

PAGEANTRY & PERFORMANCE

Reviewed by Charles Froggatt

While white gloves and knee high boots may remind most people of a rave up in the ruins rather than a parade at the palace, Henry Dallal's book *Pageantry & Performance* opens up a world where the 'watering order' is addressed by trumpet and the exercise track is by Park Lane. Welcome to the real world of The Household Cavalry, which has been associated with Guards Polo Club for nigh on fifty years, as never seen before.

THE HOUSEHOLD DIVISION AT GUARDS

Guards Polo Club, as it is known today was founded in 1955 and named the Household Division Polo Club until it was changed to its present form in 1969. Run under the aegis of the Household Division until 31 December 1999, the club is now civilian run with some 160 playing members.

But while the number of army members at Guards has decreased to a handful in the new millennium and the Household Division is now seen only fleetingly, the link between the Household Cavalry and the club remains iron clad.

Henry Dallal spent six years, prior to the Golden Jubilee year, living, breathing and capturing on film the lives of the Household Cavalry. His hard-back book *Pageantry & Performance* is the culmination of that work.

Pageantry & Performance is a collection of stunning photographs, clarified by first hand insight, that together unveils the true face of the Household Cavalry regiment in all of its splendour. This book provides a behind the scenes account of the real life inside the barracks that ultimately

leads to ceremonial glory. And in doing so, Dallal brings to life the colour and movement of an enclosed world in which attention to minute detail is everything.

Via some exquisite photography, Dallal trains his audience to look carefully at details that would otherwise have been missed. Subtle angles of colour and light allow the grandeur of the parades to be rediscovered from a fresh viewpoint, while exposing the daily ordeal of meticulous preparation required to get the cavalymen and their horses to the parade ground.

On turning the top quality, full page photographs, that match even the shine of cavalymen's jack-boots which, we are told, require fifty hours of "bulling and biffing" and four tins of polish to reach parade standards, Dallal shares the Household Cavalry's recipe for success.

And just as the pictures become narrative, *Pageantry & Performance* is by no means just a pretty slide show, as the reader will discover. "We don't just look good – we're fighters too," says cavalryman RCM Mark Kitching in *Pageantry & Performance*.

Dallal reminds us that the Cavalrymen are not just ceremonial soldiers, but also have a role to play in armoured reconnaissance, ready for action at any moment.

But for many readers, Dallal's *Pageantry & Performance* exposes a love affair between admirably disciplined cavalymen and the 250 horses in the barracks.

And if it's a tack-cleaning lesson you are after, this book may teach you a thing or two.

DALLAL'S WORK EXHIBITED

Dallal also presented this work in a *Son et Lumière* spectacle on the walls of Windsor Castle at the Windsor Festival in 2003. This was the first time such an event had taken place. At the same time an exhibition of his work was held in the Guildhall at Windsor.

Pageantry & Performance is also available on DVD. Both the book and DVD are available at all major bookstores or directly from Dallal by contacting him on +44 (0)207 225 0707 or by emailing him at hdallal@btinternet.com

