

Long-serving couple to meet The Queen today at Musselburgh Racecourse

Musselburgh Racecourse stalwarts Adam and Elaine Nish will present flowers to Her Majesty The Queen as she ends her visit to Scotland's oldest racecourse today.



Racing at the East Lothian track dates back to 1816 when the Royal Caledonian Hunt resumed racing after a brief sojourn at Leith Sands and The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will attend a special Bi-Centenary Celebration Race Day which marks the 200th anniversary and the monarch's 90th year.

Racecourse caretaker Adam Nish has been employed at Musselburgh Racecourse for one quarter of the 200 years that racing has taken place. He first started work 50 years ago as an apprentice joiner, covering all maintenance needs at the track, while his wife Elaine has clocked up 30 years in a number of roles and is now part of the Links Pavilion reception team on race days.

Adam joined the racecourse as a 15-year-old apprentice joiner but even before that, aged just 12, he would nip out from the family home in nearby Goose Green to assist stable staff with odd jobs.

It continues to be a Nish family affair at Musselburgh as one of the couple's four children, son Graeme, is the main contractor for joinery services and is a regular face around the course.

During his 50 years Adam has met all the top jockeys, including nine times Derby winner Lester Piggott, Grand

National winner Graham Lee and Dougie Costello who rode Quiet Reflection to victory in last week's Commonwealth Cup at Royal Ascot.

Looking back Adam remembers horses being walked from the former railway station and along the River Esk to the racecourse and recalls that former Celtic and Scotland manager Jock Stein was a regular visitor.

Adam said: "The changes that have taken place over the last 50 years are huge but it has been a great place to work and I've enjoyed every minute. Anyone who came racing even 10-15 years ago would not recognise the place now and I am delighted to be part of a great team who works hard to always improve the racecourse.

"We are both honoured to be meeting The Queen and this time I can't duck out of it. When she last visited Musselburgh in 1995 I was included in the party who were to meet her but I kept out of the way, however this time there is no hiding place. Elaine and I are both really looking forward to a very special day and being part of the racecourse's history."

Musselburgh Racecourse chief executive Bill Farnsworth said there was only one choice when it came to nominating someone to make the presentation to Her Majesty.

He said: "Adam has lived and breathed Musselburgh Racecourse all his working life and supported by Elaine they are a great asset to the team. A lot of the unseen work that goes on behind the scenes, but is vital to making each raceday a success, is down to Adam and his colleagues and I am delighted the Nish connection is continuing through the generations."

During the Royal visit The Queen is expected to present a specially commissioned Bi-Centenary Cup to the winning trainer and jockey of the days' feature race in which one of her own horses is entered to run.

The racecourse is encouraging racing fans and local residents to make it a day to remember and a packed programme includes an exhibition Harness Race plus music by the Band of the Royal Regiment of Scotland, who will welcome the Royal guests to the course by playing the National Anthem.

The racecourse is offering a £5 discount on the usual £25 admission fee to racegoers booking online and all children aged 17 and under are admitted free when accompanied by an adult.

For more information and to book tickets please visit www.musselburgh-racecourse.co.uk