

HOW AN HONORARY TRIBESMAN RETIRED TO PARADISE

Mr Lindsay, I presume



GONE NATIVE: Gordon Lindsay with tribespeople PICTURES: Lynn Hilton

The Swaziland warrior who wears a tartan kilt

WHEN Swaziland's King Mswati III comes of age in ten days time, one warrior will stand out among the massed ranks of dark-skinned tribesmen.

Wearing a tartan kilt, immaculate white socks and proudly

From MADELEINE HARPER in Mbabane, Swaziland

bearing an animal-skin shield will be the stooped, white-haired figure of Gordon Lindsay, Swazi warrior and former Edinburgh actuary. At the age of 79, Gordon Lindsay is living out his last years in paradise.

Not as an expatriate, drinking sundowners at all-white clubs and reminiscing about colonial times, but as the adopted subject of a Swazi tribal chief and honorary father to a Swazi native.

Gordon was 60 when he first arrived in this tiny, independent Southern African kingdom and joined in the ritual Swazi 'khonta' allegiance ceremony.

Wives

According to custom Gordon was expected to cultivate a piece of land. 'But wives do the ploughing and, since I don't have one, I've been let off,' says Gordon.

He lives quietly with the Swazi family he



FAMILY: Gordon and 'grandson' Ntumelo

befriended 19 years ago. David Hlatshwayo, then a young student, now married with a son has followed the Swazi custom of caring for elders by inviting Gordon to move in.

The frail Scot is close to Ntumelo, six, who sees nothing odd in having a white, kilt-wearing grandfather.

'Colour melts away,' says David, 35. But the family's sparsely furnished bungalow betrays

the incongruities. The skin of a 20ft python looks down on shelves filled with yellowing Scots magazines.

It seems far from Scotland where Gordon's fascination with Africa first began. 'I was studying some old accounts for a Caribbean sugar estate.

'The slaves were valued at £160 but one entry read "Sammy (in poor state of health) £20."

'I felt that when I cross over to the next world I would like to be able to look Sammy in the face.'

Gordon doesn't pine for Scotland. Perhaps because he's only a few miles from barren moorlands dotted with granite outcrops — a landscape uncannily similar to his native Highlands.

Swaziland is not so far away after all.