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Piping Times

Vol. 19, No. 6. April, 1967.



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Piping Times

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Contents

Editorial	Page 5
A Dictionary of Pipers and Piping	6
Teaching Topics	22
The MacCrimmons	26
Letter to the Editor	30

COVER PICTURE :
Alexander (Sandy) Cameron.

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- 1964 Dunvegan Medal,
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- 1965 Scottish Pipers'
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Editorial

The announcement that the United States is in process of putting into law the bill to abolish import tax on bagpipes has caused some surprise, and even concern—if not outright panic—in many quarters of the United Kingdom. The fifteen per cent duty may not in the past have stopped the American enthusiast from acquiring his chosen instrument, but the removal of the duty may encourage many more to take part in the explosion of interest in our national music which is going on across the Atlantic.

The bagpipe has always been looked on in England—and some parts of Scotland—as an object of ridicule and mirth. This attitude probably arose originally as deliberate propaganda to denigrate things Scottish—when it was politically expedient to deny the existence of a separate Scottish culture. (In view of recent developments on the political scene in Scotland it would seem that this time is still with us.)

Many believe that the motive behind the anti-bagpipe attitude is fear, and they may be right, for the racial memories which involve the sound of the Highland pipe can not be pleasant for our Southern neighbours.

Whatever the reasons, there can be no doubt that to the majority of the inhabitants of Britain piping is, like the “Forrigan Reel”, “...crude and impertinent, and no’ the thing”.

How, then, are they to reconcile this attitude with the modern ingrained conviction that everything that comes from the United States is exciting, attractive and worthy of being adopted and copied? Will they turn against the modern doctrines which have been instilled in them, or will they realise that the old ingrained prejudices had no real foundation in fact? Or will they (happy thought) go hysterical trying to decide?

A change of policy towards the bagpipe in Britain would have far reaching consequences on the future history of piping. No longer would we have the scrimping and saving, the penny-pinching and the apologising. No longer would the development of the national music be left to enthusiasts who volunteer their spare time to do what can only be at best a commendable shot at a tremendous job.

But we indulge in dreams. Only when the Americans take over piping the way they have taken over golf will the bagpipe become serious and respectable in the eyes of our rulers.

THE EDITOR is not responsible for views expressed in this magazine, other than in the editorials, replies to letters and articles appearing under his name. (Likewise the College of Piping is not responsible for the views of the editor.)

A Dictionary of Pipers and Piping

Through the good offices of Captain D. R. MacLennan we are able to present from now onwards this most valuable and fascinating series.

The frontispiece is given as we received it, but in fact the "Notices" have been further amended and added to by the late Achribaldi Campbell, Kilberry.

NOTICES
OF
SCOTTISH HIGHLAND
PIPERS
and also
LOWLAND PIPERS,
with
SOME OF OTHER COUNTRIES;
and

including those connected otherwise with piping.

ORIGINALLY COMPILED BY

Lieutenant John MacLennan,

and Revised and Added to by

Major I. H. MacKay Scobie, F.S.A. (Scot.)

Late Seaforth Highlanders,

Curator, Scottish National Naval and Military Museum,
Edinburgh Castle.

INTRODUCTION.

These "NOTICES of PIPERS"—originally compiled by Lieutenant John MacLennan (whom see), a notable enthusiast on piping matters towards the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries—were presented to the writer by his son, Captain and Quartermaster (formerly Pipe-Major) Donald Ross MacLennan (whom see), Seaforth Highlanders, in 1944. These notices have been revised where necessary, amplified, and considerably added to.

They do not profess to be an exhaustive survey of the subject, but at least include the names of the great majority of the more eminent pipers (professional and amateur), the pipe-makers, and those distinguished in some way in connection with piping, from early times onwards. In the case of many of them the necessary details have not been easy to procure, whether they belong to the distant or more immediate past, or even recent times. Lowland Scottish pipers and some of those of other countries (especially Ireland) have been included. Full definitions are given of the various kinds of pipe music, etc.



As is well known, piping in common with other things peculiarly Highland suffered a severe blow in the sudden and drastic changes, both social and economic, which took place following upon the Jacobite Rising of 1745-6. A period of extreme depression followed. But to counter this, in some measure at least, the Highland Society of London, and that of Edinburgh (later of Scotland, and now the Highland and Agricultural Society) were founded, in 1778 and 1784 respectively. These Societies, from the start, did much to revive and stimulate pipe playing, and rescue the distinctive music of the pipes, namely piobaireachd or pibroch, from threatened extinction. They also had in mind the supplying, to the numerous Highland regiments then in existence or being raised, of well qualified pipers. Their efforts were not unsuccessful, and to them as also to the regiments themselves in which piping was fostered, we owe the continuance and growth in popularity of our national instrument and its music.

Regular competitions for pipe playing were first instituted by the Highland Society of London in 1781*¹, the venue chosen and time selected being Falkirk during the great annual cattle market or Tryst held there in October, and to which great numbers of Highlanders from all parts resorted. In 1783, however, owing to the awards of the committee exciting so much dissatisfaction, a rival gathering was held a week later in Edinburgh, and, from 1784 the competitions took place in the capital under the supervision of the Highland Society of Edinburgh (later of Scotland) and under the patronage of the Highland Society of London*². They were an annual event until 1826, thereafter triennially up till 1844, in which year they came to an end. They were re-instituted, as an annual event in 1859, the venue being changed to Inverness. This gathering, which became merged into the Northern Meeting at Inverness, has continued up to the present

*¹ On 12th July, the Society decided "that a Pipe and Flag be given annually, at the October Falkirk Tryst". By the above decision "the system of competition was inaugurated, which has done so much to encourage rising talent". At the first competition 13 pipers competed, and each played four tunes. The judges were screened off. Owing to the presence of so many good performers at these competitions, opportunity was often taken by officers to obtain suitable pipers for their corps (see under "MacDonald, John, from Fortingall"). The three competitions held at Falkirk were superintended by a branch of the Highland Society of London established in Glasgow.

*² At all the competitions, private rehearsals were held in advance when the more indifferent players were then weeded out, and the programme thus shortened. In 1785, candidates were warned to appear "in the proper Highland habit".

day, and is still regarded as the premier piping competition.

At first, only the playing of piobaireachd (pibroch)—the ancient and classical music of the pipes—was permitted, but by about 1859 competitions for prizes were started for reel and strathspey playing, although from 1826 these had been customary between the regular items as an extra. The playing of marches and quicksteps was introduced in about 1859*³. Highland dancing was included as an extra as early as 1783, but not embodied in the regular programme until 1832. The music for these dances was furnished by a band of other musicians, usually Lowland bellows-pipers or fiddlers—not by a Highland piper.

The full-size, or great Highland bagpipe, with three or two drones,*⁴ was the only form of the instrument permitted, but after 1821 the two drone variety was prohibited. The reel-size pipe, and also the bellows-blown Border, Lowland or Northumbrian, as well as the Irish Union (Uilleann) pipes made their appearance at times but were disqualified for regular competition (see notices of "Lowland Bagpipe" and "Irish Pipes").

In regard to prizes, the winner at first received a bag-pipe of the "best make and finish", having a silver plate bearing his name, and carrying a banner ornamented with a thistle, but latterly the armorials of the Highland Society of London, together with forty merks Scots. The second and third each received thirty merks. The prizes were increased from three to five in 1809. After a time Highland arms and ornaments were presented in addition. The candidates received

*³ By 1826 some local gatherings included competitions for playing reels, and by about 1830 for march and quickstep playing. In the Highland Society's competitions from 1781 to 1831 there was a certain want of variety in the pieces selected for competition, and in the programme generally. In 1785, Dalzell mentions that "Failte a'Phrionsa" ("The Prince's Salute") was played by 24 competitors consecutively. MacDonald, in 1806, notes that from 1785 to 1805 "not above a dozen of different tunes" were played.

*⁴ From c. 1500 the Highland form of bagpipe had two drones only like the Lowland or Border and Northumbrian, and also Irish pipes. But a big (bass) drone came to be added, at first in the north Highlands, in the first half of the 18th century. Its introduction, however, was gradual. Previous to about 1500, the pipe had only one drone. The Irish war-pipe, which went into disuse about 1750 (owing to the successive severe enactments made against it) had two drones, and was similar to the Highland. See also notices of "English Bagpipe", and "Welsh Bagpipe".

IN DUNN'S ASSEMBLY ROOM.
ANCIENT MARTIAL MUSIC.

PLAN of the COMPETITION for PRIZES
TO BEST PERFORMERS ON THE
GREAT HIGHLAND PIPE.

To begin at Eleven o'Clock forenoon, of TUESDAY, 30th August, 1785.

ACT I.

English Translation

Candidates names and Country.

1. A Salute by Professor M'ARTHUR.

2. Ceàn Drochaid Bèg, { *Head of the Little Bridge, or the Cameron's Gathering,* To be played by John M'Gregor, sen., from Forthingall, who was the first Prize at Edinburgh last year.
3. A Piece by Peter M'Gregor, who won the first Prize at Falkirk Competition.

ACT II.

1. Fàilte a' Phrionfai', *The Arrival or Welcome—A Salute,* John Cumming, Piper to Sir James Grant of Grant, Bart.
2. Fàilte Shìr Sheumais, *Sir James M'Donald's Welcome,* { Robert M'Intyre, Piper to John M'Donald, Esq., of Clanronald
3. Cumhadh Mhìc an Leathain, *The M'Lean's Lament,* John Cumming
4. Fàilte a' Phrionfai', - - - - - Robert M'Intyre.
5. The fàine, - - - - - Alexander Lamont, Piper to John Lamont, Esq. of Lamont.
6. Glais-mheur, - - - - - Colin M'Nab, Piper to Francis M'Nab, Esq. of M'Nab.
7. Moladh Mhàra', *A Favourin Piece,* Alexander Lamont.
8. Fàilte a' Phrionfai', *(A Piece in praise of Mary, or the Laird of M'Lochlan's March,* Colin M'Nab
9. The fàine, - - - - - Donald Gun, Piper to Sir John Clark of Pennycuick, Bart.
10. Cumhadh Mhìc Chruimean, *{ The Lamentation of Patrick More, M'Crinnon,* Donald M'Intyre, sen. of Rannach.

A HIGHLAND DANCE after Act II.

ACT III.

11. The Grants March, - - - - - Donald Gun,
12. Fàilte a' Phrionfai', - - - - - Donald M'Intyre, sen.
13. The fàine, - - - - - { Douglald M'Dougal, Piper to Allan M'Dougal, Esq. of Hayfield.
14. Pìobrachd Eireanach, *An Irish Fìbrach,* John M'Pherion from Badenoch, Piper to Colonel Duncan, M'Pherion of Clany.
15. Fàilte Shìr Dheorla, *In Praise of the Laird of Callendar,* Douglald M'Dougal.
16. Fàilte a' Phrionfai', - - - - - John Pherion.
17. Teuchd an Phrionfai' gu Muirdèard, *{ The Landing in Moydort,* Hugh M'Gregor, from the stewartry of Montcaith.
18. Fàilte a' Phrionfai', - - - - - Malcolm M'Pherion from Breadalbane.
19. The fàine, - - - - - Hugh M'Gregor.
20. Glais-mheur, - - - - - Malcolm M'Pherion,

A HIGHLAND DANCE after Act III.

ACT IV.

21. Leannan Dhoisil Chruimeich *Donald's Love,* { Donald Fisher from Breadalbane, who won the second prize last year.
22. Fàilte a' Phrionfai', - - - - - Archibald M'Grigor from Forthingall.
23. The fàine, - - - - - Donald Fisher.
24. Leannan Ghìoll Chruimeich, *The Stern Lad's Southeart,* Archibald Macgregor.
25. Fàilte a' Phrionfai', - - - - - Alexander M'Grigor, from Forthingall.
26. Ceàn Drochaid Mhoir, *Great Bridge,* John M'Grigor from Glenlyon.
27. Shìfaalach Srach Ghàla, *Chieftain's March,* Alexander M'Grigor.
28. Fàilte a' Phrionfai', - - - - - John M'Grigor.
29. Pìobrachd Shìabh an t Sìora', *Sherrifmuir, a Fìbrach* { John M'Grigor jun. a boy of twelve years of age, son to the above John M'Grigor from Forthingall, who won the Prize last year.
30. Fàilte a' Phrionfai', - - - - - Donald M'Lean of Edinburgh,

A HIGHLAND DANCE after Act IV.

ACT V.

31. Fàilte a' Phrionfai', - - - - - The boy John M'Grigor.
32. Cumhadh Eoin Ghairebh, *Lamentation of Rough John,* Donald M'Lean.
33. Siubhal Mhìc Allain, *Clanronald's March,* { Donald M'Intyre jun. from the estate of Sir Robert Menzies of that ilk, in Rannach, Perthshire.
34. Pìobrachd Mhìc Dhonnal Dhuibh *Cameron's Gathering,* { Paul M'Innes from Lochabar, Piper to John Cameron, Esq. of Callart.
35. Fàilte a' Phrionfai', - - - - - Donald M'Intyre jun.
36. The fàine, - - - - - Paul M'Innes.
37. Siubhal Mhìc Allain, *Clanronald's March,* Allan M'Intyre of Edinburgh.
38. Fàilte a' Phrionfai', - - - - - { John M'Pherion from Strathpey, late Piper to the Atholl Highlanders.
39. The fàine, - - - - - Allan M'Intyre.
40. Cumhadh an Ain Mhìc, *Lamentation for an only Son,* John M'Pherion.
41. Glais-mheur, - - - - - Duncan Stewart from Rannach.
42. Fàilte a' Phrionfai', - - - - - John Dewar from the estate of Sir Robert Menzies.
43. The fàine, - - - - - Duncan Stewart.
44. Ceàn Drochaid Mhoir, *Head of the Great Bridge—A Fìbrach,* John Dewar.
45. Shìabh an t Sìora', *Sherrifmuir,* Ronald M'Donald, from Culloden.
46. Fàilte a' Phrionfai', - - - - - Robert M'Dougal from Forthingall, Perthshire.
47. The fàine, - - - - - Ronald M'Donald.
48. Moladh Mhàra', *In Praise of Mary,* Robert M'Dougal.

A HIGHLAND DANCE after Act V.

The whole to conclude with a Piece by Professor M'ARTHUR.

travelling expenses at the rate of two pence a mile. The Highland Society of London presented the prizes, and bore most of the expenses connected with the competitions.*⁵ In 1835, a gold medal was first offered by the Society for competition in addition to the prize pipe;*⁶ but on the venue being changed to Inverness in 1859, a gold medal and bagpipe became the 1st prize. Since about 1888, beyond the gold medal, prizes in money only have been given.

In 1875, a similar and equally important annual piping contest was started at the Argyllshire Gathering, Oban, to which the Highland Society of London presented a gold medal for competition in Pibroch playing, on the same lines as that at Inverness. This has continued as an annual event up to the present day, save with breaks due to war.

The revival in things Highland, which took place towards the end of the 18th and early 19th centuries, resulted in numerous Highland gatherings or games being instituted in various parts of the Highlands, and later on in the Lowlands and elsewhere, in which athletic events distinctively Highland, as well as piping and dancing were the feature, and gave a further stimulus to the cult of piping. Among the first of these was the St. Fillan's or Strath Fillan Highland Games, inaugurated in about 1820, at which a prize pipe was given for pibroch playing.

In these Notices of Pipers and prizes won by them, reference has been almost exclusively made to the results of the competitions held at Falkirk, Edinburgh, and latterly Inverness and Oban, either for the prize pipe, etc., or gold medal, and for pibroch (ceol mor) playing only. These contests have been recognised, all along, as the premier ones of the piping world. To try and enumerate the many others, including the competitions in the light music (ceol beag) would be an arduous and well nigh impossible task to attempt under the circumstances, and add considerably (even if the data were procurable) to the length of the Notices. But where a piper has been the recipient of prizes at competitions other than the above one, due reference has been made to that fact when known.

It will be seen that not only the Highland but also some and (from 1881), all the Lowland Scottish regiments possessed pipers, and

*⁵ The 1784 gathering (the first regular annual one to be in Edinburgh) was held in the Assembly Hall, behind the City Guard's quarters, later the Commercial Bank. In 1785, the competition took place in rooms in West Register Street, now demolished. Afterwards the competitions were held in various places, including a church, but finally found a permanent home in what was then the Adelphi Theatre.

*⁶ For those who had won formerly the 1st prize; the prize pipe being, as hitherto, for the ordinary competition.

latterly these produced several first-rate performers and composers. They were nearly all Highlanders, or of Highland family. More recently we find some Lowland names.

In course of time, and due to emigration over a great number of years, piping has gradually spread all over the world. It is known, and will be observed that pipers—some of them in the front rank—have been going overseas for a century and more, particularly to Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. To this fact we owe the presence of so many good players in those countries, where piping competitions are regularly held and pipe music kept up in the Scottish corps of the armed forces of those dominions.

The tendency, in later times, has been to concentrate upon band playing, which if overdone, must have an adverse effect on individual playing, and upon piping from the musical point of view. To counteract this, the need to foster and encourage solo playing is apparent. The maintaining of the standard of the music played too is essential; and the due preservation of piobaireachd (ceol mor), the big or classical music of the pipes, on correct lines.*7

So long as Scottish piping endures, and competitions take place, these Notices fall to be continually added to with further names, and facts concerning them.

The march and quickstep, now so prominent a feature of piping, appear to date only from the latter end of the 18th and early 19th centuries,*8 and seem to have been the natural outcome of the use of the pipe in the drilled and disciplined marching regiments raised in that period. Their introduction was gradual, piobaireachd being still the recognised, "official", music. But in course of time their suitability resulted in that form of pipe playing increasing, many tunes being composed instead of as formerly being adapted for the most part from

*7 As to the quality of pipe music today, remarks the author of "The Highland Bagpipe" in 1901 (and his observations apply equally today), the composing of piobaireachd is occasionally attempted, that of the "lesser music" ("Ceol beag") frequently so, but the results as a whole are mediocre, and pipers would gain quite as much credit by paying more attention to the first-rate works of their predecessors. With very few exceptions, there are no tunes like the old tunes, and their intrinsic merit is the pride of the piping fraternity. Present day conditions are not conducive to the production of good music, and we should be glad we have men who can, and are, contented to adequately interpret the old. Of the old tunes we have great store; many too seldom played or known about by the average pipe player who often wastes his time on indifferent or worthless tunes just because they are new.

*8 Although it would seem that quicksteps at least were not unknown long prior to that, as historical references tend to show.

existing song airs, or reels and jigs slowed down. This came about during the first half of the 19th century. In response to the demand, the first known published work to include marches or quicksteps was brought out in 1829 by Donald MacDonald, pipe-maker and musicographer in Edinburgh, who had, in 1822, published a collection of piobaireachd, the first of its kind save for the Rev. Patrick MacDonald's "Highland Vocal Airs"—which included four piobaireachds—of 1781.*⁹ Thereafter, other similar works were issued, containing new tunes, until by about the "forties" of the 19th century there began to be evolved—and by the "sixties" was definitely established—the four or more parted competition or exhibition march ("Composed by the Highland pipers for the Highland pipe alone, not for the marching of drilled bodies of men, but solely for the exposition of the skill of the individual performer and of the capacity of his instrument"),*¹⁰ now so marked and popular a feature, and "which, in its way", observes an eminent authority on pipe music, "is almost

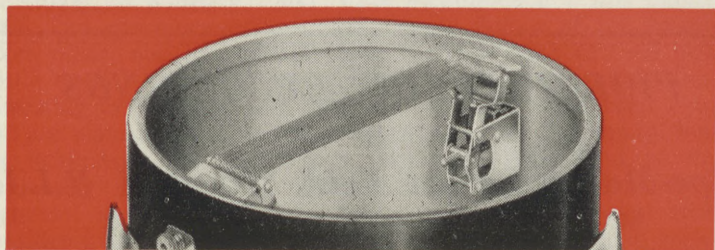
*⁹ First published in that year, followed by an ordinary edition in 1784 (see under "MacDonald, Rev. Patrick").

*¹⁰ In an article by Mr. Archibald Campbell, Kilberry, on "The Highland Bagpipe March", which appeared in the "Oban Times" some years ago, he states that this form of Highland pipe music (which was destined to be piobaireachd's rival in the years to come) "emanated, apparently, from the small coterie of experts collected as pipers to the big establishments in and about Deeside, by which, headed by Angus MacKay, the highest arts of pipe music were fostered during the first half of Queen Victoria's reign. Here it was that many of the manuscript piobaireachd records were made, on which we now depend, and here, it would seem, the competition march had its birth. One of the first composers was Angus MacKay himself, and many have come after him. Like everything else, the competition march has changed, and though it may be an exaggeration to assert, as some do, that Angus MacKay would fail to recognise the "Glengarry Gathering" as played today on a competition platform, there has been much subsequent elaboration of the music, even since the days of its great, possibly its greatest exponent, William MacLennan" (whom see).

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FROM THE "COURANT", 1793

TO HIGHLAND PIPERS.

THE ANNUAL COMPETITION for PRIZES to be given by the HIGHLAND SOCIETY of LONDON to the **Three Best Performers on the Bagpipes**, is to be held at Edinburgh on Tuesday the Ninth Day of July next (being the Second Day of the Races), in presence of a Committee of Judges and Directors appointed by the Highland Society of Scotland.

PRIZES will also be given to the **Best Dancers of Highland Reels**.

Competitors must be in Edinburgh on or before Friday the 5th day of July, and immediately on their arrival give their names to Mr. Lewis Gordon, clerk of the Highland Society, in order to a previous rehearsal as usual.

N.B.—The Pipers and Dancers must be properly equipped in the **Highland Garb**.

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as interesting a product as piobaireachd itself" (see under "MacKay, Pipe-Major Hugh", in these Notices).^{*11} The vogue of the march and quickstep was greatly increased by the regular introduction of the pipe band (pipes and drums) by the third quarter of the 19th century. Piobaireachd was now less played, and relegated to certain occasions only. Fewer pipers learnt it, although no piper was (and the same still holds good) considered a finished performer unless he could play it. As time went on, this condition has become more marked, and the continuance of piobaireachd rests as much with civilian as army pipers.

The Highland bagpipe, being a most suitable instrument for martial purposes—none more so^{*12}—we find the Highland piper in the role of fighting musician from earliest times. During the course of the almost continuous wars of the latter half of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries, the Island of Skye and Sutherland alone furnished over 1,000 pipers to the army. Throughout British Military history, Highland regimental pipers have ever played a most conspicuous role, and a large proportion of them became casualties in the various campaigns of the past. Their innumerable gallant deeds

^{*11} "Within the last thirty years", remark the authors of "The Kilberry Book of Ceol Meadhonach" (see under "Campbell, Archibald, of Kilberry"; and "Ceol Meadhonach"), first published in 1908, "an enormous national reaction in favour of the bagpipe has taken place, and has brought with it a new class of Ceol Beag (the "little music", viz. marches, quicksteps, strathspeys, reels, jigs, etc.), consisting of marches and dance tunes which have been composed, and are played, not so much for marching or for dancing to, but solely for exhibition and competition purposes. This kind of music is immensely popular. Its proper execution demands the highest technical skill, and many people are inclined for that reason to consider it the highest expression of pipe music. But, in spite of its undoubted fascination, it is probably too artificial and unreal ever to become classical".

^{*12} That is the Full-Size or Great Highland or Military. For indoor purposes and playing dance music the Reel-Size pipe, either mouth or bellows blown, was in common use up till about 1800 or later. Thereafter it was superseded by the full-size for all purposes. Latterly the "Half-size" pipe has come in for boys' bands, and, as made, is often confused with the Reel-size, but the two are distinct. The former has not so agreeable a tone as the latter. The firm of Peter Henderson, Glasgow (whom see) is one of the few which have the specifications of the true reel pipe. The Miniature or Chamber sized pipe has had some vogue all along for indoor playing. In the Highland bagpipe the blow-stick is lengthened, thus enabling the player to march with head erect.

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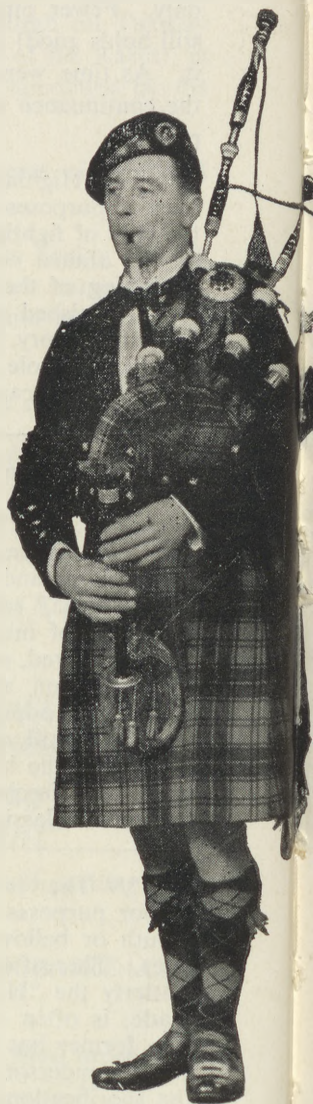
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at Bagpipes

and great sacrifices illuminate the pages of that history and can never be forgotten. In the Great War of 1914-18, waged on a more colossal scale than previous ones, the losses among pipers was upwards of 500 killed and 600 wounded, or a total of some 1,100. These included many players in the front rank or of highest promise. Such depletion of their numbers was suffered by no exponents of any other form of musical instrument. The above casualty figures were not approached in the even wider conflict of 1939-45.

Full references will be found to the old **Hereditary Pipers** (in whose hands pipe music rested up till 1747, when they were practically abolished by law)*¹³ and to their successors, the **Family Pipers**, in Notes under "The MacCrimmons" and "MacKenzie, John Ban", respectively, in the succeeding notices. Also to the **Burgh and Border Pipers**, under "Anderson, Thomas"; "Hastie, John"; "Ritchie, James"; "Waugh, James".

The subject of **Canntaireachd**, or **Articulate (Vocal) Music**—by means of which piobaireachd (literally "piping") or ceol mor (the great music) was taught and handed down prior to the use of modern staff notation—is fully entered into in a note to "Cambell, Colin Mor", and "MacCrimmon, John (Iain Odhar)"; also under "Ross, Duncan" and "MacLeod, Captain Neil, of Gesto"; as well as under the heading "Canntaireachd".

A full description of **Piobaireachd (or Ceol Mor)**—including a reference to Ceol Beag (the "little, or lesser music", i.e. quicksteps, marches, and dance tunes)—as also of **Ceol Meadhonach** (or "Middle Music", which lies between the above two categories of Highland Bagpipe music) will be found under the headings of "Piobaireachd" and "Ceol Meadhonach" respectively.

The music of the Scottish Highland Bagpipe, it may be noticed here, is peculiar to the Gael of Scotland, and in no other country has that form of instrument been developed in the same way. "It is one of the few national instruments in Europe, and the only variety of bagpipe which has held its own all along. In no other country is there such a quantity of special music, much of it of considerable age, composed solely for one instrument, and fitted only for interpretation

*¹³ The Hereditary Pipers in the Highlands were men of superior position and education and far removed from the ordinary piper of the time. They were also composers and frequently poets of merit, such as John Dall MacKay, of Gairloch (see under "Burt, Edward", in the Notices).

by it".*14

"As an inspiration to the clans", writes the author of "The Highland Bagpipe", "the bagpipe is no more", but it still remains as an inspiration to the Scottish regiments and "an integral part of Highland and Scottish life and character".

To conclude—the due preservation of the native character of the Great Highland Bagpipe lies in resisting any attempts to alter its ancient scale in favour of any modern one, and to protect its music from the influence of modern musical composition. In that, it may be said, rests the continuance and well-being of our national instrument.

I. H. McK. S.

*14 "If the Scottish Gael", observes Mr. Robert Glen, in his "Notes on the Ancient Musical Instruments of Scotland", "cannot claim the merit of inventing the bagpipe, he can at least boast that he has made it his own, by inventing a style of execution which has turned the imperfections of the instrument into beauties, and has composed a rich and varied stock of music specially adapted for it, which cannot be properly performed on any other instrument"—"Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland", Vol. XIV, p. 123.

The Scottish Piping Society Of The Witwatersrand

HIGHLAND BAGPIPE COMPETITION

to be held in JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA,
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Competitors will be required to play in the three events of
Marches, Strathspeys and Reels, and Piobaireachd.

The Piobaireachd Competition set tunes are :—

"The Glen is Mine"
"The Lament for the Only Son"
"The MacKenzies' March" ("Tulloch Ard")
"The Little Spree"
"Lament for the Old Sword"
"Corrienessan's Salute"

First Prize : L. M. Millar Memorial Trophy and 100 Guineas.

Second Prize : £25. **Third Prize :** £15. **Fourth Prize :** £10.

There is no entry fee. Entry forms and details obtainable from
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Bagpipe Music : By Co-Principal Thomas Pearston, College of Piping, Glasgow.

Gaelic Language and Song : Mrs. Tina Morrison, Baddeck, N.S.

Highland Dancing : By James L. MacKenzie, S.D.T.A., Aberdeen, Scotland.

Course for Beginners : Two Weeks—Any Age—Boys and Girls—July 10th to 22nd, 1967—Also open to first year students and students desiring extra training and preparation for Diploma Course.

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Teaching Topics

by Seumas MacNeill.

Again we start with a comment from Mr. J. M. Christie of Wick.

"I have found the very same difficulty as mentioned in 'The face of a piper' among my pupils. I have been trying to teach girls to play the pipes and drums for more than twenty-five years. I spend about 30 hours weekly giving tuition **free**. At the moment I have over 60 girls, aged from 6 years. I have been ridiculed in the Press, by pipers, even by so-called professional pipers, for wasting my time trying to get girls to play the pipes, but I just keep going. I am not annoyed by some pipers' childish jealousies. I would like to see everybody play the pipes.

In conclusion, I suggest the answer to Mr. MacNeill's problem about the pupil who will not practise. Advise him to get a guitar and join a beat group. You will always get someone daft enough to play the pipes."

Fair enough. I once advised a pupil to go and learn the banjo. He chose the accordion instead and, in a short time had his own dance band. His name is Iain MacDonald, now living in Skye. I think he appreciated the advice, because I understand that when he used to go out for a quiet dram with fellow-accordionist John Carmichael (Freena MacFadyen's husband) the first toast was always, "Here's to banjos".

* * * *

The problem this month is the one about reading music. A simple enough thing to do, but it takes an effort at the beginning.

"The Music"—a most peculiar term we always keep using, at least around this part of the world we do.

"Watch the music", we say, and "Can you read music?" we ask our new pupils.

Music is an emotion, an ethereal sensation, a thrilling of the body and a transcending elation of the immortal soul.

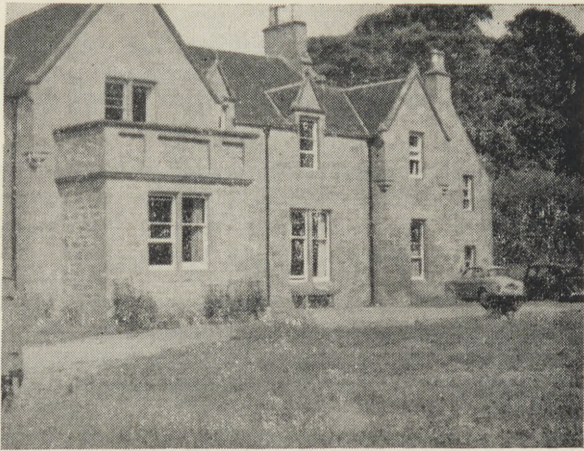
Sometimes.

But if so, how can we expect a child to watch it, or read it ?

There is a very important teaching point here, and it is **always be definite and accurate in what you say to pupils.**

Do not dither. Piping is an art, but that's no excuse for havoring like a refugee from a P.E.N. convention. Teaching piping is a science, so a certain amount of logic and simplicity are essential.

That, however, is a subject for further consideration at another time. Right now I'd really like to know what are the best ways to



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teach pupils to read and interpret staff notation.

My system (and I am sure that in this part of it at least there could be valuable additions to it), my system is to get them to write the tunes as they learn them. That is the essential and most important part.

Pupils, of course, usually hate having to write music, but I doubt if anything else teaches them so quickly. I have had the problems of course of the mother writing the tune for them, but that can soon be put right.

Even if the tune is not well written (and it won't be) the boy (or girl) is still learning a great deal. I find that, after copying four tunes as they are learned, the pupil is quite adept at reading. In fact some of them become so expert at it that they cannot, later on, play tunes in collections where gracenote errors are common—because some of the things they are being expected to do are impossible.

I am not a beautiful writer of music myself, but I don't think that a high standard is all that important.

I was once staying a night with John M. MacKenzie in Campbeltown, and when the piping stopped (early on the Sabbath morning) we got to this topic. Johnnie had been well drilled on the writing by Willie Ross, and he showed me how they were instructed to group

A SELECTION OF TRADITIONAL BAGPIPE REELS

A selection of traditional reels played by David Ross, Rosehall, at the ceilidh after the Northern Meeting, 1966, in Inverness, was greeted with such enthusiasm by the audience that it was suggested the selection should be recorded on tape, as many of the reels are now out of print and seldom heard to-day. It was felt that a wide audience both at home and abroad would be interested in hearing these fine old tunes.

It was therefore decided to follow up this suggestion and copies of the tape recording can now be obtained from:—

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the two beats in each bar so that a gap was left in the middle.

“For example”, he said, pulling a sheet of music from a pile, “This tune, ‘Leaving Gigha’, was written out by somebody who hadn’t the least idea of how to set things out in an attractive way”.

Regretfully, I had to confess that I had written this particular copy from my uncle’s dictation, so we passed on to other topics.

Two other things I do to help my pupils. First, I do not allow them to write the names of the notes under the notes, for this way they never learn.

Second, I always make them watch the book as they play, even when they can’t read hardly at all. They were given two hands for the chanter, two ears to listen to me and two eyes to watch the book.

At the early stages I point to each note (and gracenote) when I want them to play it, and I say the name of it. This becomes quite complicated, for the teacher must be expert at reading music upside-down, and he must keep watching the boy’s eyes to be sure that he is watching the book.

Well, that’s my system. I’d be glad to have advice on how to improve it.

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The MacCrimmons

by James E. Scott

We have treated Donald Ban as chief piper on account of his accompanying the MacLeods when they marched to join the government forces. It was part of the chief piper's duty to accompany them when engaged on an expedition. There is, however, some doubt about his being chief piper, that position is claimed by some for his brother Malcolm, who it seems had a weak constitution which unfitted him for the rigours of a campaign. The truth may be that while Malcolm was nominally chief piper, Donald performed the actual duties.

Of Malcolm, we have not much to say. He earned renown as an instructor of the pipes, being famous in that department of piping. An indenture, dated March, 1743, between Lord Lovat and his piper, David Fraser, has been preserved. In it Lord Lovat undertakes to send his piper at his own charges to the Isle of Skye in order to have him perfected a highland piper by Malcolm MacCrimmon, who his lordship is to reward for educating the said David Fraser. It may be noted that young Fraser had already spent some years studying under Lord Lovat's piper.

There is an oft told story which illustrates the great appreciation of piobaireachd playing by the Highland lairds. The story relates that Sir Alexander MacDonald of Sleat so greatly admired the playing of MacLeod's piper, Padruig Og MacCrimmon, that he sent Charles MacArthur, a young piper of his own, to him for training. After eleven years, having taught him all that he could, MacCrimmon brought young Charles MacArthur back to Duntuilim. It happened that Iain Dall MacKay, MacKenzie of Gairloch's blind piper, was staying at the castle at the time, Sir Alexander thought that he could obtain an unbiassed opinion from the blind man of the young piper. After hearing him play, Iain Dall was very complimentary about his skill. Sir Alexander then said there was a second pupil whom he would like Iain Dall to hear so that he could judge which was the best. MacCrimmon took the part of the second pupil, but Iain Dall when he heard him, declared that if all the pipers in Scotland played to him he would have recognised the player as Patrick Og MacCrimmon, the greatest master of piobaireachd in Scotland.

By 1769, Malcolm's younger son, Donald Ruadh, was at Borreraig. Malcolm evidently died about this time, for in the following year Donald Ruadh was still in Borreraig and received a salary of £5-11s., while his elder brother, Iain Dubh, also a piper, had Borrodale and a salary of £4. But meanwhile the rents of their holdings had been raised from £11-2s.-5d. Scots to £18 sterling, so that instead of sitting rent free, their salaries only covered half the rents they had to pay. Donald Ruadh gave up the tenancy of Borreraig and emigrated, and as we shall see he joined the army some



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time later. Iain Dubh stayed on.

There were more than men died at Culloden—a whole way of life died there. The result of that battle was fraught with great changes in the Highlands. Though the MacLeods fought on the Hanoverian side they suffered along with those who were on the opposite side. Now there began to be great changes on their estate, mainly due to the pecuniary embarrassments of the chiefs. These, of course, were no new thing, but it was not so easy to overcome them now as it had been in the past.

Up to Culloden rents had been mostly paid in kind, cheese, butter, muttons, poultry, meal, and the produce of the land all contributing to the rent, occasionally there was a small amount of cash (Scots) in addition. Now these began to be exacted at their cash value, and the money payment was reckoned in sterling which caused a great increase in the rents.

One great change brought about was that after keeping their family pipers since about 1600 this office was abolished, so the hereditary piper died. Though their official position was at an end the MacCrimmons continued for a time in their farms and teaching pupils.

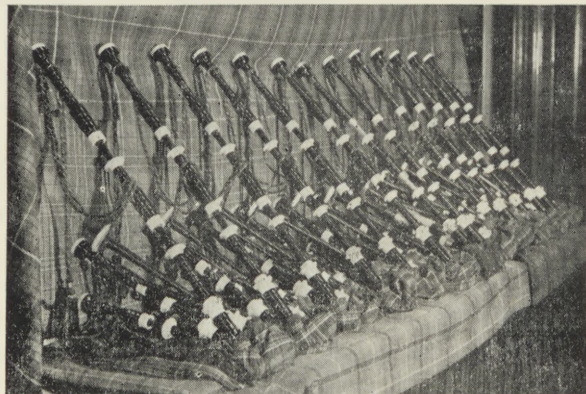
Sooner or later all the hereditary officers centred round the chiefs came to an end; bards, pipers, fiddlers, harpers, sennachies, physicians, etc.

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THE SCOTTISH PIPING SOCIETY OF LONDON

Members' Competition

The first of the twice yearly Members' Competitions of the Scottish Piping Society of London was held on Friday, 10th March, at the T.A. Drill Hall, 206, Brompton Road. The judges for the occasion were Pipe-Major Robert Hill and David Ross, the Honorary Pipe-Major of the Society. Mrs. J. Shone kindly agreed to present the prizes. The results were as follows:

Piobaireachd—1st, P. M. Walton ("Lament for MacDonell of Laggan"); 2nd, L. Smith Bowers ("Glengarry's Lament").

6/8 March—1st, Andrew Gray ("Leaving Port Askaig"); 2nd, A. MacIntyre ("Kirkhill").

Letter To The Editor

Dear Sir,

Rhodesia.

My December 1966 copy of your esteemed journal has just come to hand.

When I turned to "Letters to the Editor", I was deeply moved to find that I had another unknown friend in Mr. J. W. MacGuinness of Blackpool.

Thank you, Mr. MacGuinness, for your kind thought. I should like to thank you personally, but feel that my thanks should be tendered to you through the medium from which I learnt of your offer. The world's a better place for having people like you.

Mr. Editor, my letter is addressed to you, but I seem to have gone on another beat. I am sure, however, that you will understand.

J. M. Osler.

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Published by the College of Piping, 20 Otago Street, Glasgow, W.2.

