

# THE INTERNATIONAL PIPER

Volume 2 Number 9 - January 1980 35p



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## IN OUR OPINION

We would like to assure our readers that there was *absolutely no collusion* between us and the "Piping Times" in regard to the content of last month's In Our Opinion and their Editorial.

That two piping magazines should use the same editorial material in the same month was pure coincidence.

However, what it does show is that there is disquiet about piping in the army and that something ought to be done about it. Hopefully the army authorities will take some steps to improve the lot of their pipers, which over recent years has deteriorated greatly.

.....

Recently the Secretary of State for Scotland held a reception at Bute House, Edinburgh for representatives of the arts in Scotland. This was an official reception, recognizing the arts in Scotland in the Secretary of State's official home. Were representatives of piping invited — the short answer is No! But of course that Scotland's National music be left out is of course the expected. Piping is obviously for pipers and it appears that the general consensus of non-pipers is "leave them to get on with their odd music"; most only recognise "Scotland the Brave", and it's a grand thing to have a piper for the haggis, a wedding, a parade, or what have you, but do not in any circumstance expect that piping be recognised as art.

Yet, in January one of Scotland's leading musicians, Ronald Stevenson is presenting a series of programmes on the radio about piping. At least he recognises piping for what it is, and values it for its high art form.

Typical of recognition outside one's home ground was the recent presentation to the Piobaireachd Society by a European cultural body as being worthy of their prize. Would any official Scottish organisation give such recognition. Again the answer is No!

Despite the apparent cold shouldering by our 'ain folk' piping is happily in a

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healthy position. More and more pipers world-wide take to our classical music, our pipe band fraternity flourish, probably more than most. Pipers from overseas have reached a standard (albeit not without help from the fountainhead) which has enabled them to take the best prizes. Such achievements had it been in Ballet, Opera, Orchestral or even Chamber-music would have been hailed by all and sundry; recognition by the "authorities" would be instant and doubtless monetary assistance would have fallen like 'Manna from heaven'.

Perhaps the fault is ours and we do not sell ourselves sufficiently to the public. Recent recitals of piping which were well advertised appeared to attract some of the non-piping public and they enjoyed our art. More of these recitals organised by the Royal Scottish Pipers' Society on a wider basis must only do good.

It really is time that piping receives its proper 'slice of the art cake' and that piping and pipers be accorded their proper place in the world of music. Being music which does not 'mix' well does not warrant the very obvious cold-shouldering we get in our own country. Let us be less insular, gain a better musical knowledge, blow our 'pipe' louder and let St. Andrew's House be aware that piping is not just for playing other guests into the receptions — It also belongs! ● ●

# The Literature of the Highland Bagpipe

THE WORKS OF ANGUS MACKAY (Raasay)

Part 1  
(Introduction)

by Captain JOHN MACLELLAN

Angus Mackay of Raasay has been described by the late Archibald Campbell of Kilberry as one of the two most important pipers in 19th century piping. I would go further and say he was the *most important* piper. The magnitude of his industry had it not occurred would have left a gap which would have been well nigh impossible to fill.

To fully appreciate his genius it will be necessary to devote some space in this article to his father, John MacKay, who was in so many ways the fount on which Angus heavily relied.

John MacKay was born in Raasay about 1767 which is the date usually recorded as being his year of birth. His parents died when he was but a lad and John was employed as a herd boy by Captain Malcolm MacLeod of Eyre, Raasay, who was a good piper and said to have some talent as a composer. He taught John MacKay initially and no doubt arranged the advanced tuition John had from Ian Dubh MacCrimmon and the MacKays of Gairloch, to which family it is believed he was related.

When John MacKay was 25 in 1792 so proficient was he as a player that he was placed first in the Highland Society of London's competition at Edinburgh. By 1823 when he went from Raasay to Drummond Castle, Crieff, to be piper to Lord Willoughby d' Eresby he was undoubtedly the most important piper in Scotland. With him rested the repertory of Ceol Mor as taught in the MacCrimmon tradition, he was an expert piper much sought after as a tutor. He lived until 1848 when aged 81 he died at Kyleakin in the Isle of Skye, his native country, to which he retired some thirteen years earlier.

John MacKay had nine children, four of them boys, all first class players. His third son Angus was born in Raasay on 10th September 1813. The first we know of Angus was that when aged 12 in 1825 he was awarded the sum of 5/-d. by the Highland Society of London for writing bagpipe music in Staff notation. He also competed in the Ceol Mor competition but did not figure in the prize list. The following year playing *MacIntosh's Lament* he gained 4th prize. Thus at such a tender age Angus was well on the way to being admirably equipped with the necessary skills to become the complete expert of the piper's art. There has been considerable speculation as to the manner in which Angus MacKay gained his skills of music writing. There are two sources which are likely means of his tuition. The first is from Lady Doyle who as Miss E.J. Ross was the niece by marriage of the sister of James MacLeod of Raasay, to whom John MacKay was personal piper. She was very fond of Piobaireachd and noted for the pianoforte a number of pieces from the playing of John MacKay with whom she was a great favourite.

Angus was aged 10 years when he left Raasay with his father to go to Drummond Castle and could quite easily have been taught the basic rudiments of music at that age. In addition while at Drummond Castle, it is quite probable that any tutors to the family of Lord d'Eresby could be of assistance to the talented young lad.

According to the inscription of the "Seaforth Manuscript" written by Angus in 1854 he "copied the contents from the original mss as noted down by him

Continued on page 22

**A.G. Kenneth**



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ANGUS MACKAY

# THE LONDON LETTER

by JOHN SHONE

## THE LONDON COMPETITION

As promised last month I am continuing my analysis of the London Contest held at the Glazier's Hall, London Bridge, November last year. In the great March, Strathspey and Reel competition for those pipers who can be rightly regarded as top of their chosen art.

The competition is tough judged by any standard, the contestants having to submit 4 Marches, Strathspeys and Reels. As I reported last month the standard of playing was high with a very varied repertoire being put forward.

### Strathspeys

The following is a list of the Strathspeys submitted to the bench:

Maggie Cameron	4
The Shepherd's Crook	3
Atholl Cummers	1
Blairdrummond	2
Lady Loudon	3
Arniston Castle	4
Glenshee	1
The Caledonian Soc. of London	3
Dora MacLeod	1
John Roy Stewart	2
The Piper's Bonnet	2
Inveraray Castle	2
Susan MacLeod	1
Dornie Ferry	1
Delvinside	2
Tullochgorum	1
Bob of Fettercairn	1
Struan Robertson	1
The Caledonian Canal	2
Cabar Feidh	1

If you would care to compare the number of different Strathspeys in this list with the number of different marches I listed for this contest last month, the reader will note that there were almost double the number of Marches chosen than Strathspeys. It is interesting to note that "Maggie Cameron" and "Arniston Castle" are the most popular Strathspeys with our top professionals. "Arniston Castle" was a great favourite of the late P.M. Willie Ross, and he won many contests with it in the early part of this century. An 'oldie' indeed!

The reels submitted were as follows:

Alex C. MacGregor	2
Bessie MacIntyre	3
Laughing in the Change House	1
Ravens Crag	1
The Blackbird	1
Rejected Suitor	1
Thompsons Dirk	5
Ca' the Ewes	3
Alick Cameron, Champion Piper	1
Lexie Macaskill	1
Willie Cumming's Rant	2
The Grey Bob	1
Cabar Feidh	2
The Sheepwife	2
The Old Ruins	1
MacAlister's Dirk	1
The Man from Glengarry	1
Dolina MacKay	1
Capt. Lachlan MacPhail	3
John Garroway	1
Major Manson	1
Duntroon	1
The Back of the Moon	1
Miss Proud	1
Pretty Marion	1
Mrs MacPherson of Inveran	1

As last year the reels submitted prove to be most interesting with many modern compositions gaining favour with the professionals. Some of the above tunes would not have been submitted by any of the top players 10 years ago! I well remember the late R.B. Nicol commenting to me on this trend and being concerned that some of the modern compositions are not worthy of submission in this class of contest. I leave the readers of the I.P. to judge this for themselves.

### John Wilson

So another great player has passed on.

John Wilson's record will continue to rank high in the list of "all time" great exponents of our art, in the 20s and 30s he was always among the top 5 or 6 names in the piping world. He rose to these dizzy heights, overcoming as he did so a tremendous disadvantage, being crippled at an early age by having part of two fingers and thumb of his left hand blown off. Yet he continued piping and not only overcame the

disability but went on to become so famous that his name will go down in the history of piping.

### Post War Results

I will continue to publish the post war results of the smaller games, and this month I will cover the year 1950.

### CUPAR

**March** — 1 W. Drysdale, 2 J.B. Robertson, 3 J. Miller 4 P. Philibeau.

**Strathspey & Reel** — 1 P. Bain, 2 W. Drysdale, 3 J.B. Robertson, 4 J. Miller.

### CROOK OF DEVON;

**March** — 1 W. Drysdale, 2 P. Philibeau, 3 P. Sutherland.

**Strathspey & Reel** — 1 W. Drysdale, 2 P. Philibeau, 3 P. Sutherland.

**Piobaireachd** — 1 P. Sutherland, 2 W. Drysdale, 3 P. Philibeau.

### THORNTON

**March** — 1 D. MacLean, 2 P. Philibeau, 3 J. Yardley.

**Strathspey & Reel** — 1 J. Yardley, 2 W. Drysdale, 3 D. MacLean.

**Piobaireachd** — 1 D. MacLean, 2 W. Drysdale, 3 P. Philibeau/J. Yardley.

### BRIDGE OF ALLAN

**March** — 1 W. Drysdale, 2 J. Smith, 3 B. Hepburn.

**Strathspey & Reel** — 1 W. Drysdale, 2 J. Smith, 3 B. Hepburn.

**Piobaireachd** — 1 W. Drysdale, 2 B. Hepburn, 3 J. Smith.

### COWAL

**March** — D. MacPherson, 2 J. Garroway, 3 R. Hardie.

**Strathspey & Reel** — 1 J. Garroway, 2 R. Hardie, 3 D. MacPherson.

**Piobaireachd** — 1 J. Garroway, 2 D. MacPherson, 3 W. Drysdale, J.C. Johnston, C. Scott, R. MacDonald.

### GRADING

We in London are once again debating the subject of "Grading". Now that the 1979 Great London Contest is part of history we have had time to assess the effect of running the Competition as it has been organised for the last 30 years.

Most of the contestants were pleased with the administration on the day. The venue almost perfect, the stewarding under the able control of Mr. & Mrs. Russel Clayton was very competently conducted, together with most experienced judges on the bench. Those attending were very happy with the overall standard of the contest.

And yet grading is once again being debated. The problem is centred around our Open Piobaireachd competition. Some 35 players entered and (over the past few years this is about the average number) but each year the top 4 places are always filled by the same 8 - 11

# ☆ BOOK REVIEW ☆

by John MacLellan

## Canadian Forces Pipe Band Manual

Edited by Pipe Major A.M. Cairns and Drum Major John Kerr

professional names. This means that the other 25 or so contestants never have a chance of winning a prize. Some say this is unfair and leads to problems!

There is a proposal therefore, to divide the contest into 2 or offer 8 - 10 prizes, in this way it is argued that most contestants will be encouraged to persevere. But they are persevering! Each year the average number of competitors remains the same or increases, so the present system is certainly not inhibiting entrants!

But look at the poor judges, it is argued — trying to adjudicate between professional and amateur performances! I have spoken to the judges about this point and they show and express no concern — so long as the pipers themselves are not upset by the arrangement.

The length of the Open Contest can be a problem, but 35 or so contestants can be handled relatively comfortably in one day. There is therefore probably no reason for change — especially so, since if this competition was divided into 2 Piobaireachd contests, one of the amateur competitions would have to make room. The London Society is one of the few of our foremost Societies to hold both amateur and professional contests at the same venue. There is no doubt that this encourages amateur players to enter and rub shoulders with the great.

Recently a fat package from National Defence Headquarters Ottawa arrived in our mail. When the wrappings came off, there was revealed a handsome binder, with what looked suspiciously like a NATO parts number (A-PD-202-000/FP-000) imprinted on the spine. Colonel Buckingham, the Director of Ceremonial, had enclosed a letter informing us that enclosed was a complimentary copy of the recently published Canadian Forces Pipe Band Manual, issued on the authority of the Chief of the Defence Staff. The work of compiling, editing and arranging the material contained in the manual was undertaken by Pipe Major Archie Cairns and Drum Major John Kerr. There can be no doubt that their work must give them great satisfaction, because the manual is most comprehensive and covers all the requirements of military pipe band music.

The music reproduction is superb and I understand that it is the handwork of a member of the RCAF pipe band based at Rockcliffe, Ottawa. Mechanically produced art work could not better the notation in this book.

The work is divided into four parts:

- Part A (i) Scores for Duty tunes.  
(ii) The "Attack" for pipe  
(iii) Tempo Guide  
(iv) Pipe Band and Instrument Drill.
- Part B. A selection of some fifty tunes arranged for Massed Pipes and Drums.
- Part C. Drum Scores for the tunes in Part B.
- Part D. The Authorised Marches for Units of the Canadian Forces.

The Manual is made up in a loose leaf Binder with the music printed on a stiff cartridge paper.

The section on the "ATTACK" or the "method of striking up the Bagpipe and commencing a tune in a pipe band" is worthy of detailed examination, as it is quite an innovation to see the method of "striking up" depicted in Notation. Pipe Major Cairns gives four examples.

- (a) With Introductory Note(s) equal to value of one beat.

- (b) With Introductory Note(s) less than the value of one beat.
- (c) With Introductory Notes.
- (d) Without 'E', with the first sound being heard as the first beat of tunes commences.

This section is detailed and is a valued addition to bagpipe control instruction. My only comment is that I might have given consideration to showing the *sound of the drones* in the "Attack" in a musical sense, showing their basic two tones, rather than in only the tempo medium which has been used.

THE GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING TEMPO separates bagpipe music into three basic divisions.

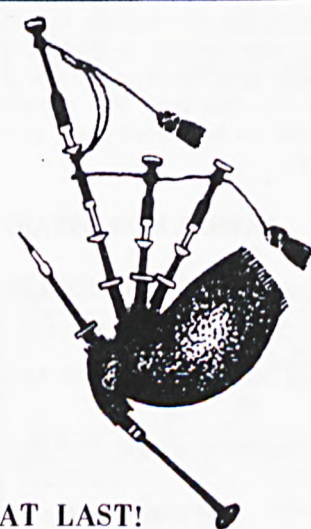
1. Music for listening
2. Music for dancing
3. Music for marching.

While the information on actual tempo follows closely that which is published in *More Music for the Highland Bagpipe* the addition of a column which shows the number of beats/counts per 5 seconds for differing tempos is an invaluable guide.

The three pages on Pipe Band and Instrument Drill is like the other parts of the manual, comprehensive, covering all aspects of drill movements required from each member be he/she a piper or drummer. Very useful indeed!

In the music sections, the tunes set aside for duty calls etc., encompass The Royal Salute, The Advance and Funeral Music, while the selection of tunes for Massed Pipes and Drums include many of the old favourites as well as what might be called "modern pipe music" with the inclusion of such pieces as *Martyrdom*, *John Peel* and *Men of Harelech*. The majority of the tunes have been arranged by Pipe Major Archie Cairns, so that the settings are of the correct "weight" for non-competitive pipe band playing. Some of the 'old hands' will probably have varied opinions about the inclusion of two bars of O' Canada in the Royal Salute (Vice Regal).

The section on drumming has been



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## BAGPIPE MUSIC ON RECORD AND TAPE

THE WORLD BEATERS — Dysart and  
Dundonald Pipe Band —  
EMI/WAVERLEY. GLN 1007 Stereo

This new record from the young Dysart and Dundonald Pipe Band will no doubt prove popular, if for one ingredient alone — It has 'go' and for any listener sparkle and liveliness help so much to maintain interest.

There are twelve groups of music on the record, six on each side presenting a varied programme which covers every type of the small music for the Highland Bagpipe. For the drumming enthusiasts there is a Drum Fanfare which commences side two of the record.

The record begins with a selection of 6/8 marches — *Captain Craig Brown*, *Caverhill* and *Mrs Dorothy Shepherd* which set the mood for the remainder of the disc, bright playing on well set instruments.

One feature of which any reviewer might be critical is the apparent deliberate under-embellishment in some areas. This is most evident in the first part of *Captain Craig Brown*. No one would put it down to making the tune easier, as it is also very evident that the pipers of the Dysart and Dundonald Pipe Band are well equipped to embellish as they please, but the starkness which sometimes appears is disturbing.

There follows a group of nine-eight time marches — *Drochie's Loom*, by I. Duncan. *The Battle of the Somme*, (not a traditional tune as stated I'm afraid, but the well-known composition of the famous Willie Lawrie), and Ronnie Ackroyd's tuneful *Festival March*.

It is obviously the done thing nowadays to include a pipe solo on pipe band records. Steven Young, only seventeen years of age is the soloist. On side one he plays two hornpipes *Ina MacKenzie* and *The Streaker* and on side two he plays four jigs *The Rakes of Kildare*, *Bob MacPherson's Jig*, *Donald MacLennan's tuning phrase* and a composition of his own, *Donna's Jig*. It is easy to criticize solo playing and there is no doubt that Steven is a good player with clean and crisp finger technique. It is possible that if some of the accentuation which appears to be ruthlessly eliminated from the jig selection were retained, that selection would be less humdrum.

The tunes on the other hand on side one of the record are a good mix of old and new. *Lord Alexander Kennedy*, *The Shepherd's Crook*, and Pipe Major Angus Macdonald's (Scots Guards) composition *Pipe Major Calum Campbell*.

That set is followed by three three-four time marches, *Leaving Larkhall*, *The Dunkirk Boatmen*, and *Bonnie Jean*. Incidentally had this set been taken at a little lower tempo the softness of these three-four tunes might have come across better. The Dysart and Dundonald pipe band are justifiably proud of their Corps of Drums winning the Drum Championship for three years in succession. Consequently they show their prowess on Band one of side two, with a Drum Fanfare which will doubtlessly please the drumming enthusiasts.

After *The 79th's Farewell to Gibraltar* and *Highland Laddie* the pipe band plays a selection of Hornpipes. *Wee Alec*, *The Braes of Abernethy*, *The Mallow Men* and *The Mason's Apron*. The last named tune makes one ponder what has changed this reel into a hornpipe? Does the inclusion of double shakes in the 3rd part do the trick?

The last two selections consist of medley and then a set of four-four time marches. The Medley is *The Braes of Enzie*, *MacPhedran's Strathspey*, *The Marquis of Huntly*, *Donald's Wedding*, *Sleepy Maggie*, and *The Wig*. The four-fours to finish are *Flora Duncan*, *Thomas Sanders* and *David Crosbie Miller*. The cover picture shows the pipers and drummers ankle deep in grass in front of what appears to be an ancient ruin. On the rear is a photograph of the World Championship Cup and another shot of the pipe band with the principals Pipe Major Robert Shepherd and Leading Drummer James King in the fore-ground. Yes! A record worth having!

I.M.A.

### RECITAL

by John Macdougall

On 29th November, members of the Inverness Piping Society and friends were entertained by excellent piping selections by John Macdougall. This is the third recital given to the Society by John who is piping instructor to the schools in Badenoch. His masterly technique in fingering and the melodious tone of his record audience. As Angus MacPhee remarked in his vote of thanks "It is no wonder that John is invited many times to play for us".

His recital covered the whole gamut of Pipe Music. His Ceol Mor tunes were *The Lament for Captain Macdougall* and *Lady Margaret Macdonald's Salute*.

He ended his Recital by playing for us the 2/4 March *John Rennie*, a much loved and respected member of our Society whose anniversary occurs at this time.

Contributed by Neil Angus Macdonald

arranged, composed and edited by Master Warrant Officer John Kerr who is the senior pipe band Drum Instructor. His many drum scores are valued for their rhythmic content and for their close accompaniment to the tunes' melodic content. I was amused to read the instruction "Shout Hey!" in the 4th bar of *The Black Bear*. This certainly keeps the old military tradition alive!

The system used to depict the drum score notation is the "Berger Uni-line system" devised by the late Dr. Fritz Berger of Basle, Switzerland in 1937 and which now appears to be universally adopted by pipe band drumming. In addition John Kerr has added certain symbols of his own to clarify his notation.

Full acknowledgement has been made to all composers and copyright holders of the music used throughout this manual, with the exception of course, of the many old traditional tunes which are included.

The Canadian Forces Pipe Band fraternity are indeed fortunate to be issued with such an excellent manual. Such a work is all the more valuable when it is realised that the pipe bands cover an area from Vancouver Island in the West to Nova Scotia in the East, some 4,000 miles distant. Unfortunately for pipe bands in general the publication is for private use of the pipe bands of the Canadian Armed Forces, most of which belong to the Militia units, but should the Forces ever decide to make the manual available to a wider clientele, it will be gratefully received. My complimentary copy has an honoured place in my music library.

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# A Page from the Canadian Pipe Band Manual

## ROYAL SALUTE (VICE-REGAL)

(For Canadian Forces Pipe Bands)

Arranged Oct. 1977 by  
Pipe Major A.M. Cairns, MMM, CD.

Intro MM ♩ = 48

A "Mallorca"

1 Melody

2 Harmony

3 Snare

4 Bass

Drones

Drones

The score for 'Mallorca' is written for four staves: Melody (1), Harmony (2), Snare (3), and Bass (4). The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 6/8. The tempo is marked 'MM ♩ = 48'. The first two staves are labeled 'Drones'. The melody and harmony parts feature eighth and sixteenth notes, while the snare and bass parts provide a rhythmic accompaniment with accents and slurs.

B "O Canada"

MM ♩ = 48

1

2

3

4

*pp* *ff*

The score for 'O Canada' is written for four staves: Melody (1), Harmony (2), Snare (3), and Bass (4). The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 6/8. The tempo is marked 'MM ♩ = 48'. The melody and harmony parts feature eighth and sixteenth notes. The snare and bass parts include dynamic markings of *pp* (pianissimo) and *ff* (fortissimo) with slurs and accents.

\* MALLORCA (Melody H.R.H. The Prince of Wales )  
© 1935 Chappell & Co. Ltd. (PRS)

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# Bridling the Drone Reeds



by  
David V. Kennedy  
Sacramento, California, USA



For pipers who like to have resonant, sweet sounding drones, bridles on the reeds can be extremely important. For pipers who like roaring, blasting, loud drones with air rushing through them like a factory whistle, read no further! This article is not for you.

For the novice piper who knows not what a bridle is, let us define it here and now. A bridle on a Pipe drone reed is a device which holds the tongue of that reed in a certain vibratory position, such that if you move the bridle up and down on the reed, the reed will alter its pitch and tone when played in the drone. On drones of the Great Highland Pipe, the reeds are single-reeds of a rather primitive design. The bridles, traditionally, have been of a thin hemp, waxed with a sticky wax ("brown" or "black" wax), and tied to the single reed so that the bridle is located near the end of the tongue, away from the waxed tip. In recent years, some reedmakers have been using resined hemp instead of waxed hemp.

The general idea of the bridling device is to restrain the horizontal movement of the tongue (i.e. the potential to lengthen under the vibratory process) and to hold the vertical distance of the tongue constant (i.e. the up and down movement of the tongue as it vibrates off its cut position). Devices like O rings; elastic bands from the orthodontist; unwaxed orange hemp; dental floss. . . to name but a few, are, in my opinion, entirely unsatisfactory . . . except, perhaps, in the initial stages of "breaking in" a new drone reed where constant movement of the bridle and readjustment have been considered necessary. They do not work well, because they tend to slither around, up and down on the drone reed, and because they allow too much vertical motion of the tongue in an irregular oscillation (e.g. elastic bands, however tightly tied on). I realise that I am "butting heads" against many competent pipers, professionals and amateurs, who do believe that devices other than orange hemp, waxed up with the brown wax or

something similar, will do perfectly well for a bridle. I have tried them all; and they have never worked well for me. So, frankly, I have faith only for the hemp and wax technique.

## The "tie-on"

Most reedmakers tie the bridle with either a single half-hitch looped under or with two half-hitches. This is a fast, easy to do tie-on which doesn't use much hemp. The resined hemp tied this way falls off or loosens pretty easily once it has been moved. If it has been brown-waxed or orange hemp, it will stay on somewhat longer after movement.

Another tie-on which I use, shown to me by J. Burgess, which (I believe) he called the "Willie Ross tie-on", uses more hemp, has two knots fore and aft, and stays on for quite a while even after movement of the bridle.

## Why move the bridle?

The bridle is moved to "tone" the drone. Drone reeds which are too "open" may howl and snarl in some drones. One of the possible remedies is to move the bridle towards the waxed tip of the reed, thus closing the aperture between tongue and the cut part of the reed. The bridle is moved also to open up the reed, when the tongue appears to be tightly closed and will not vibrate. This does not always work; and the old remedy of inserting a hair under the tongue may be the solution. If a hair is used, it should be pushed down to as close to the bridle as possible. Eventually the tongue of the reed will take a "set" and the hair can be removed. Amusingly enough, the coarseness of the hair can be a factor . . . soft, willowy celtic hairs may not do as well as one wiry pictish hair. Ca depende que . . . as the French might say!

## "Springing" the tongue

Some pipers like to take the end of the

tongue of the reed and lift it up forcibly, and then let it snap back again into position. Old Fred "Scotty" Bowden, a Boer War piper from the 42nd who used to live in Sacramento and now has gone to Tir nan Og always said to us: "Never snap a reed, boys!". I agree with him. If the tongue *must* be lifted and almost "sprung", then lift it gently and let it back again gently. But better still, lift the tongue and insert a hair under it.

## The tightness of the bridle

A very tight bridle can produce results different from a moderately tight bridle. No bridle should be so loose that you can roll it off the reed fairly easily. But tightness is a factor which can affect a reed significantly.

Some reeds require a moderately tight bridle in order to function at peak efficiency. The same bridle tied tightly in the same spot can give dismaying results. The way to test this is to make the preliminary tie-on at moderate tension. If it "claps up" or squeaks, you have either gone too far up in "siting" the bridle or the bridle is simply too tight where it is located. Loosen it up a bit, and then try it. If the drone double-tones well, to suit your blowing, you've got the right tension and position. Make the final tie-in and blow it in the Pipe. It may require moving up or down . . . either way. Do this while the wax is still fresh.

Older, well played drone reeds usually require a tight bridle sited quite far up towards the waxed tip . . . and rarely need hairs under the tongue. New reeds seem to need the bridle moderately tight and sited down towards the butt end of the reed.

## "Bridling" old drone reeds

Old snorters, snarlers, bellowers can rarely be cured by a bridle. After a while, some drone reeds take a very open "set" and very little can be done about these as far as putting bridles on them is concerned. The cane has been wetted so thoroughly over the hours of blowing that it has become raspy in tone . . . and putting a bridle 2/3 of the way up the reed towards the tip isn't going to give you a well toned reed. A temporary remedy is to insert a very thin blade under the tongue and massage the tongue back to a closed position.

Usually this won't last long.

## Replacing bridles

In dry climates bridles do not last for ever. I assume that in moist climates they have a certain longevity also. When the drone starts to "act up" then one place to go to investigate is the bridle. If the bridle has lost its tension, it may well be the time to re-tie another one on.

As the reed matures, the bridle may have to be moved to compensate for the curvature of the tongue; but after a bridle is moved a number of times, it becomes loose fitting, and the best course is to tie another one on in the appropriate place.

In dry climates, and with the use of a water-trap in the blowstick, the wax on the bridles dries out and becomes brittle and non-sticky. In moist climates, the hemp of the bridle becomes most because the wax has been penetrated by water molecules . . . and at that stage the bridle tightens up after a time of playing and may start to "act up" because of it. This may require a frequent re-tuning of the drones. In either case as stated above, a re-tie of the bridle may solve a lot of problems for the piper.

#### General considerations

Apart from bridles, other mechanical features of the Pipe must be in top shape. If your tuning pins have been poorly humped, or your drone stocks are gummed up with "glog", or the stocks leak anywhere, the finest bridles in the world are not going to give you a nice, steady, in tune, resonant drone sound. The bag, itself, should be good and tight with no leaks. The flapper valve, if you use one, should be close fitting and with no leaks. . . and so on and so on!

But assuming that all else is in class A shape and the Pipe is still difficult, then have a look at the drone bridles . . . they just might be the problem.

### YOUR RADIO LISTENING FOR FEBRUARY 1980

#### 6th February —

The Guelph (Canada) Pipe Band,  
Pipe Major E.D. Neigh.  
Repeat of broadcast 1977.

#### 13th February —

Recital of Piping by Donald MacPherson. Repeat of his Royal Scottish Pipers Society recital at Eden Court, 1978.

#### 20th February —

Piobaireachd for Beginners by Pipe Major Donald MacLeod, featuring Alasdair Gillies, Ullapool.

#### 27th February —

The Strathclyde Police Pipe Band,  
Pipe Major Ian McLellan. Repeat of broadcast 1978.

The 5th and 6th programmes in the series "The MacCrimmons of Skye" will be broadcast after the piping programmes on 6th and 13th February.

### HAMISH MACKENZIE of TONGUE and ADELAIDE

It was with a great sense of shock that we received Ewan Masson's telex informing us of the death of Hamish MacKenzie. Hamish, the son of the late Donald Iain, Tongue Hotel, Sutherland was one of that crop of pipers who were ready to begin a competitive career in 1939 and had high hopes dashed by Hitler's war.

Tongue Hotel was often the meeting place of famous pipers and Hamish was fortunate to hear the 'greats' of the 1920's and 30's, which helped to broaden his piobaireachd education. This photograph was taken of him at the Northern Meeting in 1935.

He joined the Scots Guards during the 1939-45 war and was eventually commissioned in his County regiment The Seaforth Highlanders, serving in India with the first battalion.

Some time after the war ended he joined the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and was in charge of workshops in the Hamburg area of B.A.O.R., in incidentally quite near his old battalion of the Seaforth Highlanders who were serving nearby.

He and his family eventually emigrated to Australia and settled in Adelaide. It was here that his broad piping experience was of the greatest value and he was soon in great demand as an adjudicator and tutor. To the pipers in Southern Australia, Hamish was able to pass on his wealth of knowledge, especially in piobaireachd which followed the John MacDonald, Inverness, dictum. He was a founder member and President of the U. Brown Piobaireachd Society which was formed in memory of Pipe Major Bob Brown, M.B.E., who had such a striking effect on South Australian pipers.

Hamish who died on 12th December 1979 will be sadly missed as a piper, a boon companion and as a husband and father. To Laura his wife, his son and daughter and to his sisters, the International Piper extends its deepest sympathy.



Hamish MacKenzie

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## ☆ Junior Pipers' Corner ☆

### PIPING ELIMINATION No. 2

For the first correct answer opened on  
29th February — A Pipers' Handbook.  
(For those under 18 years of age only).

1. Australian
2. Donald
3. Lochboisdale
4. Drag
5. Edinburgh
6. Angus
7. Blair
8. Moy
9. Washington
10. Argyllshire
11. Thomsons
12. Ladies
13. Stirlingshire
14. Archibald
15. Lismore
16. Flam
17. Street

18. Mackay
19. Sandy
20. Dirk
21. Glentruim
22. Campbell
23. Castle
24. Renfrewshire
25. Lochaber

For each clue eliminate two words. Clue  
This takes 24 out of 25.  
What word are you left with?

If your subscription is due to be renewed  
and it is your intention to do so, please  
act now! It helps our administration.

THANK YOU!

### Clues

- (a) S.P.B.A. Headquarters
- (b) Two gatherings
- (c) Female pipers from "Down Under"
- (d) Two places of departure
- (e) Piper to Queen Victoria
- (f) Two drumming terms.
- (g) Compiler of Kilberry Book
- (h) Two routs
- (i) Two militias
- (j) Venue of Grants Whisky Championship.
- (k) Two linked with Cameron
- (l) Competition Reel

### SOLUTION

#### Piping Elimination No. 1

Clue	(a) eliminates	6 and 15
(b)	"	10 and 24
(c)	"	21 and 16
(d)	"	1 and 11
(e)	"	13 and 7
(f)	"	18 and 3
(g)	"	12 and 25
(h)	"	22 and 9
(i)	"	23 and 2
(j)	"	5 and 20
(k)	"	4 and 19
(l)	"	8 and 14

That leaves CHANTER

Winners: Alasdair Gillies,  
Old Schoolhouse,  
Ullapool.

Colin F. Mitchell,  
3 Moir Place,  
Arbroath.

Cairnel Anderson,  
2912 Angus Street,  
REGINA'  
Sask. Canada S4S 1N9

Pipers' Handbooks are on the way

## TUNING

Assuming that some consideration has been given to the points enumerated last month the actual method of tuning the bagpipe can now be explored. But first it must always be kept in mind that **good playing** on an **untuned** or **poorly tuned** bagpipe is often worse to listen to than **poor playing** on a **well tuned** instrument. Thus it is most essential for an unexperienced piper to gain the skills of tuning as quickly and as thoroughly as possible.

Initially it will be necessary to rely on one's tutor to ensure that the instrument is fitted with suitable reeds. However, here too, is another dimension which requires the acquisition of experience and skill. Much has been written about the choice of reeds and their subsequent adjustment and while much frustration may well be felt until such experience is gained, it is a transitional period which will undoubtedly pass. May it be said at this point that the articles by Mr. David Kennedy, Sacramento, which have appeared in this and previous numbers of the magazine contain very sound advice indeed.

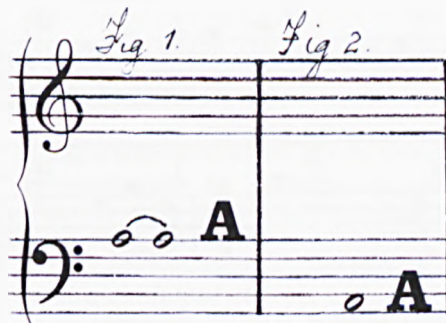
So, if the flow of the air to the reeds is steady, the tuning joints in good order and the sound from each reed compatible with the others, the first steps to tuning can be taken after we have examined the aims of the exercise which is:

1. To tune the drones to each other and:
2. Tune the drones to the chanter.

Thus, it can be clearly seen that in fact there are two distinct operations to be carried out. A start is made by tuning the tenor drones to each other. Take out the pipe chanter, carefully lay it aside, protecting the reed as necessary and stop up the chanter stock with a cork. The Bass drone can be stopped, by either stopping its vibration by closing it at the top, by touching a finger to the open end (this

will stop the reed vibrating and of course cut the sound) or by corking it up at the top of the drone. It is now an easy matter to experiment with the adjustment of the tenor drone tuning slides, one against the other. Listen carefully. At first, there will be a confused fluctuation but a steady **beat** can be heard. The objective in hand is to eliminate that beat altogether so that both drones are blended to make a single **steady** note. This is achieved by adjusting the tuning slide of **one** drone so that the beat becomes slower and slower and eventually disappears. Practise this, moving the tuning slides around until some sort of perfection is achieved. Remember however! — and this is **important** — that all the time the drones are being adjusted, the bag must be firmly controlled, otherwise the air to the reeds will be unsteady and you will be trying to achieve the impossible — trying to make a steady sound from a source which is unsteady.

So far then, the sounds of the tenor drones have been brought to an equal pitch which is the same and depicting this in staff notation, places the two notes on the Great Staff as follows. (Fig. 1)



The next step is to tune the Bass drone to a Tenor drone. It is necessary to understand that the sound of the Bass drone is also A but eight degrees lower in pitch than the tenor drones. Its place on the Great Staff is shown at Fig. 2 and naturally it has a much deeper sound, but such is the mysteries of the science of sound that we can tune a lower sounding note to a higher sounding one and achieve a perfect blend.

Stop or cork off one tenor drone (it is a little difficult at this stage to tune with both tenor drones going, because there will inevitably be some degree of unsteadiness.)

Adjust the bottom slide of the Bass drone up or down — the correct way is that which **slows the beat** down. It will at first be a little difficult to distinguish the sound of the **beat** between the two drones, but by listening carefully and by moving the slide up and down quickly at

first, then more and more slowly, it should be easier to separate the different tones. The **beat** between them should be made to occur slower and slower, until like that between the tenor drones it disappears entirely and what is left is a continuous steady note — A STRAIGHT LINE OF SOUND.

It will be necessary to practise tuning the drones in this manner as often as possible to build up confidence, experience and good tuning skills. Once the tuning of the tenors with each other and the Bass with one tenor is accomplished, try bringing in the 'closed off' tenor and tune it to the sound of the Bass drone and the other Tenor drone. Try also all types of combinations, Tenor to Bass, Bass to Tenor. In addition listen carefully to the sound of one drone only and to the sounds it makes as the tuning slide is adjusted up and down. All this is AURAL TRAINING and for the piper a 'good ear' is a most necessary requirement.

Next month — tuning the drones to the Chanter.



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Dear Sirs,

Having been frequently asked by pipers on the Pacific Coast for copies of my new 6/8, it will be submitted for publication by the B.C. PIPERS NEWSLETTER, and with the thought that pipers in other areas might like it, please publish it also in the INTERNATIONAL PIPER.

William Robertson MacKenzie is the five-month old son of Bill and Gillian MacKenzie, late of Inverness and now living in New Orelans. Hopefully, young William may inherit the talents of both parents, and become an excellent piper, drummer, and reed maker.

Thank you. James M. McColl,

## Wm. Robertson MacKenzie ~ March

by JAMES McCOLL, CALIFORNIA

The musical score is presented in a single system with ten staves. It begins with a treble clef and a 6/8 time signature. The first two staves contain the main melody, featuring a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with rests. The third staff is a variation of the first two. The fourth and fifth staves are marked with a first ending bracket and a '1.' above the staff. The sixth and seventh staves are further variations. The eighth and ninth staves are marked with a second ending bracket and a '2.' above the staff. The tenth staff is a final variation. The score is written in a single system with ten staves.

## HISTORY OF PIPING IN THE ROYAL SCOTS

Regimental Headquarters of The Royal Scots, The Castle, Edinburgh, is currently assembling material for a Royal Scots book of Bagpipe music, which is hoped to be published shortly. The main emphasis will be on previously unpublished Bagpipe music composed by or for The Royal Scots.

In addition to the music some pages on the history of Piping in The Regiment will be included.

Anyone who has served or has been associated with The Royal Scots is asked to send any material, whether factual or photographic concerning Piping in The Royal Scots. All contributions will be acknowledged and photographs returns, although publication cannot be guaranteed.

## THE GIFTS TO GIE US

John MacLay, Scottish Piping Society of London, received this "Piper's Prayer" on his Christmas Card from Muriel Clayton, the Society's joint secretary.

### PIPER'S PRAYER

*Strong lips to pucker –  
Whisky to wet 'em.  
True reeds, to suit the pipe –  
Knowledge to set 'em . . . .*

*Good lungs to fill the bag,  
And keep it tight,  
Quick, supple fingers, and  
Tone clear and bright . . . .*

*Audience attentive . . . .  
Judges all fair . . . .  
All these combined, O Lord –  
This is my prayer.*

## A CHANGE OF COMMAND

Pipe Major Alex Stewart has recently been appointed Pipe Major of the 1st Battalion Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. Alex Stewart who is the holder of an 'A' grade Pipe Major's certificate, transferred to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders from the Gordon Highlanders. He succeeds Pipe Major Malcolm MacGillivray who has been promoted and appointed Technical Quarter Master Sergeant. Hopefully, Alex Stewart will be able to carry on the fine work carried out by Malcolm MacGillivray, who over the past four years had to rebuild a pipe band, which for a number of reasons had become run down and was scarcely viable as a proficient unit.

## THE MERSE PIPERS' SOCIETY

The monthly meeting of the Merse Pipers' Society was held at Allanton on Wednesday 12th December, under the Chairmanship of Pipe Major Tim Ainslie. It was a departure from the usual in that the evening was not devoted solely to the Highland Pipes. Members greatly enjoyed being entertained by the music of fiddle, accordion and Northumbrian Small Pipes.

Sandy Taylor from Kelso started the enjoyment with some excellent Scots tunes on the accordion to be followed by Ian Cunningham of Dunbar with accordion accompanist playing on the fiddle some of the well loved fiddle compositions of Niel Gow and J. Scott Skinner. To cap the first part of the evening John Robson of Morpeth treated the company to an explanation of the history and construction of the Northumbrian Small Pipes and then charmed all present with the sweet tones of his pipes which were entirely made by himself.

After partaking of Haggis, Tatties and Neeps the second part of the evening got under way with some of the younger members showing their expertise on practice chanter and pipes. Sandy Taylor again performed but this time on pipes, and proved to be just as gifted on this instrument. Ian Cunningham then played a selection of foot tapping Jigs, Hornpipes and Reels on his fiddle. John Robson then completed a fine evening's entertainment by playing a grand selection on a set of Highland Bagpipes, again of his own making. John proved to be a craftsman, both in the making and playing of his instruments.

In thanking all who entertained the gathering Pipe Major Ainslie stated how much the evening had been enjoyed by the members and that the Society had been fortunate in that their choice of musicians had proved to be of such high quality. The Pipe Major also intimated that a shield to be known as the "Daniel Laidlaw V.C. Memorial Sheild" had been gifted to the Society by Mr. Loos Laidlaw, son of the famous Piper of Loos. It is Mr. Laidlaw's wish that the shield should be used for the encouragement of young pipers and the trophy will be competed for annually by younger members of the Society. ● ●

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## SOUND OF BAGPIPES IN THE AIR

### The Star's Africa News Service

SALISBURY – The air traffic controllers here could hardly believe their ears. Bagpipes were playing from 39,000 feet.

The men in the control tower at Salisbury airport had made contact with a United States Air Force Starlifter transport coming in from Cairo as part of the Rhodesia airlift.

As the plane, carrying British troops and equipment flew over Rhodesia the pilot radioed the controllers: "I have a message for you." And through the ear-phones came "Good King Wenceslas," played on the bagpipes.

A sergeant-major with the 1st battalion, Irish Guards, explained after the Staflifter had touched down how there was a contest in his regiment to see who could play the bagpipes at the highest altitude.

"The USAF crew were very co-operative and I can now say that, at 39,000 ft, I hold the record," said the soldier.

*From 'The Star' Johannesburg, S.A.  
29 Dec. 1979*

## MAJOR ARCHIE MACNAB

As we go to press, we regretfully have heard of the death of Major Archie MacNab. An appreciation will be included in our next number.

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## THE MASTER AND PUPIL

by  
Owen MacNiven

My good friend, Andrew McNeil of Colonsay sent to me a copy of "The International Piper" for December, 1979, knowing that I should be very interested in "An Open Letter to Alistair Campsie", and in Robbie Reid's letter. I concur in his explanation of the destruction of McDougall Gillies' notation. In the late thirties, his father told me that it could not be handed down, for the reasons Robbie has given.

In 1930, when I was aged 14, I was taken by my bagpipe teacher, the late John Morrell, from Paisley to Glasgow to ask Bob Reid if he would accept me as his pupil. I was initiated into Bob's ability to make a trenchant comment, for his reply was, "There are enough bad pipers in this world without my adding to them!". Immediately too he showed his kindness: as I had travelled from Paisley he would hear me play. I played *The Lament for Patrick Og McCrimmon*. I became his pupil. From then until 1939 there began a teacher-pupil relationship, blossoming, as I grew older, into close friendship. As with so many the War saw the parting of our ways. I did see him in 1941 when he was Battery Sergeant-Major in Castle Donnington, but I did not see him again until after the War, when I made forays to Paisley to see my mother. Three occasions are specially memorable.

One afternoon, in his shop in George Street, Bob offered to me his pipes, and asked me to play pibrochs of my choice. I played *The Earl of Seaforth's Salute*, and *My King has landed in Moidart*. His delight that his pupil could still play exactly as he had been taught, was profound. It was a most moving occasion.

The second took place after he had retired from business, and I visited him one morning in his home in Sandyhills. The visit stretched to the late afternoon: indeed Bob and his son Robbie took me by car to Clyde Street for me to catch a bus to Paisley. That day, Bob and I on practice chanters, played the ground-work, and "tricky bits" of some 50 pibrochs. So well had I been taught, it was note for note, phrase for phrase. Bob was elated.

The third occasion was most strange. Near the end of my summer holidays in August, I took a "daft notion" to travel from Nottingham to Glasgow, where I learned it was Cowal Games, so to them I went. Bob I discovered, was one of the judges and of course he and I met at the interval and were most happy, discussing

this and that. Next day, Bob died of a heart attack. What prompted me to go to Glasgow that day, I will never know.

I well remember my first lesson, for Bob's opening comment shook me rigid! "Remember, Owen, I don't teach you, I show you, then you teach yourself". That maxim I have carried throughout my life, for my career as an adult has been in education of comprehensive schools. I have been Headmaster for 25 years.

Bob did "show" me. I began on the McDougall Gillies — Reid canon of piobaireachd playing, starting with *The Battle of Auldearn* and ending in 1937 with *The Unjust Incarceration*. The canon was broken at times, when set tunes for Oban and Inverness had to be learned, usually "nameless" tunes, or pibrochs of that ilk. When I was 16, among others, I learned for Oban, *Lament for Duncan McRae of Kintail*, and in fact, won the Junior Piobroch that day, playing that tune.

In his letter, Robbie described Bob as a "perfectionist". How true: Bob would never tolerate shoddy technique and phrasing. Mr. Kenneth's letter in your December edition on "repetitiveness" of pibrochs, mentioning, *I got a Kiss of the King's Hand* was not only accurate but also recalled Bob's teaching of such tunes. Every repetitive phrase had to be absolutely identical, every time. For example, the opening bars of the piobroch above have 3 long C's, two short B's and a long B, and woe betide me, if in its repetition, one of them was shorter or longer than what had previously been played.

Many other pibrochs have intricacies of their own. The third line of the Urlar of *The Unjust Incarceration* was by itself, probably the most difficult. But the piobroch which I had greatest trouble with, was *Lament for MacDonnell of Laggan*. A marvellous piobroch, with beautiful phrasing and expression, and several weeks elapsed before Bob said, "Now, you've got it". Bob was undoubtedly a "perfectionist".

Bad playing was to him anathema, and many a time he put "a flea in my ear". Indeed in 1938 I was to play in McLellan Galleries, Glasgow, and for the competition I chose *My King has landed in Moidart*. On the Tuesday before the competition I played it over to Bob, and my "timing" was wrong. My word, but he could be trenchant. He described it as "hame-made", not even "hame-made", but "haun-knitted". He then "showed" me, and on the Saturday, in competition with Bob, so well did he "show" me that I became in 1938, the first winner of "The Oban Times Gold Medal". Bob in defeat as it were, was magnanimous: to some, who commented

on his not being able to be first winner of the Medal, replied, "No: but I could teach my "pup" to win it".

About 1937, piobaireachd playing, emanating from Inverness, began a degenerating standard. This caused Bob enormous distress, not that competitors were winning top prizes with this "bad" playing, but that The Piobaireachd Society, condoned it. Bob always looked to the Society for it to preserve the "norm". I give an example, *The Earl of Seaforth's Salute*, the First Variation of which is McDougall Gillies', and a marvellous piece of phrasing and timing. The accent is on the top notes, a wonderful opening with a nonet of three triplets. Yet the Northern School, in its Taorluath and Crunluath all through emphasised low A and "cut" the top notes. Bob called it "machine-gunning low A". I repeat, Bob was a "perfectionist".

In your magazine are names I remember well, Ian C. Cameron and brother Duncan, D.R. McLennan and Seumas McNeill. I am intrigued by mention of General Frank Richardson, because in 1938 Major F. Richardson, R.A.M.C., when I was judging the Highland Pipers' Society Competition in Edinburgh, and when I had missed the last train to Glasgow, in his car, by-passed Lenzie to drive me to Glasgow.

I too worship Bob Reid this side of idolatry. As Ben Jonson said this of Shakespeare it is not inappropriate to end with a quotation from "Julius Caesar", it certainly applies to Bob:—

"His life was gentle: and the elements  
So mix'd in him, that Nature might stand up,  
And say to all the world, This was a man".

O. MacNiven

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WRITE OR PHONE FOR QUOTATIONS

## Battle of Allen

professional keeners (*crossans*) who assisted at the interment of Donnchadh, King of Ossory,<sup>1</sup> father of Sadhbh (after written Isolde, or Izod), Queen of Ireland in the year 975. In this ancient poem we read that the nine keeners<sup>2</sup> sung a lamentation to the accompaniment of "cymbals and *pipes* played harmoniously."

In connection with the death of Donnbo at the battle of Allen in 722, as found in an Irish manuscript of the eleventh century, we read that Donnbo was "the best minstrel in Ireland at *pipes* and trumpets and harps," etc. On the night of the battle it is related that "the head of Donnbo raised the *Dord Fiansa* (a strange strain), the sweetest strain of music ever heard, so that all the assembly wept through plaintive beauty of the song."

In an Irish poem on Tara by Cuan O'Lochain, written about the year 1015, there is reference to "the pipers and jugglers" who were privileged to enter the King's house and to drink his beer. This Cuan O'Lochain was not only Chief Poet, but was practically Head King of Ireland from 1022 till his death in 1024.

The Irish may claim the invention of the musical form known as "pedal point," or "drone bass"—that

<sup>1</sup> This Donnchadh is the direct ancestor of Lord Castletown of Upper Ossory.

<sup>2</sup> In the old Irish "Pot of Avarice" we read that while the poem was being sung the *nine* leading musicians of the company played music round the pot.

## Story of the Bagpipe

is, the sustaining of the key-note, or tonic, as an accompaniment to the melody. Guido gives a specimen of this primitive form of harmony in his *Micrologus*,<sup>1</sup> and the bagpipe drone may be regarded as the substratum of the modern harmonic scale.

From the tenth century the bagpipe was gradually displaced by the harp in the favour of the upper and middle classes, and hence when Giraldus Cambrensis visited Ireland he only makes special mention of the harp and timpan, or fidil. At the same time, we are indebted to the Bishop-elect of St. David's for a very graphic description of the Irish dress of the twelfth century, which makes it clear that the "Highland" costume of today is really only a modification of the ancient Irish dress.

As early as the year 1206, among the deeds of the Priory of the Holy Trinity (Christ Church Cathedral), Dublin, there is mention of Geoffrey the Piper. Fifty years later, in the same valuable muniments, there is calendared a grant of land to William the Piper and Alice, his wife, in the parish of St. Werburgh's, Dublin, at a rent of six shillings a year. We can fairly conclude that the bagpipe, though relegated to the humbler classes, still found favour with cultured amateurs—even as it does at present in Ireland.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XIV.

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## Irish Pipers in France

Whilst King Edward I. was in Gascony during the years 1286-89 he sent for some Irish troops, and, as a matter of course, pipers, being "the musicians of the kerne," followed in the train of the native and Anglo-Irish soldiers to enliven them to deeds of daring.<sup>1</sup> In 1297 Irish kerne were again availed of in the Flanders campaign, and again did the strains of the Irish war-pipes make the welkin ring.

One of the earliest drawings of the Irish bagpipes is in a manuscript copy of the *Dinnseanchus*—an Irish topographical history—in the British Museum, dated 1300, describing the Irish kerne who accompanied King Edward to Calais in 1297. In this manuscript there is an illuminated initial letter with the quaint device of a pig playing with all-becoming gravity on a set of bagpipes. The royal proclamation ordering "all the King's lieges in Ireland to supply arms and horses and to go with them in company of the King in the present war with the King of France" is dated May 4th, 1297, and was sent to Sir John Wogan, Viceroy of Ireland. The truce with France was proclaimed in Ireland in the following October, as appears from the State papers.

It is remarkable that the Irish and their brethren of Scotie Minor should be found in opposite camps at

<sup>1</sup> Previously, in 1243, King Henry III. had a large body of Irish troops in France, who, no doubt, had their war pipers with them.

Irish  
Pipers in  
Gascony  
and  
Flanders

Irish War  
Pipes at  
Calais

## Story of the Bagpipe

Falkirk on July 22nd, 1298, and probably the martial effect of the Irish pipes suggested to the Scotch the employment of the *piob mor* in battle. Be that as it may, Irish pipers accompanied the troops levied from Ireland in the Scottish campaign of the years 1297-1303.

Thus from the thirteenth century we can trace the Irish *piob mor* as the military music of Ireland, the national outcome of the "bands of pipers" at sacred and secular gatherings, especially at funerals. And be it understood that these brave Irish pipers marched always in the van of the army. At the famous Battle of Crecy on August 26th, 1346, there were 6000 soldiers from Ireland, "with their pipers," whose prowess contributed not a little to the success of the English King.<sup>1</sup>

The first blow struck at the popularity of the bagpipe in Ireland was the *Statute of Kilkenny*, enacted at a Parliament held in Kilkenny before Lionel, Duke of Clarence, Viceroy of Ireland, in March 1366. Among the enactments of this infamous statute was one which made it penal to receive or entertain "pipers, story-tellers, rhymers, etc.," on the plea that they acted as "Irish agents or spies on the English, whereby great evils have often resulted." Henceforth anybody violating this statute was liable to be attainted and imprisoned—"that is, both the Irish agents and the English who receive or give them anything, and after that they shall make fine at the King's

<sup>1</sup> Irish pipers were also at Harfleur in 1418, and at Rouen in 1419.

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Angus J. MacLellan



Sgt. James Banks



Kenneth MacDonald



Iain MacFadyen

# PIOBAIREACHD PLAYING IN AUSTRALIA

**The Pipers' Club of Victoria – Annual Piobaireachd Competitions.**  
Report by Iain Bruce

This year I was invited by the Pipers' Club to adjudicate at their annual competitions, which were held on Saturday, 6th October at 1 RVR Depot, Burwood Road, Hawthorn. I was met at Melbourne Airport on Friday evening by the Club Secretary, Wendy Gallagher and past-president Keith Routley. All credit must go to Keith who accommodated me in his comfortable modern home at Glen Waverly, looked after me right royally with excellent fare and patiently drove me through the busy traffic to the various destinations. His hospitality was first class. Wendy is a most efficient secretary. Her energy and initiative ensured that the competitions on the Saturday and workshop sessions on the Sunday ran like clockwork. I am most grateful to her for organising flight times and other essentials, as well as for an excellent lunch on the Sunday at the V.H.P.B.A. Clubrooms.

There were two competitions. For the Silver Medal, competitors played a tune of their own choice. For the Gold Medal, competitors were asked to submit two tunes, one of which they would be asked to play. There were ten entrants in the silver medal and five in the gold medal events. Colin Cairns was of invaluable assistance to me as steward, and also managed, along with Keith, to operate some very sophisticated recording equipment throughout the day.

In the silver medal the first to play was David Shepherd, who submitted *Sir James MacDonald of the Isles' Lament*. He made a reasonable job of the ground although his chanter was flat and his hiharin movements were poorly done. He lost his way in the first variation and stopped. Next to play was Sandy Smith, who gave a capable rendering of *The Old Woman's Lullaby* although he went wrong in the second line of variation I and the first line of variation II. His "introductory E" notes in the ground were clipped a little short and he did not repeat the whole of the ground at the end. Simon Blackshaw played *The Munros' Salute* but did not sufficiently cut the low G in the ground, thus depriving us of a feature of this tune. His treatment of the low A notes in variation I was uneven and he played the crunluath variation far too slowly.

The next piper was Ralph Ballard, who played *Marquis of Argyll's Salute*. This was a promising performance but he also suffered from a clumsy hiharin. His taorluath movement was very deliberate and the crunluath breabach linking notes were too long, to the extent that they submerged the theme notes. His chanter was dull on the bottom hand. It was of interest that he played a "cadence E" entering the Taorluath variation. Following this there was a short interval, and it is likely that at this stage most people in the audience had the feeling that the best was yet to come.

The second half did indeed begin well, with Vicki Winton playing *Lament for*

*Alasdair Dearg MacDonnell of Glengarry*. She has excellent fingers, and displayed excellent execution except for the crunluath a mach variation. The expression in the ground was rather square and she played some note errors. Bill Bruce played *Lament for Donald of Laggan* very nicely on a pipe which had a good chanter but drones that were out of tune from the start. He also played too slowly. David Bail raised the standard of the whole competition, playing on a well set pipe, apart from a slight tendency to flatness on the E. His tune was *The Munros' Salute*. He did not extract the song from the first variation, and played too slowly overall. Robert Meade played *Lament for Mary MacLeod* on an excellent pipe. His style was musical throughout although he tended to play the cadence E notes in the ground too short. This was a good performance. Alan MacBean played *Fair Honey* but dragged the ground and did not phrase the variations. His drones went well out of tune and there were rough patches in his execution. But having said this, it was obvious that although not destined for the prize list this time, Alan has the ability to play piobaireachd well. Last to play was Iain Waters. His tune was *Lament for Sir James MacDonald of the Isles*. His chanter was very strong and his drones were not in tune with it. He played far too slowly and did not take out the song from his tune.

The results were –

1 Robert Mead, 2 David Bail, 3 Bill Bruce  
**The Gold Medal**

There were five players in this event but



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the standard was excellent. Iain MacPhee, taking a day off from his final year studies in mathematical statistics, played *MacCrimmon's Sweetheart* in competent fashion. He favoured the low A rather than the cadence E in phrase A of the ground and thumb which is unusual, and was not convincing in the doubling of the thumb variation. The remainder of the tune was of good standard except that the C's and B's in cadences were played a little too evenly. He played an open fogsailte variation as an a mach. Eric Christie, president of the Club, gave a masterly rendering of *MacFarlanes' Gathering*, but he was a little slow in the doublings and had trouble with his F finger in the crunluath movement.

Wendy Gallagher played *Corrienessan's Salute* on a pipe with a lovely bass drone sound. Her tuning was spot on. The spell-bound audience almost leapt from their seats at a sudden and screaming skirl in variation I. Wendy also imparted a jerkiness to this variation and to the taorluath variation, and tended to pause on the low A of the crunluath breabach before cadences. This was a performance of merit. Donald Chalmers played *Lament for Mary MacLeod*, on an excellent pipe with a big sound. His chanter is a Hardie of 1970 vintage which has undergone extensive surgery by Don, and produced an amazing tone. He cut the C before edre in the ground too short and the tempo throughout was on the slow side. Otherwise this was a first class performance. The last player was Ross Campbell, whose appearance as well as his pipe was immaculate. He played *The End of the Great Bridge* in splendid style, to win the gold medal for the third time. The results were:—

1 Ross Campbell, 2 Don Chalmers 3 Eric Christie.

The gold medal competition is run in conjunction with the Victorian Highland Pipe Band Association, whose president Bruce Neal presented the prizes. Eric Christie presented the prizes in the silver medal event.

On Sunday there were workshop sessions at the V.H.P.B.A. rooms. These attempted to cover a general approach to our classical music, with illustrations drawn from specific tunes. There were lively and entertaining discussions, and I hope that the members of the group found it as rewarding as I certainly did.

My lasting impressions are of an undoubted enthusiasm for the music, and an earnest seeking after good standards among the pipers I met. I am sure the future of piping in Melbourne is secure.

### Open Piobaireachd, Queensland Championships Saturday 29/10/79

In this event competitors were required to submit two tunes, one of which they would be asked to play. First up was Don Loch from Gympie who was asked to play *Too Long in this Condition*. He played the MacDonald setting of this tune. The expression in the ground is different from what we usually hear and variation I is a striking piece of music although Don did not point it sufficiently. There was no phrasing in his crunluath variation. His pipe lasted the distance but the chanter was strong and inclined to be rough on high A. R. MacDonnell from Townsville played *I got a Kiss of the King's Hand*. This was a good attempt for someone who has not been playing piobaireachd for very long. He had an indifferent pipe and the variations were rushed and lacking expression. David Calder played *Lament for Donald of Laggan* on a beautiful pipe. His otherwise excellent tune was marred by a fumble on F and a note error in the crunluath doubling. Doug Thoresen played *Lament for Captain MacDougall* on a steady bagpipe in competent fashion. He included the extra notes in the penultimate bar of the ground. Dennis Browning from Newcastle played *MacDonald of Kinlochmoidart's Lament No. 1* in fine style on a good instrument until he broke down in the singling of the Taorluath. Angus MacKinnon from Lithow played *Mary's Praise*. He was inclined to cut the C in bar 2 of the ground, and he omitted bar III entirely. His crunluath was spoiled by a squeaky chanter. The results were as listed below:

#### Piobaireachd

1 D. Thoresen, 2 D. Calder, 3 D. Loch

Iain Bruce

### Piobaireachd Contest in New South Wales October 1979 Report by D. Browning and F. Baillie

The Liverpool Pipe Band Hall was the venue for the finals of the inaugural Silver Chalice Piobaireachd Contest conducted by the N.S.W. Pipers' Society. There were eight contestants — six of whom were decided on at heats held the previous week and two invited players, one from Melbourne and the other from Newcastle. The judges were John MacKenzie from Bathurst and Frank Baillie from Newcastle. Fear an tigh was Bruce McRae.

The contest was well run and the organisers are to be congratulated on their first effort in running a prestigious competition and for presenting such

worthy prizes. The two invited competitors were made most welcome and we thank them for their hospitality.

The following comments on each competitor were supplied by Mr. F. Baillie.

Competitor No. 1 — Gordon Heming playing *The Battle of Strome*. Gordon played on a nicely tuned set of MacDougall pipes and as is usual with his playing, set a very nice tempo. I felt however that his playing was very much from the book and not from the heart. His crunluath fogsailte movements were faulty possibly from lack of sufficient practice.

Competitor No. 2 — Ross Campbell playing *I got a Kiss of the King's Hand*. (Ross was the first of the invited players — he was invited to play after winning the Victoria Pipers' Club Gold Medal for Piobaireachd). Ross played on a beautifully tuned set of Lawrie pipes coupled with a Hardie chanter from which the best sound of the night was achieved. All that need be said of this piper was that he produced a beautiful rendition of this piobaireachd played in the true style of the MacDonald school.

Competitor No. 3 — Ian Tague playing *MacKintosh's Lament*. His pipes were quite nice although pitched a little on the low side. I felt Ian played his tune far too slowly. A rise in tempo may have improved the musical merit of his performance. A bit more work is needed on his crunluath variations.

Competitor No. 4 — Robert Pearce playing *Corrienessan's Salute*. Robert's pipes were nicely tuned and held true throughout his tune. I felt for a player of Robert's experience he could have done a better job with this tune. It was, I feel, a little too slow for a salute. His tune was not played from "within" as it sounded to me as if played straight from the book. His crunluath breabach variations were far too stiff and did not flow as they should have done.

Competitor No. 5 — Dennis Browning playing *Macdonald of Kinlochmoidart's Lament No. 1*. (Dennis was the second invited player, who was the representative of the Newcastle-Hunter Valley Pipers' Society, being nominated by that Society). Dennis played on a nicely tuned set of Kintail drones combined with a Sinclair chanter. He gave, I feel, a very good rendition of the tune played in the style of the Macdonald School. This player, although a little nervous, was in command of his tune right throughout, ending on a well executed crunluath breabach variation.

→  
Competitor No. 6 — Harry Galvin playing *MacLeod of Raasay's Salute*. Harry had trouble with his chanter being just not right resulting in unsteady drones. I feel Harry's heart was not in his tune for this performance — I have heard him play much better than this.

Competitor No. 7 — Graham Hardy playing *The Battle of the Bridge of Perth*. His pipes sounded quite nice and he played nicely throughout his piece, although I felt his tempo was a little on the fast side. Apart from this he finished his tune with a beautifully controlled crunluath variation.

Competitor No. 8 — Grant Fawling playing *The Lament for Mary MacLeod*. Grant's pipes sounded beautiful right throughout his tune. His playing however was spoilt by the very slow tempo he set for himself. However, I feel this boy has a ton of natural talent which could be brought out if he had the correct tuition.

Following the competition, the President of the N.S.W. Pipers's Society, Mr. Bill Hart, congratulated all competitors on a fine effort and then proceeded to name the place-getters. The winner of the Silver Chalice was Ross Campbell of Melbourne, who also

received a cash prize of \$100. Second place went to Dennis Browning from Newcastle who received a set of whisky glasses and \$30. The remaining competitors were each presented with a cheque for \$10. The evening concluded with a selection of tunes from Ross Campbell and John MacKenzie.

*Reports re-printed from the "Queensland Highland Pipers' Society Newsletter."*

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## ANNOUNCING

### THE INTERNATIONAL PIPER BOOK CLUB

As a service to our readers we are proposing to start in April this year the facilities whereby most books on the art of piping will become available direct from our Circulation Department.

*Music Books are NOT included in this service.*

Full details of how the club will operate together with a list of books will be published shortly, but in the meantime if readers care to let us know any particular book they require we will do our best to see that it is included in our list.



## A PIPING NIGHT AT GOGARBANK

In early December 1979 the General Officer Commanding in Scotland, Sir Michael Gow, late of the Scots Guards entertained a group of pipers at his home, Gogarbank House, on the outskirts of Edinburgh. Present were Captain D.R. MacLennan, Lt.-Col. David Murray, Mr. James Burnet, The Duke of Hamilton, Captain Seymour Monro, (Pipe President of the Queen's Own Highlanders), Major General Frank Richardson, Captain Andrew Pitkeathly, Lieutenant John Allan, Brigadier Lorne Campbell, V.C., Captain John MacLellan and Major Colin Innes.

Selections of Ceol Mor and Ceol Beag were played by Pipe Major Paddy Morecroft, Royal Scots; Pipe Major Iain Morrison, Queen's Own Highlanders; and Pipe Major James Hood, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. The Piobair-eachds played were *The MacGregors' Salute* and *Too long in this Condition*.

This is the second occasion on which Sir Michael Gow has entertained a group of pipers at his home. His interest in piping is much appreciated.

## EDINBURGH FOLK FESTIVAL

Once again a course of piping instruction is to be included in the activities during the Edinburgh Folk Festival which is to be held during 21st to 30th March. The piping school will take place from 24th to 28th March. Captain John MacLellan and Pipe Major John D. Burgess will again be in attendance as tutors and it is hoped that they will be joined by Iain Duncan from Perth, the very successful Pipe Major of the young up and coming Vale of Atholl Pipe Band. Iain is also a solo player of note.

In addition there will be instruction in the Northumbrian and Uilleann pipes, the dates for the latter will be 26th to 28th March. The tutors will be respectively Joe Hutton and Pat McNulty. The Course fees will be:

£35.00 for Highland and Northumbrian Pipes, £21.00 for Uilleann Pipes.

Classes will be held in Moray House, Canongate, Edinburgh on the dates indicated, 9.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m., 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.

All enquiries to Edinburgh Folk Festival Director, 170 High Street, Edinburgh EH1 1QS.

## SCOTS GUARDS RECRUIT

### Oban's Neil Johnstone

To readers of our Competition Round-Up columns the name Neil Johnstone will be familiar. In the past two years he has often featured in it. We hear that he has joined the Scots Guards to follow the profession of Piper and is at present at the Guards Depot undergoing 'recruits training' - a must for all soldiers before assuming a specialist role.

Neil, who is just seventeen will hope to follow in the footsteps of the many famous Scots Guards pipers, Pipe Majors Willie Ross, J.B. Robertson, Alex MacDonald, Angus MacDonald, etc. etc.

There can be no doubt that Neil will find much to encourage him; ample time to practise and plenty of incentive to become a top class player in the Scots Guards. Good Luck to you Neil and we look forward to your continued success.

### TOPICAL TIPS

Keep the inside of the drones clean and shiny.

This improves the tone and prevents 'bugs'.

## THE COMPETITION ROUND UP

### The Scottish Piping Society of the Witwatersrand

#### RESULTS OF ANNUAL HIGHLAND BAGPIPE COMPETITION;

24th November, 1979

**Piobaireachd** - Judges: Pipe Major A.B. Watters and Capt. W.G. Sheppard, M.B.E.

1 C.I. Terry - *MacLeod of Raasay's Salute*, 2 J.D. Farmer - *Too Long in this Condition*, 3 C.A. Hall - *Black Donald March*, 4 Dr. P.D. Terry - *Catherine's Lament*.

Winner of the "Dr. M. MacDonald Bayne Trophy for Piobaireachd" - C.I. Terry.

**Marches** - Judges: Pipe Major A.B. Watters, Capt. W.G. Sheppard, M.B.E., and Mr. Roy Blevins.

1 - C.I. Terry - *Edinburgh City Police Pipe Band*, 2 L.W. Durham - *Bonnie Anne*, 3 C.R. Mulinder - *Pipe Major Willie Gray*, 4 C.A. Hall - *Pipe Major R.U. Brown's Farewell to the Ballochbuie Forest*.

Winner of the Eagle Pipers' Society Silver Salver - C.I. Terry.

**Strathspey and Reels** - Judges: Pipe Major A.B. Watters, Capt. W.G. Sheppard, M.B.E., and Mr. Roy Blevins.

1 C.A. Hall - *Dora MacLeod/Lexy MacAskill*, 2 L.W. Durham - *Blair Drummond/Rejected Suitor*, 3 A.D. Smith - *Cameronian Rant/The Smith of Chilliechassie*, 4 B. Mulhearn - *Shepherd's Crook/The Blackberry Bush*.

Winner of the "President's Trophy for Open Strathspeys and Reels" - C.A. Hall.

#### Overall Winners

1 C.I. Terry - L.M. Millar Memorial Trophy and One Hundred

Guineas (210 Rand) ("Best Piper of the Year")

2 C.A. Hall - Fifty Rand (Twenty-five Pounds)

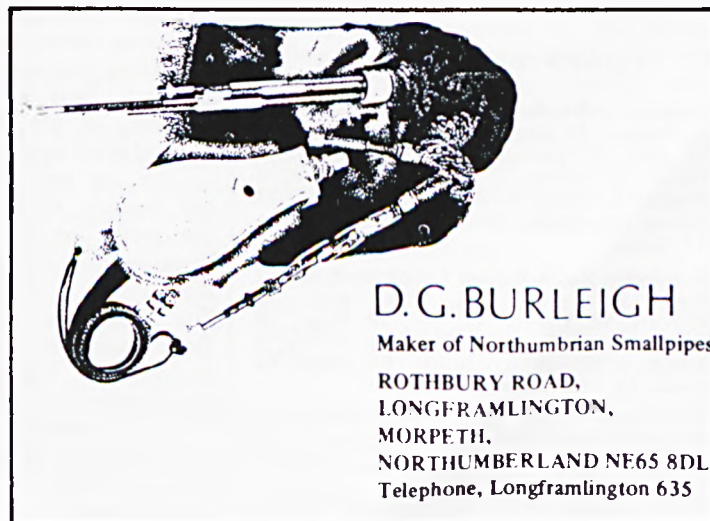
3 L.W. Durham - Thirty Rand (Fifteen Pounds)

4 J.D. Farmer - Twenty Rand (Ten Pounds)

**March, Strathspey and Reel** - Judges: Pipe Major A.B. Watters, Capt. W.G. Sheppard, M.B.E., and Mr. Roy Blevins.

1 L.W. Durham - *The 71st Highlanders/Blair Drummond/Rejected Suitor*. 2 Dr. H.P. Campbell - *South Hall/Arniston Castle/Loch Carron*, 3 J.D. Farmer - *Pipe Major Willie Gray/Monymusk/John Morrison, Assynt House*.

Winner of the "Donald Morrison MacLennan Memorial Trophy" and Fifteen Rand - L.W. Durham.



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Continued from page 2

from the Canntaireachd of John MacKay his father from the year 1826 to 1840''

Thus we see that he began his work of recording in Staff notation the repertoire of his father when only aged 13 years.

Angus MacKay's manuscripts comprise

- (a) Piobaireachd Vol. 1 )
- (b) Piobaireachd Vol. 2 ) 183 tunes
- (c) Marches, Strathspeys )
- and Reels, Vol. 3 ) 550 tunes
- (d) Reels, Jigs and other )
- dance music, Vol. 4 )
- (e) The Seaforth manuscript,
- Piobaireachd - 21 tunes.

In addition to these manuscripts he had published the following works:

- (a) A collection of Ancient Piobaireachd or Highland Bagpipe Music 61 tunes
- (b) The Piper's Assistant, a collection of marches, quicksteps, strathspeys, reels and jigs.

There is nothing recorded which indicates his employment or his places of residences from 1826 (when he was awarded 4th prize) until 1837 when he became piper to Campbell of Islay, aged 24 years.

In 1843 he was chosen by Queen Victoria as her piper, beginning a custom which is still in being. She was the first Sovereign in relatively modern times to have a personal piper.

Angus MacKay died in 1859, when he was accidentally drowned in the river Nith at Dumfries on 29th March.

Here then is the introduction to the Works of Angus MacKay, that piping genius who devoted his lifetime to the Highland Bagpipe and its music.

To be continued

## OUR PIPING CROSSWORDS

**Solution - No. 6. Across:** 1. Trust, 4. Canal, 9. Rossini, 10. Saga, 11. Donald, 18. Charge, 19. Bain, 20. Cameron, 21. Level, 22. Brown. **Down:** 2. Rustic, 3. Spiers, 5. Assynt, 6. Argyle, 7. Train, 8. Biddu, 12. Cheape, 13. France, 14. Pence, 15. Reamer, 16. Andrew, 17. Grant.

**Solution - No. 7. Across:** 1. Antrim, 3. Mine, 7. Rest, 8. Styles, 10. Pipe Bag, 13. Moidart, 16. Dornie, 17. Birl, 18. Neep, 19. Forest. **Down:** 1. Airt, 2. Tassie, 3. Isle, 5. Ensign, 6. Strands, 9. Resolis, 11. London, 12. Praise, 14. Tree, 15. Flat.

The lucky winner of Crossword No. 7 - first out of the Glengarry:

Miss Christina MacNeil, 6 Camaghall Road, Caol, Fort-William, Inverness-shire.

What is your choice of pipingtape please?

## The New Zealand South Island Solo Piping Championships

### JUDGE'S REPORT

by

William Cruickshank  
late of Bucksburn, Aberdeen

These championships were contested over a two day period on 20 and 21 October 1979 at St. Andrews College, Christchurch.

The first "A" Grade event on Saturday was a 2/4 March with a field of nineteen competitors. Each player submitted three tunes, the quality of which, in this event at least, was excellent, and it was so good to be able to choose from tunes like *Glengarry Gathering*, *P/M John Stewart*, *Ross-shire Volunteers*, *Leaving Glen Urquhart*, *Abercairney Highlanders*, to name but a few. The event was won in a close finish by Alistair Munro of Christchurch with *Stornoway Highland Gathering* on a very fine pipe. His expression was excellent and had it not been for a few very minor fingering discrepancies would have won by a country mile. Second place went to Frank Annan, also from Christchurch, who played *Millbank Cottage* very nicely indeed. P/M Frank Mackinnon, Wellington, took third prize with *Major Milne*, playing in his usual distinctive style, although a little "matter of fact" on this occasion.

In fourth spot was Alan Dodd of Dunedin who played his march very well and managed to fight off an attack of nerves which seems to plague his performances nowadays. This was the best I've heard from Alan for some time now and it would be great to have a "come-back" from him.

The most disappointing tune I heard was the *Glengarry Gathering* from Ian Hines who as a rule plays extremely accurately on a faultless pipe. Of the younger players in this event the following names are well worth mentioning: Greg Hickman, Nigel Escott, Lance Turnbull, Neil Jones-Sexton, and Brian Switalla, all of whom played well and showed great potential.

The Jig and Hornpipe event sorted out quickly the practised players from the rest. The accuracy of Ian Hines' fingering paid off in this event and he led the field by a good margin after playing *The Train* and *Donald McLean*. Alan Dodd took second prize with a confident performance, Frank McKinnon was third and young Brian Switalla was fourth with a fine performance which reeked of Lewis Turrell who, incidently, was conspicuous by his absence, as were Bill Boyle and Donald Bain.

I got the feeling in this event that a lot of the pipers were trying to imitate the great Doanld McLeod's jig playing by playing very round. I would urge them to listen more carefully to the "wee man" and they will find that the expression he produces in a jig is far more than just "round". My advice here is for pipers to do their own thing and let *their* character come through in their playing.

The premier event of the first day was the D and M Gannaway Silver Chanter Competition. This is a march, strathspey and reel combined competition and competitors must submit three sets of tunes. Former winners are not allowed to compete. There was a field of fifteen pipers, and the winner of this beautiful practice chanter was Ian Hines of Wellington with a good steady performance on an excellent instrument. The only criticism I had in his whole performance was his failure to complete the birl before jumping up to the high A in the strathspey *Delvinside*. This is a common error in this tune in my opinion, however, it wasn't enough to knock him out of first place as the rest of his performance was very good indeed.

Alan Dodd gave a very musical performance to gain second place and it certainly had a touch of professionalism in it that used to be so characteristic of him.

I couldn't separate Frank McKinnon and Frank Annan for third place as they both put on excellent performances which were marred by only tiny fingering mistakes. All in all, this was a very close contest which I found quite difficult to judge.

### ONLY GIRL PIPER

The Under 21 2/4 March event was a real pleasure to judge and the South Island teachers can be justly proud of the young players they are producing as they are certainly not lacking in talent. The winner of the event, Greg Hickman, made a first-class job of the *Knightswood Ceilidh* and is well up to "A" Grade standard. His close rival, Richard Hawke, was only just pipped into second place with *The Caledonian Society of Winnipeg*.

There were eleven contestants in this event and every one of them worthy of praise. The only girl piper, Rosalie McVean, though unplaced made a good fistful of *Glengarry Gathering*.

The Sunday competitions (unheard of in my time in Scotland) started off with the South Island Championship Strathspey and Reel which was won easily by Alistair Munro of Christchurch. This fellow is a natural player who only lacks hard practice and competition. He played the best strathspey and reel I heard the whole weekend, without doubt. Ian Hines took second prize with a per-



formance which was technically correct but lacked the sparkle of the first place-getter. Alan Dodd played very well but showed a little nervousness in the last two parts of the reel, which caused a few minor fingering errors and put him into third place. Up and coming Richard Hawke played very well indeed to get fourth prize in this company and we shall be hearing more of him in the future, I'm sure.

The South Island Pibroch Championship was the premier event of the day and provided good listening all afternoon. Three tunes had to be submitted. Twelve competitors tried their skills and it was a real thrill to hear some of their instruments which were tuned to perfection and stayed that way throughout the performance. A typical example of this was Ian Hines, whose pipe was indeed as near to perfection as I've heard. Ian played a beautiful tune, *The King's Taxes*, and handled it particularly well, showing excellent changes of tempo between variations without being too obvious. Cadences were timed very well with spot-on accuracy. The Taorluath movement was a particular delight to me as I have found this variation difficult to get just right. Only one small criticism: the Embari movement from low G to high G as in the third and fourth bars of the ground was not well played to my idea, and just took a little of the shine off a great performance.

#### ALMOST FAULTLESS

Second in this event was Brian Switalla of Dunedin who played very well on an excellent pipe also. This up-and-coming young piper has great potential as a pibroch player and his rendering of *The Macfarlanes' Gathering* was proof of this to all who heard it. His phrasing was almost faultless and his fingering technique in the Crunluath movement, especially, was excellent. Louis McKinnon, Wellington, (son of Frank) started off his tune *Corrienessan's Salute* with real determination and kept it up all the way through on an excellent pipe. There were one or two moments when the "couldn't care less" attitude came through, but he soon settled into a lovely steady performance. This was one tune I really enjoyed and he played it extra well to gain third prize.

Although recent arrival to New Zealand Dugald Murdoch's pipes didn't come up to the standard of the first three prize winners, he certainly showed that he has a good understanding of *McLeod of Raasay's Salute*. He played it a shade on the slow side for a salute but everything was in proportion and fingered nicely. I have personal memories of this tune

which I played during the Northern Meeting at Inverness, competing in the gold medal competition in 1955. Unfortunately I played a low A instead of an F in the last bar of the Crunluath a Mach to become runner-up in the event. However, Dugald made no such error and was well worthy of fourth prize.

Roy Gunn played a nice tune but wasn't quite good enough on the day.

Some of the younger players whom I would have liked to have heard didn't play in this contest. Alistair Munro and Alan Dodd were also absent, which was disappointing. The standard on the whole was high, and I had an enjoyable afternoon's pibroch.

The final competition was a 6/8 March consolation event, and this was won by Roy Gunn who played a very spirited 6/8 — in fact there were signs of fury fairly flying from his fingers — and although his pointing wasn't always to my taste there was no denying him victory with this tune which was full of character and boldness.

In summing up I would like to point out a couple of general criticisms which I feel cannot go unsaid. Strathspey and Reel playing wasn't really outstanding and I have always found this to be so in New Zealand, with a few exceptions. Strathspeys lacked bounce and reels were too round and stodgy. Choice of tunes in Jig and Hornpipe event was uninspiring (just because it is new doesn't mean it is good) and I felt myself longing to hear a good oldie or two. The same could be said in the 6/8 March event and I heard few tunes which could hold a candle to *The Battle of Harlaw*, *Bonawe Highlanders* and *Dornkop* to name but a few. However, I really enjoyed the weekend's piping and would do it again next week had I the stamina to keep up with a race of people who don't consider sleep a necessary part of life at all.

Wm. Cruickshank

#### SNIPPET

Donald was having a good blow on his pipes with the front window, which was on the main street of Dunedin, wide open. An almighty squeal a mile long followed a half-hearted birl. This caused a friendly dog passing his window at the time to try to commit suicide by running in front of a bus which, in turn, swerved and hit a brick wall injuring twenty people. A policeman on the beat saw the whole thing and ran to Donald saying, "You've just caused a very nasty accident with those pipes of yours — what do you intend to do about it?"

"Well, replied Donald, "I think I'll go back to the wooden chanter!" ● ●

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## FROM YOU TO US

Dear Sir,

I note that the Competing Pipers' Association published a notice in the November issue of your magazine which indicated that agreement had been reached, at a meeting in Edinburgh, which would limit entries to the 1980 competitions to members of the C.P.A. only and that all entrants must also have been graded by the C.P.A.

In my capacity as one of the organisers of the London Competition, I attended this meeting, which I understood to be an informal gathering between the representatives of the various big competitions and the C.P.A., to see if a common ground existed for the grading of entrants.

I thought that I had made it clear that I could not commit my Society to making any alterations to the competition rules. That is a matter for the general committee to decide and, obviously, any alterations would need long and careful consideration. My committee are aware of the views expressed at the Edinburgh meeting and this matter will be discussed in full some time in February.

At this stage, it is wrong to assume that the rules of entry to the 1980 London Competition will be any different to those of previous years.

Yours etc.

A.M. Beaton,  
35 Elm Avenue,  
Upminster, Essex, RM14 2AZ.

Dear Sirs,

Could I comment upon some of the points made in your November editorial?

The Competing Pipers' Association was born out of the Northern Meeting's proposal to restrict entry for the Gold Medal competition. Most of the competitors at the 1976 Northern Meeting indicated their wish that the criteria for entry be determined by the competing pipers themselves, and a grading system was introduced. The Northern Meeting have had regard to Association gradings, but there have been anomalies which would not have occurred had all intending competitors applied for gradings.

Last month's meeting was convened by competition promoters, and although the Piobaireachd Society were not separately represented, three members of their Committee participated, representing other organisations. The decision to restrict entry by reference to Association gradings indicates a desire on the part of promoters for a uniform approach to the problem of too many players in some events. The Association's gradings, once allocated, are reviewed frequently, and promoters intending to apply the gradings are invited to participate in the grading exercise. With the participation of our overseas membership and with regard to overseas gradings, we can fairly grade overseas competitions.

The Association aims to represent the interests of all competing pipers. Competitions are staged principally for their benefit, and we believe that it is in the best interests of piping that the competitors themselves determine the criteria for entry, in cooperation with promoters.

Yours etc.

**Malcolm McRae,**  
President, Competing Pipers' Assoc.,

Dear Sirs,

On behalf of the committee of the Eagle Pipers' Society I refer to the article contained in your November 1979 issue, page 16, Competing Pipers Association.

We, the committee of the Eagle Pipers, were unaware that this meeting was taking place and had no authorised representative present.

Yours etc.

**J.W. Anderson,**  
President,  
The Eagle Pipers' Society,  
10 Doune Terrace,  
Edinburgh, EH3 6DY.



Dear Sir,

In the November issue of The International Piper, I read David Kennedy's article entitled "The Black Wax" in which he extolled the virtues of cobbler's wax and lamented its scarcity.

This wax is manufactured in England and due to potential problems with product liability laws in the United States, the firm has decided not to export this wax. This explains its scarcity.

However, Mr. Kennedy and other pipers might like to know that I have found a very suitable substitute for the black wax. I find it has all the stickiness of the cobbler's wax and does not dry out as did the roofing tar Mr. Kennedy tried.

Perhaps you could pass my card along to Mr. Kennedy or send me his address and I will be happy to send him a sample of this substitute wax.

Yours etc.

**James D. Nail,**  
Managing Director,  
The Scottish Piper  
Post Office Box 1104  
Bennington, Vermont, U.S.A.

Dear Sir,

As an "overseas competitor" who intends to compete in Scotland, I agree, in principle, with your November editorial concerning mandatory membership in the Competing Pipers Association. The Eastern United States Pipe Band Association, of which I am a member, handles the grading of bands and individuals in my area of the world. Of course, we are graded on performance, not "hearsay". I feel certain there are many local organizations such as the EUSPBA who would be happy to co-ordinate a world-wide grading system with the CPA.

At the 1979 Northern Meeting, there were only 10 foreign residents entered out of a total of 76. The grading problem is not with the foreigners, it is with the natives. For this reason, I strongly support the efforts of the CPA in getting the mess in *Scotland* straightened out. Your publication and many competitors may not agree with the method. But, at least they are *doing* something rather than waiting around another five or ten years for somebody else to get the ball rolling.

Administratively speaking, the piping scene in Scotland is literally in the dark ages. Each game has their own set of rules. Each piping association or society

seems to want a piece of the action. Some judges sit on the panel purely because of their rank or political status. Pipers continue to be graded by their chronological age rather than their level of ability. I do not dispute that tradition is a vital and necessary part of piping, but a distinction must be made between the music, which is basically traditional, and the administration of piping affairs, which should be as efficient and fair as possible.

No organization, editorial, or editorial response can stand without criticism — just and unjust. All the existing organizations which you mentioned in your editorial (including the Piobaireachd Society) have had many years to present a workable plan for grading pipers. Don't you think the CPA should be given a fair chance to prove itself? Maybe, just maybe, their system (once all the kinks are worked out) will work. I would hope that you might reconsider your position and give your much-needed support, comments and criticisms to the Competing Pipers Association.

Yours etc.

**Albert G. McMullin,**  
873 Monmouth Drive,  
Stone Mountain, GA 30083 USA

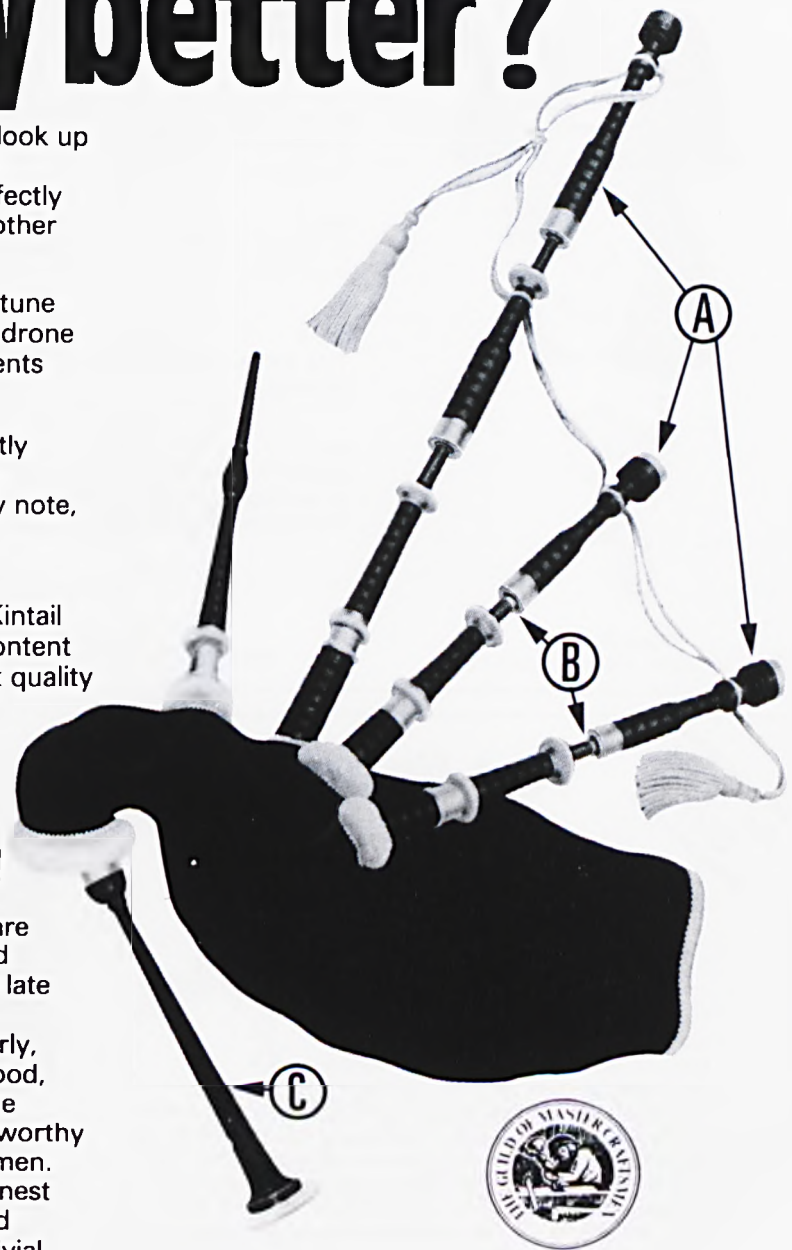
P.S. You do have my permission to print this (if you consider it worthwhile) in any future issue. The opinions expressed are mine alone. I sent my membership application and cheque to the CPA yesterday *only because I had to in order to compete at Inverness in 1980*

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