

Royal Burgh says 'willkommen' to the visiting Highlanders...

Celebrations as the contingent from Selkirk's twinned town of Plattling in Germany arrive

FEATURE

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Selkirk found itself invaded by a tartan-clad contingent at the weekend, albeit one from a bit further away than above the Highland Line.

The East Bavarian Highlanders, who mostly hail from Selkirk's twinned town of Plattling in Germany, share a fascination for all things Scottish – the history, the culture, the language and customs.

Their enthusiasm is irresistible and infectious, and they received a very warm welcome from the Royal Burgh's provost, David Anderson, and the guid folk of Selkirk at a small welcome reception in the town hall following their arrival on Thursday.

The leader of the visiting contingent, Thomas Kruse, was clearly delighted to receive a quail, beautifully

engraved by Colin Turnbull, and also visibly moved to hear a pipe tune especially written and performed for the 'Highlanders' by Andrew Bunyan. In return, the group presented Provost Anderson with a bottle of schnapps and a pennant showing their emblem.

Each Highlander also received a specially-made ceremonial arrow with true blue and scarlet fletchings from Elaine Pearson, before having a session of archery with the Ettrick Forest Archers at their range at Dunsdale.

The next day, the Highlanders enjoyed a day in Edinburgh and in the evening, they were taken to the Haining House for a

'bothy night'.

They were also shown how to cast the colours, and were suitably entertained by Jimmy Gibb, Alan Lindsay, Jenni and John Borthwick and Gary Smith, with haggis pies and beer.

On Saturday, the German party toured local historical sights, including Smailholm Tower, Dryburgh Abbey,

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Provost David Anderson greets Bavarian Highlanders leader Thomas Kruse; Euan Macdougall demonstrates the casting of the colours; the party of visitors enjoyed a civic reception and a session with the Ettrick Forest archers. (Photographs of civic reception and casting demonstration by Grant Kinghorn)

Scott's View, Abbotsford House and Hermitage Castle.

John Nichol, from Selkirk's Plattling Twinning Committee, said the Royal Burgh's visitors certainly knew their Scottish history. "Some had visited Scotland before but this was their first time in the Borders. They really felt at home here and they can't wait to come back," John told The Wee Paper this week.

"The Highlanders are so passionate about Scotland, and their character perfectly mirrors the Scottish temperament with generosity and humour."

John added that firm friendships were made and the guests' short time in the Borders was a time of laughs and smiles – and their slogan: 'We are always thirsty!' was repeated regularly with raised glasses.

Fellow committee member Rob Duff commented: "The Highlanders are the epitome of cordiality and there was a relaxed, warm atmosphere from the very start."

"They've invited us to attend their Highland Games in a few weeks and we'll certainly be there."

The Highlanders were sad to leave on Sunday morning, but have all vowed to return. On their departure, they received the old expression, 'haste ye back'. That they will hasten back is beyond doubt.

