheart"!

Sheila Walls replied to John's toast to the Lassies at Ladies Night, giving an epic and colourful description of highland dress, in particular, the sporan!

John remembers a funny situation when visiting "Grupo Sergio" for a takeaway pizza. As he entered the car park holding his chosen pizza with both hands, he was held up by a thief, branding a knife and demanding money. Unruffled, John asked the thief to hold his pizza while he got his wallet out. The man did as asked, using both hands to hold the box, and John took off, minus the pizza, but with his wallet intact! It may be an amusing anecdote now, but at the time it was far from funny.

John retired from Caterpillar in 1991 and lives in Norfolk. His wife, Beth, was an active fundraiser for Lar Tia Edna and they have two sons, Kenneth and Colin.