



Piping Times

Vol. 16, No. 7. April, 1964.



1/6



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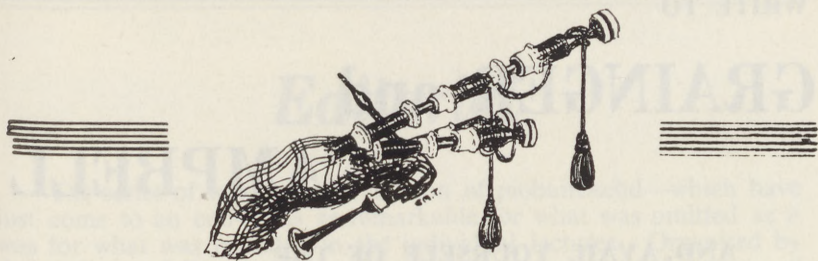
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Drum-major Neary with Sgt. Jones of the U.S.A.F. Pipe Band

(See page 11).

WRITE TO

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1962 Clasp, Inverness,
1963 Uist and Barra.

John MacFadyen
1962 Haddow Belt,
Auchterarder,
1963 Bratach Gorm, London.

Pipe-Major Donald Morrison,
Aberdeen City Police
1963 Aboyne Piob., S. and R.
1963 Braemar Piob., S. and R.

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Editorial

The series of talks on appreciation of piobaireachd—which have just come to an end—was as remarkable for what was omitted as it was for what was included in the individual lectures. Organised by the College of Piping, these six talks made up a brief survey of piobaireachd which was fascinating to the beginner and of great interest even to the expert.

For the first time, so far as is known, the public has been given an opportunity to hear professional pipers discuss their art. All the attempts to explain piobaireachd which we have heard in the past seem to have been given by enthusiastic amateurs. Although these past efforts have had varying degrees of value, they always included a great deal of extraneous material which was the result of conjecture and extrapolation from the known facts. Where the speaker's own amount of knowledge was small (which seems to have been the rule rather than the exception), the amount of his conjecture became large and its value diminished accordingly.

The features of these talks by professionals have been the wealth of knowledge they have brought to the lecture hall, and the vigour with which they have resisted any attempts to speculate unnecessarily. For the first time we heard talks which were free from fairy-tales, and devoid of preposterous argument. The speakers in fact seemed to be making certain that they would advance no opinion which was capable of being easily torn to pieces in the discussion.

In spite of this the discussions were undoubtedly of great value and interest. Always someone in the audience had a real contribution to make to the subject of the evening's talk.

It is proposed to repeat the series next winter with an enlarged syllabus and an increased number of lecturers. Nor will the speakers be confined this time to professional pipers, because there are some people in the piping world who can contribute to the sum total of knowledge, and perhaps at the same time initiate even livelier discussions after their contributions.

We seem to be living through a most active period of the development of piping in Scotland. Never since the war have there been so many organisations making so much effort to increase the general interest in piping. Perhaps we may be at the start of another golden age. Perhaps these are only flashes in the pan. Either way, this country is an interesting place for a piper to live in at present.

Uist and Barra Contest

The second of the winter professional competitions, that organised by the Uist and Barra Association, was held in the Boys' High School on Saturday, 8th February. Although the total number competing was perhaps not as high as in previous years, most of the known names in professional piping were there to provide a day's entertainment for the enthusiast. The competition, as usual, began at 9.30 in the morning and lasted until well on in the evening. Once again a large audience showed its appreciation of the playing.

Chairman for the day was Mr. Calum Robertson (Glasgow representative of the "Oban Times") who paid tribute to the Uist and Barra Association, which does more than any other territorial association in Scotland to foster the art of piping.

Adjudicators were Major General Richardson and Messrs S. Bell, Duncan MacColl, J. Hector Ross, T. MacCallum and Dr. Colin Caird. The organisation was mainly in the hands of Alex MacLellan who, as always, with the assistance of his many stewards, produced a smooth-running competition. Prizes were presented at the end by Mrs. MacLean, one of the oldest members of the Association. The results were as follows:—

Piobaireachd—1 and the Finlay S. MacKenzie Challenge Trophy and Royal Scottish Pipers' Society Silver Star, John MacDougall, Bucksburn ("Lament for the Children"); 2, Pipe-Major John MacLellan, Edinburgh Castle ("The Unjust Incarceration"); 3, Ronald Lawrie, Glasgow ("Mackay's Banner"); 4, James Young, Perth ("Kiss of the King's Hand"); 5, Hector MacFadyen, Pennyghael ("Lament for MacSwan of Roag"); 6, Ronald Morrison, Glasgow ("The Blue Ribbon").

March—1 and "The Oban Times" Challenge Trophy, Pipe-Major John MacLellan ("Abercairney Highlanders"); 2, Pipe-Major Donald MacLeod ("John MacFadyen of Melford"); 3, Iain MacFadyen ("Southall"); 4, Ronald Lawrie ("Leaving Lunga").

Strathspey and Reel—1 and the John Kennedy Challenge Trophy, Pipe-Major Donald MacLeod; 2, Pipe-Major John MacLellan; 3, James Young; 4, William Macdonald, Inverness.

Jigs—1 and The Angus John MacDonald Challenge Trophy, John MacDougall; 2, Kenneth MacDonald; 3, Pipe-Major Donald MacLeod; 4, Iain MacFadyen.

The Pipe-Major James Johnstone Challenge Trophy for competitor gaining highest aggregate marks in all four competitions—Pipe-Major John MacLellan.

The Captain Charles Hepburn Trophy presented for highest aggregate marks in marches, strathspeys and reels and jigs—Pipe-Major Donald MacLeod.



Knock-Out Contest

The second tie in the first round of the knock-out contest run by the Scottish Pipers' Association was held on Saturday, 15th February, when Duncan Johnston competed against Hector MacFadyen. This was a truly excellent competition, and the importance of the occasion was emphasised by the very large number of people present and the eager attention with which they listened to every item. The appearance of each artiste was greeted with prolonged applause and, at the end of his performance, each was given a standing ovation.

In many ways the two pipers were complete contrast to one another. One could view this as a battle of Barra against Mull, a left-hander against an orthodox, a jig specialist against an all round piper. In some respects, of course, they had a great deal in common. Both are famous for their accuracy and strength of fingering and both selected tunes which gave them an opportunity to show off their wonderful command of expression in Highland music.

Duncan Johnston played first, and the tunes were as follows:—
6/8 Marches—"Donald Cameron's Pipes" and "Cameron MacFadyen".
2/4 Marches—"Dr. Dorothy Main" and "Conon Bridge".
Strathspeys—"John Roy Stewart" and "Caledonian Society".
Reel—"Charlie's Welcome".
The jigs included—"Thomas Grant", "Adam Scott", "Donald of the Sun", "Malcolm Johnston", "Barbara's Jig", "Caber Feidh" and "The Hammer and the Anvil".

The selection of jigs was quite outstanding, especially as the instrument, which had shown signs of unsteadiness earlier, reached its best at this stage.

Hector MacFadyen, playing a pipe which was perfect from beginning to end, chose the following selection:—

Slow Airs, including "Morag of Dunvegan", "The Isle of Mull", "The Fair Maid of Barra".

2/4 Marches, including "Bonnie Anne", "Leaving Lunga", "John MacFadyen of Melfort", "Balmoral Highlanders".

Strathspeys, including "Struan Robertson", "The Piper's Bonnet".

Reels—"Major Manson", "Miss Proud", "John Morrison of Assynt House", "Mrs. Macpherson of Inveran".

Jigs—"The Seagull", "The Thief of Lochaber".

There is no doubt that a piper can best show his ability in a 20 to 30 minute spell like this. In a competition he has not enough time to get into his stride nor has the audience enough time to get into the sympathetic frame of mind which appreciates every movement and turn of phrasing. The result, which must have been a very close one, came in favour of Duncan Johnstone who now moves into the second round.

Piobaireachd Appreciation

The course of six lecture-demonstrations on piobaireachd which has been organised by the College of Piping came to a successful close on Tuesday, 17th March. Although the series attracted an audience which was modest in numbers the organisers and lecturers concerned are fully agreed that the venture was worthwhile. Everyone who attended took a keen and active interest in the various talks, in the many excellent illustrations and in the stimulating discussions which went on each evening.

The course got off to a flying start on the 11th February when John MacFadyen dealt with the topic, "What is Piobaireachd?" The chairman for that evening was Hector A. MacKenzie, who has been for so long associated with the College and is now a vice-president. Among the items dealt with were the general structure of piobaireachd, the conventional nature of the variations and the origin and background of the music generally. Illustrations on tape enabled the speaker to bring home the points very clearly to the audience.

The next three talks concerned themselves with various ways of classifying piobaireachd. The first of these was given by Thomas Pearston, who dealt with tunes under the headings battles, laments, salutes, etc. The audience was given a chance to guess for itself which category different illustrations fell into, and illustrations were given by tape recordings and the big pipe itself. A feature of this talk was the playing of one piece while the score was projected on a screen so that the audience could follow exactly what was happening.

The third lecture was given by Seumas MacNeill, who considered classification of tunes by the scales in which they were performed. He dealt briefly with the scale of the pipe, the three pentatonic scales available and gave illustrations of each type. On the pipes he played "MacNab's Salute" and "MacIntosh's Lament", while on tape the audience was regaled with recordings of John MacLellan playing "MacCrimmon's Sweetheart" and James MacColl playing "The King's Taxes".

Pipe-Major John MacLellan, M.B.E., came from Edinburgh to give the fourth talk, which was headed, "Classification by Phrases". Assisting him with tape recorder and card illustrations were Archie Cairns of Toronto and Pipe-Sergeant MacLeod of the Scots Guards, both pupils in the Army School at present. John MacLellan dealt with primary, secondary, tertiary type A, tertiary type B, and supplementary piobaireachd. Illustrations were by means of recordings, and each member of the audience was given a specially prepared sheet to enable him to insert the plan of the phrases for six different piobaireachds. The pieces were "MacCrimmon's

Sweetheart", "MacLeod of Raasay's Salute", "Lament for the Children", "Lament for MacSwan of Roaig", and "Chisholm of Strathglass's Salute". On leaving, each of the audience was given a brief summary of the lecture.

The fifth lecture was given by John MacFadyen, who considered a most interesting survey of the MacCrimmons and their contribution to pipe music. Recorded illustrations of "Lament for Donald Ban MacCrimmon", "Lament for the Children", "MacLeod's Salute" were played, and also a composite ground made up of three different lines of compositions by Donald Mor MacCrimmon. In the talk (which was full of valuable information) two points stood out. One was a chart showing the piping descent of modern masters from the MacCrimmons, and the other was the exhibition of documents loaned by Dame Flora MacLeod of MacLeod relating to the MacCrimmons. These included the Tack of Borreraig given to Donald Ruadh, a letter agreeing to the sale of Donald Ruadh's pipes, the dowery agreement for Patrick Og MacCrimmon's marriage, and other priceless items.

The last talk in the series was given by Seumas MacNeill, who put forward some ideas on the respective values of different piobaireachds as musical compositions. He showed how some of the earlier pieces were rather rudimentary and difficult to express, and then went on to an analysis of some of the greatest compositions, including "Lament for Colin Roy MacKenzie", "The Big Spree", "Lament for the Donald Ban" and "Scarce of Fishing". Finally he dealt with the tunes which were more immediately appreciated, although they probably lacked as much musical merit.

It is hoped to run a similar course next year when several other people will be invited to contribute.

Brockville Pipers

The Brockville branch of the Pipers' Society of Ontario held its annual winter competition of piping and dancing. In the chanter events five girls and seven boys competed.

The results were as follows :—

Chanter—

Girls—1st, Leslie Fox; 2nd, Christina MacNaughton; 3rd, Susan MacNaughton.

Boys—1st, Gordon Robertson; 2nd, Rickey Robertson.
The judges were Mr. George Beley and Mr. Duncan Matheson.

This useful group, which is organised by Mr. Beley, is appearing for two shows in the New York Colosseum. A group of fourteen of them, ranging in age from five years to fourteen years, will make the trip.

S.P.A. Annual Meeting

The A.G.M. of the Scottish Pipers' Association was held in the Highlanders' Institute, Glasgow, on 22nd February, when the following office-bearers were elected :—

Hon. President—P.M. John MacDonald, Bulawayo.

President—Mr. John MacFadyen.

Hon. Vice-Presidents—P.M. Robert Reid, and P.M. Hamish McColl.

Vice-Presidents—P.M. Hector MacLean and
Mr. Hector MacFadyen, Pennyghael.

Hon. Treasurer—Mrs. J. MacKay.

Hon. Secretary—Miss F. McNeill.

Auditors—P.M. Alex MacLeod and Mr. William Walker.

Hon. Composer—P.M. Peter MacLeod.

Hon. Pipe-Major—Mr. James Young, Perth.

Committee—

P.M. Nicol MacCallum, Messrs. Donald MacLeod, John Finlay, James Russell, Lawrence MacIver, Alec MacAskill, Tom. MacKay, and Capt. Cameron Taylor.

The principal alterations in the above list were brought about by recognising the service given to the S.P.A. by two of our foremost professional pipers, Hector MacFadyen and James Young. The former has been a pillar of the club for many years, while the latter (though having farther to travel than any other member) scarcely ever misses a function.

Oban Pipe Band

The Annual General Meeting of the Oban Pipe Band was held last month when it was reported that a considerable improvement in the financial position had been achieved during the year. The deficit had been reduced from £250 to £87, and it was hoped that this satisfactory trend would continue. The main items of income were £145 being profit from concerts, and £135 donation from the Town Council. The main expenditure was £239 paid to band members.

The committee elected was as follows :—

President, Mr. Duncan Cameron; vice-presidents, Provost Neil Cameron and Mr. Alex. Macleod; treasurer, Mr. J. Taylor; secretary, Mr. Archie Simpson; convener of entertainments, Mr. Alex. Macleod; committee, Councillor D. Thomson, Bailie E. T. F. Spence, Mr. Pat Robertson, Mr. J. MacLean (rector High School), Mr. Alan MacInnes, Mr. Dickinson.

The band leaders elected were Pipe-Major C. MacPhedran, Drum-Major M. MacKinnon, Drum-Sergeant Hugh Cameron.

The U.S.A.F. Pipe Band

By James J. Neary.

The United States Air Force Pipe Band is the result of a decision, made in 1950, to include six pipers in The United States Drum and Bugle Corps. Many of the original pipers were Air Force bandmen who received their introduction to the pipes in the Drum Corps, but since 1958 all aspirants are auditioned, and only fully competent pipers have been accepted.

Since that time the number of pipers has increased to fourteen, when at full strength, and two drummers of the Corps were appointed to learn, what was to them, an entirely different type of drumming.



Thus, emerged The United States Air Force Pipe Band.

Since 1960, by order of General Curtis LeMay, the Air Force Pipe Band has been "kilted". The tartan worn is the Mitchell, chosen in honour of the famous General, "Billy" Mitchell.

By 1962 the demand for the Pipe Band was so great that the Officer-in-Charge, C.W.O. Henry R. Uhland, decided to eliminate the pipers from the Drum Corps so that each unit could operate separately.

The Band has played both near and far from its home base in Washington, D.C., and for many diverse occasions, such as: In Jamaica, W.I., on the occasion of her independence; For Astronaut Gordon Cooper's Ticker Tape Parade in New York City; Annually, at the Flower Festival Parade in Bermuda; For various functions at the White House; and, in Glasgow, Montana.

The Band draws its pipers from many various places. With the exception of two lads from Ireland, all of the pipers are American, of Scottish or Irish descent. Most of them were raised in an atmosphere of piping. All started piping while quite young. A few examples:—

S/Sgt. Sandy Jones, 25, from Spokane, Washington, started when he was 8 years old. He was taught by P.M. George Mars of Vic., B.C., and competed with the Kimberly Pipe Band (Royal Can. Engineers) of B.C., in the early 1950's;

A/2C Robert Fulton, 22, from Cleveland, Ohio, started taking lessons from John Irvine (ex-Sgt. Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders) when he was 9;

Two lads from Glens Falls, New York, A/1C Tom Kirkpatrick, 20, one of four brothers (all pipers), and A/1C Jerry Cashion, 23, who has one brother, also a piper. Both started learning from Tom's eldest brother, and later from P.M. Hugh MacInnes.

The U.S.A.F. Pipe Band is a component of the United States Air Force Band, stationed at Bolling Air Force Base, Washington 25, D.C.

In addition to its committed public and military performances, the Band has often had the pleasure of welcoming pipers, or pipe bands, to Washington, with a proper "ceilidh", and continually looks forward to hearing from any piper (or pipers) who may stop by.

ENGLISH CONTEST.

The North-West England branch of the Scottish Pipe Band Association held a pipe band and drumming contest at Warrington.

Results:—Senior—March, strathspey and reel—1, Mount Carmel Pipe Band, Salford; 2, "B" Mount Carmel, Salford; 3, Warrington Pipe Band. Drumming—1, Drum-Sgt. Healey, Warrington; 2, Drum-Sgt. V. Peers, Mount Carmel. Junior—March—1, Mount Carmel; 2, Warrington. Drumming—1 and 2, Mount Carmel; 3, Prince Charles Edward Pipe Band, Manchester.

The judges were Pipe-Major J. MacAllister, Shotts and Dykehead Pipe Band, and Drum-Major R. Montgomery, City of Edinburgh Police Pipe Band.

LAMENT FOR JOHN F. KENNEDY.

By W. J. Watt

2nd. TIME 2nd. @ 4th. Vari.

INSTRUCTORS WANTED.

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Dennistoun, Glasgow. Private tutor wanted for young boy. Apply to Mrs. Morvern I. Paterson, 149 Onslow Drive, Glasgow, E.1,

Cambridge University

Piping Society

The annual competition of the C.U. Piping Society was held in the Cambridgeshires' Drill Hall on Friday, 12th March.

Mike Sugg, the Society's secretary, organized the function with his usual unobtrusive efficiency.

The playing was of a noticeably higher standard than in recent years, which must have been gratifying to P/M J. B. Robertson, to whose forthright teaching methods members of the Society owe so much. P/M Robertson did the judging, assisted by Dr. W. MacPhail and Mr. G. G. Kerr.

Robin Scott won the march very narrowly with a nicely balanced rendering of "Charles Hope De Vere" from Willie Elder, the Society's president, the excellence of whose fingering in "Parker's Welcome" was spoilt by a rushed phrase in the third part of the tune. Peter Rowett's "Stirlingshire Militia" was spoilt by two nasty skirls and one error, but he has a good finger and deserved his third place.

Willie Elder won the strathspey and reel with "The Shepherd's Crook" and "Thomson's Dirk", both of which he expressed thoroughly well. The judges had some difficulty in separating Barry Kemp and Robin Scott, but gave the edge to Kemp because Scott's pipe, which he had got singing in his march, had lost some of its tune. Kemp (whose researches in Egyptology might, we hope, one day reveal new facts about the Alexandria scale) played "Highland Harry" and "O'er the Isles", and Robin Scott, "Caledonian Canal" and "O'er the Isles".

The members followed their usual custom after the playing and dined together on soup, haggis and "stodge". A ceilidh followed in which the standard of playing, high to start with, deteriorated to moderate in direct ratio to the level in the "Jug". Finally, after a particular rendering of the "Jig of Slurs" had contained rather more and somewhat unorthodox slurs than P/M G. S. MacLellan had intended when he composed it, the president called a halt to a most successful evening.

NORTH AFRICA PIPERS.

A shipment of 100 sets of bagpipes, with Royal Stewart tartan covers, was sent off recently to Algeria by Peter Henderson, Ltd., Glasgow. The pipes, worth a total of £3,500, went to equip the pipe bands of the Algerian Army.

Knightswood Local Mod

The local mod, which is held each year by the Knightswood and District Highland Association, again attracted a very large number of young people to all the various competitions. The chanter and piping events were judged by Alec. MacLeod. The results were as follows:—

Chanter—1, John Montgomery; 2, Iain Macfarlane; 3, Ronald Elmslie.

Piping—March—1, Finlay Drynan; 2, Archibald Maclean; 3, Andrew Martin. **Strathspey and Reel**—1, Finlay Drynan; 2, Gordon Medlow; 3, Archibald MacLean.

PIPE-MAJOR WANTED

The Nigerian High Commission is looking for a fully qualified pipe-major to instruct, drill and supervise the pipe band of the Southern Police College in Ikeja, near Lagos. The salary offered is £2040 per annum, with free passage for wife and children, free medical and dental service and a gratuity of £150 per annum on completion. A car loan scheme is available and low rental furnished accommodation is provided. Applications or enquiries regarding further details should be addressed to Nigeria High Commission, Nigeria House, Northumberland Avenue, London, W.C.2.

CONVERT ?

An interesting point has been brought to our notice with regard to the Northern Meeting in Inverness last year. No fewer than eight members of World Champion pipe band, Edinburgh City Police, took part in the solo piping competitions, including **Drum-Major** Ackroyd. Even the Glasgow Police in their hey day never equalled this.

Incidentally, the Northern Meeting this year will be held on September 17th and 18th in the Arts Centre and the Lovat Scout Hall.

COME AGAIN ?

Mr. Roderick MacCrimmon, a schoolteacher in Glasgow, has been appointed headmaster of Uig School, Skye.

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Amateur Contest

An Amateur and Juvenile Piping Competition was held by the College of Piping on Saturday, 15th February. As is usual on these occasions, the audience was both numerous and enthusiastic. A capacity crowd, in fact, appeared to find great enjoyment in the four hours of piping.

Chairman for the day was Hector A. MacKenzie, who commented upon the enthusiasm of the young pipers and upon the excellent work which was being done to encourage them nowadays.

The Judge, Nicol MacCallum, had a difficult job in some cases, but he formed his decisions in his usual efficient fashion. The results were as follows :—

Piobaireachd—1, Gordon Middleton; 2, James Jackson; 3, Roderick MacKenzie; 4, John Forbes.

March—1, Gordon Ferguson; 2, James Jackson; 3, Gordon Middleton; 4, Craig Brown.

Strathspey and Reel—1, Donald Lindsay; 2, Craig Brown; 3, James Jackson; 4, John Corbett.

Over-all Champion—James Jackson.

The arrangements for the competition were mainly in the hands of Evan C. MacKay, and the stewarding was looked after most efficiently by Ludovic Black, John MacAskill, Dugald MacNeill and Dugald Murdoch. The prizes were presented by Mrs. D. MacKay. Votes of thanks were proposed by Dugald MacNeill.

Morar Games

The Annual General Meeting of the Mallaig and District Highland Games was held on February 18th, with Mr. P. Moncrieff in the chair. Office-bearers for 1964 were appointed as follows :—

President, Canon Galbraith; Chairman, Mr. Moncrieff; Secretary, Mr. Ian Massey; Treasurer, Mr. Ian MacKinnon.

Three new members were elected to the committee, Mr. A. Henderson, Mr. D. Buchanan, Mr. C. MacAndrew.

The games will be held this year at Morar on August 5th.

ACHARACLE PIPE BAND.

A strong move is afoot to form a pipe band in Acharacle (which can probably compete successfully for the title of the most inaccessible part of the Scottish mainland). Piping interest has been at a very high level for some considerable time, and now as the result of meetings organised by Dr. Nicolson of Salen, the initial steps have been taken to form a band.

The event received a valuable financial start as the result of a concert held in Shielbridge Hall on February 14th.

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South Uist Games, 1958

This crescent of critics was caught up in John MacLennan's camera, during a post-mortem after one of the competitions at the South Uist Games.

All pre-1914-18 veterans, they were the hardy annuals of the games.

Reading from left to right are—Ronald MacAulay, J.P. of the D.O.A.S. Nanton, and brother of Pipe-Major Angus MacAulay, now of New Zealand; Archie MacDonald, Clanranald House, auctioneer and sales manager, father of Neil and Rona, and first cousin of John and Roderick, ex-Glasgow Police; Dr. Allan MacDonald of Uig,



Skye, one of the piping judges. Then come the late Dr. Jock Simpson, Inverness; the late Col. J. P. Grant, J.P., of Rothiemurchus, and the late revered Major Finlay MacKenzie, energetic promoter and organiser of piping, and the power behind it all. While a tune is played on Askernish Machar these three will be remembered by our generation.

Next in line is Donald MacPhee, auctioneer, Nanton, dancing judge. Beside him and half hidden is the popular Louis MacKinnon, on tour to this country that year with the famous City of Wellington Pipe Band; and extreme right is Major Neil MacLennan, J.P., Lochboisdale, one of four brothers, all pipers of merit. (This record we understand is beaten by the MacFadyens by one point—the lassie?)

Laggan School of Piping

The annual parents' night of the Laggan School of Piping was, as usual, a great success, and the many people who attended enjoyed a whole range of piping from playing by beginners on the chanter to a polished performance by a master musician on the pipes.

The class is organised and taught by Dr. Kenneth MacKay, and is a credit to his enthusiastic efforts.

Before the competition began, six of the pipers played together a selection of tunes which included the ground and first variation of the "Lament for Duncan MacRae of Kintail". The judge of the competition was Mr. William M. MacDonald of Inverness, who expressed himself as being amazed at the high standard of playing.

Awards made included the following :—

College of Piping Certificates. Members' badges were awarded, and certificates were presented to—Catriona MacRae, John MacRae, George MacKenzie.

Provincial Mod Piping. (William MacDonald Challenge Cup),
1st, John MacRae.

Chanter—1st, Stuart Forbes; 2nd, Robert MacLagan.

County Music Festival Piping—2nd, John MacRae.

Chanter Cup—1st, Robert MacLagan; 2nd, Stuart Forbes.

School Trophies—

Matheson Cup for Piping—John MacRae.

Gask More Cup for Chanter—Robert MacLagan.

Gask More Cup for Piping—Catriona MacRae.

Rennie Cup—George MacKenzie.

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Blue Bonnets

This is said to have been a favourite tune of David Leslie, the covenanting general, and it is further averred that his troops played it when they left or entered a town. There were old words associated with the air.

March! March! Why the deil don't you march?
Stand to your arms, my lads, fight in good order,
March! March! why the deil don't you march?
Stand to your arms, my lads, fight in good order!
Front about, front about, ye musketeers all,
Until ye come to the English border,
Stand to your arms, and fight like men,
True gospel to maintain,
The parliament's blythe to see us coming.

Stenhouse says the tune is in the Crockatt's manuscript dated 1709. Oswald published the tune in 1742, and MacGibbon in 1746, and it has often been published since. It is in the fifth volume of the "Museum".

The melody does not seem to be a Scottish one, but an English imitation so common towards the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th century.

I may add that Leslie was responsible for the massacre of the 300 defenders of Dunavirty Castle, Kintyre, by flinging them over the cliff on to the rocks below.

PIPER HONOURED.

Our belated congratulations to Ronald MacCallum of Inveraray, pipe-major of the 8th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, who was awarded the M.B.E. in the New Year's Honours List. No man does more than Ronald to encourage piping in his own area, and no-one is more deserving of this award.

NEW YEAR TRIP.

One piper who did not suffer from the cold at New Year was Iain MacLeod, pipe-major of Edinburgh City Police. Iain was engaged over the festive season to play on a cruise to Las Palmas. Accompanying him were four lady dancers, one of them being his wife.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Piping Judges.

I am asked to reply to a letter recently published in the "Piping Times". The letter makes references to piping judges in general and in particular to the panel of judges appointed by the Uist and Barra Association at their last piping competition.

The Uist and Barra Association appoint judges from the Royal Scottish Pipers' Society and these gentlemen, as far as the Association is concerned, have always acted in good faith.

Whilst the letter does not directly throw aspersions on the Association there does exist, nevertheless, an accusation that the society has not exercised its prerogative in appointing judges of experience and merit.

The letter goes on to say—inter-alia—that at the last annual competition organised by the Association a player was placed in the prize list despite the fact that his tenor drone stopped in the first line of the Urlar and that he omitted a "C" note from the second line of his Taorluath movement.

I cannot accept nor deny this because I was elsewhere at the time and therefore did not hear this player, but I am sure that your correspondent would never make wild accusations unless there was some justification. Consequently the inclusion of this player's name in the list would naturally cause some discontent.

It is now advisable to have a look at other competitions not judged by Royal Scottish Society nor Piobaireachd Society judges.

Were the professional pipers satisfied with the results of the recent Scottish Pipers' Association members' competition held recently? Was it not the fact that the same player was placed despite the fact that he went astray in the Strathspey of his selected group? And is it not the fact that the competition was judged by two professionals?

In the first instance let it be made clear that this is no diatribe against the piper who received somebody else's prize. Indeed he was the first to say that he should not have been placed.

But where do we go from here? Surely one cannot criticize one set of judges and blithely ignore the other. It cannot be denied that there are efficient judges among panels from both the Piobaireachd and Royal Pipers' Society; there are also incompetent ones.

I, personally, prefer the judge who gives of his best—even if his best is not, perhaps, up to standard—in preference to the expert who

is expected to know the technicalities, yes, and the rest, but who, it would seem, prefer to go for the man.

The Uist and Barra Association fully realise that your correspondent was aiming at constructive criticism, but wish to make it clear that not all of the judges selected from the various panels appointed by the Association have been negligent in their duties.

The Association wishes it to be known that they are concerned with the furtherance of piping in the city and that they will continue to make every effort to provide efficient and satisfactory services for those who uphold their competition, namely the competitors.

Ronald Morrison,
Hon. Secy., Uist and Barra Association.

Dear Sir,

Santa Cruz, California.

The Black Watch.

I have just received my copy of the December issue of "Piping Times", it was all very interesting I assure you. Your editorial covering the tragic assassination of our late President John F. Kennedy struck a poignant note that echoed the sentiments of all of us. However, I am at a distinct loss (likewise most of the piping fraternity around here) to understand what the Black Watch Pipe Band did or didn't do at the last sad rites in Arlington Cemetery. Pray, what was "The very keystone of farce with their appalling performance" perpetrated by the Black Watch?

After the series of tragic events in Dallas, Texas, most of us were glued to television almost round the clock, yet from where we sit, nothing of an untoward nature was observed during the burial service. Yes, we did see the Black Watch in the distance presumably leaving Arlington playing "The Barren Rocks of Aden", and in the foreground the United States Air Force Pipe Band entered the picture playing "The Mist Covered Mountains".

It may have happened that the funeral service pictures beamed to the United Kingdom were different from that broadcast locally in the United States. In any case, would you please tell us just what did happen at Arlington Cemetery to mar the reputation of "The Gallant Forty-Twa". I would appreciate hearing from you Mr. MacNeill.

James MacLachlan.

Dear Sir,

New York.

The Black Watch.

I have just read with interest your December editorial on the tragic death of President Kennedy.

I feel obliged to comment on your criticism of the Black Watch on their performance in the late President's funeral. I must admit

that it did seem very much out of order and place to catch brief glimpses on the T.V. of the 42nd swinging along in that mournful procession playing such tunes as "The Old Rustic Bridge" and "The Nut Brown Maiden". (I believe that this was your point of criticism.)

It must be pointed out, however, that the U.S. Armed Forces have no Funeral or Slow March, as do the British and Irish Armies. The pace of the cortege was set at 100 steps per minute, making it impossible for the Black Watch to play slow marches in the procession.

I feel, then, that your criticism of this fine band should perhaps be reserved, at least until all the facts are known.

In reference to your remark about the complete failure of the Piob Mor on this occasion, might I refer you to the performance at the graveside by the U.S. Air Force Pipe Band. I personally could find no fault with their rendition, and I feel that they brought no discredit to piping.

It might be noted that this unit was a particular favorite of President Kennedy, having entertained him on many occasions. The last occasion on which they did so, I believe, was during the State Dinner for Prime Minister Sean Lemass of Ireland, at the White House. On that occasion they entertained both leaders while wearing the traditional garb of Irish military pipers, the saffron kilt and green tunic. Their usual dress is Scottish in style.

Joseph F. Wicklow (Tyrone Pipe Band).

**1st Bn. The Black Watch,
Wiltshire.**

Dear Sir,

I have a bone, or several bones, to pick with you over recent references to the Pipes and Drums of the Black Watch. I'll have you know, before I start, that I am quite unbiassed, being a learner piper in spare time and not having been in the band.

Let me start with your reply to P/M Young's rather coy letter in the January number. "Please, teacher", he smirks, "Should not Pipe-Major Anderson do something about the flat high A?" Patting the bright fellow on the head, you actually reply, "Yes, and smartly". How military that sounds! One visualises a determined guardian of the sacred flame of piping, preparing to weather all the storms of controversy and smack down unbelievers. Don't you think your opinions would have more impact if delivered to P/M Anderson personally? Or isn't there quite enough fervour in your veins to sustain you through such an interview? This whole business is probably due to the commendable view that a piping magazine ought to speak out fearlessly and kow-tow to no-one. But irresponsible statements, backed by no shred of reasoned criticism, will **convince** no-one.

The second bone to be picked is closely connected with the first one. Your December, 1963, editorial stigmatised the band's performance at President Kennedy's funeral as "appalling", "farcical", etc., without in any way specifying **what** was appalling—the tunes? the settings? the tempo? the actual playing? the tuning? Let us know, please—all of us who neither saw the funeral on T.V. or got to Washington for the occasion. After all, you wouldn't expect to hold your readership were you to criticise the various individual competitions in similar terms, without giving your reasons.

I regret to report that my nose detects, in your pages, the occasional, unmistakable stink of snobbery, the snobbery of him who can be pleased by nothing, and must deride others to maintain his own self-esteem.

Earlier on last year you dismissed, in one page—almost one paragraph—all the Army pipe bands, civilian and military, grades one to four, who competed at Cowal, for having a high A out of tune. I am awestruck at this display of righteousness by one against so many. Those criticised include many illustrious names in the piping world—P/M Andrew Pitkeathly of the Argylls is one—but what is the name of the critic? Such a superman should not hide his light under a bushel! Let him go and put these poor, deluded practising pipers on the right track. They would (of course) be very grateful.

But for the moment, I buy and will continue to buy the "Piping Times"; it is the only available periodical on the subject, apart from the S.P.B.A.'s publication, and, with jabs from the readers it may get better. (Don't you get tired of all those sticky letters of congratulation you publish?)

Cpl. H. Whyte.

If you are not biased in favour of the Black Watch then the Black Watch has got a curious corporal.

The answer to your first question is "No", to your second is "Yes" and to your third, "All of them except the settings".

"One against so many" is too flattering—you forget that P/M Young is on my side.

The Black Watch performance however has been taken very seriously, both in Scotland and abroad. Lt.-Col. N. G. A. Noble of the 1st Bn. the Black Watch has been kind enough to supply the following information:—

"(a) As you will probably realise the Band as such did not take part. Nine pipers only played and this was at the express wish of Mrs. Kennedy.



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“(b) I think most people with a knowledge of piping would agree that the Telstar television reception was not particularly good. However, I was in WASHINGTON myself four days after the occasion. There I asked about this very point and was assured by several people with piping knowledge who were actually present that the pipes were tuned.

“(c) The tunes played by the nine pipers between the White House and the Cathedral were:—

‘The Brown Haired Maiden’,
‘The Badge of Scotland’,
‘The 51st Highland Division’,
‘The Old Rustic Bridge’,
‘The Barren Rocks of Aden’.

These were asked for personally by the Staff of the White House. I am sure you will agree that it was the duty and wishes of all in Scotland that the pipers should meet the wishes of the American people on such a sad occasion.”

They say that to know all is to forgive all. Certainly the reasons for the performance are quite understandable. The cold weather no doubt affected the fingering, and the tunes—which, in Scotland at least, are considered quite unsuitable for a funeral—produced an effect here which may have been different from the effect produced in other parts of the world. The absence of drummers was probably the biggest upset for pipers unaccustomed to playing without them.

None of these things could be avoided or allowed for by the Black Watch, and Mrs. Kennedy’s personal wishes were of far greater importance than the possible reactions of other people.
The Editor.

Dear Sir,

Kent.

When I pick up my morning paper the first thing I turn to is the correspondence columns. I do the same with the “Piping Times”. To some people this may appear to be odd, but if anyone should be inquisitive enough to ask David Ross what kind of a chap I am he would very likely say, “a cranky type and very often somewhat off balance”.

I thought I had better make this clear before commenting on a letter written to the “Piping Times” by a gentleman in Maryland, U.S.A. On divers occasions I have been rebuked by one of your correspondents, the innuendo being that “I do not know what I am talking about”. This could very well be true, but I always feel pleased when anybody does disagree with anything I have written since it proves that one person, at least, has taken the trouble to read what I have written.

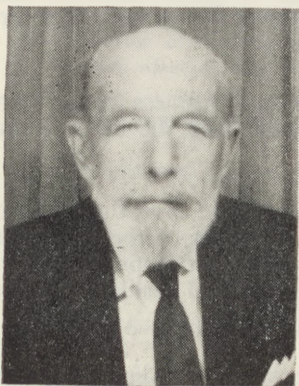
To get back to the Maryland letter. As I read on I thought "Well this is a bit of a corker" and I asked myself, "How in the world is the Editor going to cope with this bunch of conundrums?" The Editor proved himself to be one of the stars of journalistic art by replying to the lot with a short precis at the close of the letter.

But, wait a bit, what the Editor really did was to answer in a phrase coined by Lenin when a member of his audience asked a question to which even he, Lenin, himself could not reply.

I will not quote the phrase as we all know it, besides I do not wish to be unkind to the gentleman from the U.S.A. Anyone who takes such a keen interest in the problems of the bagpipe and the playing of it is to be admired.

William Ross.

Well, boy, you'll have plenty to turn to this month.—Ed.



Dear Sir, Ontario.

Thanks for your "Piping Times" subscription form and note. I am sending a money order for \$2.50 for 1964. If I mind right, I sent it without waiting for the form, and it was misplaced when it was sent to you, but you wrote me letting me know you found it.

I had a nice trip back home again last summer with the 48th Highlanders of Canada Old Comrade's Association, which I enjoyed again very much. That was my fifth time back since I come to Toronto in 1904. I will be back again if I am spared. I had 41 years service with the 48th Highlanders and Toronto Scottish Canadian Reserve, with 9 years active in both wars, 1914-18 and 1941-45. Acting Pipe-Major with both, I was always very interested in pipe music practically all my life. I am still very keen for them and their wonderful music from piobaireachd down. I love reading your "Piping Times" and all it contains. I think it is splendid for voluntary workers and I am sure we all look forward to it coming in different parts of the world. Best wishes to you all for 1964.

P/M William A. Burns.

Dear Sir,

Aberdeen.

Your editorial in the March number raised a point concerning the constant comparison of the playing of one piper with that of another and, presumably, who is the "better". In the first place, this is hardly surprising considering that pipers of all grades are scarcely heard by the public unless they are in competition with each other and mostly for money.

In the second place, why this constant air of "competition"? With players in other branches of instrumental music, this competition spirit never arises. Nobody would expect Arthur Rubinstein to compete with Louis Kentner or Yehudi Menuhin with say Nathan Nulstein. It would be very undignified and would certainly lower their whole professional status. Amongst these players and others of their level there is no question as to who is the best; there is no "best". Some may interest the public more for their interpretation of Beethoven, others of Brahms, Bach, etc. They are all technically on the highest level, and it is only a question of interpretation.

Why then should pipers not raise themselves from their present somewhat materialistic "competing" for money and give recitals of pipe music. I am certain that a recital for a fee by say Donald MacLeod or Archie MacPhail (to mention two well-known pipers) in Glasgow and other cities would draw a good audience and remunerate them in the same way as other instrumentalists are rewarded.

In my opinion this "knock-out" competition business (reminiscent of prize fighting) is belittling to the profession and the art. In any case, who is to judge who is the best?

It is the individual interpretation which is the essential point of any performance and arises from the temperament of the performer and his inner feeling for music. "De gustibus non disputandum" is very applicable, and there can be many likes and dislikes amongst the audience at a piping exhibition.

In any case, competitions for money prizes entail disappointment and frustration in the minds of many pipers and give rise to doubts as to the qualifications of the judges, and consequently grievances about what are considered as unfair decisions. This often creates a state of mind in a piper which is certainly not conducive to the giving of the highest artistic expression to the music.

I should think it is time that the College of Piping or some other body in authority should look into this matter with a view to raising the status of the professional piper to something approaching that of other professional musicians.



Norman S. Reid.

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