



Piping Times

Vol. 21, No. 7.

April, 1969.



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COVER PICTURE :

CAN YOU IDENTIFY HIM ?

The photograph is an old one, taken in Perth (Scotland).

PIOBAIREACHD

CLASSICAL MUSIC OF THE HIGHLAND BAGPIPE

SEUMAS MACNEILL

PIOBAIREACHD, the classical music of the great Highland bagpipe, has been described as Scotland's major contribution to world culture. Yet despite its acclaimed musical merit and the almost universal acquaintance with the instrument, piobaireachd is played and understood by only a small minority.

To interest and educate a wider audience, the BBC has commissioned *Piobaireachd*. Published on October 24, 1968, this book will not only contribute to the literature of the bagpipe but will help both the listening and the reading public to understand and enjoy this ancient classical music.

Piobaireachd is the first full treatment of the subject. Written by Seumas MacNeill, Joint Principal of the College of Piping, it traces the history of the bagpipe and of bagpipe music and describes in detail the unique characteristics of the instrument itself. The main body of the book is devoted to a close analysis of selected tunes representative of each category of piobaireachd. Finally there is a summary of the present position and a review of future prospects for this great musical tradition.

12/6d. (plus 1/6d. postage).

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SCOTLAND.



Editorial

The wind of change is blowing strongly through the piping world at present, and not the least fascinating blast is the effort which the Scottish Pipe Band Association is making to link up pipe band culture with the rest of the world of music. This has grown up gradually over the years, so that now the movement has gathered so much momentum that it is rolling on unchecked and almost unheeded.

To deny the value and importance of such a link up is to be considered reactionary or just a plain old fashioned stick in the mud. To suggest that maybe the rest of the music world is not interested in the proposed link up is heresy of the first order. And yet is such a link likely, or even desirable ?

Pipers have always recognised that their music is a thing apart. We get ideas from other people, and we pass on ideas—our export-import relationship has in fact always been very favourable. We gave the world sol-fa notation, and we accepted from it staff in return. Due to the nature of our instrument we have little interest in harmony and no interest in counterpoint or such ideas as rubato, diminuendo, etc. Apart from exchange of tunes, contact between pipers and other musicians must always be on a very superficial level. We are all very well aware that when we listen to opera or jazz or pop music or whatever takes our fancy, that this is a different thing altogether. So where and how can we make a contact which is any better than we have already ?

In the pipe band world perhaps things are slightly different. Perhaps members of the orchestra can hear something in a combination of pipes and drums which makes them feel there is a common ground to be explored. To us however it seems very unlikely that the oboists, flautists (what do you call a man who plays a flute?), bassoon players and others feel any affinity for the pipe-bandsman. Why else does the Musicians' Union debar pipers from membership ?

The S.P.B.A. seeking for acceptance in this way reminds us inevitably of Mr. Wilson going cap in hand to de Gaulle. The inevitable rebuffs can do nothing but harm to the public image of the piper, and it is indeed sad that those of us who have no interest in the proposal should have to suffer with the few who do.

TUTOR WANTED for young lady beginner. Please apply to Miss E. E. Webb, "Brooklands", 55 Harrowby Place, Willenhall, Staffordshire.

Uist and Barra Contest

The annual professional competition organised by the Uist and Barra Association was held in the South Govan Town Hall, Glasgow, on Saturday, February 22nd. A lot of work had obviously gone into the arrangements, but somehow the event did not go with all the swing and excitement we expect at a premier contest of the winter season.

Perhaps, after the exhilaration of the Scottish Pipers' Association judging system, it was a case of back to auld claes and porridge, for we were once again sitting patiently, like cattle, watching and listening but not taking part. The thoughts and the machinations of the men on the bench may have been an entertainment to them, but to us docile stooges they were just the same old mystery as usual.

The "Uist and Barra" is of course more a social occasion than a piping one, a chance for old friends to gather and talk of the glories of the piping past of the islands, now gone for ever. In the past we have complained about the fact that this chatting went on in the hall while the piper was playing, but such was not the case this year, for there weren't enough people in the hall at any time to make chatting a problem. Partly this may have been due to the competing attraction of the miniature band contest, but no doubt the attendance was affected by the bus curfew. (The previous week a bus conductor had been stabbed to death, and until the city fathers can find some method—other than psychiatric treatment—to control hooligans, the bus crews, for the sake of their lives, are going off duty at 8 p.m. Let Glasgow flourish).

Chairman for the day was Mr. John Buchanan, who gave a forthright and down-to-earth speech which was well received, and deservedly so. Prizes were presented by Mrs. Gillies (whose son was a prize-winner), Ronald Morrison presided over all, and detailed arrangements had been handled by the convener, Angus J. MacLellan.

RESULTS :

Piobaireachd—1. John Garroway ("MacKay's Banner"); 2. John MacDougall ("Scarce of Fishing"); 3. Hector MacFadyen ("MacDougall's Gathering"); 4. Kenneth MacDonald ("The Pipers' Warning"); 5. Iain MacFadyen ("MacNeil of Barra's March").

March—1. Iain MacFadyen; 2. Iain Morrison; 3. Iain MacLellan; 4. Norman Gillies.

Strathspey and Reel—1. Iain Morrison; 2. Hector MacFadyen; 3. Iain MacFadyen; 4. John MacDougall.

Jig—1. Kenneth MacDonald; 2. Iain Morrison; 3. Norman Gillies; 4. Hector MacFadyen.

N. IRELAND.

Tartan Club Contest

We have now received (through the good offices of Jackie Doran) details of the points awarded in the competition organised by the Tartan Club on January 11th. As in the S.P.A. contest, and as explained by Jackie last month, the highest and lowest of the marks given by the five judges were ignored each time. The mark in the final column is the sum of the remaining marks.

The judges can be identified as follows:—

1. W.S.—W. Stewart.
2. J.McA—J. McAdam.
3. TG—T. Geddis.
4. TMcQ—T. McQuillan.
5. JM—J. Murdoch.

PLAYERS	JUDGES					Mark
	WS	JMcA	TG	TMcQ	JM	
Juvenile	1	2	3	4	5	
B.McCabe	4.6	4.6	4.2	4.0	4.5	13.3
H. McIleer	4.3	4.7	4.8	3.2	4.2	13.2
Junior						
J. Fitzpatrick	6.5	6.1	7.7	7.0	7.0	20.5
E. Kirk	6.9	7.4	7.4	7.0	7.4	21.8
Miss M. Matthews	6.3	6.0	6.9	6.5	6.5	19.3
T. J. Grant	6.4	7.1	7.2	7.0	6.8	20.9
Senior						
T. Robinson	9.3	9.1	9.4	9.0	9.5	27.8
J. Finlay	8.7	8.1	8.3	7.5	7.5	23.9
H. Hook	9.5	9.0	9.6	9.3	9.4	28.2
K. Brown	8.5	8.4	8.0	8.0	8.0	24.4
W. Maxwell	8.8	8.1	8.7	8.0	7.8	24.8
B. Brannigan	9.0	9.0	9.2	9.0	9.0	27.0
H. Stevenson	9.4	9.1	9.7	9.2	9.3	27.9
R. Barry	8.9	8.9	9.2	8.2	8.8	26.6
J. Johnston	9.0	8.8	9.0	8.5	8.8	26.6

Brittany and the Highland Bagpipe

by H. Thomas.

Brittany is a small country, or more exactly, a peninsula in western Europe. It is a Celtic Nation and, in the western part of it, people speak the Breton language, of the same branch of Celtic as Welsh and Cornish.

Brittany was an independent duchy until 1532; but now it is under the domination of French government, economically, politically and culturally, just as Celtic nations of Great Britain and the United Kingdom are under the power of London.

Brittany had a kind of pipe music: the "Biniou kozh" ("old pipe", much smaller than the Highland bagpipe, with only one drone) which accompanied the "Bombard", an ancestor of the oboe. For centuries Bretons played them. But some Breton pipers of the last century thought it would be possible to accompany the Bombard with the Scottish Highland bagpipe. The first we know to have done this is Gwilherm of Benac'h, a carpenter. He played in accompaniment of a clarinet and a drum. Gwilherm was born in 1857, had his pipe between 1870-1880, and died in 1922.

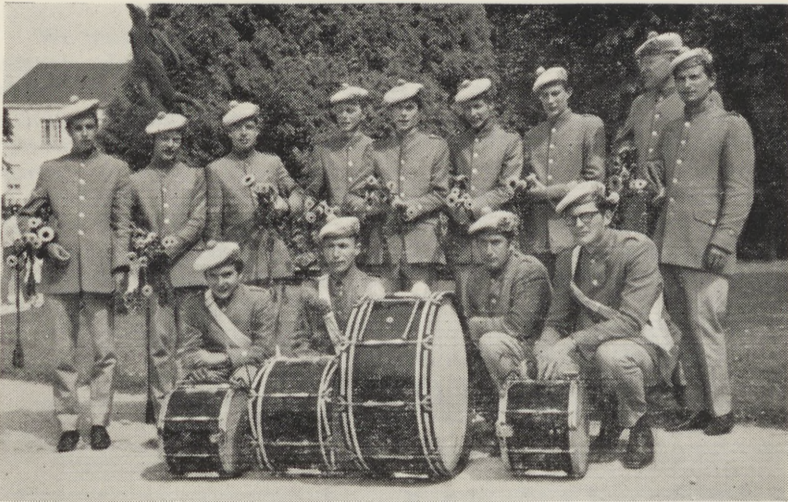
In 1929, Herve Le Menn instructed half-a-dozen friends to play what is called Breton instruments, that is to say: the bagpipe (which was called "Binioubras", high bagpipe), the "Biniou-kozh", the "Bombard" and the "Taboulin" (=drums, tenors and bass, as in Scotland). Their "band" was named, "kenvreuriez ar Viniouerien" (K.A.V.), which exists still today, and is quite a curious band, consisting of drummers, "biniou-kozh", and "bombards".

One of the first Bretons to have played the Highland bagpipe was Gweltaz Jaffrenou, the son of the bard Taldir, born at Karaez. In the year 1930, after his military service, a Scottish piper, Moffat Pender, came and gave him a tutor and his first bagpipe lessons. In 1937, it was Angus MacAulay, piper of the "London Scottish Country Dance Society", who played at the "gorsedd" of Perroz, who came and taught him. Before that, in 1934, Seton Gordon of Skye, who played the bagpipe at Roscoff, gave him lessons. After the second World War, Jaffrenou was the only bagpiper of "Penn ar Bed", a county of Brittany, and played all over the country.

Other players of the Highland bagpipe during these years were Jakez Connan, Marcel Le Bouc, born at Dinan in 1891. After 1929, that is to say the creation of the K.A.V., other pipers played on Scottish bagpipes.

In 1943, Polig Monjarret, Dorig Le Voyer, and friends created "Bodadeg ar Sonerien" (B.A.S.), a new society of pipers whose aim

was to develop Breton music. They organised summer camps for their pupils, and created bands, the first of which was the railway station clerks' band of Kareaz. These bands consisted of Highland bagpipes, Bombards and drums; their name was "Bagad"; the gathering of several "Bagadou" of a same town was named "Kevrenn". "Bagadou" were created nearly in each town of Brittany, most of them exist still now and compete once each year at Brest, a competition which decides which of the three existing grades they will be placed in: 1st grade, 2nd grade, 3rd grade (this being divided in grade A and B).



In 1956, Herri Leon (whose nickname was "Ar Big") and Donatien Laurent went to the summer camp of the College of Piping. Being back, they founded a college named "Skolaj Beg An Treis" which held its camps at Porspoder school, a village on the shore in the north of Brest. The teachers of this "skolaj" were the first to consider the Highland bagpipe as a true music instrument, and had the same spirit as Scottish pipers, although they continued with the association of bagpipes, and bombards and drums. Unfortunately poor Herri Leon died after a bicycle fall in August 1962, and with him it was the end of the "Skolaj" as his friends were not able to take the place of their leader. We can say that all the "Penn-Sonerien" (band leaders) who are at the head of a first grade Bagad now were pupils of the "Skolaj Beg An Treis".

Some pipers think now that the "Bagad" has reached a musical summit and will never be able to play better music with the association of Highland bagpipes and Bombards. These pipers think the bombards find a better use with the "Biniou-Kozh", as "Biniou-Kozh" is an accompaniment to the Bombard; small bands of Bombards can be created, as the Bombard is a complete double-instrument, just as the more modern oboe is; Highland bagpipes and drums must play together in bands (the Breton name for a band is "Laz-Senin").

The first kind of pipe music, the couple "Biniou-Kozh"—"Bombard", is the traditional one which flourishes again in Brittany and is certainly the highest expression of the Breton folk music. A

Slow Air.

Me 'm aus choazet un dous (Baud)

Ar: J. PINCET

small band of Bombards exists in Roazhon and has a school name: "Skol ar vombard" (the school of Bombard), the leader being Yann An Helgoualc'h. The first pipe-band to be created was the "Gaelic Club Pipe-Band" of Naomed, the leader being Jean-Francois Allain, but to my own knowledge they do not play Breton music. (Perhaps are they playing now?) The second pipe-band has been created last year in Roazhon (Rennes in French), its name is "An Ere", and its leader is Jakez Pencet, a pupil of Herri Leon Ar Big, W. Leslie and R. U. Brown (Balmoral). In our band, Breton music as well as Scottish or Irish music is played; in a word we want to show that all that concerns pipe-band music must be played in a Breton band, as

well as in a band of any other Celtic nation. The Highland bagpipe and the Bombard are not at all the same instruments, and it is quite impossible to play "true bagpipe music", Ceol Mor, or jigs in accompaniment of Bombards, and bagpipes cannot play what can be played on a Bombard. The means of expression of these two instruments are quite different, and the association of them can produce neither bagpipe music nor Bombard music—it is only a cocktail, where bagpipes and bombardists incommode themselves, where the pipe chanters must wear "Scotch" tapes in order to have the same scale as the Bombards, and where the Bombards destroy the homogeneity of the pipes and drums! A first grade "Bagad" is perhaps not quite unmusical, but is not to satisfy a true "Piper"!

We must speak of a new organisation that does a lot of work in Brittany. It is the "Bureau Collegial" owing to "Kendalc'h". The "B.C." is a "College Board" of pipers and drummers and bombardists; its aim is to teach the Breton instrumental music, to do research, to organise competitions, camps of work, and to publish books and records. A book: "Breton Music for the Bagpipe" can be found in the shops of some Glasgow bagpipe-makers, and a record completing this book has just been made. Two piping schools, one in Roazhon (25 pupils) and another one in Sant-Brieg (10 pupils) have just been opened. The number of pupils coming to our camps (40 to our last summer camp) is increasing. We publish articles upon the maintenance of the bagpipe, research, an editorial, and a tune each month in the magazine of "Kendalc'h" which name is "Breiz" (Brittany).

With the "B.C.'s." work we can hope for the best spreading of the bagpipe all over Brittany.

ALL FOR FUN.

Recently we have had another addition to the staff of the "Piping Times" (acting unpaid). What Donald Drone is to Seoras, Fred Heffelfinger of Grasspants, Oregon is to William Hamilton Weber. Mr. Weber hails from San Francisco, California, so his humour (compared to the normal Scottish variety) is not only trans-Atlantic but trans-Continental forbye. In his application he says "I distribute my efforts to the fellow members of the Black Raven Pipe Band of San Francisco. They are greeted with almost as much laughter as my playing".

Anyway we have decided to give him a trial. If you like him we can always double his salary.

"The Man from Glengarry"

by D. R. MacLennan.

In the "paper" by Mr. Archibald Campbell of Kilberry in your December, 1968, issue, he writes :—"Nowadays at any rate, composers often keep their compositions up their sleeve unnamed, waiting for a favourable event to provide a name". He was obviously not very far from the truth as will be seen from the following :

In the article on "The Man from Glengarry" I see that a letter from the composer (D. C. Mather) states "I finished the composing of 'The Man from Glengarry' in 1901".

When my late brother, G. S. MacLennan, won the Amateur Championship of Great Britain at Stamford Bridge (London) in 1894 at the age of 10½ years, he made three phonograph records—the old cylindrical type. Two of these records are now in the Royal Scottish Museum, Chamber Street, Edinburgh. The third record was unfortunately smashed although I heard it when it was whole.

On one of the records now in the Museum, G. S. plays :—"The Midlothian Pipe Band"—"Climbing Duniquaich" and "The Man from Glengarry". All three would probably be "new tunes" at that time, and a boy like he would wish to play the latest! There were no names of tunes on the record cases although I myself subsequently put the name on them so that I do not know if the tune was named then or not—but the tune is certainly what we know as "The Man from Glengarry".

George had always a great regard for D. C. Mather, and often told me that "David Mather never really got justice when competing at the Games in Scotland". It may be that Mather, too, thought something of the boy G. S. MacLennan and gave him copies of "Climbing Duniquaich" and "The Man from Glengarry" (both composed by Mather) long before they were published.

These recordings of G. S. MacLennan's playing are the only ones he ever made, and these on a "home" phonograph (not a recording company) and playing on his half-sized pipes.

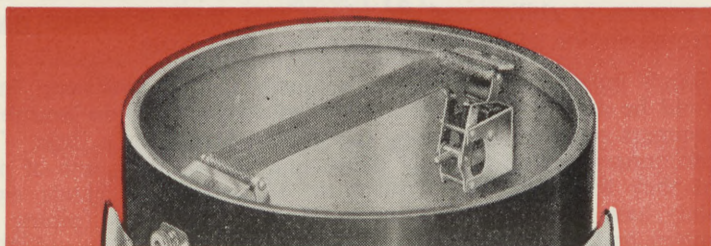
It may interest pipers to know the names of the tunes on the other two records. On the other record in the Museum he plays "Inveresk House" (by James Mauchline), "Shepherd's Crook" (1st two parts only), and the "Deil among the Tailors".

On the record which was smashed he played "Lochiel's Welcome to Glasgow", "Maggie Cameron" and "The Eight Men of Moidart".

In conclusion, may I repeat that these recordings were made in 1894.



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Miniature Bands

The annual S.P.B.A. miniature band contests attracted a capacity crowd, both of listeners and performers, to Bellahouston Academy, Glasgow, on Saturday, the 22nd February. With four entries in Grade 4, seven in each of Grades 3 and 2, and twelve in Grade 1, the band enthusiasts had undoubtedly their brightest spot of the winter.

Also to the fore were over a score of solo drummers, playing off for the Juvenile and Ladies championships. The juvenile was won by D. Stirling of Knightswood, with J. Dunsmore of Shotts second and G. MacFarlane of the 93rd Boys' Brigade third. The ladies contest was won once again by Jennifer Mellor (now Mrs. Hardman), the second of Rose Fletcher's talented daughters. The two pipers who played for her incidentally were her sisters, Pauline and Janet, which made it probably a quite unique achievement.

M. Williamson of Clan Macrae was second, and G. Garden of Aberdeen Ladies was placed third.

As the afternoon wore on the audience increased steadily, partly due to bands who had competed settling down to listen to the others, and partly as those who work for a living managed to reach the hall.

There was also a steady increase in the quality of the performances, showing that bands are perhaps after all fairly homogeneous in ability, and six pipers plus three drummers give a fair representation of the standard of the whole band.

Bands indoors are of course definitely an acquired taste, but a lot could be done to make them more palatable—or even bearable—if drummers could be persuaded to restrain themselves a little. Two side drummers can quite easily drown the sound of six sets of pipes—and they frequently did. Many of the miniature bands would certainly have received better marks if the adjudicators (piping and ensemble) had been able to hear the pipers.

This fault was particularly noticeable in Grades 3 and 2, but even some of the Grade 1 bands gave a good example of a drumming duet with faint bagpipe accompaniment. Even the Edinburgh Police were guilty of this. We all know Alex. Duthart is the greatest, but it would have been nice to have heard the pipers too.

The other outstanding impression, listening to Grade 1, was the number of tunes which had been murdered by the pipe-major before the band even stepped on the platform. The S.P.B.A. rules do not allow an adjudicator to deduct points for the style or setting of a tune played, which is one of the biggest mistakes the association can make, because it encourages some of the most mangled versions of beautiful music. It is amazing how many pipe-majors consider they

have better musical taste than Willie Ross. And some of the versions of "Major Manson" (march or reel), "Donald MacLean's Farewell to Oban", "Alex. C. MacGregor" and others, would strongly indicate that the tunes were heard distantly, written hastily and learned carelessly. Maybe the adjudicators can avoid being influenced by such efforts, but the audience can't.

Among offenders in Grade 1 were Clan Macrae No. 1, and Shotts, both with that unbelievable start to the "Highland Wedding" (which sounds as if the pipers have dropped the lot), Red Hackle No. 1 with a quaint "John MacDonald of Glencoe", and Red Hackle No. 2 with a way-out "Inveraray Castle".

The principal prize was won rather easily (though the points don't show it) by Glasgow Police No. 1. This was noteworthy even if only for their traditional setting of "Highland Wedding" and for the fact that they played the last note of the reel—many bands are so scared of sounding drones at the end that they give up anywhere in the last bar.

Second prize went to Muirheads No. 1, and once again we all felt it was a pity that with twelve competing there were only two prizes, for many others played extremely well. It seems strange that in the open, the bands often compete for five prizes, but indoors you must be first or second to be mentioned.

RESULTS :

Grade 1—

1. Glasgow Police No. 1, Pipe-Major Ronald Lawrie, ("Highland Wedding", "Atholl Cummers" and "The Smith of Ghilliechassie").
2. Muirheads No. 1, Pipe-Major Robert Hardie, ("Brigadier Cheape of Tiroran", "The Shepherd's Crook" and "John MacKechnie").

Grade 2—

1. Bilston Glen.
2. Paisley.

Grade 3—

1. Lanarkshire Police.
2. Renfrew and Bute Constabulary.

Grade 4—

1. Aberdeen Ladies.
2. Rose Fletcher.

THIS IS SCOTLAND

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The Falkirk Herald.

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AN EASTER HARE

by Dr. David Stevenson, Edinburgh University.

I wonder if this illustration from the Danish newspaper "Politiken", of Copenhagen, might be of interest to readers?

The text reads (approximately)—

"A bagpipe-playing hare is a miraculous sight. It symbolises, like the bagpipe-playing pig, the forces which lead people into depravity. There is however some disagreement about the symbolism. An old English noble family have no fewer than three bagpipe-playing hares in their coat of arms—and this should scarcely mean that the family are given to loose living. The great Slesvig woodcarver, Hans Gudewerdt, was so fond of music-making, and especially flute-playing, hares, that he nearly always included them in his carvings and so got the name 'The Master with the flute-playing hare'."



The illustration was used to accompany an article on Easter Hares—hares apparently accompanying chickens as Easter symbols in some parts of Europe. (Similar origin to March Hares?)

I do not know which noble family is referred to. I regret that the Danes frequently use the word "English" where "British" or even "Scots" would be more correct, so I would not vouch for the nationality of the family concerned.

Contributions Wanted

Not your money, but your news or views on piping affairs.

News of what is happening in your part of the piping world will be most welcome. Articles about societies, bands, individuals, will gladden our heart, especially if accompanied by a glossy photograph suitable for reproduction.

Articles and photographs will be acknowledged and the approximate date of publication given, but will not be returned unless specially asked for.

Letters and other comments are always of interest, especially when they disagree with the establishment. Although often, because of space considerations, we have to withhold publication of letters which agree with us, we always publish those which oppose our view.

GOLD MEDAL WINNERS

1961.

RONALD LAWRIE

1962.

SEUMAS MacNEILL

1963.

ANGUS MacDONALD

1964.

HECTOR MacFADYEN

1965.

NEIL MacEACHERN

1966.

DUNCAN MacFADYEN

1967

WILLIAM MacDONALD

1968.

THOMAS PEARSTON



By Appoin
To Her M
The Qu
Bagpipe M

Premier
Carlton
Clansman
Drums

Playi
Bagpipe Ch
By

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PIPE BAND CHAMPIONS

1961.

Muirhead and Sons
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1962.

277 Argyll & Sutherland Hgd.
Fd. Regt. R.A. (T.A.)
(World Champions)

1962.

Muirhead and Sons
(Champion of Champions)

1965.

Muirhead and Sons
(World Champions)

1966.

Muirhead and Sons
(World Champions)

1967.

City of Glasgow Police
(Champion of Champions)

1968.

Muirhead and Sons
(World Champions)



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Majesty
Queen
Makers

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Scottish Music

Publications which discuss, analyse or report the music of Scotland are lamentably few in number, being confined mostly to magazines which tend to flourish for a very short time. A recent book by Francis Collinson however has done a great deal to stabilise the situation. This is "The Traditional and National Music of Scotland" (Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 63/-). It will undoubtedly become a useful and interesting addition to the bookshelves of all who seek a wide and detailed view of Scottish music.

Mr. Collinson is a founder member of the School of Scottish Studies, having taken charge of musical research at the inception of the school in 1951, and being now an Honorary Research Fellow. In some ways the book is a combined effort, and due tribute is paid to the many other stalwarts who have helped to provide material for the various chapters. The frequent foot-notes are sometimes references to other publications, but often consist of comments on the texts which have been added by colleagues. To those who like to read quickly for enjoyment, this seems an unnecessary distraction, but the scholar who is seriously interested in the subject and anxious to learn as much as possible will probably welcome them as providing further illumination of the particular matter.

With this reservation the book is easy to read, written in a clear style with a modesty which the author's eminence makes quite unnecessary.

The book begins with a discussion of the native idiom in music, and this forms a welcome and necessary basis for all the chapters to follow. Then comes an analysis of Gaelic and Lowland Scots songs, ending with the surprising information that the finest lament in song was composed, not by a bard at all, but by Patrick Mor MacCrimmon, the song being "Lament for Rory Mor MacLeod".

A most entertaining chapter on Gaelic labour songs follows, with numerous illustrations and a wealth of traditional detail. The vocal music of Lowland Scotland shows the amount of non-Gaelic songs, including the famous ballads of Scotland, the bothy ballads and folk songs, and ending with a reference to children's songs.

The next two chapters, on the bagpipes and their music, represent unfortunately the weak part of the book. Mr. Collinson is obviously writing his book for musicians who are not pipers (one might almost say for musicians who are antagonistic to the bagpipe), but to say that bagpipe notes and intervals are "'out of tune' by concert standards" is surely an old fashioned and biased way of looking at the facts. And putting "out of tune" in inverted commas does little to soften the blow. Come to think of it however, if Mr. Collinson really believed what he

prints on pages 165 and 166 regarding the results obtained for the bagpipe scale then his comments are not altogether unjustified. Unfortunately he attributes these results to Dr. J. M. A. Lenihan and myself, but wherever he got them it was certainly not from us, or from any publication approved by us.

The non-piper has two main disadvantages when writing about pipe music, and both of these are evident throughout the two chapters on the bagpipe. The first is that he has no way of knowing which of the many people who have rushed into print on the subject in the past wrote anything of value. The other handicap is that he cannot tell instinctively and with absolute certainty which stories are manifestly untrue, as for example when Mr. Collinson quotes the old story of the piper throwing down his instrument after he has finished playing a tune. No good piper in possession of his senses ever did this at any time in history. And I know of no piper "who, to this day, before he will consent to play piobaireachd insists on putting on his bonnet, as a mark of respect to the ceol mor". (It's very likely that there are some who do, but I have heard all the great living piobaireachd players perform, and not one of them does it).

Some interesting analyses of piobaireachd is given, again however for the non-piper. This is a very useful part, but it is unlikely that many readers will understand easily a phrase like "tenuto-like anacrusis—note". Also it is perhaps a wee bit unfortunate that "MacLeod's Salute" was chosen for the illustrations, because the first bar is written straight from the Piobaireachd Society, and not as any piper ever plays it.

Perhaps our complaints regarding these two sections should be directed rather at ourselves as pipers than at anyone making a conscientious endeavour to interpret, explain and put on permanent record. Often in the past the complaint has been expressed in these pages that pipers do not write enough about their subject, and it is only our own fault if people like Grattan Flood, Manson, and Robin Lorimer are quoted as authorities on piping. Nobody for example has ever to my knowledge expressed in print his opinion that Robin Lorimer's idea of dividing a piobaireachd ground into four equal lines, as detailed in his "Scottish Studies" (Vol. 6, No. 1, and Vol. 8, No. 1) is a lot of rubbish. To make the record right, I hereby so stipulate.

Forty pages out of a total of two hundred and sixty-eight are devoted to the bagpipe, and there are numerous references throughout the whole of the book to the national instrument. Mr. Collinson makes it clear that the bagpipe has had a tremendous influence upon singers and fiddlers, and gives ample evidence of this.

In his concluding chapters on the fiddle, the harp, and the music of Orkney and Shetland he is on much firmer ground, except when he postulates the really untenable theory (on the basis of one manuscript tune in Edinburgh University Library) that all piobaireachd

developed from harp music and was taken over by the pipers when the harp went into decline. As he says, this "is not impossible", but it's so improbable as to be unworthy of mention.

The book is beautifully printed, in hard covers, with twenty-three plates and nearly a hundred and fifty music examples, including some rare tunes of the "Ossianic" or "Heroic" ballads which are of the author's own collecting. I would not be without a copy, and I heartily recommend it to anyone interested in any aspect of Scottish music, with the proviso that Chapters 5 and 6 should be approached with considerable trepidation.

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KILT—something worn over nothing.

SPORRAN—something worn over a hole in a kilt.

GRIP—what you have when you don’t feel good, your nose is red and runs.

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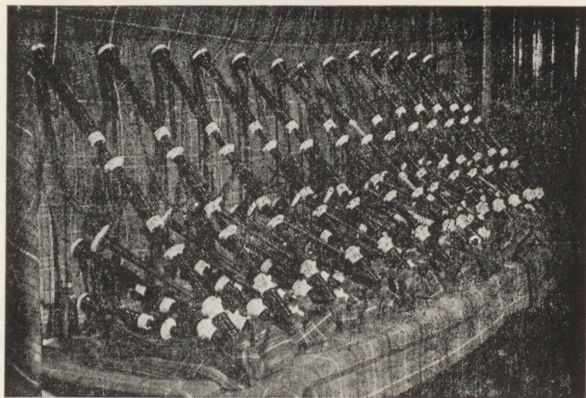
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From the "Piping Times"

10 YEARS AGO—

"More attention should be given to the simple cadence; too often the E gracenote is cut too short, and when a shake on the B note follows, the D is never heard and that effective LAH in canntaireachd, or phrasing, is simply not there. The rhythm is often unpardonably broken and the crunluath mach is stumpy and jerky."

Angus Macpherson.

20 YEARS AGO—

"The vexed question of judging seems to be occupying the minds of many pipers these days. The pipe bands have decided to have judges in the open this year, and the adherents of the old system of concealing adjudicators are vociferously worried about this change."

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SOUTH AFRICA.

CONTEST TUNES

The Scottish Piping Society of the Witwatersrand has decided that the following tunes shall be the set tunes for the piobaireachd competition for the L. M. Millar Memorial Trophy and the annual award of R210 (100 guineas) for the "Best Piper of the Year" to be competed for at a competition to be arranged by the Society towards the end of 1969:—

"Black Donald's March."

"Sir James MacDonald of the Isles' Lament."

"MacLeod of Raasay's Salute."

"The Company's Lament."

"The Groat."

"The MacFarlanes' Gathering."

Each competitor will be required to submit three of these tunes to the judges who will select one for the competitor to play.

In the case of the open marches and the open strathspeys and reels competitions, competitors will be required to submit three selections, one of which will be nominated by the judges to be played. All tunes will have to be at least four-part tunes, with marches in 2/4 time.

The arrangements set out above, which have the approval of the Secretary/Manager of the Royal Scottish Gathering Committee, will also apply to the Royal Scottish Gathering in 1969.

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Dear Sir,

Lairg, Sutherland.

In the December issue of the "Piping Times" you ask for some information regarding the reel, "The Man from Glengarry", composed by D. C. Mather. The reel was composed as a tribute to the author of the book of which I had at one time a presentation copy, but loaned it and, as usually happens, never got it back. I cannot remember the author's name. The book was much sought for in my young days and no doubt it can yet be got.

I knew Mather very, very well—a first class piper and dancer, and incidentally I was second in the prize list the day that Mather got the Northern Meeting Medal for piobaireachd. I also knew Angus MacMillan Fraser who is pictured on the cover leaf of the P.T. when I was in New York many years ago.

The December issue is, as always, very interesting, and I am glad to see that you are to be with us again on "Chanter" on Wednesday first. The weather around here has been very cold of late and not very conducive for even a youth like myself to play his pipes. Sitting by a good fire in the evening with one's chanter and browsing over old times is as good a pastime as I know of.

Angus Macpherson.

Dear Sir,

Exmouth, Devon.

As the subject of judging is again in the news, may I add a few comments?

Pipers, regardless the origin of their instruction, have been extremely fortunate in having, at most of the leading competitions at any rate, the greater percentage of judges who had the ability and were able to maintain complete neutrality when listening to the various settings and styles of piobaireachd, and adjudicated accordingly. Judges such as these have made the competition system worth the effort, especially for civilian pipers, most of whom have more than their share of obstacles to overcome.

Alas, not all judges have been so impartial. I refer to the few who, in my opinion, persistently showed a tendency to favour one particular style, despite superior performances of different authoritative styles, which to my mind were equally as musical and, in many cases, more so.

On some of the occasions when competitors and audience alike were left completely bewildered by decisions, a look in this direction might have solved the mystery.

Donald MacPherson.

Dear Sir,

North Kessock, Inverness.

Will you please excuse me once again for encroaching on your valuable time? You will, no doubt, see Duncan Johnston (some-time) and please tell him (a stranger) I was enraptured listening to his lovely performance on B.B.C.4 this evening. His timing was first class. This is the first time I heard him play or heard of him. No reply needed. Simply my appreciation of his playing.

K. Campbell.

Dear Sir,

Belfast, N. Ireland.

For some time now I have been endeavouring to obtain a print of R. R. MacIan's "MacCrimmon" without success. Simpson-Bell Limited, Edinburgh, have advised that no reproductions were made, but it may be possible to obtain an original. They have enquired on my behalf from many sources, but tell me that they have had no success and, as I noticed in a recent issue of the "Times" that a MacCrimmon Society was in existence, I wondered if perhaps they or any of your readers could help.

I would be very much obliged for any assistance you could give me in this matter and would thank you in anticipation.

B. S. McDowell.

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Camberley, Surrey.

Dear Sir,

I can remain silent no longer! I for one do not agree with Mr. MacLeod or Mr. Bradbury.

It may come as a surprise to these two gentlemen to learn that some of us females like to hear the pipes, and that we too are interested in learning to play and understand them.

The average girl piper meets with more than her fair share of opposition and "ragging". Believe me, it is no easy task to lean under such conditions.

How about a little chivalry and encouragement for a change, and a little less of this out-dated "men only" complex. Do we present such formidable competition that we have to be banned and discouraged from piping? It is perhaps preferable to listen to the piper rather than to complacently criticise the piper's appearance.

Joan Ward Harris (Miss).

Dear Sir,

Sidcup, Kent.

I trust the Editor is not prejudiced against the fair sex and will allow this letter to be published.

I hope that Mr. Sam Bradbury noted that in the issue of the "Piping Times" in which his criticism was made about females playing the pipes, a feminine name appeared in the prize list of the Scottish Pipers Association Amateur Competition. Namely, Anne Sinclair (1st Piobaireachd, 2nd Jig), living proof of female ability (my young brother was also mentioned in the prize list). I believe that one has to be up to a good standard to take a place in this competition.

Perhaps the gentlemen who find the time to write criticising the fair sex playing the pipes would be better employed encouraging any interest shown in the pipes, regardless of sex, in all young would-be pipers.

Catriona Hill.

Back Numbers

Most back numbers of the "Piping Times" are still available, price 2/- or 30 cents each, including postage.

The following are **NOT** available:—Vol. I, nos. 1, 4, 11; vol. II, nos. 1, 4; vol. III, nos. 5, 6, 11; vol. IV, nos. 1, 3, 4, 7, 8; vol. V, nos. 4, 9; vol. XVI, nos. 2, 5.

We also have, in stock and ready for immediate dispatch, some copies of bound volumes VI to XVII inclusive. Price for each of these twelve volumes, including postage is £2-5s. or \$6.75.

Dear Sir,

Wick, Caithness.

During my 27 years teaching girls, I have met many Sam Bradburys, we have them in Caithness too, and some of them were worse performers than the little girl he saw staggering to shoulder a set of pipes. I suggest to all Sam Bradburys, instead of being disgusted, and saying so, they will take an interest in helping small girls to master the pipes. As a result there would be more pipers in this district. I have seen bands organised by Boy Scouts, B.B., A.C.F. and A.T.C. come to nothing, so small boys do not want to play pipes. I suggest to all Sam Bradburys, if they are really interested, to make an effort to encourage others, boys or girls, instead of ridicule, and that superior nose in the air attitude, re the song "If I can help somebody".

James M. Christie.

Dear Sir,

Blacon, Chester.

Oh! Mr. Editor, print my words in answer to M. Phillips. Mine are not in anger, but in pity for a poor wee mortal who has lost his pride in our Scottish possessions.

There are at least 90 to 100 tartans which are approved by the Lord Lyon, and at least another 300, I would guess, not approved, but still a pride to the wearer of the kilt. I wear mine every week and at weekends and every Thursday at our St. Andrew's Society

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dance. We have others wearing Ogilvy, MacAlister, Clan Chattan. Please don't look at these without your sun glasses, but what a grand change after the dull drab dress of a male.

A good book, equal to a dictionary for Scotland references, is "The Clans, Septs and Regiments of the Scottish Highlands" by Adams, re-written by Innes of Learney.

We have it in our puir wee libraries, aye even in England.

I enjoy and look forward to my "Piping Times", and as an engineer I get the relaxation it brings. Being greedy like all we males, I wish it was twice as big.

Sam Bradbury.

Dear Sir,

Forfar.

I crave the courtesy of your columns to express my disappointment in the recent amateur competition run recently in Glasgow. It was without dubiety the usual Glasgow organised shambles. They ought to go to the St. Andrews Competition to see how it is done. When are the S.P.A. going to get with it and become the **Scottish** and not the Glasgow Pipers' Association?

I was told the competition was well advertised—it had appeared in various shop windows in Glasgow. Of course we Teuchters are noted for our good eyesight.

K. MacDonald.

Dear Sir,

Cambridge.

In the Piobaireachd Society's Book Eleven, the Editor confesses that he is wholly unable to account for the extraordinary name of the tune called "Black Wedder's White Tail"; he suggests that it may have some connection with the Highlanders' scorn and loathing for sheep at the time of the clearances. A clue to the name of the tune is provided by Sir Walter Scott in his introduction to "Rob Roy". He describes the events which led to the battle of Glen Fruin and the dire consequences for the Clan MacGregor which resulted from it; the name of MacGregor being abolished by an Act of the Privy Council in 1603. The story begins when two MacGregors were refused shelter by a dependent of the Laird of Luss, with whom the MacGregors had long been at feud. "They then retreated to an out-house", Scott writes, "took a wedder from the fold, killed it, and supped off the carcass, for which (it is said) they offered payment to the proprietor. The Laird of Luss seized on the offenders and by the summary process which feudal barons had at their command, had them both condemned and executed. The MacGregors verify this account of the feud by appealing to a proverb current amongst them, execrating the hour (Mult dhu an Carhail ghil) that the black wedder with the white tail was ever lambed". The rout at Glen Fruin was the result at the MacGregor's determination to avenge this quarrel.

I do not know Scott's authority for this story, but the interesting thing is the very great similarity between this tune and "The MacGregor's Gathering"; the variations are almost exactly the same, as anyone who knows the two tunes will remember.

When I saw Mr. A. G. Kenneth at Inverness last year I told him I would let him have the reference. Perhaps you will allow me to do so in a more public fashion, as some of your readers may be able to throw more light on the matter. I'm afraid I have nothing to suggest about "The White Wedder's Black Tail"!

Duncan Forbes.

Dear Sir,

Houston, Texas.

When the September issue of the "Piping Times" arrived, we read it from cover to cover, as we always do, but there is one item that calls for a rebuttal.

A Mr. M. MacLeod wrote disparagingly of women playing the bagpipe, saying it is a man's instrument.

If a woman can master the technique of playing a bagpipe and do it better than a lot of so-called men pipers, then that is ample proof that it is NOT a man's instrument.

To compare a woman piper with a woman smoking a pipe is stupid. There is NO comparison—a woman piper is doing something that is clean, honorable, decent and certainly above reproach by fair-minded persons, while a woman who smokes a pipe of tobacco (or cigarettes, for that matter), is putting herself into the same class as men who smoke—offensive to the nostrils of those who don't have that foul habit.

Mr. MacLeod states that clan warriors and army pipers were, and are, all men. Obviously, he isn't a student of Scottish history, else he would know that a member of the Royal Scots Greys was a woman and it was only after her skull was fractured in the Battle of Ramilies in 1705 that the secret she had concealed for so many years became known.

As for women wearing kilts, what is unladylike about that? When our daughter plays her pipes in public, as she is frequently asked to do, she dons her lovely kilt, blouse with lace jabot and ruffles, black velvet jacket, plaid, etc., and she is what people often say is a "treat for sore eyes".

Her kilt, plaid and bagpipe cover are made from her father's family tartan, and she wears them proudly, which she has a right to do. And when she plays her pipes, she does equal justice to that instrument, thanks to a pipe-master who is a stickler for perfection.

Had Mr. MacLeod given his address in London, I should have sent him a color photo of our daughter to prove that she can wear a kilt and still look like a lady.

Mrs. Murray M. Baird.

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The Piper's Warning to His Master

by Alasdair MacArthur.

As we leave Port Ellen, going towards Lagavoulin, which lies on the south east coast of Islay, we pass Laphroaig on the right hand side. We come to a stone bridge, and then past the bridge we descend a brae. Straight across the bay to the right hand side, on the hill, stands Dunuveg Castle—opposite Lagavoulin distillery. This castle was mandated by a lady called Martha MacKinnon who owned the eastern part of Islay to a line where stands Dunuveg Castle, and the castle was well garrisoned by guards and guns. Any person who crossed this line was captured and taken prisoner to the castle.

The MacDonalDs of the Isles held a stronghold in Antrim, Ireland, and had a great galley which sailed from Antrim to the Outer Isles. Preparations were made at Dunuveg Castle for an invasion; later it was found out that an invasion was imminent but which source the invasion was coming they did not know.

The chief of the MacDonalDs in Antrim gave orders to embark, on this galley, a large force of soldiers well equipped to invade Dunuveg Castle. One of the crew was a piper, and volunteered to go and see how the situation at Dunuveg Castle stood. Coll Ciotach, the name of the captain, said to the piper not to go, but he refused his master's order and managed to cross from Ireland to Islay. The name of the piper was Macanrailte, and he composed the piobaireachd of which the captain Coll Ciotach knew all about it. However, Macanrailte the piper was captured and taken prisoner to Dunuveg Castle. The lady of the castle liked the pipes but he was only to play when she wanted, so he became reluctant to her rules. As a result, for badness and spite, she gave orders to her soldiers to cut the little finger of the right hand off, so that he could not play, but alas he was such an able man with the pipes he changed the left hand at the bottom on the chanter and was just as able as the right hand.

The time was at hand for him to play. He saw the invading galley coming with her white sails and blew up his pipes and played the warning, the words of the urlar begin:—

Coll my dear, do not come near,
Captive I, Captive I.
The wind is steady,
Their guns are ready,
The current is your luck,
Make for the sound,
Here I will be
and cannot flee,
The day will come
When I will be free
and will fight against this enemy.



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Printed by R. Kirkland, St. Mungo St. (Crowhill Rd.), Bishopbriggs, Glasgow
Published by the College of Piping, 20 Otago Street, Glasgow, W.2.

