

Notes

FROM THE PIPING CENTRE

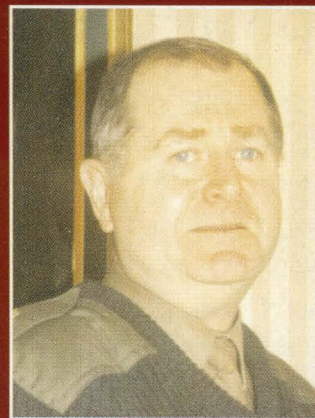
Issue No. 12

Spring 2000



HRH The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay
— Patron of The Piping Centre. Page 2.

Notes is the quarterly publication of The Piping Centre
30-34 McPhate Street, Cowcaddens, Glasgow, Scotland, G4 0HW.
www.thepipingcentre.co.uk



ARMY's pipers
soldier on
— *A New Reed.*



MAGIC in the music
— PAGE 13-14.



IT'S all on in Europe
— PAGE 17-18.

THE Piping CENTRE

Price £1

HRH Prince Charles joins Piping Centre team as patron

HRH The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay, who officially opened The Piping Centre in January 1998, has now become the Centre's patron.

Prince Charles received his piping tuition at Gordonstoun School, was on warm terms with some of the great pipers of the day, including Bob Brown, and Bob Nicol, of the Balmoral Estate, and Seton Gordon, and maintains a keen interest.

He has indicated his desire to be an active patron, as evidenced by his invitation to The Piping Centre to take a

prominent role in events at Holyrood during his residence as Lord High Commissioner for the week of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 19-25 May.

"His Royal Highness's decision to become our Patron is a great honour for piping, The Piping Centre and for all our staff and students," said Brian Ivory, C.B.E., co-founder and chairman of The Piping Centre.

"Students come to the Centre from all over Scotland and, increasingly, from all over the world. Courses at the Centre have been attended by students from 31 different countries."

The Piper's Diary

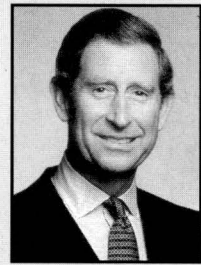
JUNE

- 2 Fri - 4 Sun. Lowland and Borders Piping Society teaching weekend. Melrose. (0141) 946 8624.
- 3 Sat. Strathmiglo Highland Games.
- 4 Sun. Carrick Lowland Gathering. Girvan.
Marckinch Highland Games. John Dixon Park.
- 10 Sat. Campbeltown Millennium-Tercentenary Invitational Piping Competition. Argyll Arms Hotel from 10.30 a.m.
- 11 Sun. Forfar Highland Games. Lochside Park.
Ardrossan Highland Games. Saltcoats.
Bearsden & Milngavie Highland Games. Burnbrae.
- 16 Fri. **Donald MacDonald Memorial Quach.** Clan Donald Centre, Armadale..
The Piping Centre Recital: Iain MacFadyen & Murray Henderson. The Piping Centre auditorium. 7.30 p.m. (£5 & £4)
- 17 Sat. Oldmeldrum Highland Games. Pleasure Park.
Campbeltown & Kintyre Highland Games. Castlehill.
Newburgh Highland Games. Mugdrum Park.
- 18 Sun. Aberdeen Highland Games. Hazelhead Park.
- 22 Thu. Dunbeath Highland Games. Playing fields.
- 24 Sat. **British Pipe Band Championships.** Ashbourne
Drumtochty Highland Games. Laurencekirk, castle grounds.
- 29 Thu. **The Piping Centre Students' End of Term Competition.** The Piping Centre auditorium. 7.30 p.m. (£5 & £4)
- ### JULY
- 1 Sat. Dingwall Highland Games. Dingwall Academy grounds
Glengarry Highland Games. Invergarry sports field.
Thornton Highland Gathering. Memorial Park.
- 2 Sun. Cupar Highland Games. Duffus Park.
- 3-7 Mon.-Fri. **Summer Piping School, No. 1.** The Piping Centre.
- 8 Sat. Forres Highland Games. Grant Park.
- 9 Sun. Stirling Highland Games. Bridgehaugh Park.
- 15 Sat. Tomintoul & Strathavon Highland Games. Tomintoul Public Park.
Lewis Highland Games. Tong Field.

- 16 Sun. Roseneath & Clynder. Ardincaple Hotel.
- 18 Tue. Inverary Highland Games. Winterton Park.
- 19 Wed. South Uist Highland Games. Ashernish Machair, Lochboisdale.
Luss Highland Gathering. Games field, by Alexandria.
- 20 Thu. Highlands & Islands Young Piper of the Year. Benbecula.
Tobermory, Mull. Mishnish Hotel.
- 22 Sat. Inverness Highland Games. Bught Park.
North Uist Highland Games. Balelone.
Balquhiddier, Lochearnhead & Strathyre Highland Games. Lochearnhead Games Park.
- 24-28 Mon.-Fri. **Summer Piping School, No. 2.** The Piping Centre.
- 26 Wed. Arisaig Highland Games. Traigh Farm.
Loch Ness Highland Gathering. Fort Augustus.
- 27 Thu. Scotland's Royal Tribute. Edinburgh Castle.
- 29 Sat. Lochaber Highland Games. An Aird Park, Fort William.
Dundonald Highland Games. Royal Dundonald Castle.
- 30 Sun. St Andrews Highland Games. North Haugh.
- 31 Mon. **Lunchtime Recital: Colin MacLellan.** The Piping Centre auditorium. 1-2 p.m. (£4 & £3)
- 31-4 Aug. Mon.-Fri. **Summer Piping School, No. 3.** The Piping Centre.
- ### AUGUST
- 1 Tue. **Lunchtime Recital: Donald MacPhee.** The Piping Centre auditorium. 1-2 p.m. (£4 & £3)
- 2 Wed. **Lunchtime Recital: Greg Wilson.** The Piping Centre auditorium. 1-2 p.m. (£4 & £3)
Killin Highland Games.
- 4 Fri. **Lunchtime Recital: Angus MacColl.** The Piping Centre auditorium. 1-2 p.m. (£4 & £3)
Dornoch Highland Games. The Meadows Park.
- 5 Sat. **BT Scotland Millennium Piping Festival.** Edinburgh, Princes Street.
Newtonmore Games.
Tain Highland Gathering.
Aboyne Highland Games. The Green.
- 6 Sun. North Berwick Highland Games. Recreation Park.
Bridge of Allan Highland Games. Games Field.



**Patron: HRH The Prince Charles
Duke of Rothesay, KG, KT, GCB**



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NOTES

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Mike Paterson phone/fax: +44 (0) 1324 715 852
E-mail: Daybreak@btinternet.com

- 7 Mon. **Lunchtime Recital: Roddy MacLeod.** The Piping Centre auditorium. 1-2 p.m. (£4 & £3)
- 8 Tue. **Lunchtime Recital: Willie Morrison.** The Piping Centre auditorium. 1-2 p.m. (£4 & £3)
- 9 Wed. **Lunchtime Recital: Gordon Duncan.** The Piping Centre auditorium. 1-2 p.m. (£4 & £3)
Skye Highland Games. Portree Games Field.
- 10 Thu. **Lunchtime Recital: Brian Donaldson.** The Piping Centre auditorium. 1-2 p.m. (£4 & £3)
Ballater Highland Games. Monaltrie Park.
- 11 Fri. **Lunchtime Recital: Gordon Walker.** The Piping Centre auditorium. 1-2 p.m. (£4 & £3)
- 12 Sat. **World Pipe Band Championships.** Glasgow Green.
- 13 Sun - 20 Sat. **The Great Hebridean Bicycle Adventure 2000.** The Piping Centre. Call (44) 141 357 6650 for details.
- 14 Mon. **Lunchtime Recital: Stuart Liddell.** The Piping Centre auditorium. 1-2 p.m. (£4 & £3)
- 15 Tue. **Lunchtime Recital: Willie McCallum.** The Piping Centre auditorium. 1-2 p.m. (£4 & £3)
- 16 Wed. **Lunchtime Recital: John Wilson.** The Piping Centre auditorium. 1-2 p.m. (£4 & £3)
- 17 Thu. **Lunchtime Recital: Brian Lamond.** The Piping Centre auditorium. 1-2 p.m. (£4 & £3)

RSPBA takes on the challenges of excellence

HRH Prince Charles' patronage of The Piping Centre is good news for piping.

Prince Charles' boyhood association with Bob Brown at Balmoral, his life-long exposure to piping of the highest standard and his position as High Commissioner for Scotland this year make it clear that what is a high honour for The Piping Centre also constitutes recognition for piping as a whole and for what it has to offer — at 'home' in Scotland, and abroad.

In turn, recognition helps to open new opportunities, and it's up to us, as pipers, to identify them and move forward. We must, for example, widen and give greater consistency to standards, extend our professionalism and broaden the opportunities that exist to involve more people in piping and present the pipes to wider audiences.

The Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association's adoption of the Millennium Report is a resolute move towards all of these objectives.

The association deserves considerable credit for having recognised the depth of the problems that faced it, for having had the good sense to seek wise advice and for possessing the courage to implement that advice.

The consequences will be far-reaching and they will bear fruit over a great many years to come.

Even in the minds of the RSPBA report's authors, it is unlikely that the full, long-term implications of the restructuring are crystal clear.

But everyone in piping can be assured that they will benefit directly from the association's decision in favour of professionalism, outreach and the pursuit of excellence.

We at The Piping Centre have an interest. Through, for example, our implementation of quality assurance processes with the Scottish Qualifications Authority and RSAMD, we are doing our utmost to embed real educational worth into what we're doing. Just one of the spin-offs we have seen has been a gradual but steady growth in the opportunities that exist for professional pipers.

Thus will it be as the RSPBA moves forward. As the association benefits, we all will benefit, no matter the level or nature of our involvement. As well, we are all healthily challenged.

We're challenged to revise the worth we accord piping. We are challenged to raise our standards a notch or two, and take more pride and confidence in our instruments, our tradition, our music and ourselves.

The Great Highland Bagpipe

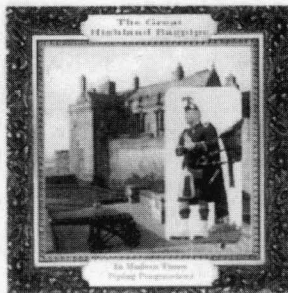
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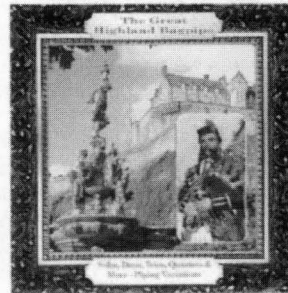
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See the Isles: The Great Hebridean Bicycle Adventure 2000

By PENNY LEWIS

IT'S time to dig out your bike clips, pump up your tyres and get in training.

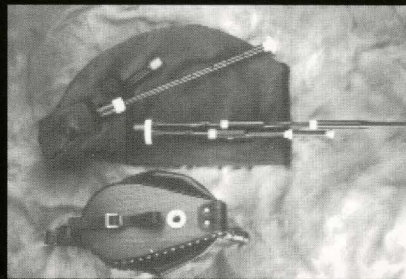
The Piping Centre's fundraising bike ride through the Hebrides is coming up in August and there's still room for more adventurers to take part and help raise funds for the Centre's education and outreach programme.

And you'll be in great company. Roddy MacLeod, Colin MacLellan and Greg Wilson are all taking part, so there'll be some great piping along the way too. The emphasis will be very much on having fun and raising the profile of The Piping Centre wherever we go.

If you're feeling daunted by the idea of raising sponsorship, don't be! Help is at hand from the organising team and we have even identified a number of non-cyclists who are willing to help participants raise funds.

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Pipe Band Association opts for radical restructuring

Stand by for a high profile re-launch of the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association at next year's World Pipe Band Championships.

The association has embarked on a radical redesign of its 20-year-old management structure with the aims of securing its financial future, raising its public profile and professionalism, and facilitating its work as an international organisation.

The RSPBA, which originated in a conversation Pipe Major William Sloan of Glasgow had with a few friends on the ferry home after the 1930 Cowal Gathering, has become the world authority on pipe band standards, performance and competitions.

But changing times and the flourishing international interest in piping saw the RSPBA's role and responsibilities outgrow its capacities.

"If the association is to remain at the centre of the pipe band movement world-wide, it has to move with the times, be forward-looking, respond to the changing needs of its members and, above all, be professional, effective, efficient and financially viable."



THE WORLD PIPE BAND CHAMPIONSHIPS ... a high-profile relaunch of the 70-year-old Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association is planned for the 2001 event.

"If the association is to remain at the centre of the pipe band movement world-wide, it has to move with the times, be forward-looking, respond to the changing needs of its members and, above all, be professional, effective, efficient and financially viable," warned the authors of the *Millennium Report* commissioned by the association in May last year: "Professionalism, quality, high standards and credibility are paramount if the RSPBA is to raise its profile and achieve a status alongside other cultural organisations."

THE RSPBA's response has been bold if, some would say, not before time.

At its annual meeting on 18 March, the reforms proposed by the highly qualified review team, led by Alistair Aitken, were accepted.

An implementation group now faces the task of prioritising and timing the restructuring.

"Acceptance of our recommendations will require the RSPBA to develop both organisationally and functionally," said the consultants' report. "It will be important to put in place the new structures and procedures as a matter of urgency, although phased implementation will inevitably be

required and the full programme could take a number of years to complete."

The *Millennium Report* put immediate priority on installing a new board of management, a project advisory group and branch trustee council structures, the formulation of short, medium and long-term business plans, and the development of marketing and public relations strategies. The "board of management" involves the appointment of an executive chairman, directors of finance, operations, marketing and public relations, strategic development, education and training, a non-executive president, and a chief executive.

A full time staff of five would serve the overhauled association: two project officers, an office manager and administrative officer, and the chief executive. The estimated staffing cost is £98,400.

The board of management would be advised by the Branch Trustee Council (replacing the National Council), comprising 19 representatives nominated by each of the 12 branches and the adjudicators' panel. The *Millennium Report* said the adjudicators' panel

Continued on page 6

THE Piping
CENTRE

**The Piping
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Archive**

Anyone wishing access to The Piping Centre Archive is invited to contact

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Pipe Band Association

Continued from page 5

should be "an integral part of the association," its members subject, like all association members, to an RSPBA Charter, "aimed at providing the integrity, accountability, professionalism and openness of the association as a cultural organisation in all that it does."

The report also called for members of the adjudicators' panel to be required to sign a "register of interests", and recommended that "any commercial interests in pipe band instrument manufacture or equipment or uniforms within the membership of the panel should be phased out by year 2003, to avoid the possibility of any perceived conflict of interest undermining the integrity of the panel."

Targets for the current 12 months included establishing the RSPBA as a limited company (while retaining its charitable status), initiatives to boost income, the strengthening of links with other cultural bodies, and a review of the capacity of the RSPBA's Washington Street premises in Glasgow to meet the association's accommodation needs.

As a company, the RSPBA's constitution and rules would be replaced by a Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association under the Companies Act.

A prime concern expressed in the *Millennium Report* is income, and the institution of "a rigorous financial management system which ensures control in income, expenditure and cash".

Recommended annual membership fees are £200 for an adult band, affiliated association or overseas band that does not belong to an affiliated association, £100 for juvenile bands and affiliated association member bands, and £20 for an associate member (or £150 for a life associate membership). This scale of fees was reckoned to secure more than £80,000 for the association.

The rest of the association's income requirements would need to be met

"Public relations will be a key tool in getting the RSPBA message to the diverse range of groups and individuals. ... Branches and member pipe bands must also improve their PR activity, which should in turn present opportunities to raise their profile and identify funding opportunities."

through grants, sponsorships, donations and earnings.

Public funding had not been secured in the past, said the consultants, because no case had been made for the particular categories that qualified for support. "A central part of the RSPBA's marketing plan must, therefore, be to develop a programme of events, performance, cultural development and education and training which will secure funding for the association and its member bands."

But the association also had previously unrealised entrepreneurial opportunities.

Observed the consultants: "There is obvious potential for the RSPBA to attract increased revenue from pipe band championships.

"With the increased complement of permanent staff we propose, the RSPBA could be in a position to act as the promoter of each championship rather than hand over the co-ordinating role to the main sponsor.

"In this way, the RSPBA could undergo a process of tendering for championships and would be able to realise the full potential of running each championship under the RSPBA brand. The model used for the Belgian Pipe Band Championship at Alden Biesen operates successfully on this basis."

Other suggested sources of increased earnings included museum charges, media recordings, publications sales, and development of the Pipe Band College.

For the association's earning potential to be realised, its profile needed to be raised, and a strategy was recommended that would see the RSPBA's public, political and institutional communications dramatically stepped up.

"Public relations will be a key tool in getting the RSPBA message to the diverse range of groups and individuals. This will require to be done by persuading the media, through seminars, conferences, displays, brochures and one to one briefings, that what the RSPBA does is worthy of coverage," said the report.

"Branches and member pipe bands must also improve their PR activity, which should in turn present opportunities to raise their profile and identify funding opportunities," said the report.

"We consider that part of any sponsorship of championships should include a budget for effective advertising. Advertising is expensive and it would be advisable to increase the charge for hosting an event to include this cost."

Other initiatives recommended include "a properly constructed and managed RSPBA website", joint marketing arrangements, telemarketing and direct mailings to build up a database of interested people and organisations, and closer links with the association's overseas affiliates in Ireland, North America, Australasia and Europe.

As the ideal vehicle for launching the overhauled RSPBA, the *Millennium Report* identifies next year's World Pipe Band Championships, and calls for a budget of at least £10,000 to ensure the occasion meets professional standards.

In mind are an information stall, RSPBA branded goods, a hospitality area and media tent, a reception for Members of the Scottish Parliament and invitations to dignitaries, a pre-Worlds seminar and high quality information packs.

MEMBERS OF THE REVIEW GROUP WERE:
Alistair Aitken (chairman),
Iain Duncan
Doug Elliott
Sandy Henderson
John MacInnes
Gordon Parkes
John Wilson

Inaugural winner



THE INAUGURAL annual Duncan Johnstone Memorial Solo Piping Competition for B and C-graded members of the Competing Pipers Association, held at The Piping Centre in February, attracted a large audience and an international entry of 35 competitors.

Above, the winner of a special jig competition in honour of the late Duncan Johnstone ("king of the jigs"), Decker Forrest of San Diego, accepts the Duncan Johnstone Memorial Quaich from Duncan Johnstone's son, Iain. Decker Forrest also won the march, strathspey and reel event. The competition was generously supported by The Lady Margaret Watt Charitable Trust, the 1745 Association, the Keepers of the Quaich, and Mr Arthur Gillies.

Centre provides the pipers for 2000 General Assembly

THE Piping Centre assembled a strong contingent of pipers to take part in events surrounding this year's General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 19-25 May.

The Centre's involvement was at the invitation of HRH The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay, Lord High Commissioner for the Assembly. The Ceremony of the Keys on Friday, 19 May opened the Assembly Week programme and gave Prince Charles his first view of The Piping Centre's staff and students in action since becoming the Centre's Patron in March. Piping again featured at a garden party for 3,000 people the next day and at a dinner party for 250 guests at Holyrood Palace on 23 May.

The pipers also collaborated in colourful presentations with dancers, drummers and other performers from Dance Base, Edinburgh.

Eight performers — including full time Centre staff Roddy Macleod, Colin MacLellan, William Morrison, Greg Wilson and Jim McLean — were turned out for the Ceremony of the Keys, along with the Centre's Youth Pipe Band, specially assembled for the occasion. The band included a number of students from all over Scotland who became involved with the Centre through the National Schools Piping Project.

Another 17 pipers played at the garden party, where, along with Dance Base performers and military pipers, they entertained 3,000 people. A traditional music ensemble led by part-time Centre teacher Finlay MacDonald and Finlay Napier, with past and present Centre students Chris Stout, Maggie Anderson and Phamie Gow, played Scots ballads, Gaelic airs and selections of ceilidh music at the dinner party.

Military Piping

Video

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Accompanied by Military Bands

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Video

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William McCallum plays *The Lost Pibroch*

NEIL MUNRO's classic short story *The Lost Pibroch*, published with 11 other 'Sheiling Stories' in 1896, is a dark, poetic account of two travelling pipers whose hunting foray leads them to 'Half Town' and an encounter with the blind piping master there.

In the course of a night, their rivalry on the pipes casts a spell of restless yearning over the young men of the community: "And a day came when all that was left in that fine place were but women and children and a blind piper." Then he, too, sets off, "down through the woods with his pipes in his oxters."

Scotsoun's tape cassette release — *Pibrochs Lost and Found* — features William McCallum, with one track from an earlier recording by the late Pipe Major Pipe Major Donald MacLeod, playing nine ceòl mór named by Neil Munro in the story.



WILLIAM McCALLUM ... exploring literary connections with Scotsoun.

Each is introduced by a brief excerpt from *The Lost Pibroch*.

William McCallum plays the ground of *The Fairy Harp*, *MacKay's Banner* (ground and variations), *The Vaunting*

(ground and crunluath variations), *The Macraes' March* (ground), *The Massacre of Glencoe* (ground and variations followed by siubhal variations), *Tulloch Ard* (ground), *MacLeod of Raasay's Salute*, *A Kiss of the King's Hand*, and (standing in for the "Lost" ceòl mór of the title) *Beloved Scotland*. The track from the late Donald MacLeod — *The Desperate Battle of the Birds* — was recorded in 1975 at Dunfermline Abbey.

The album includes an explanation by William McCallum of the ceòl mór form, illustrated on the practice chanter, and two strathspeys played by William McCallum: *Inverary Castle* and *The Caledonian Society of London*.

The album was launched at the annual conference of the Neil Munro Society at Inverary on 20 May. The recording was supported by the society, Sir Iain Noble and John Noble.

New event launched for Northumbrian pipers

Northumbrian pipers are invited to what is hoped will become an annual weekend of workshops and performance at Halsway Manor, Somerset, 3-5 November.

Development of the 1,000 year-old Halsway Manor in Crowcombe as a residential centre devoted to folk music, dance and song was begun in 1965 under Bill Ratter, western region organiser of the English Folk Dance Music and Song Society.

Now operated by the Halsey Manor Society, it stands in its own grounds on the slopes of the Quantock Hills.

Artists booked for the weekend include Colin Ross, president of the Northumbrian Pipers Society (NPS). A piper, fiddler and pipe-maker, he is the former curator of the Bagpipe Museum at Morpeth, an acknowledged authority on English northeastern tradition and an influential figure in the growing Northumberland piping scene

Andy May, who won the NPS open title when he was just 13 and has remained at the top ever since, is a guest soloist, and Francis Wood of London — known for his "drinking straws and balloons" version of the pipes — will be on hand help beginners attending the weekend.

Full-board in the manor (Friday night to Sunday afternoon) will cost from £105 each. Alternative accommodation is available locally.

The contact is Alan Corkett at 14 Mill Lane, Nether Stowey, Somerset, TA5 1NL (ph. 01278 732202, e-mail alan@bcorkett.freeserve.co.uk).

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Piping's Top 10 cds

THIS CURRENT 'Top 10' of Scottish piping albums was produced for *Notes* by Gordon Duncan Distribution, Kilsyth, from international sales records.

- 1 **Highland Cathedral** (cditv642)
Royal Scots Dragoon Guards
- 2 **1999 World Pipe Band Championships Vol. 1.** (cdmon838)
- 3 **1999 World Pipe Band Championships Vol. 2.** (cdmon839)
- 4 **The Lone Pipers** (cditv639)
Various artists
- 5 **The Queen's Piper** (cditv649)
Jim Motherwell
- 6 **Sound of the Sun** (cdld1284)
Fred Morrison
- 7 **Majestic Scotland** (cditv655)
1st Battalion Pipes & Drums
The Black Watch
- 8 **Pipeworks** (cdtrax171)
Jimmy Young
- 9 **Masterblasters** (cdmon832)
Victoria Police Pipe Band
- 10 **Masters of Piobaireachd** (cdtrax181)
R. Brown & R. Nicol

Festival ceòl mór album released

LAST year's Edinburgh International Festival saw pipers repeatedly captivate general audiences.

At the Reid Concert Hall on 30 August, the programme was ceòl mór: 13 tunes presented one after the other with no pauses, on-stage tuning up or intermission. The concert was also unique in the music that was represented and in the line-up of pipers it brought together: senior stalwarts of the competitive platform, William MacCallum, Roddy MacLeod and Robert Wallace; William MacDonald, who as well as being a solo gold medallist has a military piping background; and two pipers with keen academic interests, Cambridge University graduate Barnaby Brown (playing a replica set of 18th century pipes) and Allan MacDonald, who organised the Festival series.

The audience, which included people hearing ceòl mór for the first time as well as piping enthusiasts who were

Black Watch on CD-Plus format

SCOTDISC, the Kilsyth-based company responsible for the first piping CD-Rom, has recently released the first CD-Plus piping album: a music compact disc that also carries text, images and video clips accessible on a PC*.

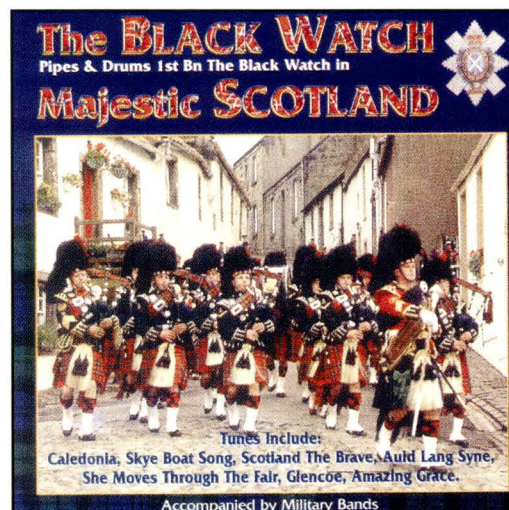
The *Majestic Scotland* album featuring the Pipes and Drums of the First Battalion, The Black Watch, has been selling well since its release late last year.

The CD-Plus format has been around for some time, particularly in the pop industry where, with production runs of several hundreds of thousands of units, added costs can be spread widely. It has not previously been used for a pipe music album.

"For us, the Black Watch album is a toe in the water," said Scotdisc's Norman Scott.

"We are keeping our expertise up and watching what is happening in the industry.

"Our longer-term intention is to



make sure that we have a computer track on at least one of each of our artist's pieces of product.

"It might be, though, that CD Plus and CD technology go out the window in favour of DVD (digital video disc which is a combination of both any way. If in a year or two DVD has really taken off, that's where we plan to be."

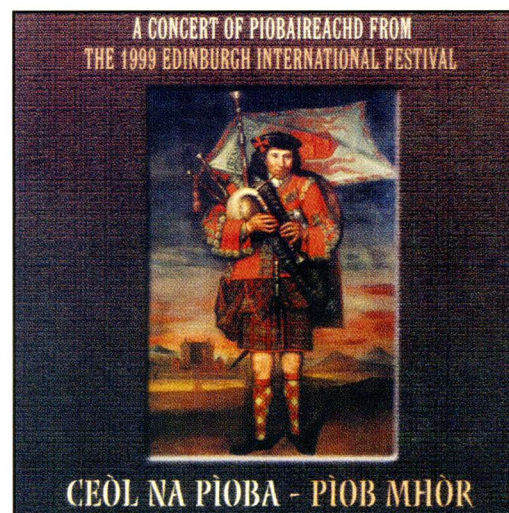
* no Macintosh format is available.

hearing tunes they had never before been exposed to, was entranced.

The programme was recorded and seven of the tunes played that night — two unpublished works from the Colin Campbell cantataireachd manuscripts, the unusual *Lament for Hugh* (*Cuma Eòin*), the more familiar *Too Long in This Condition* (*Is Fhada Mar Seo Tha Simm*), *The Fingerlock* (*An Glas Mheur*), *Glenagarry's March* (*Cill Chrìosd*) and *The Old Woman's Lullaby* (*Crònan na Cailliche*) — feature on a new album from Greentrax: *A Concert of Piobaireachd from the 1999 Edinburgh International Festival*.

"There are three clear interpretations there," said Allan MacDonald, who also produced the album. "I hope it's heard as a sampling of some wonderful music.

"The concert was intended to present some of the richness of the tradition embodied in the different keys,



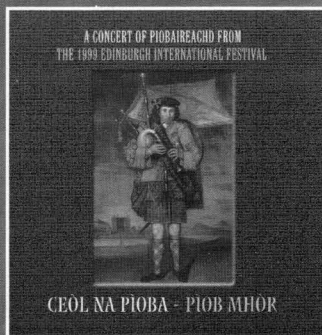
rhythms, styles and so on. The effect it had on people surprised me as much as anybody else.

"The Reid Concert Hall was a good setting, and the audience was able to enter into the music without preconceptions, rather than setting out to judge it.

"That's the spirit in which I hope people can hear the album — a spirit I'd like to see encouraged through more concert presentations."

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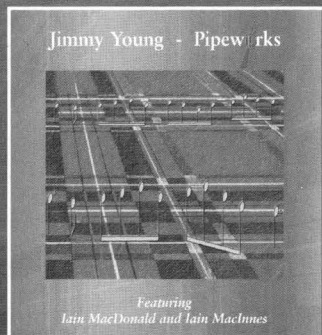
GREENTRAX



CEÒL NA PÌOBA - PÌOB MHÒR

CDTRAX 5009

A concert of piobaireachd recorded during the 1999 Edinburgh International Festival Ceol na Pìoba series 'Music of The Pipes'. Performed by pipers who are masters of both the music and the instrument. Includes tunes from the Campbell Canntaireachd not heard in public for some 200 years. A must for Pibroch devotees and a useful introduction to one of Gaeldom's most enduring art forms.

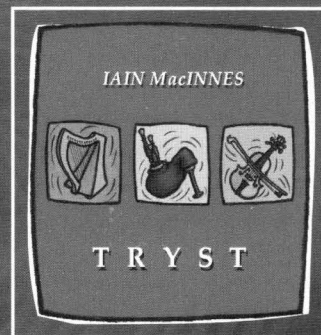


JIMMY YOUNG

PIPEWORKS

CDTRAX 171

Jimmy, who plays Northumbrian pipes, is the anchorman of New Zealand award winning band Rua. The album features the Northumbrian, Border and Scottish Small Pipes together. Top Scottish & New Zealand musicians sessioned on this beautiful album currently enjoying rave reviews. The first seven tracks are dedicated to the ship "Rainbow Warrior".



IAIN MacINNES

TRYST

CDTRAX 182

An ex-member of the Tannahill Weavers and currently in the re-formed Ossian, Iain also presents the BBC Radio Scotland "Pipeline" programme. He is widely regarded as an authority on piping and is also an outstanding piper on both Highland and Small Pipes, which are both featured. Iain is joined by some of Scotland's finest musicians on an album which has 'class' stamped all over it.

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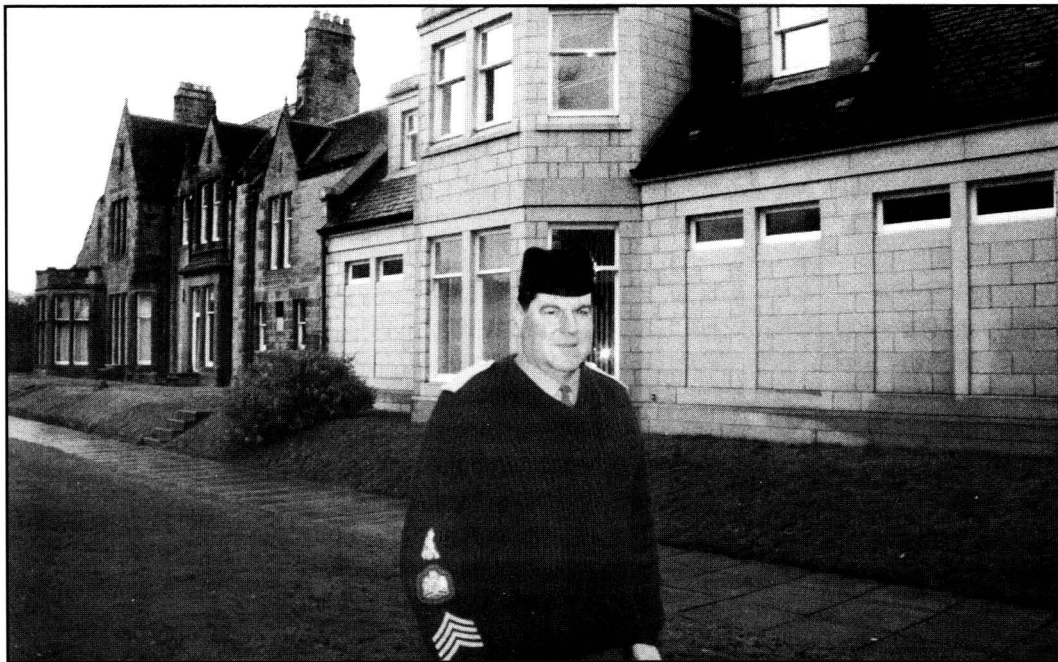
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A NEW REED

NUMBER FIVE - SPRING 2000

*Newsletter of the National Schools Piping Project
at
The Piping Centre*



More on offer as year turns

The National Schools Piping Project is nearing the end of its second year, and well on the way to achieving its target of 36 courses for the year. Many thanks to all who've supported us this past year. I'm sure you gained a lot from your course ... and, of course, you're always welcome to come back for a second helping!

A new offering has been the **Piping Instructors' Seminar**. The first of these, 14-15 April, was an outstanding success. It gave Instructors and those wanting to become Piping Instructors a chance to share

their views and experience in a friendly, relaxed environment, and to look into issues relating to teaching piping at all levels. Topics covered included playing with other instruments, teaching methods, music theory, music writing software, and reed making. All had the opportunity to sit for an Institute of Piping certificate. Anyone interested in attending a Piping Instructors Seminar should contact me as soon as possible to register their interest and nominate suitable dates. You'll have read elsewhere in *Notes* that The Piping Centre provided pipers for events associated with this year's General Assembly of the

Church of Scotland at Holyrood. One of these engagements included a **Youth Pipe Band** made up from CCF Pipe Band members from three private schools, Piping Centre students and former National Schools Piping Project students. For a number of those who took part, selection was a direct result of their involvement in the project's courses. **YEAR THREE** for the project begins in September and concludes in June/July 2001. This is the last year of assured Lottery Fund assistance, so be sure to register your interest in a course without delay. This will ensure you can attend a course at a time convenient to

you. Talk to your piping teacher or Pipe Major about coming on a course and remind them that they, and one additional carer, can attend a NSPP course free of charge.

ALL THE VERY BEST to those of you who are competing this summer as soloists or with your band: the hard work you have put in over the winter will stand you in good stead for the coming season — and let's hope for better weather at the Worlds this year.

Greg Wilson
Project Co-ordinator

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THIS issue of *A New Reed* looks at piping in the British Army through an interview with Major Gavin Stoddart, Director of Army Bagpipe Music. AT LEFT, the British Army's chief piping instructor, Pipe Major (WO1) Bruce Hitchings, is seen at the new Army School of Bagpipe Music and Highland Drumming, Inchdrewer House, Edinburgh: a regular call for students on National Schools Piping Project courses.

Thank You! For assistance and expertise: **The Army School of Bagpipe Music; McMurchie Bagpipes; Inveran House; Clan Bagpipes; R T Shepherd & The Merchants House of Glasgow; the AMW Charitable Trust.**
For financial support: **The Scottish Arts Council National Lottery Fund; Bank of Scotland, Fort William Branch; Bank of Scotland, Oban Branch.**

• BEST Feedback • BEST Feedback • BEST Feedback • BEST Feedback • BEST Feedback • BEST Feedback • BEST Feedback

I WENT to the Course with one of my friends from Craigmount Pipe Band and it was a last minute decision to go but I'm glad I did. Because the course was excellent and I thoroughly enjoyed it all and found it really helpful with any questions I had about bagpipes.

The course was split up into different sections which were all really good but my favourite was the reed making lesson which was great as we got to make our own reeds and we were taught how to manipulate them as well. I also really enjoyed the lesson with Dougie Pincock on playing with other instruments, I found this really useful with loads of information which I would need if I ever played with other instruments. We were shown the bagpipe music writer as well which was that good and easy to use. I bought it when I got home and have used it a lot.

When you are at the course you have to do a project on a topic which has got something to do with bagpipes I thought this would be really hard but the library has got tons of information from piping CDs, CD Roms and loads of books this makes it a lot easier to do your project.

I thought the course was great and would recommend it to anybody as there are different levels of study, lots of information and teachers are really good and will answer any questions you have about piping. And as soon as I learn some piobaireachd I am going to go back to do my Intermediate exam.

Thomas Clarke (15)

Craigmount High School Pipe Band

(Thomas, a member of the Craigmount High School Pipe Band, attended the National Schools Piping Project with the Strathallan School in December 1999.)

I AM writing to say how much I enjoyed the National Schools Piping Project. I was with a group from Arran who attended it on the 14-16 December 1999. I have to say it was the first piping course I had been on and I enjoyed it very much. Everyone was helpful and that was very nice. Greg Wilson was with us every day and we got to know him very well and he was very good at showing people where they had gone wrong. He was a great person to know when we were there. He helped us with our exam preparation and our playing of the chanter.

All the things we did during the week were very interesting and have helped with my piping and the maintenance of my pipes. There were two parts of the course I liked best, the first one was reed-making with Willie Morrison. I made my own reed but I couldn't get it to sound right, although after a week of trying it now sounds right. I found that very interesting and helpful. The second thing I enjoyed most was playing with other instruments with Dougie Pincock. I found it very enjoyable and if I improve maybe someday I will be playing in a folk group.

The accommodation was very comfortable and warm which was nice. All the staff and tutors were very kind which made the place inviting. The food was the best I've tasted for a while. The whole course was very enjoyable and I wouldn't mind coming back on another one sometime soon. On behalf of everyone in the group thanks for a wonderful week.

Calum Gilmour (14)

Isle of Arran

(Calum attended a National Schools Piping Project course in December 1999.)

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THE move of the Army School of Bagpipe Music from the hallowed rock of Edinburgh Castle on 1 April last year looked to many civilian pipers like the abandonment of a tradition or, at the least, like a loosening of links with the legendary Pipe Major Willie Ross who in 1919 established piping instruction at the Castle.

Said the current Director of Army Bagpipe Music, Major Gavin Stoddart: "Many civilians thought that was us finished. To be honest, it's been quite the opposite." In terms of Army measures of accountability, piping is in a position of greater strength.

And, whereas Willie Ross once laboured alone on a pittance and his pension, the new, combined Army School of Bagpipe Music and Highland Drumming at Inchdrewer House — a grade A listed country house on Colinton Road, Edinburgh — is well staffed and provided for.

Major Stoddart has a second-in-command, Captain John Gray, as administrator. Pipe Major (WO1) Bruce Hitchings is chief piping instructor and, assisting him, is Pipe Major Brian Donaldson. Other staff include Drum Majors Alistair Barclay and Neil Nairne, Pipe Sergeant Neil Hall, three pipe corporals (Calum McKenzie, Andrew Lambert and Lance

Johnstone) and, on the drumming side, Corporal Graeme Brown. There is also a civilian administrative officer, Mrs Jo Delworth. The role of the Director of Army Bagpipe Music may not have changed greatly, but the demands have risen markedly.



MAJOR GAVIN STODDART ... *"the quality of our band pipers and drummers has never been stronger in the 34 years I have been in the Army and, I would say, even before then."*

At Edinburgh Castle, the school ran courses for 10 months each year, devoted one month to mounting the Edinburgh Military Tattoo and took one month for leave.

PIPERS *soldier* ON

The combined school, which provides all of the British Army's piping and drumming instruction, runs courses throughout the year. The main ceremonial commitment remains the Edinburgh Military Tattoo, but this year, for example, it also fell to the school to put together a New Zealand edition of the Tattoo in March and, in July, the Royal Tribute to Her Majesty the Queen Mother.

For each of these, the Director of Army Bagpipe Music selects and produces the pipe and drum scores and the senior Pipe Major plays the leading role in rehearsing and drilling the bands involved.

There is also a continuing commitment to provide a judge for the annual

Duke of Edinburgh's Pakistan Army Pipe Band Competition.

Major Stoddart, a member of The Piping Trust which raises funds for The Piping

Centre, said he was delighted that the Centre included a visit to the school as a part of its National Piping for Schools Project. "It is a part of what we seek to do for piping.

"We do a lot with the Combined Cadet Force (the units of those schools in Scotland that still have a cadet force), and the Army Cadet Force.

"Most regiments have a cadet force so we help them out as required, normally by providing judges and instruction.

"The Territorial Army comes here for instruction as well. Any established pipe band can come here in summer, normally in July, for a two-week piping and drumming course."

The school is also involved in the selection of the Queen's piper and does its utmost to supply pipers for diplomatic engagements overseas, though these are often undertaken on the piper's own time.

Major Stoddart concedes that, with the recent departures from the Army of Alisdair Gillies and Gordon Walker, and the

soldiering on...

• continued from previous page •

retirement in June of Brian Donaldson, the British Army appears to be short of top grade solo competitors. "I am concerned, for obvious reasons, that when Brian (Donaldson) goes, it will be the first time in living memory that we didn't have a gold medallist competing." said Major Stoddart.

"But the quality of our band pipers and drummers has never been stronger in the 34 years I have been in the Army and, I would say, even before then.

"And we have a number of really good solo pipers coming up to the gold medal: Stuart Samson who replaces Bruce Hitchings later this year, and Lewis Barclay; we have Pipe Major Michael Gray of the Highlanders, and numerous good silver medal pipers."

A hurdle facing rising young Army pipers seeking solo laurels is the need to maintain a piping profile despite their Battalions' increased military commitments.

Said Major Stoddart: "Without a doubt, you have to get a track record before you're going to go anywhere, and the only way to do that is through appearances at the games and getting points on the board. But, if a military piper is stationed overseas or if an operational commitment comes up, it's unlikely that a commanding officer could release him for competitions.

"Every pipe band in the Army does some overseas operational tour every year, generally of 4-6 months. It's

very, very difficult now for Army pipers to get a track record at the competitions."

But the British Army's pipers and drummers have always had to be soldiers first, he said.

The Army's restructuring programme *Options for Change* made an important impact on piping in 1995, when depot piping and drumming schools were merged with the piping and drumming wing at Milton Bridge, said Major Stoddart.

"That was the Scottish Division School of Music. The schools that closed were the Guards Depot Piping School and the Irish School and, effectively, the Scottish Division. They then came under an organisation called the Army Training and Recruiting Agency (ATRA), commanded by Infantry Training Centre Catterick, under the Commanding Officer of the Third Battalion."

"My memory goes back to a time when it was great to sit all day playing pipes and drums..."

We don't get a chance to do that now."

The Army School of Bagpipe Music in the Castle, however, came under command of Infantry Headquarters, Warminster. At the same time, from the mid-1990s, it became mandatory for every infantryman to have the infantry qualifications.

"The emphasis has changed, purely for career

"We would obviously have liked piping and drumming to remain in the Castle — however, mainly because of the work we were going to be doing, it was found really not suitable."

management, onto the military role," said Major Stoddart. "When I joined, piping and drumming came first and the military side took the back seat," said Major Stoddart: "My memory goes back to a time when it was great to sit all day playing pipes and drums. We don't get a chance to do that now.

"Every piper and drummer has to have a career structure ... and has to do serious career courses. We now have more highly qualified pipers and drummers who're probably among the most qualified soldiers in the Battalion; they do two or three roles — the ordinary infantry soldier would do just one."

When it became clear that it would make sense to merge piping and drumming under one roof, various options were considered.

"The Castle was taken into consideration," said Major Stoddart. "We would obviously have liked piping and drumming to remain in the Castle — but, mainly because of the work we were going to be doing, it was found really not suitable. We would have 35-40 students at any one time, pipers and drummers, undergoing the basic course which includes military training, and a great deal of fitness and range work. This would have entailed considerable travel to range and training areas.

"That's really the reason why the Castle was taken

out of the equation."

Major Stoddart said that the General Officer Commanding Scotland at the time, General Mark Strudwick, was determined that, if piping was to be moved from the Castle, it would be to a prestigious location. "Nowhere was nearly as good as what we have now in Inchdrewer House." With the move, and merger of the wing at Infantry Training Centre Catterick and the Army School of Bagpipe Music, command was placed with ITC Catterick.

At present, pipers and drummers constitute the Battalion's machine gun platoon. "When they go onto a war footing, every commanding officer wants to keep the pipes going, so the band is kept together and it has this war role.

The war role means that, to qualify for promotion, pipers and drummers have to complete the physically demanding machine gun SF (sustained fire role) course: "You've got 60-80 pounds on your back, so you won't see too many portly younger pipe majors," said Major Stoddart.

The bandsmen's role is about to change. The present "Phase Three" course (the Army's piper and drummer elementary course) finishes in June.

The next, starting in October, will see the Pipes and Drums of the Battalion beginning to train as assault pioneers.

• **Dougie Pincock appointed director**

Centre of Excellence for Traditional Music launched

Scotland's first National Centre of Excellence for Traditional Music is being established at Plockton High School, near Loch Carron.

Responsibility for creating and overseeing its development is in the hands of Dougie Pincock, who took up his position as director of the £500,000 initiative on 2 May.

"Naturally we're sorry to lose a person of Dougie's calibre from our staff," said the director of piping for The Piping Centre, Roddy MacLeod. "But we're delighted that this very important step forward for traditional music has the advantage of Dougie's capable leadership, experience and versatility."

With assured support from the Scottish Executive's Excellence Fund for the venture's first two years, Dougie Pincock said the job was now to ensure that it enjoys a long-term future.

"There are parallels: there's a Centre of Excellence in dance at Knightswood Academy in Glasgow and one in sport at Bellahouston Academy," he said.

"But this is a big step: it's heartening that traditional music has been raised to this level of acceptance in the mainstream formal education sector. It's something we've often talked about at The Piping Centre."

He said factors that saw the Highland Council's bid for funding succeed included local commitment and the fact that Plockton has a residential hostel with scope for development. "The rector, Duncan Ferguson, is

very supportive of traditional music and Gaelic in particular," he said. "I'll be very well supported by an advisory group from Highland Council, and have strong support from the school, from the music department and other departments including the library and guidance department."

Auditions for the first intake of students are being conducted in June for the first intake in August.

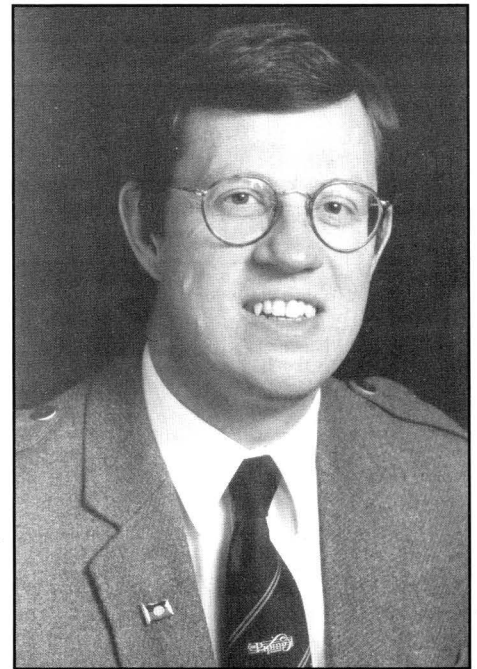
"We're initially looking to recruit about 10 students rising hopefully to about 20 as it progresses," said Dougie Pincock.

"They'll be residential and the traditional music programme will supplement not replace any part of their general education." Traditional music tuition will include pipes, fiddle, clarsach, Gaelic song, Scots song, accordion and whistle. But, said Dougie Pincock, "it's doubtful whether anyone who shows genuine excellence or potential for excellence in any instrument would not be accepted into this programme — we'll make room for them, the proviso being that we can find somebody to teach them."

"It should not interfere with their general education but intertwine with it. Everything's going to be geared to making sure these people have as good a time as possible."

The object is to provide students with the best possible tuition in their individual instruments, as well as tuition and workshops in wider contexts, including song, Gaelic and Scots language, ensemble performance, dance and literature.

"It will involve a lot of evening, weekend and after school extracurricular activity and will be quite demanding," said Dougie Pincock. "It should not interfere with their general education but intertwine with it. Everything's going



DOUGIE PINCOCK ... " this is a big step: it's heartening that traditional music has been raised to this level of acceptance in the mainstream formal education sector

to be geared to making sure these people have as good a time as possible."

Local talent in the region will be recruited to provide the ongoing instruction, with star performers brought in as visiting specialists and for master classes.

"We have a remit to create outreach opportunities — performance and learning — so we will be maintaining links with places like The Piping Centre, the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, the Easterhouse Arts Project, Balnain House, Fèisean nan Gàidheal, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the Glasgow Fiddle Workshop and so on.

"We must be a national resource. This gives the centre the potential to facilitate interactions across the traditional music field, and that's exciting.

"Outwith term time, we also have a remit to provide services for the traditional music community nationally, so we will be looking to hold weekend events and activities for other organisations."

The National Centre of Excellence for Traditional Music is open to any secondary school student in Scotland.

Intending applicants should contact Dougie Pincock through the office of Plockton High School: 01389 759 878.

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The woman managed to calm the dogs, reassure her drowsy husband and the piper, in full ceremonial dress, marched into the bedroom and duly delivered the birthday present.

The morning engagement was one of the many that are arranged week by week through The Piping Centre's busy pipers' agency service. People began calling The Piping Centre soon after it opened looking for advice on finding pipers for various events, and an agency arrangement was put in place. Over the past 12 months, the demand has surged.

"People hire pipers for occasions you would never dream about," said Jim MacLean, who manages The Piping Centre's pipers agency. (An occasion Jim MacLean still does dream about, however, was the six-day booking he personally accepted a year ago to play twice daily and deliver a series of lectures on board the *Queen Elizabeth II* cruise liner as it sailed from New York to Southampton: "That was a wonderful one-off.")

"But weddings, funerals, Burns' suppers, ship launchings, christenings, graduations, birthdays, annual dinners, business launches and openings, conferences... you name it: the demand is there and growing."

Providing high quality pipers for events as diverse as these has a helpful spin-off for piping in that it gives wider groups of people opportunities to experience good piping, said Jim MacLean.

A critical factor is the quality of the pipes.

"All the skills of a top class piper would be totally wasted if you made him play on a poor instrument," said Jim MacLean.

"You hear pipers in the street and at different functions and, while some are

pleasing enough, you do hear some whose instruments are way out of tune and badly played. Pipes, unfortunately, tend to be judged by the bad examples people hear. The piper is always the centre of attention — it's impossible to play background music on the pipes — so, if you make a mess of it, everyone hears and sees."

"A badly tuned bagpipe is insufferable and I'm afraid there are too many badly tuned pipes about, and that's something we aim to put right here."

Another of the things that sticks out for the average person is what the piper looks like, said Jim MacLean. "If a piper stands awkwardly and looks as though he or she is struggling, that catches the eye of the average person. Deportment is a dead give-away."

Pipers engaged for The Piping Centre bookings must be top class pipers with good, well-maintained instruments, and they must be well turned out. This generally means full ceremonial dress: kilt, doublet, braid, plaid with brooch, feather bonnet and hackle, cross-belts, waist belt, horse-hair sporran, diced or white hose, shoes with buckles, sgian dubh.

While some clients approach the Centre with a good knowledge of pipe music, others ask for tunes that fall outside the pipe repertoire. "For funerals, we have often been asked for *Danny Boy* to be played. You can adapt it for the pipes with some small adjustments," said Jim MacLean. In other contexts, the theme from *Braveheart* has been requested. "It's impossible to do that: you don't have the backing or the right instruments.

"In cases like these, we discuss with people their needs and explain the pipes' range and repertoire; we give people music to hear, and we've invariably arrived at a situation where people are pleased with suitable tunes — we've never been stuck," he said.

"Often people will ask for a pipe band, and there too you really have to ask them a few questions about why they want it and the venue. Sometimes we advise them that a full pipe band

would have too much volume and that their needs might be better met by two pipers and, perhaps, a side drummer.

"That's often provided, particularly where you have larger gatherings and several performances over the course of an evening. It goes down well but it does need a bigger venue."

Jim MacLean said there were top class pipers who were available to take up the range of assignments and that The Piping Centre was able to assure clients that, for £100 per engagement, they would get a good piper, on time and well-turned out.

"You'd be amazed at the number of people who come back to you and say, 'thank you; the piper was excellent, well turned out' and so on, and add: 'I didn't know piping could sound like that'," said Jim MacLean.

"We've mostly provided pipers to areas within 60 miles of Glasgow but, to help out, we're happy put people in touch with pipers further afield — all over the world — and they make their own arrangements from there."

Apart from a booking for a dinner party at Holyrood Palace as a part of arrangements for the Church of Scotland's 2000 General Assembly, the Centre has had no requests for small pipes or uilleann pipes. Said Jim MacLean: "We can meet requests for uilleann or small pipes, but small pipes are quiet. Even at a wedding or funeral, they can have insufficient volume. The height of most churches can swallow a lot of sound."

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The magical music of the pipes

A factor underlying the widespread revival of interest in bagpipe traditions could be that people want more from music.

"I hear, from more and more musicians, that the conception is changing of what musical performance is," said Dr Karen Ralls-MacLeod, a classically trained musician who has long been fascinated by the effects that music has on those who listen to it.

"Particularly after the 18th century, when a more materialistic scientific paradigm came to predominate in the West, the arts were shoved off to the side as something extra, or as mere entertainment.

"Previously, music and singing had been integral parts of everyday life, not something you bought a ticket for to go to at a particular time.

"Now, I think we're seeing a worldwide movement to bring back some of the interactive power with the audience: the audience is not so much 'out there' as 'with you' as a performer."

This shift, promising a reassertion of some of music's ancient potency, gives a freshness and pertinence to Dr Ralls-MacLeod's current work — researching the musical folklore of Scotland — and suggests that revivals of instruments like the pipes, fiddle and clarsach could have an exciting future.

Her recent book, *Music and the Celtic Otherworld* (Edinburgh University Press, 2000) is an exploration of the spiritual dimensions of music evident in medieval sources from Scotland, Ireland and Wales.

Now, as a postdoctoral research fellow in the Celtic Department at the University of Edinburgh, she is looking more closely into the purely Scottish sources. It is a rich field.

"The sheer number of tales relating to piping is fascinating. The pipes are described as having dramatic effects on the listener at times," she said.

"Many of the stories deal with fairy bagpipes, often heard at certain times, twilight or midnight, or seasons, and at certain places, where it was believed



Karen Ralls-MacLeod ... "I think we're seeing a worldwide movement to bring back some of the interactive power with the audience."

you could learn special tunes. Another common theme is the ghostly piper."

Behind such tales lies an awareness of the power of the pipes — along with the clarsach and fiddle in particular — to part the mists between this world and the Otherworld.

Said Dr Ralls-MacLeod: "The 'Otherworld' is a term used in folklore to mean 'not of this world'. But it has several dimensions.

"There's the heavenly otherworld and, in Celtic belief, there's also a whole gradation of realms through the land of youth, Avalon, and the underworld.

"The Celtic Otherworld is much less hierarchical than the Greek or Christian otherworlds; there isn't the same sense of stepping upwards or stepping downwards, although the dimensions are acknowledged," she said.

"In the Gaelic, the transcendent is always in and around us, and there is the implication that the bagpipes and some other instruments have special abilities to connect humans to this Otherworld quickly and effectively."

Dr Ralls-MacLeod also points to the idea of the holy island which, whether Iona or Avalon, "is neither 'above' nor 'below'.

"We can look at it right now, in this world. It is a mythical intersection, and there are a lot of musical motifs and tales associated with islands.

"Many of the Western and Orkney islands have specific musical tales related to each island. The distinctions involved here are things I'd very much like to explore for my next book.

Continued on page 14

PIPING lore includes numerous tales involving the Otherworld:

- There are stories of pipers who have vanished into caves, including the piper who ventured into a tunnel discovered during alterations to Edinburgh Castle. His pipes are said to be sometimes heard still sounding beneath the Royal Mile.
- There are ghostly piper stories. The phantom of a piper to the great Alasdair MacColla, the one responsible for the ceòl mór *The Piper's Warning to his Master* during struggles for possession of Duntroon Castle in 1646, is said to haunt the castle's turret room with his playing.
- There is a story about a fisherman on a loch in North Harris who hooked a monstrous fish that dragged the line out to the other side of the loch. There a door opened in the hillside, and fairy people hauled the fish inside. While the door was open and afterwards, through the ground, the fisherman heard fairy pipes.
- *The Old Woman's Lullaby* (*Crònán no Caillich 'sa Bheinn Bhric*), *The Cave of Gold* (*Uamh an Oir*), *The Fairy Harp* and *The Finger Lock* (*An Glas Mheur*) are some of the pipe tunes often said to have otherworldly origins and connections.

Dr Ralls-MacLeod would like to hear from people with piping knowledge and stories of the pipes' links with otherworlds. There is an e-mail form on her website at: <http://www.ancientquest.com/>

Magical music

Continued from page 13

"THE druidic mist that guards holy islands is something that there are many tales about. Columba and his monks were described as singing or using incantation to part the mists so they could go through. The music and singing, and the ability they have to break through the mist guarding the Otherworld, is fascinating. It's like a curtain, that certain sounds can part.

"And there are the silky (enchanted seal) tunes — sometimes with the silky singing in conjunction with a piper on the land — a theme which again acknowledges the power of the pipes to reach dimensions beyond this world and to inspire, not only the player, but also the listener to go out of themselves into this 'other' world.

"Music is seen as a special way to connect with the Otherworld and the pipes have always had a special place in that, along with the clarsach."

These sorts of powers sat uncomfortably with early Irish Christian monks who professed a preference for the music of bells, singing and nature, she said. "In the saints' lives, there are descriptions of Heaven, but not one single harp is mentioned in relation to their Heaven. In Scotland however, there are examples from a later period of bagpipes being included in Heaven;

"We're moving into an internet age, and the question is what will happen to music: are we going to merely be observers or can we reclaim that audience-music involvement."

and some of the Latin saints' tales also mention pipes along with other instruments and singing."

Many of the Scottish tales Dr Ralls-MacLeod has come across have been in parish minister's accounts, from the Highlands and Islands particularly, up to the early 20th century. "There were fiddles, harps and pipes on bonfires, it is true, but mainly there were ministers who recognised that not all musical instruments were dangerous, and they made an effort to write down what their parishioners told them.

"On the other hand, at some of the witchcraft trials the pipes were blamed as one of the most powerful ways to summon the devil, as in the case of the North Berwick witches," she said.

"Also, many of the artworks show the devil as a piper. The idea of the ability of the bagpipes, and the fiddle, to get people energised, makes them the two instruments most often demonised ... they were thought to be especially powerful.

"We see it in the prominent role of the fiddle in Scottish dance music, and the pipes. Today those are the two traditional instruments that people most like to dance to, instruments that do get people moving. Then there is the pipes' association with war that has a

whole history very well outlined in many of the piping histories."

Emotional and personally or culturally significant times are often linked with the parting of the veil to the Otherworld. Thus, the use of the pipes to mark beginnings and endings to this day, as for funerals and weddings, tempts Dr Ralls-MacLeod as a "fascinating area to explore.

"I think there is something about the bagpipes in particular in Scotland that has a ceremonial quality; to mark an occasion as special. The pipes for one reason or another, have that quality. The consequences of taking the piper away from the community (following the Act of Proscription, for example, and during periods when Britain was at war) is something that bears much more exploration too," she said.

"We're moving into an internet age, and the question is what will happen to music: are we going to merely be observers or can we reclaim that audience-music involvement.

"It's something that musicians have some very strong views on. We'll see whether, as Arthur Koestler said, there really is a ghost in the machine ... perhaps we'll hear ghostly pipers again.

"I would love to see a time when we got back into that way of thinking."

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It only gets better...

AS speaker for the 2000 John MacFadyen Trust lecture at Stirling Castle on 24 March, Iain MacInnes, producer and presenter of BBC Radio Scotland's weekly *Pipeline* programme, presented a strongly encouraging overview of piping at the start of the new millennium.

"I'm sure piping is stronger world-wide than it's ever been. The quality of performance is fantastically good, the quality of the instruments is as never before," he said. "You have to give credit to the people who have devel-

oped synthetic drone reeds and various synthetic bags: developments that have enabled average players to produce a consistently excellent sound."

Iain MacInnes' perspective on piping in Scotland is wide. As well as his broadcasting and scholarly background, he is a frequent performer on both the Scottish small "cauld wind" and Highland pipes. Last summer, for example, the veteran of groups such as the Tannahill Weavers and Smalltalk toured with Ossian and released his own album, *Tryst* (Greentrax).

Looking back over his own career,

Iain MacInnes recalls that 20 years ago, for example, "no-one made bellows-blown pipes in Scotland, and only half a dozen people were playing them."

Things, he told *Notes*, can change quickly, and for the better: "You can go to Piobaireachd Society conferences now and find that a quarter of the membership are playing bellows pipes or have electronic pipes, and they see it as a pleasant sideline which doesn't in any way detract from their interest in promoting ceòl mòr."

The worst fears of 20 years ago had proved groundless. "When groups like Battlefield Band, Alba, the Tannahill Weavers and Ossian started using pipes, there was genuine concern in the piping establishment that this would dilute or distort the tradition." That had not happened, he said, largely because most of the pipers involved had a firm grounding in the tradition. "And it certainly has taken Highland pipes to concert stages that they wouldn't have otherwise reached."

Now, Iain MacInnes would not be surprised to find fewer groups using Highland pipes in their line-up. "The period of real experimentation and creativity has passed. The Highland pipes completely change the dynamics of a group; a lot of what can be done with them — there's the sheer, raw energy that was the attraction in the first place — limits what a group can do."

On the other hand, improvements in bellows-blown pipes — "the instrument we used to call 'Lowland pipes' — promise to make them more accessible and amenable, he said. "I think that's another direction we're going to see taking off. They're much more internally balanced in terms of volume in a group, fiddlers love playing with them, and the fiddle brings out the tonal qualities of these instruments."

Meanwhile, when top competing pipe bands look towards making an album, they have been keen to import instruments and influences. "It's quite healthy I think."

"Having said that, the last three or four years have seen a dip in what the



IAIN MacINNES... "I'm sure piping is stronger world-wide than it's ever been."

Picking up *Pipeline* — by satellite

SINCE November last year, BBC Radio Scotland's weekly, hour-long *Pipeline* programme has been able to be picked up throughout Britain on Sky Digital 927 ... and more widely.

"I stumbled across it about a month ago and have been listening ever since," said Pipe Major Jack Kelly* of Lincolnshire, an Edinburgh City veteran whose involvements now lie with the Lindsey Piping Society and the Grimsby Atholl Pipe Band. "There are a lot of us down this way and it's great to be able to get *Pipeline*," he said.

Noble Macpherson, BBC Resources' information and liaison engineer, Scotland, told *Notes* that Radio Scotland programming was "free to air" via the new digital Astra 2 satellite — "so you don't need a Sky digi box to

receive it; any satellite box can pick it up, provided it's pointed at Astra 2."

Anyone with a dish receiver in the area covered by the Astra 2 satellite — including most of Continental Europe — can tune in, but most receivers on the Continent would need to be redirected towards the Astra 2 satellite.

Radio Scotland news and current affairs are available on the internet now and there has been talk of extending the programming. It might be a good time for overseas pipers to write to BBC Radio Scotland asking that *Pipeline* be given priority.

*P/M Jack Kelly also said he would like to hear from drummers and pipers in the Lincolnshire area who'd be interested in joining the Grimsby band or the Lindsey society: call 01507 442 844.

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Getting better...

Continued from page 15
commercial market is producing," said Iain MacInnes. "There seems to be a bit of reluctance, particularly on the part of pipe bands in Scotland, to get into the studio. I'm not sure why that is. I don't think the market is in any way saturated ... record companies that get into it find an enormous, ready-made global market."

Iain MacInnes feels there may be potential for the further development of pipe band concerts, following on from the success of the Glasgow Skye Association concerts in the lead-up to the World Pipe Band Championships every year, and the Ballymena concerts launched in the late 1970s by the Ulster pipe bands. "It created the situation, probably for the first time, in which bands didn't just have the opportunity but were almost forced to re-think their repertoire," he said.

"To entertain an audience for two hours, the bands started building on the medley format and coming up with some interesting stuff. A classic example was the suite *Journey to Skye* that the 78th Fraser Highlanders played in 1987 in Ballymena.

"That got people thinking again about what can be done in terms of multiple harmonies and so on. The answer is you can't really do that much because the instrument is limited but at least they were trying."

Commercial interests have yet to become seriously involved in piping and Highland piping remains "a genuinely amateur activity," he said.

"There is this curious misnomer in that we call the top competing pipers 'professional' but, of course, they're not. "They're people with often very demanding day jobs who happen to be extremely good pipers ... few would be earning all that much from piping

"Pipe bands — fantastically well drilled musical ensembles like Simon Fraser University — are actually paying for the privilege of travelling to Scotland to perform in public, paying out of their own pockets."

Where touring pipe bands had found popular success was in events such as North American tours by Army bands and regularly organised road shows in Germany.

"As we go into the new century we are probably seeing the end of an era in Army piping," he said. "Army pipe bands have had a brilliant sense of occasion; they look fantastic. For bands that are doing parades and civic duties, all the trappings and accoutrements are excellent: they look good, they are well disciplined.

"But for civilian bands oriented towards performance on a concert stage, or competing with dynamic and unusual music, maybe all the trappings that came out of the Army are no longer necessary. ...I see some of the

senior pipe majors thinking about it quite seriously."

Another area of change Ian MacInnes points to is the growth of scholarly interest in piping. "We have people like Allan MacDonald and Barnaby Brown exploring other options, and I think that work will filter through."

William Donaldson's recent book *The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society 1750-1950*, he said, was "a fantastic book, very well researched.

"What was particularly new in William Donaldson's book was the way he focussed in on developments from the 1890s to the present and the influence of the Piobaireachd Society.

"I don't think everything that's happened in piping has been consciously manipulative — a sense of that comes across in William Donaldson's book — but the core research he's done is very revealing and very beneficial.

"And it does highlight a genuine facet of Highland piping as it was: a general class divide between the administrators and the patrons, the social elite and the people who actually performed — and that, I think, has changed radically."

As for the new hour-long format of *Pipeline*, Iain MacInnes said he appreciated the extra scope it provided. He hopes to use the extra time for more in-depth interviews and to feature more junior-level pipers and pipe bands

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Continental Europe sees piping gain ground

From Finland, Sweden, and Norway, through Denmark, Germany, Holland, France and Italy, to Spain and Portugal... the Great Highland Bagpipe is heard at the many piping competitions and functions held throughout the Scandinavian and European Continent.

In the Middle Ages, various forms of pipes were common throughout Europe. Related instruments are known to have existed as far afield as the Orient.

Now, the European Continent has re-awakened to the exciting possibilities of the great Highland bagpipe, as can be attested to by the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association whose adjudicators attend piping contests held under its rules throughout Europe.

Most of the piping organisations in Continental Europe are affiliated to the RSPBA. They include the Bag Pipe Association Germany (BAG) and the Scandinavian Associations, which organise piping and drumming summer schools, and invite well known identities from Scotland to come to teach and advise Continental pipers and drummers. Prominent amongst these was the beloved late Pipe Major Angus Macdonald.

So far, no Continental band has attained grade one standard. However, France, Holland, Denmark and possibly other Scandinavian countries have bands in grades two and three.

Most of the Continental bands to have been graded have achieved grade four. Most recently, The Clan Pipers of Frankfurt, Germany, are justly proud of having achieved grade three after many years of hard work and practice. And there are other, ungraded bands which are possibly ripe for grading.

There are also several solo pipers who could compete in Scottish solo events with confidence but for time and travel cost constraints.

Two worthy of mention with regard to the Continental piping scene are Pipe Major David Johnston (Royal Irish Regiment) and Dr Matt James



DR MATT ('Old Mac') MacDONALD with the Baul Muluy Pipe Band Hamburg e.V.

Macdonald who hails from Skye but who has lived in Germany for some 20 years. Both can be considered modern missionaries of Scottish culture.

P/M David Johnston is widely respected as an organiser, teacher and adjudicator. Dr Matt Macdonald is known for his organisation of piping events, such as the Fallingbostel Evening Piping Concerts, held every two years.

By Marcel Martens Hamburg, Germany

Dr Macdonald ("Old Mac" as he is known to most pipers) also organises Highland Games and competitions. At the most recent piping concert in Fallingbostel, a programme of five and a half hours, he mounted a show which put 22 pipe bands — 355 musicians — on the stage. Television, radio and print media all covered the event and rated the show a great success. Old Mac billed his show as the greatest non-competitive indoor show on Earth. It attracted an audience of 1,500 who each paid DM20 (over £6.50) for their ticket. Admissions income just about covered the costs of the show.

The next programme of this kind is planned for April 2001: the Trillennium Pipers Evening Concert.

Again, pipe bands from every corner of Europe are likely to take part. Folk

groups and solo pipers will also be made warmly welcome.

Standards of piping and drumming on the Continent appear highest in Scandinavia and the Netherlands, where the most grade two and three pipe bands are found. Piping in Scandinavia, particularly in Denmark, is very highly organised as is evidenced by the very efficient summer schools where teaching standards rival those of the best schools in Scotland. The dedication with which piping and drumming is approached in Denmark and other Scandinavian countries is impressive. It was particularly evident at the 30th Scandinavian anniversary Championships, held in Copenhagen in February.

Scandinavian piping was represented at a recent international meeting, organised by the RSPBA, by Pipe Major Mats Hermansson (Murray Pipes and Drums Gothenburg), who is chairman of the Pipe Band Association of Scandinavia.

Pipe Majors Tom Harboe (Heather and District Pipes and Drums Copenhagen) and David Lundgreen (Holbek Pipes and Drums) are probably the best known pipe majors in Denmark. Their bands both have achieved grade two ratings. The Holbek Pipe Band, with more than 40

Continued on page 18



THIS slow air was written by one of Germany's piping pioneers, Dr Matt MacDonald ('Old Mac'), as a tribute to Shiela Patterson who devoted her life's work to Quarriers

in Renfrewshire, one of Scotland's oldest and largest charities, and encouraged many of the orphaned youngsters in the homes' care to learn (and practise!) the pipes.

Continental Europe

Continued from page 17

members, gave an excellent concert at the conclusion of the Copenhagen Competitions.

In Germany, the Bag Pipe Association of Germany (BAG) organises a summer school at Breuberg (an ancient Castle) to which leading Scottish piping and drumming instructors are invited. The late Pipe Major Angus Macdonald was one such person.

Standards in Germany are rising, as can be seen in the promotion of the Clan Pipers of Frankfurt to grade three. The Chairman of the Bag Pipe association Germany (BAG) is Peter Brinkman ("Pibroch-Pete", so named for his skills as a player of ceòl mór). The BAG organises solo, pipe band and ceòl mór competitions every year in Ludwigshafen.

Because of their dedication and high attainment, Peter Brinkmann, Tim Latham, Herbert Bartmann, Christoph Kresse and Mark Schwertzel would be the best-known pipers in Germany. There are 39 known bands in Germany and possibly others.

There are also several good players who enter solo competitions through-

out Europe. Some have even made a name for themselves in Scotland.

Highland games and competitions are well known in Germany and, judging by the number of gigs that bands and solo pipers are booked for, pipe music seems to have become very popular in Germany.

Folk groups with pipers in their line-up can be heard in many German pubs, mainly at weekends, and this kind of music is spreading throughout Germany like wildfire. Irish pubs, which are very popular in Germany, have contributed much to the Irish and Scottish folk music scene.

A competition held recently in Hamburg to find the best school music group attracted some 200 entries. The top 10 groups received recording contracts. First prize went to a group with the pipes in its line-up. The youngest in this group was 14 years old, the oldest was 17.

Many Continental pipers have discovered The Piping Centre in Glasgow, which, as well as offering the highest qualified instruction at reasonable prices, has affordable accommodation and a restaurant where visiting pipers can dine, relax and meet their Scottish counterparts. Many a good and lasting friendship has been struck up through the medium of this fine institute. The

College of Piping is also well known in Germany for its instruction, although it lacks many of the associated facilities that The Piping Centre has on offer.

The future for European Continental pipers looks good, helped by modern communications media. Instead of slaving away without the benefit of a teacher — formerly the Continental piper's typical experience — pipers can now use the internet and e-mailing for advice, and to receive competent and qualified instruction.

New communications technology and the internet have enormous potential. Most youngsters now have a computer, and surf through cyberspace hungry for information. It is these youngsters who are overjoyed when they hit upon a piping website and discover a wealth of piping information, tips, and advice. They are the future of the piping scene.

In addition, there are now very good pipe-music notation software programs which allow these youngsters to write new music, giving pipe music a refreshing new lease of life.

While traditional Scottish pipe music is good, it is inevitable that we see a wealth of new and exciting good music being composed in the future.

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