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PIPING AND DANCING

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No. 2.

SEPTEMBER, 1935.

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PIPING AND DANCING

A Monthly Journal for Pipers, Dancers and Drummers

No. 2.

SEPTEMBER, 1935.

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A MAN YOU KNOW

THE subject of our sketch this month, Pipe-Major Ross, is so well known that it seems impossible to find anything original that could be added to what has already been said and written about him. He differs in many respects from other well-known pipers. First of all, he is a piper who has never been anything other than a piper. Then he is the first piper to receive the honour of teaching Royalty. He taught the rudiments of piping to H.R.H. The Prince of Wales when his Highness was in residence at Oxford University. Next, he is one of the few, if not the only Pipe-Major, to receive a medal for Long and Meritorious Service in both the Regular and Territorial Army.

Pipe-Major Ross's military service embraces, in all, 38 years. During that period he was awarded the Royal Victorian Medal, the South African (1899-1902) Medals with 8 Clasps, Victory Medal, General Service Medal, 1914 Star; which, with two Long Service Medals mentioned, make 8 in all.

When we come to consider the awards that have been made to Pipe-Major Ross for piping, our brain just reels. It would be much easier to tell what he had NOT been awarded. The total is monumental, in fact it reminds us of the days of our youth when weekly journalism made itself popular by telling the world that if the sum total of something or other were placed end to end they would reach from here to some place a long way off.

Among the most important awards that have come his way is the two Highland Society Gold Medals and 9 Gold Clasps won at Inverness and Oban for Piobaireachd. The Lochaber Gold Medal for best all-round piper in Piobaireachd, Marches, Strathspeys and Reels, twelve times.

It would give the reader a better idea of what Willy Ross had done if we tell him that he entered a competition in 1889 when he was a boy, and has been among the prizes ever since.

To cap all the awards he ever had, he received the premier award of all when the Piobaireachd Society appointed him their tutor under their scheme for training Military pipers at Edinburgh Castle. These Military Classes are conducted within the period from 1st September to 28th February. Between these times, Pipe-Major Ross carries on classes (under the Ægis of the Society) to teach youths and adults in different parts of the North. The recipients get this tuition free. Subsequently, a good many of them join up in the army as pipers. Pipe-Major Ross is, of course, now considered among the front rank of adjudicators, and there is a great demand for his services when they are available.



Pipe-Major WILLIAM ROSS.

COMMENTS

WE have to thank innumerable people for congratulatory messages as a result of our first appearance. If ever a spur should be needed to flag our energies in the effort we are making to improve Piping, Dancing and Drumming, recollection of these messages will be certain to effect it. They have confirmed, too, our opinion that our appearance was not made a moment too soon.

At Cowal, where we spent two interesting and instructive days, two things were forced into our view that need immediate attention. The first of these was the vast difference that existed in the quality of the competitors who were contesting in the same sections. It would seem that the only thing that determines the fact that the veriest tyro shall exhibit his ability (or lack of ability) alongside that of the champion is the fact that they are both over 18 years of age. Now this is obviously nonsensical. There should be a preliminary test of some kind that will eliminate the zealot with no ability. For, otherwise he becomes a burden not only to the other contestants, but to the listeners who come, in many cases, long distances, so that they may hear the best that is to be heard, either that they may model their own playing on it, or that they may have that pleasure that listening to the best may be expected to give.

It was obvious to us that this was a source of annoyance to the judges also; and we are certain that no emolument would compensate them for their sufferings; for we are sure that that is what their experience was in several cases. Surely it is not beyond the wit of games promoters to arrange that this state of things should cease. It could be arranged in suchwise that the tyro who had never won a competition should be kept among others of that kind. Then the main competition would be restricted to those who had been recognised in previous efforts; and then we will be spared the sight of able competitors wandering around for hours on end awaiting a decision that is apparent to everyone with ears to hear and eyes to see.

The other item that needs reviewing is the arrangement of the playing, and convergence on a point, of the massed bands. As we saw this on the 31st August, it was a fiasco. There is, of course, nothing like it attempted anywhere but at Cowal; and that means that the opportunity of rehearsal is infrequent. That, however, is no excuse for some of the sights we saw. In one case a little B.B. side drummer seemed to be attempting to consume his drum in an ineffectual effort to get it out of his way as his bigger contemporaries crowded in on him. In another case a bass drummer seemed to hit every other thing within the radius of his sticks, but not his drum: and that through being jostled about in every direction he did not want to go. An endeavour should be made to do this in a really spectacular fashion. As a sight to draw big crowds it has great potentialities, and it does not need the organisation of a showman. We have seen similar things arranged at various times by the Navy, Army, Territorial, Boys' Brigade, and Boy Scouts' organisations, and in every case where we have seen the massing of numbers by these bodies the effort was really thrilling.

We would suggest that the organisation and arrangement of this should be handed over to the Scottish Pipe Band Association, for they have the men and the opportunity of making it a thing worth seeing. They could, at their district competitions, stage massed band rehearsals on a small scale. Through rehearsed on a small scale, there is no doubt that when the annual turnout took place at Dunoon, the bands could fit into place without any embarrassing congestion at points. We would also suggest that the drummers and pipers should be gathered into two separate bodies, and that it be arranged that only a proportion of the drummers should drum, for, in the mass, they seem to be too heavy for the pipers.

The attention of our readers is drawn to the Competitions we are running in an effort to find some good music. So far, the response to the appeal is poor, but that, of course, may be because each intending entrant is leaving his entry to the very last moment.

We hope that is the reason, for, otherwise, one of the reasons that this Journal has been started will be nullified.

We are assured on all sides that if we unearthed the very large quantity of original music that only required asking for, we would have performed an inestimable service to the piping world. We are, meantime, living in hope. Let us hope it won't be a forlorn hope.

A friend has suggested that we may have forgotten that the real need is for new piobaireachd music. As a matter of fact we have not forgotten that; nor do we forget that there is a very excellent society that devotes its energies to unearthing all the Ceol Mor that it can find, and we see no reason why we should duplicate their work. If there should be some who have composed this type of music, and who do not, for some reason of their own, wish to put it into the hands of the Piobaireachd Society, by all means send it here. If our adjudicators report favourably on it, we will be only too pleased to publish it.

Our readers will see that in this month's number we have been able to reprint an extract from Mr. Seton Gordon's "The Charm of Skye." We draw their attention to the opening part of this article, particularly where it refers to the relative positions of the pipe and harp in the life of the Gael. We think the position of these two instruments was the same in countries other than in Northern Scotland, and we believe the renaissance of the pipe is being followed by that of the harp, or clarsach.

We mention this because we have been asked from two opposite sources to give a little of our space for the benefit of the players of this instrument. We would like to hear what our readers think of this suggestion.

We regret that Mr. A. D. Hamilton's article has had to be left out this month, owing to late arrival. It will appear, along with a score of "Leaving Lunga," next month.

Foreign Pipers at the International Folk Dance Festival

BY "Z."

Three forms of foreign bagpipe were seen at the International Folk Dance Festival held in London last July. These were the *biniou* of Brittany, the *cabrette* of Auvergne, and the *gayda* of Bulgaria. They were no museum pieces either! All three of these continental forms of the instrument are in active use at the present day among the peasants for accompanying their traditional dances; and the foreign pipers, too, were themselves, one and all, peasants and traditional players.

Most Scottish pipers have heard of the *biniou*. It has entered the literature of the pipes through Neil Munro's "The Oldest Air in the World," and some of us saw it in France during the War. It is a small mouth-blown bagpipe, with a single drone about the length of the tenor-drone of a Highland set, and with a very short chanter, shorter than a practising chanter. At the Festival it was never played solo, but always in combination with the *bombarde*, which may be likened, roughly, to a High-

played marching at the head of their dancers in procession, but their bagpipe, the *cabrette*, is bellows-blown, and, when playing for dancing, they preferred to sit. There is a reason for this position, however, apart from the bellows. The *cabrette*, with its ivory mounts and velvet cover, exhibits something of the delicacy of craftsmanship of the Northumbrian small-pipes. It is, however, a larger instrument, in appearance similar to the *chalumeau** illustrated on p. 248 of Dr. Duncan Fraser's book. The chanter is long, bellung slightly at the bottom, and there is one slender drone, inserted into a separate head of the chanter-stock, in length a little shorter than the chanter, and lying rigid alongside it. The tone of the *cabrette* is soft, and the drone buzzes rather than booms; but all the same a fine skirl comes out of the reeds, and at a little distance the sound is reminiscent of the Uilleann pipes when the regulators are not being used. Doubtless because the distinctness of the melody is rather blurred



1. Breton Group with Biniou and Bombarde. 2. Auvergne Group with Cabrette. 3. Bulgarian Group with Gayda.

land chanter furnished with keys and blown directly with the mouth, the tongue actually touching the double reed, as with an oboe. In this combination of *biniou* and *bombarde* the melody is provided by the latter. The little chanter of the *biniou* has a very high shrill pitch, and the traditional style of playing is to maintain a continuous complicated trilling, blending with the melody to some extent, but piercing through the deeper notes of the *bombarde*. Sometimes for a bar or two, while the *bombarde* player regains his breath, the *biniou* will run on alone with its trilling, and when the *biniou* player himself wants extra breath he lets the blow-pipe fly loose, regaining it between his lips without removing his hands from the chanter. (The Bulgarian piper had the same trick, and I have also seen a Portuguese piper do it. Their blow-pipes appear to be fashioned short and carefully set at an angle to make it easy). The drone of the *biniou* was decorated with an inlaid pattern of lead; this was repeated on the blowpipe, and the chanter had lead bands; but there was no other ornament, not even a cover to the bag, the exterior of which was greasy with some vegetable oil. The Breton musicians were little gnarled old men in gold-braided velvet jackets and broad-brimmed black hats. They played their dancers on in procession, and generally stood while performing.

The other French pipers from Auvergne—five of them, big broad-shouldered dark-moustached fellows—also

by the muzziness of the drone, need has been felt in dance-playing to emphasise the rhythm by percussion. Resort has not, however, been made to the drum, but to the piper's own feet. On his leg or legs he ties small bells, like the bells of English Morris dancers, and playing sitting, stamps the beat vigorously with one or both feet, onto a flat block of wood if the dancing is on grass. The Bretons have not the same necessity for percussion, as the staccato tonguing of the *bombarde* enables the dancers to keep to the rhythm without difficulty.

The dances of both the French groups had clearly recognisable affinities with the country dances and reels that are spread throughout the British Isles. Resemblances in the music were less marked. There was always a fine rhythm, and an exhilarating "dancy" spirit, but the melodic interest was usually slight. One of the Breton tunes, however, "Le Bal de Quimper," was easily identified as "The Steamboat," printed as a jig in David Glen's book of Irish tunes (and also, I expect, under other names in many other collections. I am even told that a variant of it is played by the Basques of the Pyrenees on their three-hole whistle-pipes).

The piper from Bulgaria was a swarthy mountain shepherd in embroidered linen shirt, gartered leggings, and conical wool cap. He played either standing or sitting, and at a pinch would have obliged upside down

(Continued on Page 7.)

RESULTS FROM THE GAMES

We will be favoured if Secretaries will post on the results of any competitions that may be held by the organisation that they serve. They and their committee are asked to note that there is a vast number of exiled compatriots who look forward to learning the names of "who won."

BANFF GAMES (14th August, 1935).

Piping, Piobaireachd.

1. Pipe-Major Reid, Glasgow.
2. Malcolm MacPherson, Invershin, and John Wilson, Edinburgh (equal).
4. Pipe-Major Smith, Black Watch.

Strathspey and Reel.

1. Pipe-Major Greenfield, Royal Scots.
2. Pipe-Major James Robertson, Scots Guards.

Marches.

1. J. Robertson.
2. Pipe-Major Greenfield.
3. M. MacPherson.

SUTHERLAND SHOW SPORTS.

Marches.

1. Piper W. J. MacLeod, Dunrobin.
2. Piper MacLeod, Seaforth Highlanders.
3. Piper Sinclair, Seaforth Highlanders.

Strathspey and Reel.

1. Piper W. J. MacLeod, Dunrobin.
2. Piper Sinclair, Seaforths.
3. Piper MacLeod, Seaforths.

LONACH GATHERING (16th August, 1935).

Piobaireachd.

1. Pipe-Major Reid.
2. R. Brown.
3. Malcolm MacPherson.
4. J. Wilson, Edinburgh, and R. Nicol (equal).

Piobaireachd.

1. J. Wilson.
2. Malcolm MacPherson.
3. Pipe-Major C. H. Smith, Black Watch.
4. Pipe-Major Robertson, Scots Guards.

Marches (Open).

1. J. Wilson, Edinburgh.
2. Pipe-Major Robertson.
3. Pipe-Major Cruickshank.
4. Pipe-Major Greenfield.

Reel o' Tulloch (Open).

1. Mary Aitken.
2. M. Drumsfield.
3. R. Cuthbertson.
4. J. I. Mackenzie.

Best Dressed Highlander (Society).

1. J. G. F. MacGregor.
2. Frank Stewart.
3. John Anderson.
4. John Don.

Best Dressed Highlander (Open).

1. Pipe-Major Grant.

TAYNUILT (17th August, 1935).

Piping, Piobaireachd.

1. D. MacLean, Glasgow.
2. Pipe-Major R. Hepburn, Bonhill.
3. A. MacNab, Craignish.

Marches.

1. Pipe-Major Hepburn.
2. D. MacLean.
3. A. MacNab and A. MacQuarrie, Oban (equal).

Strathspeys and Reels.

1. D. MacLean.
2. Pipe-Major Hepburn.
3. A. MacNab.

Russell-Fergusson Cup for Piping.

- D. MacLean, Glasgow.

Dancing, Sword Dance.

1. Cathie Johnston, Glasgow.
2. C. Stewart, Alexandria.
3. J. MacCrail, Callander.

Sword Dance (under 16).

1. Mairi MacDougall, Oban.
2. Agnes Blair, Tarbert.
3. Nan C. Wilkie, Lochgilphead.

Highland Fling.

1. Cathie Johnston.
2. M. R. Graham, Glasgow.
3. C. Stewart.

Highland Fling (under 16).

1. Rena MacDonald.
2. Mairi MacDougall.
3. Jessie Bruce.

Reel.

1. Cathie Johnston.
2. J. MacCrail.
3. M. R. Graham.

Seann Truibhais.

1. Cathie Johnstone.
2. Mrs. Williams, Bonawe.
3. M. R. Graham.

Sailors' Hornpipe.

1. Cathie Johnston.
2. M. R. Graham.
3. Mrs. Williams.

CRIEFF (17th August, 1935).

Piping, Pibrochs.

1. Owen MacNiven, Paisley.
2. R. M. Meldrum, Kilmacolm.
3. D. MacIntyre, Sandbank.
4. Pipe-Major C. Smith, Black Watch.

Marches.

1. Pipe-Major C. Smith.
2. D. MacIntyre.
3. Pipe-Major G. Greenfield, Royal Scots.

Strathspeys.

1. D. MacIntyre.
2. C. D. Scott, Glasgow Police.
3. Owen MacNiven.

NAIRN (17th August, 1935).

Piping, Piobaireachd.

1. J. Wilson, Edinburgh.
2. Malcolm MacPherson, Invershin.
3. Pipe-Major Johnston, Camerons.

Strathspey and Reel.

1. Pipe-Corpl. Thomson, Camerons.
2. Pipe-Major R. Reid, Glasgow.
3. Pipe-Major Robertson, 2nd Scots Guards.

Results from the Games—Continued.**NAIRN—Continued.****March.**

1. Pipe-Major Robertson.
2. Pipe-Corpl. Thomson.
3. Malcolm MacPherson.

Highland Dancing, Sword Dance.

1. R. Cuthbertson, Glasgow.
2. A. Massie, Clydebank.
3. J. MacKenzie, Aberdeen.

Highland Fling.

1. J. MacKenzie.
2. R. Cuthbertson.
3. R. Watson, Aberdeen.

Reel o' Tulloch.

1. R. Cuthbertson.
2. J. MacKenzie.

TAYNUILT (17th August, 1935).**Piping, Highland Fling.**

1. D. MacLean, Glasgow.
2. Pipe-Major Hepburn, Alexandria.
3. A. MacNab, Craignish.

Strathspeys and Reels.

1. D. MacLean.
2. Pipe-Major Hepburn.
3. A. MacNab.

Piobaireachd.

1. D. MacLean.
2. Pipe-Major Hepburn.
3. A. MacNab.

**INVERARAY (Local Competitions).
(21st August, 1935).****Amateur Piping.**

1. D. R. Cameron, Islay.
2. Pipe-Major R. Hepburn, Bonhill.
3. H. C. Collins, Taret.
4. A. MacIntyre, Dalmally.

Junior Piping.

1. A. MacIntyre.
2. H. C. Collins.
3. A. MacCallum, Campbeltown.
4. H. MacGuinease, Port Sonachan.

(Open Competitions).**Piping, Pibrochs.**

1. Pipe-Major R. Reid, Glasgow.
- 2 & 3. John Wilson, Edinburgh, and Rod. MacDonald, Glasgow (equal).
4. Pipe-Major J. Robertson, Scots Guards.

Marches.

1. Pipe-Major J. Robertson.
2. John Wilson.
3. Pipe-Major R. Reid.
4. Malcolm MacPherson, Invershin.

Strathspeys and Reels.

1. Rod. MacDonald.
2. D. MacIntyre, Islay.
3. Robert Reid.
4. M. MacPherson.

Highland Fling.

1. R. MacNiven Cuthbertson, Glasgow.
2. W. MacNiven, Glasgow.
3. A. D. Cameron, Glasgow.
4. A. R. Massie, Clydebank.

Sword Dance.

1. R. MacNiven Cuthbertson.
2. Wm. MacNiven.
3. A. D. Cameron.
4. A. R. Massie.

Seann Truibhais.

1. Wm. MacNiven.
2. R. MacN. Cuthbertson.
3. A. D. Cameron.
4. A. R. Massie.

Seann Truibhais (Ladies).

1. Jean Telfer, Port-Glasgow.
2. Cathie MacLean, Paisley.
3. Bessie Findlay, Bearsden.
4. Agnes S. Kinninmonth, Stirling.

Highland Fling (Ladies).

1. Jean Telfer.
2. C. MacLean.
3. Mary MacHarg, Stirling.
4. Agnes S. Kinninmonth.

SKYE (22nd August, 1935).**Local Events.****Piping, Marches.**

1. M. MacKay.
2. George Moss.
3. Ewen Cameron.

Strathspeys and Reels.

1. M. MacKay.
2. George Moss.
3. L. MacDonald.

Dancing, Highland Fling.

1. E. Cameron.
2. W. MacDonald.
3. L. MacKenzie.

Reel of Tulloch.

1. Iain Wynne.
2. L. MacKenzie.
3. Ian Paterson.

Ghillie Callum.

1. Iain Wynne.
2. E. Cameron.
3. W. MacDonald.

Highland Fling (under 16).

1. E. Cameron.
2. Iain Wynne.
3. E. Wright.

Reel of Tulloch (under 16).

1. E. Cameron.
2. Iain Wynne.
3. E. Wright.

Open Events.**Piobaireachds (MacCrimmon Dunvegan Medal).**

1. J. Wilson, Edinburgh.
2. M. R. MacPherson, Invershin.
3. Pipe-Major Robertson, Scots Guards.
4. Pipe-Major Greenfield, Royal Scots.

Marches (the Captain Kemble Challenge Star).

1. Pipe-Major Robertson.
2. J. Wilson.
3. Corporal Bain, Scots Guards.

Strathspeys and Reels.

1. J. Wilson.
2. Corporal Thomson, 4th Cameron.
3. Pipe-Major Robertson.

Results from the Games—Continued.**LOCHABER (27th August, 1935).****Open Events.****Piping, Piobaireachds.**

1. John Wilson, Edinburgh.
2. Malcolm R. MacPherson, Invershin.
3. Pipe-Major R. Reid, 7th H.L.I.
4. D. MacLean.

Marches.

1. Pipe-Major Robertson, Scots Guards.
2. Pipe-Major R. Reid.
3. M. R. MacPherson.
4. J. Wilson.

Strathspeys and Reels.

1. Pipe-Major Robertson.
2. J. Wilson.
3. Pipe-Major R. Reid.
4. M. R. MacPherson.

Dancing (Men only), Reels.

1. R. Cuthbertson.
2. Wm. MacNiven.
3. G. MacLeod.

Ghillie Callum.

1. R. Cuthbertson.
2. J. L. MacKenzie.
3. Wm. MacNiven.

Highland Fling.

1. R. Cuthbertson.
2. Wm. MacNiven.
3. J. L. MacKenzie.

Reel of Tulloch.

1. R. Cuthbertson.
2. J. L. MacKenzie.
3. Wm. MacNiven.

Seann Truibhais (Costume).

1. R. Cuthbertson.
2. Wm. MacNiven.
3. J. L. MacKenzie.

Sailors' Hornpipe.

1. Wm. MacNiven.
2. A. R. Massie.
3. R. Cuthbertson.

COWAL GAMES.**Friday, 30th August, 1935.****Juvenile Piping, March.**

1. Donald A. MacLean, Paisley.
2. E. MacArdle, Kentallin.
3. Donald MacKechnie, Dalmuir.

March, Strathspey, and Reel.

1. E. MacArdle.
2. Thomas Pearson, Glasgow.
3. Eric MacNiven, Paisley.

Piobaireachds (Open).

1. Pipe-Major R. Reid, Glasgow.
2. Pipe-Major J. Slattery, Ayr.
3. Pipe-Major G. A. Greenfield, Glencorse.
4. Owen MacNiven.

March.

1. Pipe-Major R. Reid.
2. Pipe-Major J. MacDonald, Govan.
3. Pipe-Major G. A. Greenfield.
4. Pipe-Major Slattery.

Reel and Strathspey.

1. Pipe-Major John MacDonald.
2. Pipe-Major J. Slattery.
3. Pipe-Major R. Reid.
4. Donald F. Ross, Lochgilphead.

Best Dressed Playing Piper.

Hector MacLean, Oban.

Juvenile Highland Dancing.—Best Dressed Dancer in Highland Costume.

Ila Anderson, Wrexham.

Highland Fling (under 10 years).

1. Chrissie Turner, Sandbank.
2. Margaret Brown, Dunoon.
3. Grace Sorrie, Sandbank.

Sword Dance.

1. Chrissie Turner.
2. Grace Sorrie.
3. Sandy MacKay.

Seann Truibhais.

1. Chrissie Turner.
2. Grace Sorrie.
3. Sandy MacKay.

Argyll Championship.

1. Chrissie Turner.
2. Grace Sorrie.
3. Sandy MacKay.

Highland Fling (under 15 years).

1. Donald MacKinnon, Dunoon.
2. Bunty Downie, Dunoon.
3. Joan Blair, Tarbert.

Seann Truibhais.

1. Bunty Downie.
2. D. MacKinnon.
3. Rena Tait, Sandbank.

Sword Dance.

1. Donald MacKinnon.
2. Bunty Downie.
3. Joan Blair.

Argyll Championship.

1. D. MacKinnon.
2. Bunty Downie.
3. Joan Blair.

Strathspey and Reel, Open (under 15 years).

1. D. MacKinnon.
2. B. Downie.
3. Rena Tait.

Highland Fling, Open (under 7 years).

1. Margaret Armour, Motherwell.
2. May Prentice, Clydebank.
3. Mary Winton, Perth.

Sword Dance.

1. May Prentice.
2. Jean Penman, Perth.
3. Margaret Armour.

Seann Truibhais.

1. Mary Winton.
2. May Prentice.
3. Margaret Armour.

Scottish Championship.

1. May Prentice.
2. Margaret Armour.
3. Mary Winton.

Highland Fling (under 9 years).

1. Betty Rox, Lanarkshire.
2. Netta Grant, Coatbridge.
3. Pearl Kilgour, Thornliebank.

(A Number of Results have been held over till next month)

Foreign Pipers at the International Folk Dance

Festival—Continued from page 3.

on his head with the drone of his pipes twisted round his ankles. For this drone, about a yard in length, was fixed into a flexible neck of the bag, like the chanter, and could in consequence be manipulated in all directions. On the march it hung down perpendicularly by his right leg. Seated, he either laid it across his knees or flung it up on one or other shoulder. The drone had some carving on it, but the instrument was otherwise without ornament, and there was no cover to the bag.

The *gayda* was not used solo, but in combination with two other instruments, one a long wooden whistle-pipe, the other a kind of fiddle held vertically. Usually there was a tom-tom sort of drum as well. The dances were mostly of the chain type, men or women or both dancing in line with arms linked. The whistle-pipe gave the melody, the drum the rhythm, the fiddle a scraping harmony, and the chanter of the *gayda*, which was about a foot long, kept up a constant rapid warbling. This was some of the most primitive music and dancing at the Festival. As the bagpipe is such a complete instrument in itself, supplying both its own melody and harmony, one wonders what its effective purpose is in such a combination of instruments. This appears to be to give body to dance music that would otherwise be too thin, especially out of doors. The warbling of the *gayda* was

in fact the background against which the flute chirruped and the fiddle scraped. The bagpipe was therefore not a mere extra; its skirl and drone were a characteristic part of the general effect. In other districts of Central Europe where the bagpipe has gone out of use, and ordinary fiddles are used, the fiddlers deliberately cultivate a style that enables them to get a marked bagpipe-like effect out of the strings.

Scotland was represented at the Festival by a large contingent from the Scottish Country Dance Society, whose piper played for a sixteensome; and also by a piper and eight dancers from the 2nd Camerons, whose grand performance of the Argyll Broadsword roused the 500 foreign visitors from more than 20 different countries to almost frenzied applause. The English Folk Dance Society, which organized the International Festival, is itself a good friend to the pipes. At the Society's last own annual festival, at the Albert Hall, the Pipes of the Three Nations were all represented. A fisher-lad from Barra rendered Hebridean dances to the *piob mhor*. Irish groups from both Dublin and Belfast danced reels, horn-pipes and jigs to the *Uilleann* pipes; and the Northumbrian "half-long" bellows-pipes accompanied the Earsdon Sword-Dance.

* The *chalumeau* however was a mouth-blown instrument. A special recording of the *cabrette* was made by Decca Co. at the Festival. The record can be obtained 3/9 post free from the English Folk Dance and Society, Cecil Sharp House, Regent's Park Road, London.

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HEREDITARY PIPERS OF SKYE.

BY SETON GORDON, F.Z.S.

"The world may come to an end,
But love and music can never die."—(Gaelic rune).

THE Highland bagpipe, or *piob mhor* (great pipe), is a musical instrument of great antiquity, and has been the national instrument of Scotland for over two hundred years.

About the year 1700 the harp was superseded by the pipe. For several generations previous to that time the harp or *clarsach* and the pipe were played, figuratively speaking, side by side in the castles of the great Highland chiefs. The harp was the instrument of peace. The music of the pipe, being more robust, could be played in war and in peace. After the middle of the eighteenth century the harp was rarely heard, but of recent years its playing has been revived, and there is no music that suits the old Gaelic songs so well.

It is probable that the decline of the *clarsach* was due to the gradual disappearance of the bard who sang his own verse. The chiefs in the eighteenth century were spending much time away from the Highlands. They lived for a part of each year in London or abroad, and were absorbing the customs of the English. They were thus less interested in their hereditary harpers, and the two arts of harpist and rhapsodist were lost together, and from the same cause.

The chiefs of all the great Highland clans were surrounded in former times by their hereditary office-bearers. They had hereditary doctors, armourers, purse-bearers, archers, bards, harpers, and pipers. Of pipers, the most celebrated line in Skye, and indeed in all Scotland, were the MacCrimmons. They were pipers to the chiefs of MacLeod, and owed their pre-eminence to the beauty of their compositions and their skill in teaching. At Bore-raig, beside Loch Follart at Dunvegan, the MacCrimmons had their college of piping, and to this college came all the best pipers in Scotland, and even from Erin across the sea.

There are various traditions concerning the origin of this musical family. They are supposed to be descended from the Druids and to be of a royal Irish line. One of the Irish kings was Crimthan, and there are scholars of to-day who believe that the MacCrimmons were descended from that king. There is a popular tradition (which finds no favour with those skilled in Celtic lore) that the first of the MacCrimmons was brought from Italy to Skye by the MacLeod of the day on his return from a crusade in the reign of King Alexander of Scotland, and that the name MacCrimmon is derived from Cremona, in Italy, the piper's birthplace. The tradition was current over forty years ago on the remote island of St. Kilda, where no English is spoken. It is known that the family were anciently established in the Isles, for in the Bannatyne MS. it is stated that in the thirteenth century "the south end and the small isles of Harris were possessed by the MacCrimmons, afterwards the famous hereditary pipers of the MacLeods." The Bannatyne MS. also mentions that, *circa* 1250, "Sleat had previously belonged to the Clan Mhic Gurimen, a Celtic tribe." It may possibly be that Gurimen was an early spelling of MacCrimmon.*

It was perhaps in the seventeenth century that the most renowned MacCrimmon composers lived. At this time *ceòl mòr* alone was played by the great pipers. *Ceòl mòr*

* The Bannatyne MS. has been preserved in the Glendale branch of the MacLeod family.

or "big music," is the classical music of the Highland pipe. Each composition of *ceòl mòr* is nowadays known as a *piobaireachd* (Anglicè, pibroch). A *piobaireachd* is built upon a theme or *urlar*. After the *urlar* has been played, one variation after another follows, and the composition usually ends with the fast and difficult movements known as the *crunluadh* and *crunluadh amach*.

There is a general impression—perhaps because of the slow rhythmic movements of classical pipe music—that a *piobaireachd* is always a lament. This is not so. It may be a lament, it is true, but it may also be a "warning" ("Hector MacLean's Warning"), a battle piece ("The Desperate Battle"), a salute (Lady Margaret MacDonald's Salute), a "gathering" tune ("Tulloch Ard"), a tune to keep rowers of a galley together ("MacLeod of MacLeod's Rowing Piobaireachd"), a satire ("A Taunt on MacLeod"), a hymn of praise ("Moladh Mhairi"), or a march ("The Earl of Ross's March"). It is probable that every *piobaireachd* originally had its own words to which it could be sung. The words of most of the old tunes have now been lost, but some remain, and a short time ago, on looking through an old book of Gaelic poems (*Dain agus Orain*, 1780), I saw the complete words to a long and very beautiful *piobaireachd* known as "Guileagag Moraig" ("Marion's Swan-song").

In the days of the MacCrimmons it is doubtful whether there was staff notation in pipe music, and all the compositions of *ceòl mòr* were handed down from one generation to another by a "word" notation called *canntaireachd*, which was sung by the old masters as they taught their pupils. At the MacCrimmon college at Bore-raig each pupil had to memorise one hundred and ninety-five testing compositions of *ceòl mòr* and be a master of theory and composition before he was held to have honourably finished his musical course. Little wonder that there was a saying that it took seven generations of pipers to make a master player.

No piper was considered to have finished the course at Bore-raig until he had studied there for at least seven years. At the present time piping is not taken so seriously, and there are few Highland families who have in their service a really good player. Nor is the spirit of the present day in favour of *ceòl mòr*, and with the passing of the old times its composition has almost died out. During the past century very few outstanding *piobaireachd* tunes have been composed, and not one has been written during the last fifty years.

The present restless spirit of the times is more favourable to the lighter pipe music (march, strathspey, and reel), and it is probable that never before has the standard of this type of music—sometimes called *ceòl beag*, or little music—been so high. *Ceòl beag* found no favour with the old chiefs and their pipers, and it is said that the Laird of Coll, returning unexpectedly to his castle and hearing his piper secretly practising a march tune, there and then dismissed him from his service.

Many beautiful pieces of *ceòl mòr* have been preserved to us; many more have been lost. After the Battle of Culloden, in 1746, the Disarming Act was put into force throughout the Highlands, and in the early days of that Act it was often as much as a man's life was worth to be convicted of being a piper.

Hereditary Pipers of Skye—Continued.

That so many pieces of *ceòl mòr* have been preserved is due largely to Donald MacDonald, a native of Glen Hinisdale, in Skye, who, in 1805, published what is probably the earliest collection of *ceòl mòr* in existence. Then, in 1839, Angus MacKay* published his more extensive collection of classical pipe music; and, in 1900, the late Major-General Thomason brought out a small book called *Ceòl Mòr*, in which is published, in a new and easily acquired shorthand notation, some two hundred and eighty *piobaireachd* tunes. This little book is now rare; it is sometimes known as "the piper's Bible," and is of priceless value to all who play classical pipe music.

So far as we can tell, the MacCrimmons excelled all other pipers in the art of *piobaireachd* composition. Some of their masterpieces are immortal. One of the finest is "Cumha na Cloinne," the Lament for the Children, composed by Padruig Mòr MacCrimmon, who lived in the seventeenth century. Padruig Mòr had eight fine sons. One day a foreign ship dropped anchor in Loch Dunvegan. She had a deadly fever aboard of her and spread it far and wide over MacLeod's Country. Padruig Mòr lost all his sons but one of this fever, and, under the stress of deep emotion, composed his lament for his loved family.

The first MacCrimmon of whom we have record is Iain Odhar; the last of his line to hold office was Iain Dubh (Black John), who died rather more than a hundred years ago. His son in 1840 held the rank of captain in the British army. Iain Dubh was over ninety years of age when he died. The Rev. Dr. Niall Ross of Glen Dale tells me that his grandmother knew the old man, and that up to the last, when too frail to play, he used to sit by the fire and finger his stick as though it had been his beloved chanter. According to the Bannatyne MS., it was Alasdair Crottach (chief of MacLeod from 1480 to 1540) who gave the MacCrimmons their Boreraig lands. In an old document it is mentioned that in 1528 there resided at Boreraig one John MacAngus, who was, we may infer, MacCrimmon's predecessor.

Perhaps the most celebrated MacCrimmon (as a man, if not as a piper) was Fionnlaidh na Plaide Baine. He was known as Finlay of the White Plaid because he was always dressed in white homsepun.† He first became famous by routing, single-handed, a body of twelve bullying men who were oppressing the people. Finlay bound with strong fishing-line those he did not kill, and took them captive to Dunvegan Castle. He also saved the MacLeods from a surprise attack by the MacDonalds of Clanranald on one occasion.

It was a dark, misty night, and Finlay was fishing in Loch Dunvegan. He saw suddenly several hostile galleys loom through the mist. He and his four companions rowed for the shore at Galtrigil to give the alarm. He was pursued and overtaken as his boat grounded on the beach. His four companions were killed. Fionnlaidh escaped, and running to the very summit of Dunvegan Head, gave three mighty shouts which the watchman at Dunvegan Castle heard, although the castle is seven miles

from the headland. The surprise attack of the Clanranalds was thus averted.

The MacCrimmons held, rent free, the lands of Boreraig and Galtrigil until the year 1770. By that year the value of the land had become six or seven times as great as it was when the MacCrimmons originally had been granted the farm, and so MacLeod reasonably proposed to resume one-half of the farm, at the same time offering to MacCrimmon a free lease of the other half *in perpetuum*. MacCrimmon, indignant that his emoluments should be curtailed, resigned the farm and broke up his establishment. The farm was afterwards let to eighteen different tenants, and brought in over £100 a year.

The MacCrimmons were well educated, and were persons of great importance. A MacCrimmon always had a *gille*, or servant, to carry his pipe. This explains the opening words of the beautiful *piobaireachd*, "The Lament for Rorie Mòr." The lament begins with the following words: "Tog orm mo phìob," meaning "Lift my pipe upon me." No MacCrimmon lifted his bagpipe himself; this was the duty of his servant. It is an indication of the respect in which the MacCrimmons were held that the chief of MacLeod in 1708 gave MacCrimmon a "tocher" of £157 upon his marriage.

It is interesting to read in the *New Statistical Account of Scotland* (written about twenty years after the death of the last hereditary piper to MacLeod): "There are a few of the MacCrimmons still residing in the parish, but they were born of what was reckoned a very low marriage for MacCrimmon, and they do not possess either the talents or the respectability of their progenitors. A MacCrimmon still acts as piper to MacLeod, but he is not descended from the Boreraig MacCrimmons, who appear to have renounced their profession with their endowment."

Boreraig, beside the sea, has lost its glory. MacCrimmon's house is a ruin, but it can be seen that it was a dwelling of considerable proportions, with its byres and its outhouses surrounding it. Close to the ruin, and now built into a wall, is a great stone, in weight perhaps half a ton. It is known as Clach Mhor Mhic Cruimein, or the Great Stone of MacCrimmon. It is said to have been used by Padruig Mòr MacCrimmon to drive his horse's tether-peg into the ground. None now living in MacLeod's Country can so much as move this great stone.

The following story told me in Boreraig testifies to the strength of the MacCrimmons. One of the MacLeods, who was a general in the British army, was abroad fighting, and MacCrimmon was with him. When the army was on the march a carriage passed. It neither stopped nor gave the soldiers sufficient room. This annoyed MacLeod, and he called on MacCrimmon to teach that driver his manners. They held the carriage wheels, and so great was the strength of the Highland chief and his piper, that the carriage wheels remained in their hands while the horses went on without them!

Near the MacCrimmon's former dwelling is a small recess in the rock beside the sea. It is Slochd nam Piobairean, the Piper's Hollow. Here MacCrimmon's pupils practised over their tunes. As they fingered the chanter on the breezy hillside beside the shore they could see the Cuillin southward raise their blue ethereal spires to the sky. Did the musicians glance north they viewed the hills of Harris, fair to gaze upon, across the blue plain of the Minch. Below them they could hear the murmur of the waves. It may be that there lingers here the faint echo of the old pipe tunes that so often drifted across the hills and across the sea; it is a pleasant thought that they may yet make melody.

* Angus MacKay was one of four gifted sons of John MacKay, a latter-day pupil of the MacCrimmons. John MacKay was a native of Raasay, who lived for a time at Kyleakin and taught numerous pupils who afterwards excelled in their profession. It is from John MacKay, through his pupils, his sons, and his sons' pupils that the MacCrimmon traditional playing has been handed down to the leading pipers of to-day.

† The MacLeods of Dunvegan, by R. C. MacLeod of MacLeod.

Hereditary Pipers of Skye—Continued.

Near Slochd nam Piobairean is Uamh nan Piobairean, or the Piper's Cave. To this cave the great MacCrimmons retired to compose. When they were desirous of making some outstanding composition they vowed a vow that they would touch no food until the *piobaireachd* was completed. To MacCrimmon, fasting in his cave, there appeared by night the spirit of his ancestor. The spirit piper played him a wonderful tune. In the morning MacCrimmon found that he could imperfectly remember the tune. The second night his ancestor again appeared and played the tune to him. This time the human listener received it more clearly, and when the third night it was played a third time MacCrimmon remembered it without fault. So much did he appreciate this tune that he called it his sweetheart, and to this day it is known as "MacCrimmon's Sweetheart."

Dunvegan Head, near Boreraig, is so delightful a spot that the MacCrimmons, we may doubt not, sometimes climbed it at sunset or by the light of the full moon for inspiration.

It is on an August day that Dunvegan Head is at its best. To the very edge of the great precipice of a thousand feet the heather blossoms so richly that the headland is purple and the breeze heavy with the scent of heather honey. It is inspiring to look across this carpet of bloom to the blue waters of the Minch, far below, and to see the hills of Uist beyond.

There are many great chasms on Dunvegan Head. Geodh an Tairbh (the Chasm of the Bull) and Geodha nan Each (the Chasm of the Horses) are close together. Then there is Geodh na Glongraich (the Chasm of the Tinkling Sound), that may have been named because the pebbles here roll back musically with the receding waves at the foot of the gully.

As MacCrimmon sat, lost in thought, upon this lonely headland in the dusk of a summer night, he saw perchance a ruddy beacon lighted on the far western horizon. Beyond North Uist it shone, and he knew that it came from Eilean nam Manach (the Isle of the Monks), and that the monks were lighting their friendly beacon to warn passing ships of the many rocks which rise treacherously from the sea around that lonely island group.

Leum an Doill, the Blind Man's Leap, is at Boreraig. One of the pupils at the piping college was Iain Dall Mackay, the blind piper of Gairloch. His fellow-pupils were jealous of his fine playing, and one day when he angered them in some manner they pursued him so hotly that the blind man leaped unknowingly from the top of a grassy knoll to the ground twenty feet below, yet was unharmed.

Although this happened centuries ago, the marks of where his heels landed in the soft grass were, so 'tis said, visible until recent times!

The piping college of the MacCrimmons was known as the Oil-Thigh. In the eighteenth century the MacCrimmons gave diplomas to their most successful pupils. On the diploma were drawn a picture of Dunvegan Castle, the galley of MacLeod, and various musical instruments. The name of the holder and the date of his entrance to, and departure from, the college were written on the diploma, which was sealed with the MacCrimmon seal. Among the last students at Boreraig were two of the MacIntyres of South Uist, hereditary pipers to Clanranald. Four cows were said to have been paid for their tuition.

The MacCrimmons have gone; their pipes remain. At Dunvegan Castle is preserved the renowned *piob bhreac*, or

Speckled Pipe, said to have belonged to Padruig Mòr MacCrimmon. The pipe has been re-made, and the tops of the three drones are all that is left of the original.

In Dunvegan Castle is another historical pipe. This pipe has the two small drones, but the big drone is wanting. It was played by Iain Dubh MacCrimmon, the last hereditary piper, and bears out the remarks of Joseph MacDonald* that the pipers of the west had in his time "laid aside the use of the great drone."

There are various legends to account for the unusual piping skill of the MacCrimmons. It is said that they possessed a fairy chanter. It was called Sionnsair Airgid na Mna Sithe, the Silver Chanter of the Fairy Woman, and was gifted by a fairy to Iain Og in the Piper's Hollow.

There is another account of the gift of music to the MacCrimmons. A great piping championship was to be held at Dunvegan. A young herd boy was anxious to hear all the fine playing, but his master would not allow him to go, for he said that his work was to herd cattle and not to listen to piping. The boy, sad at heart, was lying on the hill grass with the summer sun warm upon him and the scent of the wild thyme in his nostrils, when a beautiful fairy appeared to him. She said, "Have you your pipe with you, lad?" He said that he had, and that if he had his way of it he would be down at Dunvegan listening to all the fine playing. The fairy said to him, "I will give you the choice of three gifts. Which will you have—the gift of sailing, so that your boat of spotted yew will cut a slender oaten straw, so fine your steering of her; or the might of battle, so that when you fight the ravens of the Dun will be satiated with blood; or the gift of piping, so that your music will bring the birds from the trees and give peace to wounded men and pain-worn women?" The lad looked shyly up at the fairy. She was beautiful with a wild beauty. Her eyes were large. In them he saw sorrow and the light of the spiritual world. She looked at him kindly but (he thought) a little sadly, and stood silent awaiting his reply. Her dress was "the pure colour of the green sea where it lies over white sand." The lad said, "Give me the gift of piping." She gave him a fairy chanter and the gift of piping, then faded from his view.

Picking up his pipes the lad hurried down to Dunvegan. The piping there was in full swing. Renowned players from every district of the Highlands were contesting in *ceòl mòr*. MacLeod was angry when the herd boy arrived against his orders, and, as a punishment, insisted that he should play a tune before them all (knowing that he was but an indifferent player), so that he might be disgraced. The lad stood out with his pipe. He tuned his drones. The great players around him smiled to think that the boy was to compete against them. But as he played the talking and the ridicule were gradually stilled, and all listened eagerly. The lad was carried away by his tune. His music was such as had never before been heard, even at Dunvegan, and, as he finished amid breathless silence, all were agreed that the unknown herd boy had gained Buaidh na Piobaireachd, the Championship of Piping.

The lad became the first MacCrimmon.

The fairy had told the boy that he and his heirs must always reverence the fairy chanter, and if ever anything were said by its owner against it she would at once recall her gift.

Centuries after that MacLeod and his kinsman, MacLeod of Raasay, were returning to Skye from Applecross in the Dunvegan galley. MacCrimmon was with them, and after a time MacLeod said to him, "Seid suas"

* *A Compleat Theory of the Scots' Highland Bagpipe*, compiled 1760-63.

Hereditary Pipers of Skye—Continued.

("Blow up"). MacCrimmon blew up his pipe. He sat on the prow, the piper's seat, and the sea was so rough that he could not keep his fingers on the chanter. At last, in anger, he threw down his pipe and began to abuse the chanter. Scarcely had he finished speaking when the chanter wrenched itself from the drones and leaped overboard into the waves. Then MacCrimmon, too late, remembered the fairy prophecy that had been handed down in his family from father to son.

This is perhaps why the "Speckled Pipe" in Dunvegan Castle has a new chanter and old drones.

Less celebrated than the MacCrimmons were the MacArthurs, hereditary pipers to MacDonald of the Isles at the castle of Duntulm. The MacArthurs, or MacKarters, from time immemorial, occupied the lands of Hunglader, in Trotternish, in virtue of their office. In 1773 these lands were valued at eighty-four merks of silver duty. The site of the MacArthur's house is now occupied by a crofter's dwelling, but the small hill where the pipers and their pupils almost daily practised their tunes is still pointed out. The hill is called Cnoc Phail, and it is in close vicinity to Peingowan at Kilmuir.

The *New Statistical Account of Scotland* tells us that "the MacArthurs vied with the MacCrimmons of Dunvegan, the MacGregors of Fortingall, the MacKays of Gairloch, the Rankins of Coll, and the MacIntyres of Rannoch."

On the Island of Ulva, beside Mull, was a celebrated college of piping presided over by MacArthurs, apparently members of the same family who held the lands of Hunglader.

One of the last of the MacArthurs was in favour, more than a century ago, of founding a piping college for the instruction of those whose services might be useful in Highland regiments. The scheme came to nothing, but MacArthur was a pioneer, and in recent years we have seen started and carried on successfully the school for army pipers at Edinburgh Castle, where selected players are given a six months' course of tuition by the pipe-major instructor of the Piobaireachd Society.

Like the MacCrimmons, the MacArthurs were persons of considerable importance.

Pennant, during his tour of Skye in 1772, "took a repast at Sir Alexander MacDonald's piper, who, according to ancient custom, by virtue of his office, holds his lands free. His dwelling consists of several apartments—the first for his cattle during winter; the second is his hall; the third for the reception of strangers; and the fourth for the lodging of his family."

We last hear of the MacArthurs at the funeral of Flora MacDonald in 1790.

The mortal remains of the MacArthurs lie in Kilmuir Churchyard. On a flat gravestone is the following interesting inscription. The letters are so weathered and overgrown with moss that they are hard to read, and at first glance appear to be written in a foreign tongue. The inscription reads:

HERE LY
THE REMAINS OF
CHARLES MAC
KARTER WHOSE
FAME AS AN HON
EST MAN AND
REMARKABLE PIP
ER WILL SURVIVE
THIS GENERATION

FOR HIS MANNERS
WERE EASY & REG
ULAR AS HIS
MUSIC & THE
MELODY OF
HIS FINGERS WILL

After the word "will" the inscription ends abruptly, for Charles MacArthur's son was drowned while crossing the Minch from Harris with cattle and the quaint inscription was his doing.

The epitaph is, one infers, of a descendant of the Charles MacArthur concerning whom the following story is told:—

Sir Alexander MacDonald of the Isles, while on a visit to MacLeod at Dunvegan Castle, heard with delight the playing of Padruig Og MacCrimmon. Sir Alexander told the great piper that he had a young man in his own country who showed promise as a player, and he felt that a course at the MacCrimmon college would do him much good. Padruig Og told Sir Alexander MacDonald that he would be delighted to be of any service to him, and young MacArthur went to Boreraig and studied there for eleven years. At the end of that time Padruig Og took him back to Sir Alexander at Duntulm Castle.

When the two pipers arrived at Duntulm they found that MacKenzie of Gairloch was a guest at the Castle, and along with him his celebrated blind piper, Iain Dall MacKay.

Sir Alexander MacDonald of the Isles considered the opportunity an excellent one for testing MacArthur's skill. He accordingly made Padruig Og MacCrimmon and Charles MacArthur promise to keep their identity secret from Iain Dall, and, taking them up to the blind piper, said to him: "I have here a young man who has been learning the pipe for some years. Will you tell me if he is worth the money I have spent on him?" He then asked MacArthur to tune his pipe, and while he played a *piobaireachd* Iain Dall sat in silence. At the close of the tune he said to Sir Alexander: "He gives the notes correctly, and if he takes care he will excel in his profession. I think a great deal of him." Sir Alexander said that he was delighted to hear so favourable a report. He then mentioned that he had sent *two* pipers to Boreraig for tuition, and, as he intended keeping as his own piper the better of the two, he would now ask the second man to play before Iain Dall, to hear his opinion of him also. He then signed to Padruig Og MacCrimmon to play.

The excitement of the blind piper increased as the master player brought out the spirit of his tune by his genius, and at the close, before Sir Alexander had time to speak, the blind man exclaimed: "Indeed, Sir Alexander, it is needless to test me in that manner, for although I have lost the eyes of my human body I have still the eyes of my understanding, and if all the players in Scotland were present I should not find it hard to distinguish the last player from them all."

As I finish this chapter I look out upon the castle of Duntulm and picture the scene as the old blind piper from Gairloch listened to the playing of MacCrimmon, while the sea made music beneath the castle walls and the gulls sailed overhead, and I could wish once again the echo of that immortal pipe might be heard across the lonely shore of Eilean nan Sgiath, the Winged Isle.

[The foregoing is a chapter from Mr. Seton Gordon's Book, "The Charm of Skye." It is reprinted here by his permission and that of the publishers, Messrs. Cassell & Co., Ltd.]

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENTS

SCOTTISH PIPE BAND ASSOCIATION NOTES.

By D. McINTOSH.

A MEETING of the Executive Committee was held on Saturday, 17th August, with the President, Mr. Hugh MacDiarmid, M.I.M. and Cy.E., M.I.Struct.E., occupying the Chair.

The entry of H.R.H. Princess Louise's Dumbarton County Scout Band for the General Contest at Dunoon was agreed to. The Torphichen Thistle representatives were unable to attend the meeting to support certain written allegations which they had made, and it was agreed to defer consideration of the subject until the next Executive Committee Meeting. The question of bands taking part in the Isle of Man Gathering was under consideration, and the Secretary was instructed to write the Bands concerned, deploring their action in participating in the gathering against the wishes of the Executive Committee. Intimation was received of the resignation of the 5/6th A. & S. Hdrs. After a lengthy discussion it was decided that Bands should receive permission to attend Pitlochry Highland Gathering Contest for this year as an experiment, the Secretary to notify all bands accordingly. The decision of the local Committee regarding an appeal by Polmont War Memorial Band at the Falkirk Contest was ratified. The Secretary and Pipe-Major MacConnacher were appointed to represent the Association at Dunoon, on the 24th August, at the Draw for order of playing, &c. A vote of thanks to the Chairman terminated the proceedings.

The great day for Pipe Bands has come and gone: and what a day it was! Fourteen bands in the Juvenile Contest, 28 in the General Contest, and 18 in the World's Championship, should have given even the most enthusiastic of bandsmen as much as he wished for one day. Congratulations to all the winners, and "better luck next time" to all the others. The splendid presence of Major Lockie, who has organised these Contests for many years, was sadly missed, and Ex-Provost Ferguson expressed the sentiments of all present when he made reference to the sterling qualities of his friend, Major Lockie. The duties of organising stewards were performed most satisfactorily this year by Major J. Watt, M.C., and Mr. C. B. Lockie (son of Major Lockie), and they are to be complimented on the excellence of their arrangements.

The weather throughout the day was dull, with a couple of heavy showers, but, despite these handicaps, there was a large attendance of spectators. The general playing was of a high standard, although several of the Bands suffered from the showers of rain. We were again pleased to see our friends, "The Fintan Lalor," from Dublin, and on all hands I heard pleasing comments on their appearance and playing. We shall be highly delighted to welcome them into our ranks, if they could find such a course possible. It says a good deal for their enthusiasm that they travel such a long distance to compete in these Pipe Band Contests. The massed parade of all the Bands at the conclusion of the contests must be seen to be realised. It was literally a quarter of a mile of Pipe Bands.

Pitlochry Highland Gathering Contest is not under S.P.B.A. rules. I believe they have had two contests, in 1932 and 1933, and they renewed the venture this year, on 7th September, 1935. The question was duly considered by the Executive Committee, and, as an experiment

and for other reasons, it was decided to make the Contest open this year to all Association Bands. The response was astounding—no fewer than 10 Bands of the S.P.B.A. actually entering for the Contest as against 8 non-association. This is the first occasion on which Association Bands have competed at what may be regarded as non-association contests, and it remains to be seen whether there will be an extension of this privilege, or a reversion to the previous policy of non-intervention. The weather here was on its best behaviour, and this helped to enhance the appearance of an already naturally made enclosure. A beautifully level field at the foot of a slight hill which had been terraced and formed into a grand-stand was offset by a belt of trees which encloses the park in the distance. The massed Band Parade, under the charge of Drum-Major Lambe of the Glasgow Corporation Transport Band, was well carried through, and in particular the "Hollow Square" march across the field aroused great enthusiasm amongst the spectators, many of whom were seeing such a formation for the first time. The playing of the bands during the massed parade was particularly fine.

The Contest Season is now over for another year, and the bands, generally speaking, will be easing off for the Winter.

COWAL GATHERING.

World's Championship.

1. MacLean,	100 $\frac{1}{4}$ Points.
2. Glasgow Police,	98 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
3. Clan MacRae Society,	98 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
4. Glasgow Corporation Transport,	96 "
5. Dalzell Highland,	94 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

General Contests (confined to Grade 2 and Grade 3 Bands).

Contest No. 1.

1. Shotts and Dykehead Cal.	91 $\frac{3}{4}$ Points.
2. Glasgow Corporation Cleansing,	89 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
3. Muirhead & Sons,	86 "
4. Torphichen Thistle,	85 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
5. Ballochyle,	84 "

Contest No. 2.

1. Shotts & Dykehead Cal.	91 $\frac{3}{4}$ Points.
2. Glasgow Corporation Cleansing,	89 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
3. Muirhead & Sons,	86 "

Contest No. 3 (confined to previous non-prize winners at Cowal).

1. Glasgow Corporation Cleansing,	89 $\frac{1}{4}$ Points.
2. Muirhead & Sons,	86 "
3. Ballochyle,	84 "
4. Kinning Park,	81 $\frac{1}{4}$ "

Juvenile Contest No. 1.

1. Glasgow Shepherds,	90 $\frac{1}{2}$ Points.
2. Banknock & Hags,	87 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
3. Bowhill Colliery,	86 $\frac{1}{4}$ "

Juvenile Contest No. 2 (confined).

1. Banknock & Hags,	87 $\frac{1}{2}$ Points.
2. Gleneraig Colliery,	85 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
3. Lochgelly,	85 $\frac{1}{4}$ "

Territorial Contest.

- 5/6th A. & S.H.
- 9th H.L.I.
- 7th S.R.

Territorial Drumming.

- 5/6th A. & S.H.
- 9th H.L.I.

From Our Correspondents—Continued.**DRUMMING CONTESTS.****World's Championship.**

1. { Equal } MacLean,	97	Points.
2. { } Clan MacRae Society,	97	"

General Contest.

1. Clan MacKenzie,	97	Points.
2. Shotts & Dykehead Cal.,	96	"

Juvenile Drumming.

1. Dundonald,	87	Points.
2. Banknock & Haggs,	86	"

Drum-Major's Contest.

1. D.-M. Montgomery, 5th H.L.I.
2. D.-M. Slater, Bonhill.

The Judges were :—Juvenile and World's Championship.

Piping.—P.-M. J. O. Duff and P.-M. P. Meldrum.

Drumming.—D.-M. W. MacCrate.

Marching.—Capt. E. Stevenson, M.C.

Dress and Discipline.—Captain G. MacQueen.

General Contests :—

Piping.—P.-M. J. MacDougall and P.-M. C. H. Smith.

Drumming.—D.-M. H. MacHardy.

Marching.—Capt. E. Stevenson, M.C.

Dress and Discipline.—Capt. G. MacQueen.

PITLOCHRY HIGHLAND GATHERING BAND CONTEST.**7th September, 1935.**

1. Clan MacRae Society,	97½	Points.
2. MacLean,	94	"
3. Glasgow Corporation Transport,	93	"
4. { Equal } City of Dundee,	90½	"
5. { } Scottish Horse,	90½	"

17 Bands competed. The Judges were :—

Piping.—P.-M. Wm. Ross, Edinburgh.

Drumming.—D.-M. Wm. Patterson, Edinburgh.

Marching, &c.—P.-M. Ackroyd, Perth.

Notes from the Irish Free State.

IN or about the beginning of the present century the old Dublin Pipers Club was formed by a few students and admirers of the old traditional music. Though the main object was to encourage the youth of the country to take up the study of the art of playing the Irish Uilleann Pipes (or, as they were sometimes called at that time, the Irish Union Pipes), all traditional musicians whether fiddlers, flute players, or war pipers, were welcome in the club. Mr. Patrick Nally, an official of the Dublin Corporation, and Patrick Archer, who was well known in Gaelic literary circles, and the late Eammon Kent, were a few of the founders of this fateful club, but for the formation of which the real traditional style of playing the old Irish pipes would by this time be but a memory of the past, and beyond recall, as many of the old-time pipers that were living at that time have since then all passed away. The Club began in a very small way indeed. We had to be content with a small kitchen under Cathal McGarvey's tobacconist's shop in North Frederick Street. Poor Ned Kent, our Hon. Secretary, who was executed after the rising in 1916, had a gift for organisation, very fortunately secured as Uilleann pipe instructor to the Club an old piper named Nicholas Markey, from near Ardee, Co. Louth, but at that time living in Dublin. This old man was taught by the famous Billy Taylor, the Drogheda piper and pipe maker who made such a great name in America, where he died. Nicholas Markey was admitted by the pipers of his day to be the best pupil that Billy

Taylor left behind him here in Ireland. We soon had a class of five or six working away at the fingering of the pipe chanter, and, as there is no tutor for the Irish pipes, similar to those used by our Highland cousins, in teaching the Piob Mor, we had to learn the grace notes and all the tricks of pipe fingering direct from the fingers of the old piper. The membership of the Club began to increase so much that the committee took two rooms in 41 Parnell Square, and our energetic Secretary about this time interested a Galway gentleman, Edward Martyn, Esq., who gave very generous financial support to the Club, and paid the fees of three traditional teachers: Nicholas Markey for the Uilleann Pipes, Tom Kenny traditional fiddle, and Dan Clune, from Clare, Irish dancing.

The Club was now very strong, and had over 300 members, and held a weekly ceildh to which all were welcome. About this time Kent resigned, and one of the committee named Michael Dugan, a promising young student of the Uilleann pipes, took over the duties of hon. secretary, which he carried out with credit till the break up of the Club in 1916. However, the old Dublin Pipers Club, during its short existence, did vital service towards saving the art of playing the old Irish pipes from being hopelessly lost.

The great obstacle in those days was that it was a matter of heartbreaking difficulty to procure a set of pipes in playing order, and it was only the very keenest and staunchest learners who stuck to their old sets of pipes till their perseverance was rewarded by coming across some old piper from the country who could make reeds for their pipes, and put the instrument in playing order, and so give them a sporting chance of picking up the method of fingering the chanter from our revered old teacher, Nicholas Markey (long since gone to his heavenly home), whose execution on the Irish chanter I have never seen equalled, and I have heard and known personally every Irish piper of note during the last 40 years. As I mentioned before, Markey was a pupil of the great Billy Taylor, who could make and play the Highland pipes as well as he could the Irish. This experience of his (Taylor's) of the playing of the Highland chanter accounted, to my mind, for the clear distinct way he made every note. During my years of practice and study of both the playing and making of these two instruments, I have become more and more convinced of the close link there is between them. We know, of course, that the Uilleann pipes were developed from the ancient Highland pipes, or Piob Mor, but there is also a very marked similarity in the fingering of both chanters, of course only apparent to pipers who can play the two instruments. I have noticed this similarity mostly in the chanter playing of several pipers in the County Louth, notably Pat Ward, of Drogheda, who was a great reed-maker, and gave me my first lessons in that art; also George McCartney, of Ardee. Both of these old men belonged to the Billy Taylor school of piping. Also with a couple of Galway pipers—Pat MacDonagh and Martin Reilly, both championship winners in their day. Also a travelling "wind-merchant," by the name of Johnny Gorman, from Roscommon. The southern pipers that I have heard played in a more open style of fingering, and lacked the clear way of cutting out the notes of the Louth and Galway men. The best-known of these southern pipers was John Cash, of Wicklow town, famous all over Ireland. He was a well-to-do travelling tinsmith, far above the ordinary tinker, and was a horse-dealer as well. He was a grand old piper, and I could tell by his method

From Our Correspondents—Continued.

of fingering that he had not travelled without picking up the clear style of execution from the best pipers he met. He had a son, Jim Cash, who I have heard it said by Wicklow and Wexford men that he was a better piper than his father. I am sorry to say he died before I had a chance of hearing him; but, if he was better than Old John, he must have been a crack. Thomas Rowsome, son of a Wexford farmer, was a very beautiful player. He had a flowing style, rather open fingering, but perfect rhythm, a very pleasing player indeed. Many a happy hour have I spent with these last-mentioned old friends of mine, both of whom have passed over to the great majority.

Although there is a great difference between the Highland pipe chanter, which has only a range of nine notes, and the Irish chanter, which has a range of two octaves and a full chromatic scale, the fingers are placed in exactly the same positions on both chanters. The lowest note on the Highland chanter, which is in the Key A major, is G on the second line, the same fingers on the Irish chanter produce D below the lines, in the scale of D, and the grace notes are used in the same way in both chanters. Take, for instance, the grace notes G D E, used for the sounding of low A rapidly, three times on the Highland chanter. The same fingers are used on the Irish chanter to produce low D, three times rapidly, but the grace notes struck are C G A, keeping the chanter closed, and off the knee. There are several other movements on the Highland chanter which can be used with very telling effect on the Irish chanter. I have found, from long experience of teaching both pipes, that the pupil that has been properly taught the Highland pipes finds it surprisingly easy to learn the Uilleann pipes, as the music for both pipes can be written in the same manner, but only by a piper who can play both. The ordinary beginner who never had his fingers on a chanter, or learned to read music, has a much harder job than one who got his first schooling on the Highland chanter.

The old Dublin Pipers Club did great service towards the revival of piping, and I ascribe the greatest benefit to the learners in Dublin to the organisation by the Club Committee of an annual contest at the Gaelic League Festival (the Oireachtas), to which every known piper was invited, and all his travelling expenses paid. This was a tremendous advantage to any of us who were learning, to hear the best pipers that were left in Ireland, and there were some good ones, but all old men, who we could not expect to have long with us. We were thus enabled to compare the style of playing of pipers from all over Ireland. One member of our Club committee, Seamus Cassidy, although not much of a piper, was a great man for research work, and if ever there was a piper in Ireland, he found out all about him, and he did his best to get him up to the annual contest.

Another person who was most helpful to novices for many years was the late William Rowsome, brother of Thomas Rowsome, mentioned before in this article. He was the best maker of the Irish pipes in Dublin during the first quarter of this century, and a first-class reed-maker; so it can be understood what a great help he was to us beginners, as it takes a man of long experience to keep a set of Uilleann pipes in playing order. He left two sons, pipers, Leo and Thomas, who can play the pipes well, and the former carries on his father's trade of pipemaker.

During the month of August, we had the annual pipe band contest held in conjunction with other events, at

the Garda Depot, in the Phoenix Park, on Sunday, the 25th. There were only four bands entered, and the judging was the worst exhibition of ignorance and assurance that I have ever witnessed. The bands were placed in the following order:—Connolly Pipe Band 1st, Bray Pipe Band 2nd, and Donnybrook Catholic Scouts Band tied with the Fintan Lalor Pipe Band for 3rd place. The first-mentioned three bands played up to the usual form for the Free State, and certainly the Donnybrook boys pleased me very much as a Scout turn-out, and their teachers, Leo and George Purcell, deserve great credit. But all these bands have a long way to go before they can give a performance equal to that given by the Fintan Lalor Pipe Band, of either piping or drumming. The individual competition proved beyond doubt that the judge has no practical knowledge of piping, as young Tim Keogh, 2nd, is in a class far above the other entrants, who were really only in the elementary stage; and to cap all this the judge told the secretary of the Fintans, when he asked for their marks, that their drumming was very bad. I saw him looking at the drummers while they were competing, and, from the look on his face, I would say he did not know what they were doing.

Anyhow, we get the judges we deserve. When Father Hogan made several efforts to form a Pipe Band Association, the bands let him down after all the trouble he took.

Next month I hope to write a little about Irish Dancing.

SLAINTE.

NOTES FROM NORTHERN IRELAND.

By ULSTERMAN.

THE first number of "Piping and Dancing" has been received with much appreciation by our Pipers and Drummers. Much praise has been showered upon the Editor for the numerous items of interest. Ulster bandmen are pleased to have a journal which deals with their Pipe Bands, and drummers are delighted with the article on drumming by A. D. Hamilton. This series should be a means of edification to our drummers.

Messrs. Joseph Bell, Pipe-Major, Lebound Pipe Band, and J. Warnock, Secretary, Tullylagan Pipe Band, were interested spectators at the famous Dunoon Gathering. Both were highly pleased with the excellence of the competing bands.

All the bands in Ulster are now devoting their time to the test pieces for the coming contest in November. March, "MacDonald of the Isles"; Strathspey, "Maggie Cameron"; Reel, "Duntroon"; Logan's arrangement, are the pieces chosen for this year's test.

There will be keen competition this time, as the bands are out to stop Tullylagan Band in its winning career. Up to the time of going to press, it is not possible to state the bands intending to compete.

I would like if Secretaries of bands would send along reports each month, as it is our intention to make the Ulster Notes as interesting as possible.

Star of Eden Pipe Band, under the tuition of Mr. F. B. Hope, Ireland's leading piper, has received a great loss by the death of their popular secretary, Mr. W. Alexander. The Band has lost a faithful worker and sincere friend, whose place will be hard to fill.

Ballykeel Pipe Band, Mr. J. Walker (teacher), was out in a procession, and looked remarkably well, had a nice appearance, and a splendid toned set of pipes. The tuning of drones was a good feature, whilst the chanter work was highly commendable.

Coronation Pipe Band, one of the oldest Pipe organisations in Belfast, still have the services and advice of M

From Our Correspondents—Continued.

T. H. Nelson, and the band is fast regaining lost ground. I look for good results in the near future.

The Duke of York Pipe Band, with Mr. Angus Nelson in command, have been doing very well of late. This Band is noted for their fine military appearance when out on the march.

Carnmoney Pipe Band, Mr. A. Reith in command, is having hard luck with members working late. The Band had to forego entering the March Contest on account of this. I hope better news will be forthcoming so that the members can attend in full force.

Mr. Samuel McFeeters, Pipe-Major Angelo Davison Band, is one of the most enthusiastic band leaders I know of. Sammy is never contented unless he is either Piping or Dancing. He was the pioneer of Highland dancing in Belfast.

It may not be generally known that Antrim town possesses a very good Pipe Band, viz., the Apprentice Boys, who are a capable set of pipers. They have had a very busy season.

St. Michael's Cadet Pipe Band owe a great deal to Mr. Wm. Ferry, senior officer, for his continued interest in the boys. It is just questionable whether the Church would have had a band at all were it not for Mr. Ferry's useful and self-sacrificing work. He is an enthusiast of the highest order.

Mr. Wm. Milne, a conductor who has had useful experience in the Army, has charge of the Prince of Wales Pipe Band. This progressive organisation is making rapid strides. If the members give their support to Mr. Milne, good results will surely come.

I am pleased to observe that the Castleton Pipe Band has decided to re-join the Bands Association. This looks as if this old-time contesting Band intends to enter all the local contests.

Seven Towers Pipe Band, Ballymena, are quite a capable Band. Their turn-out at a recent parade in Ballymena was highly satisfactory. Piping and Drumming of many well-known Highland marches was of a high order. Quite a pleasing Band.

East Belfast Pipe Band scored a great success at the Oval, on Motor Race Day. I have never heard a crowd recognise a band with unstinted applause as on this occasion. The bandsmen were fully deserving of all the praise they got. Their bearing and marching was a perfect treat to watch. The Drum-Major deserves special mention. He added dignity to the turn-out.

NOTES ON THE NORTHUMBRIAN CHANTER.

By WILLIAM A. COCKS, F.S.A., Scot.

GREETINGS from Northumberland to the readers of "Piping and Dancing." I hope to give each month some notes on the Piping activities, and possibly also the Dancing doings in our County, which I hope may be of interest to others besides ourselves.

We, that is Northumbrian pipers, are a purely local institution, and are keeping alive the last remaining trace of the use of the old English bagpipe, which was common in bygone times to many parts of the Country. It has gradually disappeared, and now the North-East corner alone keeps the flag flying. I find in my wanderings that the Northumbrian pipes are very little known elsewhere, and indeed they have not been heard of at all in many places. During the last few years they have been revived to a large extent, and on several occasions have been broadcast by Mr. Tom Clough, one of the leading players. This augurs fairly well for the immediate welfare of the

instrument, but their fate in the more remote future hangs in the balance. People will not take much trouble nowadays to make their own music. They learn to "play" the gramophone, or "twiddle" the knobs on the wireless; and that is about the sum total of their effort. More shame to them!

In view of the fact, therefore, that our Pipes are so little known, I shall hope to give, from month to month, a few jottings on their development and construction, in addition to notes on current events.

At the moment, we are looking forward to our largest annual event, the Piping Competitions at Bellingham Show, which takes place on September 21st. There are ten classes for Pipes, and one for Pipes and Violin in concert. This event is the Pipers' annual day out, and is greatly enjoyed—weather permitting.

In the "good old days," we Northumbrians, together with our brother Scots, used to crack heads over the Borders. Now we crack nothing more harmful than jokes, and I hope that my future notes may have the effect of increasing "that fellow-feeling which makes us wondrous kind" in our mutual Piping interest.

LONDON NOTES.

By IAIN OG.

Piping in London—Learning to Play.

Just recently, in a London evening paper, there was a paragraph to the effect that young Scots in London seemed to have no inclination to follow the lead given by the Prince of Wales, and learn to play the pipes. The paragraph was accompanied by a sketch of a kilted, Balmoral-bonneted individual turning up his nose at what was undoubtedly a set of bagpipes.

In their discussions of matters pertaining to the pipes, London newspapers are apt at times (if I may go to the grouse moors for my phraseology) to indulge in wild shooting, but it must be admitted that, in this case, they managed to hit the mark. There undeniably is a dearth of learners in the Metropolis, and the newspaper paragraph is an echo from the annual report of the Scottish Piping Society of London, which drew attention to the smallness of the Society's chanter class.

As the old Glasgow lady said: "Things will aye be some way"; and there must be a reason or reasons why things in London are like this. The big difficulty, I think, is that London is regarded by the majority of young Scots as a city where there is neither room nor time for learning to play the pipes, or practising on them. If young Donald is not a piper in the north, then he certainly has no ideas about taking up the pipes when he is going to get to London, and, when the time comes to say good-bye to the old home in Inchnadamph, or Inveraray, and turn his face to the Metropolis, you may be sure he has a lump in his throat, but no pipe-box in his hand. And he remains of the same opinion once he is down here.

It must be admitted that, up till some years ago, there was every justification for this way of looking at things. Other than regimental pipers and one or two isolated players, piping had really no footing in the South and opportunities for learners were hardly known. With the creation of the Scottish Piping Society of London three or four years ago, however, the institution of a Chanter Class and the holding of an annual competition, this state of affairs has been completely altered.

The question is: should not this alter the view-point of our young friend, Donald? The answer is that to date it has scarcely altered it at all. After each competition there are always a number of enquiries about the chanter

From Our Correspondents—Continued.

class advertised on the programme, and there is always a small band of enthusiasts to be found practising on the chanter every Friday evening, in the Corporation Hall; but, in the main, young Donald remains the personification of the individual in the newspaper sketch, only without the kilt and the Balmoral bonnet.

Can anyone suggest a means of converting him?

NOTES FROM EDINBURGH.

By "LISTENER."

THE advent of a journal devoted to Piping and Dancing has naturally aroused much interest amongst pipers and dancers in the Scottish capital, and the first number has met with a hearty welcome. Only such a periodical can deal amply with topics of special interest, and such topics are assuredly not few: Let us take, for example, the vexed and divergent views that exist with regard to the judging of solo and band competitions (including drumming), not to speak of Highland dancing. Probably the strongest criticisms of present methods and appointment of judges emanate from dancers who appear to have at least a *prima facie* case for discussion and enquiry before the tribunal of your readers. It seems to be the fact that rightly or wrongly, certain of the greatest present-day exponents of Highland dancing seldom, if ever, now take part in the leading Highland games. This is not as it should be, if we are to have real contests and the best features of the art preserved. Committees in charge of Games here and there throughout the country can do a great service to Highland dancing, and, indeed, to piping also, by considering what can be done to restore the confidence of those outstanding artistes who now absent themselves from their gatherings. In some districts local committees are believed to be reluctant to change their judges with the result that, after appearing unsuccessfully once or twice before the same judges, good performers do not feel justified in risking their reputations and wasting their time and money in facing the same gentlemen again. It will be very unfortunate if the present discontent amongst dancers will result in still further reducing the number of young men who go in for the long and expensive training necessary to prepare them for open competitions. It is therefore suggested that different judges should be appointed every year for the principal Highland Games, and that no judge should officiate at more than one gathering in any one year. This should give a fair chance to all competitors, and would ensure larger and more representative entries, which are also desirable to maintain interest in the Gatherings.

The judging of Pipe Bands is a big question, and behind it lies the even greater issue, viz., whether band playing is not actually detrimental to what is best in the music of the pipes. While the services of pipe bands in popularising the national instrument are widely recognised, there is a growing feeling that bands do not, generally speaking, give sufficient consideration to the timing and phrasing of tunes. As regards time, Marches are frequently played much too fast, suggesting that the present-day craving for speed which dominates the commercial world has also infected our Pipe and Drum-Majors, who should not forget that the attenuation of certain important notes robs the tune of much of its natural expression and charm. Indeed few, if any, of our best Marches can be rendered properly to "military time." Such a pace may quite well answer the purpose of soldiers on the march, where

proper expression is of subsidiary importance to the thud of the drum. Whether drums should be allowed to intermix with pipes in ordinary band contests is a moot point, for it is almost impossible for judges, however competent, to do real justice to both. For that reason some hold the view that pipe bands should be judged as such, and without any drums, although for spectacular purposes drums are of importance; but, of course, no art, such as piping, should be sacrificed at the altar of another, such as drumming, even if the object be to attract a good "gate" to provide the necessary prize-money.

Piping and kindred Highland Societies in Edinburgh have not yet completed their arrangements for the coming Session, as many of their members have only now returned from holiday. I hear, however, that the Highland Pipers' Society's annual meeting, at which their syllabus for next Session will be arranged, will be held shortly, and in time to resume their practice meetings next month.

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From our Correspondents—Continued.

DANCING NOTES.

By TERPSICHOIRE.

THOSE of us who earn a living in the Dancing business are just at the time when, literally, we don't know where to turn for time. Conferences have been the order of the day, new dances have to be seen, and now we are completing preparations for what looks like the biggest winter season ever. All this following on our efforts to polish up our Highland dancing pupils for contests has just left us limp.

It was thought a few months ago, when the police took action in Glasgow against some teachers who had organised some exhibitions of dancing by their own pupils, that the bottom had been knocked out of the Highland dancing business. As my readers may remember, a small sum was charged for admission to these functions. This, according to the prosecution, made it a case of employing children under fourteen on the stage. What we have never yet learned is why Highland dancing was selected for attack in this manner. Readers will readily agree with us that teachers of ballroom dancing, singing, elocution, and mime, arrange functions of a similar form, with children of all ages, and then they charge a sum so that the parents and friends may see how much they have profited by the teaching. Yet they, so far, have never been interfered with by authority. This, it should be remembered, is generally only a sufficient charge to meet the cost of the hire of hall, and other charges connected with it. The teacher rarely, if ever, makes a direct profit from this. Undoubtedly, he may make an indirect profit if his pupils show themselves to be specially apt, and instil a desire in the minds of others to learn at the same source. I think that is a very far-fetched excuse for a charge of employing children under fourteen on the stage.

However, to return to the point. It was thought that these prosecutions would knock the bottom out of the business. Actually, the reverse seems to be the case. On all hands I hear of more pupils being enrolled for winter classes than has ever been known in the recollections of any teacher. In addition, another pleasing feature for teachers of Highland dancing is the requests that nearly all of them have to form Reel Classes for Adults. This shows an ever-increasing demand for tuition that must be a very pleasing factor to those of us who set our faces against some of the more recent ballroom dances.

Another item to report, while it is in my mind. In the August issue, "Ulsterman" said that there is a field in Northern Ireland waiting to be exploited by a dance teacher. This has come to the notice of several of these teachers, and they ask me to get information on the point. One of them has told me that he would not be averse to opening a branch establishment if he could pay expenses in the first year. Can "Ulsterman" supply information?

I have been in conversation with the Editor regarding ways and means, and we have come to an arrangement, or maybe I should call it a method, whereby I will start next month and give dancing lessons in these pages. It is my intention to start with Reels, as we, nearly all, dance these. If I find that readers would prefer to start off with some other dance, let me know, and I will arrange it.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

7 Mayville Road, Brierfield,
September 3rd, 1935.

Ed., "Piping and Dancing."

Dear Sir,—I enclose my sub. for "P. & D." I have been (and am now) playing in brass bands 30 years. Three years ago I started study of the Pipes (and can now play a bit), and the first thing I enquired for were publications on the subject similar to *Brass Band News*, *The Cornet*, and several other papers. To my astonishment there were none. I expect your paper to have a phenomenal success.—Yours truly,

HARTLEY BANNISTER.

Glasgow.

Dear Sir,—My attention has been drawn to a mistake in result of competition at Strathendrick Games. Dancing, Sailor's Hornpipe (page 8 in magazine) should read: 1st Prize, Jean Forbes, Shettleston.—Yours,

R. R.

31 Harcourt Drive,
Dennistoun, Glasgow.

Dear Sir,—Re your issue of "Piping and Dancing," August, 1935, page 13, Isle of Man Gathering, you state there was no prize-money or other remuneration. Nevertheless, 4 bands attended. May I draw your attention to the fact that the 4 bands who attended Gathering each received remuneration, and I suggest that you have this statement corrected at your earliest, and oblige.—Yours,

WM. ARTHUR, Pipe-Major.

We have made enquiry regarding Pipe-Major Arthur's statement, and we find that our correspondent was substantially correct. What the bands that went to the Isle of Man received was an *ex gratia* payment to meet out-of-pocket expenses. This is not remuneration, or payment for services rendered.—Editor

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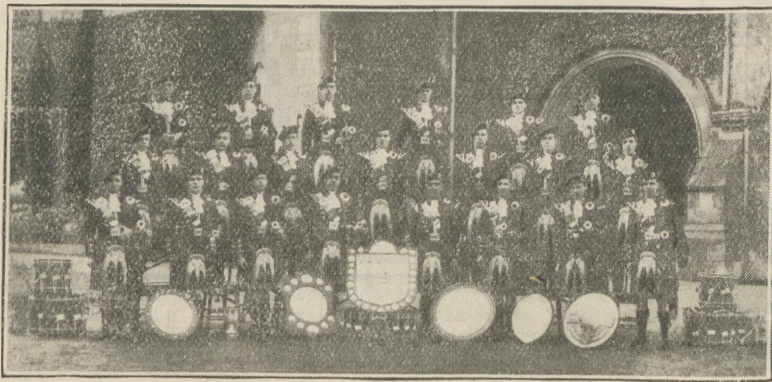
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THE MACLEAN PIPE BAND, Champions of the World, 1927-30-35.

THE MacLean Pipe Band had its origin in the Glasgow Y.M.C.A. Pipe Band, a band that was indebted to a Dr. MacLean for much financial assistance.

This Y.M.C.A. Band was disbanded in 1920. Among the members were several pipers and drummers who, at great personal sacrifice, fanned the flame of interest, and had the band re-established. Friendships were made thereby, and adversity in the intervening years only served to cement them, so that now the MacLean Band has become a happily united family.

Pipe-Major William Sloan was the last Pipe-Major of the Y.M.C.A. Band, and the first, and, so far, the only Pipe-Major in the MacLean Band. He it was who, with Drum-Major Turrent and one or two other enthusiasts, set to work and reformed the band, with what results we now know. In doing this, however, much labour was expended: how much only those who went through the time of travail from 1920 to 1927 know.



The first practices were held in a contractor's shed in the South side of Glasgow. Here, amid a welter of carts and lorries, practice was carried on in the bleak winter nights. Many times it had to be stopped so that the stalwarts of those days could warm their fingers in a manner that carters are wont to do, or, if it should be wet, heat was engendered by jumping about in an effort to dodge the rain that came pitilessly through the leaking roof.

In the first year the band had no name. Its official quarter's were the Pipe-Major's house, and here, after much discussion, it was decided to perpetuate the name of the Dr. MacLean who had done so much for the band in other days; and so the MacLean Pipe Band came into official existence in 1921, though it is doubtful if the Doctor ever knew of it. The first secretary, Piper John Campbell, called the first official meeting of the band on the 12th May, 1921, when he gave a resume in substance similar to what we have given here. Then 19 members bound themselves to stick together for two years and assist in raising the necessary capital to make themselves a fully-fledged band.

In June, 1921, a uniform was borrowed from a welfare club in Rutherglen. With this the band took part in a contest held at Scotstoun, winning 3rd prize, £10. The money was a great help; but it was nothing compared to the moral effect on the members. During the following three years enthusiasm dwindled, and it was just the Pipe-Major's indomitable courage that kept things moving. In April, 1924, the Caledonian Gardens Association

granted the use of their hall to what was now only the remnants of a band. This proved to be the turning-point in their affairs. Within three months of taking up their new abode, the band was able to buy a uniform through the generosity of members, friends, and well-wishers. True, it was ex-army stuff, and, probably, more useful than ornamental; still it was a Seaforth kilt and a khaki tunic dyed blue, and it enabled the band to appear at Cowal and get a fourth prize in the civilian championship, and first for bands that had not won at Cowal before.

From this point the band moved on, winning one contest after the other, till they had won the supreme award at Cowal, in 1927. With their secretarial duties in the capable hands of Drummer E. McColl, and those of the treasurer in the equally capable hands of Piper W. Walker, the band went from one triumph to another, and, in the meantime, they bought and paid for a uniform costing £400. 1927 was a great year for this band which had only five of the original members left then.

The band firmly established itself in the eyes of the Piping world when it repeated itself by winning, again, in 1930. Now the secretary was Drummer R. P. Smith (who still wields the pen ably for them), and the treasury remained in charge of Piper Walker, than whom no more efficient official could be found.

About this time there was much rumour about the formation of an association for pipe bands, but it did not, then, come to fruition. Towards the Autumn of 1930, the MacLean Band circularised all the leading bands of that time, in an effort to find if an association was desired by the majority. In October, 1930, an invitation was sent to every acquiescent band to attend a meeting to be held in the MacLean Band practice hall. Out of this meeting the Scottish Pipe Band Association was formed, and Pipe-Major Sloan had a little of the reward due to him when he was appointed the first President, an office that he adorned for three years.

Space does not permit us to give a detailed list of all the prizes that the MacLean Band has won. It will give the reader a fair idea of their competitive skill when we state that in their fifteen years as the MacLean Band they have only missed the receipt of one or other of the prizes on five occasions.

Great credit is due to both the Pipe-Major and Drum-Major in bringing the band to the state it is in, but they themselves would be the first to admit that their present pre-eminence is due to the effort of every single playing member, and also to a host of helpers and well-wishers outwith their ranks. No remuneration is received by anyone in the band, everyone doing his best for the love of the instrument.

Although MacLean's, as a whole, are interested in the band, some in a very practical fashion, the band has no official connection with any clan or other organisation. It depends mainly on its own efforts to keep it alive, both as an instrumental entity, and as a financially sound concern that has made its own niche in the Piping world.

How to Make Your Own Bagpipes

BY "WEE WULLIE"

Noo, Ah'm no' as green as Ah look. an' Ah thocht this big galoot wis tryin' tae hae a rise oot o' me; so Ah walks away, an' then Ah sees a lot o. sheepskins hingin' up, an' Ah asked an' auld man if they wis guid cured sheepskins. Then he asks me whit wey I ask that; so Ah tells him the whole story, an' he says its a shame takin' a rise oot of a wee laudie like me. Then he goes back wi' me tae the stall, an' he fair tells aff this big galoot, an' he tells the butcher whaur tae get the kin' o' guid cured sheepskin that Ah want. An' afore he went he shoved somethin' intae ma' haund, an' when Ah looks here's a twa bob bit, an' he says "that'll help tae buy the guid cured sheepskin."

Me an' the butcher goes back hame, an' the butcher he says that he'll write tae the folks that keep the guid cured sheepskins, an' try an' get wan shune.

In the beginnin' o' the next week, up comes a guid cured sheepskin. The next night the auld fl'a came hame so ma mither said we were baith tae go doon an' see the butcher an' pey fer it. In we goes tae the butcher, an' he says tae the auld man, "it's a fine night an' all, an' what are ye needin' the night, big Calum?" So the aul' man says, "we hiv the guid cured sheepskin, an' we had come tae pey it, an' he wid like tae know where he got it jist in case he had tae get anither wan, an' maybe no' be near the same butcher tae get it. So the butcher said something about a tanner; then the aul' man puts a hauf croon on the coonter, an' the butcher asks whit that's fer; an' the aul' man says it's fer the guid cured sheepskin, an' there'll be two bob back. Then the butcher begins tae mak' oot he got the guid cured sheepskin fae a man that's ca'd a tanner, an' that it cost a pound. An' then the auld says, "Jees, its as dear as a set of pipes themselves." Bit he peys the pound, an' oot we went; an' he says we'll go an' see that wee fairy Irishman.

Ah wisna' sae keen on that. Efter a' the bother 'o gettin' this bloomin' sheepskin Ah thocht we could dae without this wee fairy man. Bit Ah wis feart tae say that tae the auld fl'a. Ah wid likely hae got a guid cloutin' if Ah had.

So doon we goes tae the Broomielaw, an' the auld man he slips intae a place tae get some stuff tae help tae mak' the bag. When we gets intae the Irishman's, he hands ower the sheepskin and the bottle of stuff tae help tae mak' the bag. Then the fairy man lays the skin on his coonter an' he sniffs at the bottle, then he sips it, then he drinks it right up. So Ah asked ma feyther hoo it wid halp tae mak' the bag. The auld fl'a he says it will give him the right feeling to cut the skin in the right manner; but the Irishman says that he feels it'll give him a sore head unless at's washed right down by the real potheen. So he reaches for a five-giller, an' he takes a gulp an' smacks his lips an' passes it over tae ma feyther, an' asks what he thinks o. that. After the aul' fl'a has a sook, he says it's the grand stuff, an' he thinks it should put a grand skin on the bag; so the Irishman taks oot a tea-spoon an' poors a drap intae it an' puts it on the skin an' gies it a rub wi' his haun', an' then he says his sicht is bad, but if big Calum can see the skin on the bag they might as well have another wan for shure the pipes want blessin'.

Ma feyther an' the aul' fairy took tae blessin' till that five-giller wis about empty. Then ma feyther said he wid

be back fer the cut skin the next day, when the fairy man's sight would be better.

We left then, an' on the road hame the aul' fl'a was gey shoogly about the legs, bit we managed a'richt till we got tae the close mooth, where the auld wife wis waitin' tae tell us whit she thocht o' a man like that. She wis jist gettin' right worked up when the auld fl'a gied a grunt an' slid doon on his hunkers an' went aff soond asleep.

When the auld wife saw that ma feyther wis sleeping an' peyin' nae attention tae her bletherin', she sterted greetin' and began haverin' aboot dens o' iniquity whore her wee laudie wis bein' led intae temptation by the very man who should be pittin' his feet in the paths of righteousness.. She jist about had me worked up tae the pint o' greetin' when a polisman poked his heid intae the close, an' when he saw whit wis whit, he humphed the auld fl'a up on his back an' kerried him up tae the hoose.

He dumped him doon on the big easy chair, an' then the old fl'a woke up. He gied his heid a bit o' a shake an' then started camarachenchuin away tae the polisman. Nae doot ye'll hae jaloosed that it disnae tak' very much tae stert ma mither talkin'. Bit ah'll bate a boab ye never heard onything like her when twa Hielanmen get sterted teerin' the tartan in oor kitchen. By gums, ye should hear her. Whit she disnae say aboot big ignorant lumps that cannae talk like ordinary Christians isnae worth listenin' tae. She talks that weel that she aye shuts up the big ignorant lumps; bit for a' that the auld fl'a gies her a look sometimes that jist seems tae freeze her. This wis wan o' the times he turned the look ontae her, an' when she stopped he sterted. An' ye s'h'd a heard him fer a chinge. By gum, he did go his mile. He asked if it wisnae enough tae pey a poun' for a sheepskin an' then mare tae bless it, without having tae listen tae a' this bletherin' fae a wuman that wid be better mindin' her ain fauts an' leavin' other folk alane. But he wid hae been better tae stick tae his argument wi' Duncan Ban.

When she did get a chance to get her oar in, she did tell him off. Peyin' a poun' fer a sheepskin! By her certy she aye thocht he wis daft; noo she kent it. A poun' fer a sheepskin when he could hae goat a sheep fer that, an' hiv had mutton broth, minch collops, gigots, and chops, and his aul' sheepskin, sheep's heid, sheep's horns an' a'. He wis gettin' money easy, an' learnin' this wean naethin' but bad habits.

Ah goat that fed up listenin' tae this that Ah went awa' ben the hoose, an' went tae bed. When Ah goat up in the mornin' the aul' fl'a wis awa' tae his work, so Ah goat ma parritch an' wis sent aff tae the schule without hearin' a word aboot pipes.

That nicht me an' some other fl'as were playin' in the street when Ah saw ma feyther comin' along wi' a big bundle under his erm, so Ah followed him up tae the hoose an' then he shows me twa pipe bags a' shewed up, an' he telt the aul' wife that this wis goat oot o' the wan skin, an' that he wis gonnae sell wan o' them tae wee Ogylvie, the engineer on the boat, for fifteen shillings.

The aul' wife didnae say onything tae that, but ah could see by the look she gied that she wid believe that yin when she saw the fifteen bob. She's aye sayin' that this Ogylvie's only a blether. He talks aboot bein' a fireman long ago in the City o' Rome, bit she's shair he's nae mair an Eyetalian than she is.

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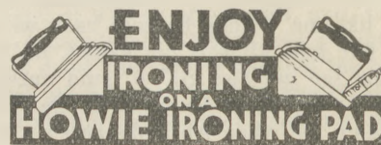


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