

08/09/85-

ADDRESS AT OPENING OF
GRAHAMSTOWN AND DISTRICT KENNEL CLUB
EIGHTH ANNUAL CHAMPIONSHIP DOG SHOW

Mr Chadwick, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Grahamstown and District Kennel Club I should like to welcome everyone here, and every one of your best friends who have agreed to accompany you.

We have come from near, and far. I fall in to the near category (point at The Lodge). Others are from what some Grahamstonians refer to as the Outer suburbs - Port Elizabeth and East London - and then there are those from afar - Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban, three cities that are more or less equidistant from here.

It comes to mind that Grahamstown was also the destination for two of South Africa's most famous and heroic visits. In December 1834 Colonel Harry Smith rode from Cape Town to bring help, and in June 1842 Dick King rode from Port Natal to get help.

Without intending any offence, I think that it must be accepted that today's visitors will regard themselves as "getters" rather than "givers", by which I mean that their intentions - perfectly honourable ones, it must be stressed - are to lay hold of, annexe and take away the spoils of the ring.

It sounds all very pugnacious but I know that the spirit is quite unlike that of boxers and that it is generally agreed that while deer-hounds are a girl's best friend, gentlemen prefer poms.

Although the competitive spirit has to be in evidence at a championship dog show, I know that there are other good reasons for you to collect together. In the academic world we call such gatherings seminars or conferences. The purpose is to trade information, keep up-to-date with one's colleagues and to look for new ideas.

As far as a general theme is concerned, I am told that dog breeders believe their attention must be concentrated on improved behavioural characteristics.

Some breeds - which I would not dare to mention in this company - do offer problems. I believe it is right for breeders to try to improve and even eliminate anti-social characteristics in their dogs. Our whole society is bedevilled by too much aggression, and I would like to wish you success in your efforts to improve dog behaviour. Perhaps the rest of us could then try to emulate your future success by improving our own behaviour.

It was over 250 years ago that William Penn noted that "Men are generally more careful of the breed of their dogs and horses than of their children". So, while dog breeders have been

leading this field for a long time, and not yet solved it all, perhaps we shouldn't be too ambitious, nor too inward-looking, and be prepared to accept life more as it is. After all, it was Edward Westcott living a hundred years ago, who said :

"They say a reasonable amount of fleas is good for a dog - keeps him from broodin' over bein' a dog, mebbe".

Maybe we need our dogs to keep from us brooding over being humans.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you a successful and enjoyable visit to Grahamstown, and now have much pleasure in declaring open the Grahamstown and District Kennel Club's eighth annual championship dog show.

GRAHAMSTOWN
September 8, 1985.

DR D S HENDERSON