

## The Queens Baton Relay (A unique experience)

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of October at Buckingham palace, her majesty the Queen placed her Commonwealth message in the Titanium lattice frame of the baton and the epic journey of the Queens baton relay began and would reach its final destination at the opening ceremony of 2014 Commonwealth games where her majesty would read her message to the world.

The Queens Baton relay is unlike the Olympic torch, it is much more global. The baton would be carried by more than 10,000 individuals from all walks of life and would cover over 190,000 kilometres as it visited 69 nations and territories of the Commonwealth.



Neil with the Queens baton in Tayport, just before it set sailed over the silvery Tay to Dundee

The excitement and enthusiasm soared throughout Scotland as on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2014 the Queens Baton relay finally arrived in the host nation, travelling all over the country for 40 days as the countdown to Scotland's largest ever sporting and cultural festival was fast approaching.

Helping to promote the Glasgow Commonwealth, Beth Gilmour participated and won a competition for children to design the 2014 Commonwealth Mascot and from her imagination the Iconic little cheeky chap named "Clyde" was born. Clyde proved to be a worldwide sensation and visited all of the 71 nations and territories before growing into the tall thistle he is today.



Neil meets Clyde for the very 1<sup>st</sup> time in Glasgow's Kelvin Hall.

I was very keen to promote and be part of the commonwealth games in any way I possibly could. To be honest I was thinking it would probably be in the role of a marker or perhaps a chaperon for one of the 4,950 athletes that would be competing in Glasgow. But early in 2014 I was invited to attend an audition for the role of Mascot/Chaperon and from there my Commonwealth Journey began.



Clyde stands on the Swilken Bridge at St Andrews old course. This image would become an international



*Neil with fellow Dental School staff member Robert Mckerlie before the Closing Ceremony*



*Neil with Louis Smith MBE, one of Team England's medal winning gymnasts*



(Left) Neil meeting Scottish gold medal winning boxer 'Mailman' Charlie Flynn

(Below) Neil with Team Scotland's gold medal swimmer Ross Murdoch





(Left) Neil meeting double gold medallist in the Bowls, Alex 'Tattie' Marshall

(Bellow) Neil with 13 year old Erraid Davies, who secured a bronze medal in the swimming pool for Team Scotland

