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DECEMBER, 1955.



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Piping Times

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COVER PICTURE:

Pipe-Major John Wilson of Edinburgh and Toronto, Canada.

In answer to a number of requests, we again introduce a competition for composers somewhat on the lines of the one we held in 1949.

The competition is for an original bagpipe composition. The tune, which must not have been submitted for a competition before, may be either a

march (in 2/4 or 6/8 time), strathspey, reel or jig.

Prizes.

First Prize: £10. Second Prize: £5.

If the number of entries is large, we shall make separate contests for different types of tunes and award additional prizes.

Rules for entry.

1. The entries should be sent to The Editor, "Piping Times", Kelvin House, Otago Street, Glasgow, W.2., marked "Composers' Competition".
2. Each competitor may submit as many of his own compositions as he likes, but an entry fee of one shilling must accompany each tune submitted.
3. The name of the tune (provided that it does not give a clue as to the identity of the composer) may appear on the copy, but the entrant's name and address must not appear thereon. A separate sheet of paper, stating the entrant's name and address and his list of tunes submitted, must accompany all entries.
4. The closing date for entries for this competition will be 29th February, 1956. All entries must reach the Editor before 7.30 p.m. on that date, but competitors are requested to submit entries as soon as possible.
5. The copyright of all tunes submitted for this competition will remain with the composers. However, it is a condition of entry that tunes submitted may be published in "Piping Times" in connection with the

"Judge the Tunes" contest (see below) and no payment will be made to the composer for such publication. It is a further condition of entry that the College of Piping shall have the sole and exclusive right of printing and publishing the prizewinning tunes in this contest in sheet form or in any book, in all countries during the term of the work's copyright, and shall pay to the composers the usual royalties on sales of such publications.

6. An expert panel of judges will adjudicate on the merit of tunes submitted. The decision of the judges is final and no correspondence can be entered into regarding the results.

"Judge the Tunes" Contest.

A selection of the best tunes submitted in the Composers' Competition will be chosen by the judges and published in "Piping Times", one or more tunes each month. You will then be given an opportunity of sending in **your** list of the tunes in order of merit, and prizes will be awarded to the readers whose choice is the same or nearest to that of the judges. Watch for further details in the future issues of the magazine.



Editorial

One of the most important talking points in Scotland at present is the proposed rocket range for the island of South Uist. The Government Department concerned has decided, after surveying the resources at their disposal, that the only suitable spot in Britain for this project is the fair isle of the Outer Hebrides. Naturally there has been a great deal of opposition to this suggestion. This ranges from letters to the newspapers from the people concerned, to the declared intention of some prominent figures, such as Compton MacKenzie and James Robertson Justice, to lie down on the railway line when the trains carrying the first loads of materials head for the North.

It is doubtful if all our protestations will make any difference to the final result, for almost certainly once again the subject race will have to accept the decisions of the masters. Still we cannot let this pass without at least adding our own objections to the considerable list already in existence.

South Uist has for a long time been an important place in the world of piping.

The islanders themselves and their descendants claim that it now holds the honoured place which Skye occupied for so long. Although recently it has seemed to us that the pipers of South Uist have been depending more on the past than the present for the island's reputation it still represents to all of us a stronghold of the national instrument. The whole cultural and social system of Uist was the fact which decided the Piobaireachd Society many years ago to choose it for the establishment of a new piping tradition. Certainly the truly Highland life which the people lead there is entirely conducive to the development of piping.

It has been suggested that the rocket range will make little difference to the island. Such a contention is obviously entirely false and misleading. The influx of Southern engineers will destroy not only a portion of the land but also a large part of this ancient and noble style of living.

We doubt, in fact, if a more unhappy choice of location could possibly have

been made. We are slowly, in fact, coming to believe that there is a well organised conspiracy developing against piping. The Entertainment Tax on Highland Games shows no sign at all of being abolished and the number of Gatherings next Summer will, as a result, be even less than in the past season. It may soon come, in fact, to the stage where to attend a Highland Gathering one will have to visit Canada or the United States.

Nobody in Scotland is particularly interested in atomic energy for warfare or in having an experiment rocket range. Our nation has no quarrel with any other country of the world, and we firmly believe that no country, with the possible exception of that to which the rocket range planners owe allegiance, has any desire to improve itself at the expense of Scotland. The presence of this disgusting piece of barbarism can bring nothing but evil. The destruction of a few hundred acres of South Uist will be the least of the damage done, for the truly Highland life will in a short time be almost completely ruined.

That piping also will suffer is only too evident. It is to be hoped that the islanders will show as much opposition to this as the people of Skye have been showing recently to the much important problem of the proposed Sunday ferry Service.

BOUND VOLUMES OF THE "PIPING TIMES."

In response to a number of requests, we have completed arrangements for having copies of the "Piping Times" bound into volumes. With strong material and gilt lettering, these make an attractive addition to any library and maintain in a permanent form some of the most interesting material that has ever been written on piping.

Send your back numbers to the Editor at the usual address and mark the parcel "For Binding." The cost for each volume per volume, is 17/6.

March, Strathspey and Reel Playing—Oban and Inverness

By Seumas MacNeill.

Preliminary.

The Argyllshire Gathering and the Northern Meeting do a great deal to encourage young and talented players in addition to their premier function of establishing the best standards of piping. The quality of the playing which is heard at the Meetings indicates the state of health of piping for the year, and for this reason the results, the names of the judges, and experienced comments on the playing are of importance to pipers all over the world.

Scope of Contests.

The Ceol Mor events were dealt with very fully last month. In March, Strathspey and Reel playing again there are two distinct types of contests. Some events are intended primarily to encourage younger players and to test the standards of the present generation of competing professionals. Two other events, one at each Meeting, constitute the highest trial of skill of the best performers in this branch of music.

At both Oban and Inverness a March and a Strathspey and Reel event are held from which previous first prizewinners are debarred. Six tunes are submitted by entrants each time, and one tune is chosen for the first trial. After this a short leet is held in which the successful competitors are required to play another of their submitted pieces. In the short leet the tunes are played twice over.

In the March, Strathspey and Reel event for previous first prizewinners of either the March or the Strathspey and Reel there is no short leet, but all tunes are played twice over. At Oban six marches, strathspeys and reels have to be offered by pipers and at Inverness four marches, strathspeys and reels are sufficient. It is important to note that the tunes are not submitted in sets but that any march may be combined with any strathspey and any reel.

Present day players.

It is of interest to note that only two of the present day competing pipers have won all six preliminary competitions—that is the Gold Medal Piobaireachd;

March; Strathspey and Reel at both Oban and Inverness. These two are James B. Robertson and John D. Burgess. In march, strathspey and reel playing only these two and myself have won the four major awards. In Ceol Mor James B. Robertson and John Burgess are joined as winners of both medals by Ronald MacCallum, R. T. MacKay, Donald MacLean (Lewis), Donald MacLeod, Donald MacPherson and now William MacDonald.

The March at Oban.

Twenty-four pipers competed in this event which was judged by Col. J. MacDonald of Viewfield, Mr. James Campbell, and Major D. Murray.

A fairly good standard was heard from most players but there were a distressing number of tunes with technical hitches. These consisted largely of chokes, skirls and an occasional breakdown.

A short leet of six players was chosen and these, with their tunes, in order of playing were:—

Iain MacFadyen, "Argyllshire Gathering".

Neil MacEachern, "Duchess of Edinburgh".

Donald Ramsay, "Angus Campbell's Farewell to Stirling".

William Connell, "Parker's Welcome".

Donald Morrison, "Abercairney Highlanders".

F. MacKinnon from New Zealand, "Dr. MacLeod of Alnwick".

All of these played very well on their first attempt. In addition mention should be made of Hector MacFadyen who gave an enjoyable performance of "Bonnie Anne", although missing odd gracenotes and doublings at times. Duncan Lamont also played well with "Blackmount Forest" but was handicapped with a sharp A.

Iain MacFadyen was the first to compete in the short leet and he set a good standard with "Mrs. John MacColl". His F was a shade flat and he tended to make the gracenotes too close together in the doubling at times, but otherwise

there was little to find fault with here. Neil MacEachern, playing "Miss Elspeth Campbell" did not display the standard we heard from him at Inverness last year, but he kept a fairly regular rythm throughout in spite of a few demoralising scrochs. At times he was not very clean in changing from low G to double high G, and his high G was inclined to be sharp and was obviously being nursed by him.

Donald Ramsay then came on and played the "Edinburgh Volunteers" with a much better instrument than his first appearance and a fine rounded and steady style. One small point was noticeable to myself and J. B. Robertson, and that was that his birl came in a shade too fast at the end each time. There was no doubt, however, that this would be a very worthy winning tune. Wm. Connel made a good job with "Abercairney Highlanders" although he started rather shakily. As the tune progressed he played much better but, unfortunately, missed a note in the third part of the tune when playing it for the second time.

Donald Morrison displayed good clean and rounded fingering in the "74th Farewell to Edinburgh" but his chanter again was inclined to be sharp on top and he had two scrochs. His double F could be taken as a model for any piper but his double C was inclined to be blurred at times. The last player was the young man from New Zealand—F. MacKinnon—and I suppose he must be the best competitor from overseas to have competed in this event in recent years. His "Charles Edward" was inclined to be a little staccato but he maintained a fine, steady, rythm throughout. The result was as follows:—

1. Donald Ramsay.
2. Donald Morrison.
3. Iain MacFadyen.
4. F. MacKinnon.
5. N. MacEachern.

Taken all over the standard might be said to be well up to the previous year's, and the prizewinner was certainly well up to the standard of previous first prize takers in this event.

It was surprising to hear, however, so many pipers not making a first class job of such fundamental movements as double C. Surely we might expect that everyone in this competition would be able to make clean, hard and accurate doublings, at least most of the time. Too

many competitors were apparently unaware of the value of separating grace-notes in the doubling of B. C. E and F. The playing of a march demands a sense of rythm which is not too common among pipers. The best example of good march playing I have heard recently was the playing of Archie MacNab at Bob Hill's ceillidh in London last April. This is a faculty which can only be learned by listening, and pipers anxious to do well in marches should study this point very carefully.

March, Strathspey and Reel Competition.

Nine competitors played in this event at Oban and, as has been the custom in recent years, the standard was gratifyingly high. John D. Burgess was the eventual winner which gives him the satisfaction of having gained first place in this event four times in the last five years. Second prize went to Thomas Pearston and third was James B. Robertson.

March at Inverness.

Twenty-three pipers competed in this event. The standard was not so high as at Oban. A short leet of six players was chosen and once again all the members of the audience were able to settle back in the comfort of the Northern Meeting Rooms and make their own decisions.

First to play in the short leet was Peter R. MacLeod whose tune was "Parker's Welcome". Peter MacLeod has, of course, two of the best hands in the business, and he gave a good all round performance although his little finger stuck in the middle of a birl at one point. Incidentally, this is the only time I remember a piper putting a G grace-note on the birl at the end of a tune and getting a prize for it at one of the Meetings. Personally, I have nothing against the G grace-note on the birl except that it is not politic to play it. In fact, some years ago I was strongly advised by a Piobaireachd Society Judge never to do this if I wanted a prize at Oban or Inverness. I was strongly reminded of Tommy Pearston's famous limerick on the subject, which goes:—

"There once was a piper called Cyril,
Who always gracenoted the birl,
He said, "I'll take some beating
At the Northern Meeting"

But he tied for twelfth place
With a girl."

Peter MacLeod seems to have struck a blow for freedom. One other thing detracted from his performance and that was the flat C of his chanter. Even a piper's best friend will not tell him, but to my ear at least this note was slightly off.

The next player was Finley MacNeill, late of the College of Piping and now of the Seaforth Highlanders. His tune was "Leaving Glenurquhart" but he played it too quickly, especially at the start, and his tachums were not rounded enough. I might have been inclined to say that he had been badly taught the tachum but this is one occasion when I prefer to blame the pupil and spare the teacher. Nevertheless this was a creditable performance for a young player reaching the short leet on his first time at Inverness.

Donald Morrison played next and again his tune was the "74th's Farewell to Edinburgh". His chanter was still a little bit weak on top and he tended to rush slightly the start of the tune. Otherwise his fingering was a model of elegance and his expression was very good indeed. Albert Sheath started to play the "Highland Wedding" as if the first prize was already his. His chanter was weak on top but for the first four measures in the tune he played brilliantly, quite the best I have ever heard from him. From then onwards, however, his fingers began to tire and his grips became sloppy. I believe that too few pipers realise that the ability to play a tune once over is of no importance, because playing it once through will only get them into the short leet. To win a prize it is necessary to be able to play it twice through and to make the finish as strong as the start. Certainly this was one instance of a pessimistic piper.

The next competitor was Donald MacGillivray who surprised all of us by playing a very fine march "Blackmount Forest". Donald has tended, in the past, to be looked on as a piobaireachd player, but it is obvious that he has been paying some attention to other music this year. This tune was easily the best march that most of us had heard from him.

Last to play was Neil MacEachern who, again, favoured us with "Miss Elspeth Campbell" but this was again below the standard we expect from Neil.

The final result was:—

1. Donald Morrison.

2. Donald MacGillivray.

3. Peter R. MacLeod.

The judges for this competition were J. Hector Ross and Colin Campbell.

The Strathspey and Reel.

Twenty-one competitors played in this event which was judged by Dr. Kenneth A. MacKay and Mr. Colin Campbell. The standard again, although good, was not as high as it should have been. In case anyone thinks this means that I am getting old let me just offer as proof that it must be seldom that a piper can make a mistake, even a slight one, in his tune and still qualify for a prize, as happened this year.

The short leet consisted of six players, and first to play was Donald MacPherson whose tunes were "Blair Drummond" and "Alick C. MacGregor". It would be impossible, these days, for Donald MacPherson to give a poor performance, but this one was not entirely flawless. As usual he gave an exhibition of clean fingering and first class expression but at one point he substituted a high G for a high A and this must have upset him because two other flaws appeared later. Willie MacDonald played "Monymusk" and "The Smith of Ghilliechassie" but he interchanged the second and fourth parts of "Monymusk" when playing the tune through for the second time and his reel suffered from the resultant mental disorder. Cpl. MacKillop was given the "Shepherd's Crook" and "Thomson's Dirk" to play but he missed a note in the strathspey and had a choke and a few missed gracenotes in the reel. The next competitor was Donald Morrison whose tunes were "Caber Feidh" and "The Smith of Ghilliechassie". For once, in this competition, his drones did not remain steady but he gave a very good performance nevertheless. Perhaps the reel at the end was being rushed slightly (which is always the re-action to drones going out of tune) but this, to my mind, was the best performance. In fact for once my judgement of a competition was identical with the final result. Donald MacGillivray surprised us with the "Piper's Bonnet" and the "Sheepwife" and although he was a little heavy here and there, nevertheless he put up a fine show. The last player was James M. Robertson, who was playing under the watchful eye of his father, B. Robertson. He was unable however to keep up the high standard he had set in the first run

through. His tunes were "Blair Drummond" and "Miss Proud".

The result was:—

1. Donald Morrison.
2. Donald MacPherson.
3. Donald MacGillivray.

March, Strathspey and Reel.

According to general reports this competition, which was judged by Dr. Simpson and Mr. D. Graham Campbell of Shirvan, reached the highest standard which has been heard in this event since the war. For the record the competitors were Donald MacLeod, Peter R. MacLeod, James B. Robertson, Thomas Pearston, Donald MacPherson, Seumas MacNeill, and John D. Burgess. The results were—

1. Donald MacLeod.
2. John D. Burgess.
3. Donald MacPherson.

The Jig Competition.

This event is usually a rather exhausting one for the piper because it represents the last effort of the competition season. Previously many of those entered didn't appear to play as the train for the South usually left before the

event began. Nowadays the Stewards have insisted that pipers must play in all events for which they are entered, the result being that fewer people enter for the Jig.

It is probably true to say that there is less agreement as to what constitutes the correct standard in this class of music than there is in any other branch of pipe music. Some players attempt to play slowly and with expression, other appear to try to play as quickly as possible and the majority seem to compromise between the two. For this reason it is difficult to compare one jig competition with another but I suppose that the standard this year was as high as the average. Certainly some very fine and dexterous playing was heard, especially in my own opinion from John D. Burgess although his style of playing the "Shaggy Grey Buck" is not one I would recommend as a standard for jig playing.

The result was as follows:—

1. Donald MacLeod.
"The Hen's March".
2. Donald MacPherson.
"The Connaught Man's Rambles".
3. John D. Burgess.
"Shaggy Grey Buck".

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COMPETITORS IN THE STRATHSPEY AND REEL COMPETITION AT OBAN, 1955, AND THE TUNES THEY PLAYED

Donald MacKinnon,
John MacFadyen,
Donald Ramsay,
Donald Morrison,
Walter Drysdale,
J. M'I. Robertson,
Wm. MacDonald,
Finlay MacNeill,
Albert Sheath,
Iain MacFadyen,
Peter MacLeod,
Duncan MacFadyen,
Hector MacFadyen,
Neil MacEachern,
Duncan Lamont,
Angus MacDonald,
Sgt. F. MacKinnon,
Ronald Lawrie,
J. C. Johnston,
Charles Scott,
Peter MacCallum,
Peter MacFarquhar,
Wm. Connell,
Donald MacLean,
James Jackson,

John MacFadyen,
Iain MacFadyen,
Hector MacFadyen,
Donald Morrison,
Peter MacFarquhar,
Peter MacCallum,

1. Donald Morrison.
2. Iain MacFadyen.

Strathspey.

Lady Loudon.
Shepherd's Crook.
Arniston Castle.
Dornie Ferry.
Highland Harry.
Piper's Bonnet.
Caber Feidh.
John Roy Stewart.
Atholl Cummers.
Caledonian Canal.
Lady MacBeth.
Arniston Castle.
Maggie Cameron.
Highland Harry.
Lady Loudon.
Dora MacLeod.
Atholl Cummers.
Delvinside.
Caledonian Canal.
Monymusk.
Arniston Castle.
Caber Feidh.
Caledonian Canal.
Blair Drummond.
Atholl Cummers.

Short Leet.

Shepherd's Crook.
Arniston Castle.
Maggie Cameron.
Caber Feidh.
John Roy Stewart.
Lady Loudon.

Results.

3. Peter MacFarquhar.
4. Peter MacCallum.

Reel.

The Old Ruins.
Loch Carron.
Rejected Suitor.
Alick MacGregor.
Arnish Light.
The Flaggon.
Cameronian Rant.
Grey Bob.
The Blackbird.
John Morrison.
Charlie's Welcome.
Man from Glengarry.
Sandy Cameron.
Smith of Chilliechassie.
Ca' the Ewes.
Pretty Marion.
John MacKechnie.
Sheepwife.
Smith of Chilliechassie.
Thomson's Dirk.
Pretty Marion.
Lochiel's Away to France.
Piper and the Dairymaid.
John MacKechnie.
Pretty Marion.

Loch Carron.
Man from Glengarry.
Sandy Cameron.
Sheepwife.
Miss Proud.
Sheepwife.

5. Hector MacFadyen.

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London Notes

Scottish Piping Society of London

The 1955/56 season is now well under-way and in addition to the normal Friday evening meetings two recitals and two dances have already been held.

The Office-Bearers from the previous year were re-elected with the exception of Angus MacLellan, whose duties have taken him away from London. His place on the Committee has been filled by P. A. Morrison.

President—James Campbell.

Vice-President—R. A. Gillies.

Secretary—N. S. Reid, Eastgate, Berks Hill, Chorleywood, Herts.

Treasurer—G. D. MacDougall.

Pipe-Major—David Ross.

The Society meets every Friday evening, from 7. p.m. to 10 p.m. at the Drill Hall, 56th (London) Armd. Division, R.A.O.C., Duke of York's Headquarters, Chelsea, S.W.3. Pipers visiting London are always welcome at these Meetings.

In the programme for 1955/56 there are, as always, recitals, Member's Competitions, Dances and, of course, the main event in the year, the Annual Competitions. These competitions, subject to minor changes, will consist of the Bratach Gorm, Open Piobaireachd and Open March, Strathspey and Reel Competition.

Two recitals have already been given and these were very much enjoyed by members. With reception as it is at present what little piping there is on the Scottish Home Service is poorly heard here. The recitals, by local exponents, give London enthusiasts a rare opportunity of hearing piobaireachd played by experts.

Readers, both in this country and overseas, who may know many pipers here might like to peruse the programme for 1955/56.

October, 7th—"MacLeod of Raasay's Salute", Robert Hill.

October, 28th—"The Battle of Waternish" James B. Robertson, M.B.E.

November, 11th—"The Vaunting", J. Caution.

December, 2nd—"My King has Landed in Moidart", Andrew Bain.

December, 16th—"Lady Doyle's Salute", David Ross.

January, 13th—"The Red Hand in the MacDonald Arms", James Campbell.

January, 27th—"Lament for Captain MacDougall", P. Quinn.

February, 10th—"MacGregor's Salute", Donald MacLean.

Feb., 24th—"Patrig Og MacCrimmon's Lament", Malcolm MacMillan.

March, 23rd—"Nameless" (from Duncan Campbell's M.S.), George MacRae.

April, 7th—Annual Competitions commencing 10.00 a.m. (at 58 and 59 Buckingham Gate, London, S.W.1.).

Pipers in London were delighted to hear that David Ross, on a recent trip to Glasgow, won the veterans' competition staged there. David has a fine record of success in competition over the years and is still a force to be reckoned with in piping. As a pipe-major of the London Piping Society he had done much to advance the cause as a tutor, competitor and judge and last, but by no means least as M.C. at Society Dances. He is to be congratulated on this recent achievement and it is hoped he still has years of service to offer in what has always been one of his major interests in life.

William Ross, one time Treasurer of the London Piping Society, has returned to the Friday evening meetings after a long and serious illness. It is good to see him back again and we wish him every good wish in a recovery, which to date, appears first rate. It may not be long now before he takes up his pen again as he has done often in the past to record his views on the wearing of the kilt by women, women pipers and pipe bands to mention a few of his pet aversions.

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J. MacGREGOR,
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Seattle Highland Games

By Bill Paterson.

Seattle's 9th International Highland Games were held on August 6th this year, once again under cloudless blue skies, in fact in near record heat of 85 degrees temperature. President Charles Sherriff conducted the Opening Ceremonies while the Canadian Scottish Pipe Bands preceded the Official Party before an attendance of 4,000 people.

Once again the Pipe Band Contest was outstanding, there being a total of twelve bands.

Winners were:—

"A" Bands:

1. Seaforth Highlanders of Canada—P/M Edmund Esson, Vancouver, B.C. Tunes were "Stirlingshire Militia, Caledonian Society of London, Alick MacGregor".
2. Powell River Pipe Band—P/M David Westie, Powell River, B.C. Tunes were "Leaving Lunga, Caledonian Society of London, Pretty Marion".
3. Crawford Pipe Band. P/M Ronald Forman, Vancouver, B.C. Tunes were "Bonnie Dunoon, Highland Harry, and The Blackbird".

The Canadian Scottish P/M Andy Pollock of Victoria, B.C. were the fourth band in the "A" Contest.

The "A" Band Drumming Contest was won by the Powell River Drum Section, Bert Sorly—Drum Sergeant.

"B" Bands:

1. Crawford Pipe Band—P/M Ronald Forman, Vancouver, B.C. Tunes as above.
2. U.S. 6th Army Pipe Band—P/M Wm. Allen, San Francisco, California. Tunes were "Balmoral Highlanders, Struan Robertson, Jock Wilson's Ball".
3. Seaforth Cadets of Canada—P/M Ian Sinclair, Vancouver, B.C. Tunes were "Atholl and Breadalbane Gathering, Market Place of Inverness, Pipers of Drummond".

Other "B" Bands competing were, Ladies Pipe Band of Vancouver, B.C. P/M Shirley Tudge; Seattle Pipe Band—P/M James MacNeill; Keith Pipe Band of

Seattle, Washington—P/M Collin Buchan; Portland Pipe Band of Portland, Oregon—P/M Chester MacNeill; Sons of Scotland Pipe Band of Vancouver, B.C.—P/M Donald Adamson.

The "B" Band Drumming was won by Seaforth Cadets.

Junior Pipe Band Contest:

1. Seaforth Cadets of Vancouver, B.C. P/M Ian Sinclair. Tunes listed in "B" Bands.
2. Seattle Pipe Band Juniors of Seattle, Wn. P/M John Harvey. Tunes were "My Native Highland Home, Hot Punch, MacKenzie's Reel".

Piping Judges for the bands and Professionals were:—George Cameron, Vancouver, B.C.; Peter George, Victoria, B.C. Piping Judges for the Amateurs were:—Albert Whyte, Seattle, Washington; P/M Donald MacKenzie, Powell River, B.C.

Drumming Judge, Cyrus Drake, Seattle, Washington. Department Judge, Lt. F. O. Borga, Jr., Seattle, Washington.

In piping the Open Pacific International Championship was won by Fred MacLeod of Powell River, B.C. Amateur Pacific International Championship was won by Norma Nicholson of Vancouver, B.C.

Results in the Professional competitions were as follows:—

Professional Piobaireachd:

1. Fred MacLeod, Powell River, B.C. "Lament for Mary MacLeod".
2. Ronald Forman, Vancouver, B.C. "Lament for Donald Duaghal MacKay".
3. P/M Malcolm Nicholson, Vancouver, B.C. "Massacre of Glencoe".

Professional March:

1. Fred MacLeod, "Hills of South Uist".
2. Ronald Forman, "Balmoral Highlanders".
3. John Low, Victoria, B.C. "Bonnie Anne".

Professional Strathspey and Reel:

1. Fred MacLeod, "Top of Craigvenow, Rejected Suitor".

2. Ronald Forman, "Blair Drummond, Sheepwife".
3. John Low, "Arniston Castle, Caber Feidh".

Professional Jigs:

1. Fred MacLeod, "Mill in the Glen".
2. John Low, "Rory MacLeod".
3. Ronald Forman, "Loch Ness Monster".

Native Piobaireachd:

1. Norma Nicholson, Vancouver, B.C. "Desperate Battle".
2. Donald MacInnes, Vancouver, B.C. "Salute of Donald".
3. Stewart MacAlpine, Portland, Oregon. "Chisholm's Salute".

Native Marches (over 16).

1. Norma Nicholson.
2. Victor Biswell, San Francisco, Calif.
3. John MacDonald, Vancouver, B.C.

Native Strathspeys and Reels:

1. Victor Biswell.
2. Norma Nicholson.
3. Donald MacInnes.

Native Old Highland Airs:

1. Norma Nicholson.
2. Victor Biswell.
3. Ian Sinclair, Vancouver, B.C.

Bandmen—March:

1. Hampton Brady, Oakland, Calif.
2. Bill Paterson, Bellingham, Washington.

Bandmen—Strathspey and Reel:

1. Hampton Brady.
2. Bill Paterson.

Native Marches (under 16).

1. Douglas Murray, Powell River, B.C.
2. Catherine MacDonald, Vancouver, B.C.
3. Duncan MacInnes, Vancouver, B.C.

Native Strathspey and Reel (under 16):

1. Douglas Murray, Powell River, B.C.
2. Ken Osborne, Vancouver, B.C.
3. Roddy MacIsaac, Vancouver, B.C.

Native Old Highland Airs (under 16).

1. Catherine MacDonald.
2. A. David Wilson, Vancouver, B.C.
3. Terras M'Hardy, Vancouver, B.C.

Native Girls Marches:

1. Rae Marie MacInnes, Burnaby, B.C.
2. Rae Belle MacInnes, Vancouver, B.C.

Native Girls Strathspey and Reel:

1. Rae Belle MacInnes, Vancouver, B.C.

Novice Marches:

1. Dennis Brooks, Seattle, Washington.

Novice Strathspey and Reel:

1. Dennis Brooks.
2. Fred Eaton, Vancouver, Washington.

Well, that does it for this year's Games. I might add that these results are being posted much sooner than last year's. In fact they would have been sent by now but a small interruption (ahem) mainly the writer's marriage to Isla MacCourt Berglund caused a delay. Nothing would do, of course, but we have a proper Highland Wedding; John Low from Victoria, B.C. and Donald MacDonald from Vancouver, B.C. who incidently composed a tune of the wedding called Paterson's Wedding, played the pipes. When the wedding was over a real Highland Reception was held with the majority of persons there in full dress. Next summer if our plans go right we hope to take in the Games on your side.

A NEW TUNE.

The doyen of drum-majors, affectionately referred to the world over as "Pa Seton", has had a new march specially composed for him by Peter MacLeod, jr. Drum-major Seton has named the tune "Hastings Highland Games" and it will appear complete with drum score, in the programme for the next Hastings Games to be held at Easter, 1956.

Already, the tune has been accorded an enthusiastic reception by many of the best pipers in the Dominion of New Zealand.

Mr. K. J. Sparks, secretary of Greater Hastings has had the march included in the syllabus for B. grade bands competing in the event next year.

A PIPING HOLIDAY.

Continued from page 17.

present when on different occasions Mr. James L. MacKenzie gave an exhibition of Highland Dancing including the Sword Dance, Highland Fling and Irish Jig. This to music provided by Mr. Seumas MacNeill was a treat beyond words.

In a recent letter from Mr. Kenneth MacLean, who was still in St. Ann's, he spoke of the ghosts that now people the College grounds and even as you read these lines how well I can hear or see, the skirling of the pipes, the beat of the drums, the laughing voices, the swinging kilts, the hum and squeal of the practice chanters—yes, many ghosts but all of them will be speedily put to rout when the Summer School opens in 1956.

A PIPING HOLIDAY

By George M. Beley.

Several years ago while still experiencing the thrill of sounding a few notes on the bagpipes I rushed into print under the title of "I Learned to Play the Bagpipes". It was not until this year I discovered how much I really have to learn before I can honestly be called a Piper. Only the experience of the past summer could force me into this admission because previous thereto I, like every piper when once he gets his pipes to skirling, felt secure in the knowledge that I was the world's best.

It all started about two years ago when I decided to get instruction in Piobair-eachd and wrote the Gaelic College, St. Ann's, Cape Breton, N.S. Disappointment was real when word arrived that I would have to await the arrival of the College's Instructors from Scotland. In the summer of 1954 that seemed along way off but in due time registration was obtained for the 1955 Summer School.

My wife and I had decided to couple a motor trip to the Maritimes with my attendance at Gaelic College so at this point I find myself torn 'twixt a desire to tell you of the motor trip through Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island as against sticking with the all absorbing topic of Piping. To choose the latter is to tell you of my arrival at the College Sunday evening, July, 17. A most attractive middle aged woman answered the bell and—well I have to confess that beautiful women always have had an effect on me—I thought by saying "I am Mr. Beley from Brockville" would be the same as reading a ninety-nine page book about myself but her expression plainly showed there was something lacking. However, after a few false starts it was realised by the Director's wife, Mrs. A. W. R. MacKenzie, that I was not the fond father of a budding piper but the gray haired piping student in person.

You see the student body of the College was composed of slightly over one hundred youngsters mostly girls of whom Mrs. W. A. MacLeod of San Diego, California and myself were the only adults.



Mr. Beley.

Nowadays upon being asked how I enjoyed my holidays the word "Wonderful" comes spontaneously and is a faithful description because the Gaelic College, thanks to its Instructors, gave me one of the outstanding experiences of my lifetime. The first day at St. Ann's was a settling in business and we looked forward to the evening when we were to meet at Sydney Airport the three Instructors who were arriving from Scotland, namely Messrs. Seumas MacNeill and Kenneth J. MacLean of Glasgow, the Piping Instructors, and James L. MacKenzie of Aberdeen, the Dancing Instructor (Sgt. Drummer C. Hunt of the Cape Breton Highlanders was the Drumming Instructor and Rev. A. D. MacDonald was the Gaelic Instructor, both of Sydney, Nova Scotia). Mr. Seumas MacNeill, joint principal of the College of Piping, Glasgow, Scotland, as most pipers even on this continent know is outstanding in his field and he was ably supported by Mr. Kenneth J. MacLean, an honour graduate of the Glasgow College of Piping. The latter has remained in Canada to carry on instructional work throughout the winter. The Dancing Instructor, Mr. James L. MacKenzie, was equally outstanding in

his field, being an ex-world champion of Highland Dancing and equally well known on this continent and in other parts of the world. Much that has been accomplished in the field of Highland Dancing is due in no small part to his deep interest and untiring efforts. The College "MacDonald Hundred Pipe Band" was on hand to greet the arrivals and take them on a march down Charlotte Street in Sydney before heading for the Gaelic College and, for the instructors, a much needed rest. Some days later a similar honour was awarded Vice-Admiral L. D. Mackintosh, C.B., D.S.O., D.S.C., who arrived as chief of the Mackintosh Clan to bring greetings from Scotland to the Gaelic Mod.

I would that my pen was sufficiently facile to paint you a picture of the opening exercises that first morning after the arrival of the Instructors. An air of expectancy pervaded the class room; many of the young faces seemed to say "Seumas is back" because it was his second year, while at the same time others held a look of anticipation with regard to the new Assistant Piping Instructor and Dancing Instructor. Finally the hum of practice chanters was hushed and the buzz of voices died down as the Director of the College, Rev. A. W. R. MacKenzie, called the class room to order. Following the Lord's Prayer which was repeated in Gaelic the Instructors were introduced and classes were formed on a basis of experience in Piping and Dancing and the work of the 1955 Summer School was started.

What will interest most readers is the precise nature of the College so may I explain that it is not an academic institution. Rather does it specialize in Highland Dancing, Piping, Drumming, the Gaelic Language and Scottish Arts and Crafts. It is beautifully situated on St. Ann's Bay an arm of the Bras D'Or Lakes in Cape Breton. The main building provides a residence for the Director and Staff, a Craft Centre where Tartans are hand woven and exhibited for sale as well as Scottish items such as Ties, Glen-garries, Balmorals, Scottish Jewellery and Highland Literature. The other main building composes a class room, the MacAskill Museum and a Gift Shop. It is the only College of its kind on the Continent if not in the world. Much credit is due to Rev. A. W. R. MacKenzie, the Director of the College, and the Board of Directors. They have aimed at getting the best in Instructors and have succeeded in doing so.

A typical day was, opening exercises, a half-hour instruction on practice chanters or Highland dancing or Gaelic class then these classes would rotate. After lunch was a time for individual piping particularly by the Instructors and also band practice. The first item in the afternoon schedule, was Piobaireachd class for Seniors followed by a session on "How to teach Piping". This broad outline was altered and modified to allow such extracurricular activity as attending the reception at the College for The Mackintosh of Mackintosh, his reception at Hotel Baddeck, special band practice preparatory to the opening of the Road to the Isles, August 13, 1955 (Causeway, Mainland to Cape Breton), rehearsal for the "Rout of Moy" and the official opening of the new Gaelic Mod Platform on the College Grounds. The Mod which occurred toward the end of the Course added its quota of variety and colour. The Honourable Henry D. Hicks, Premier of Nova Scotia was present on Nova Scotia day and extended official welcome and good wishes on behalf of the Province.

The first weekend we visited Halifax, the Annapolis Valley and the Land of Evangeline and the second weekend took the trip around the Cabot Trail. The third Sunday occurred during the Mod and the open air service Sunday afternoon, conducted in both Gaelic and English, was unique. Having left for Prince Edward Island before the closing exercises were held we missed seeing the Pageant portraying the "Rout of Moy" but since heard it was excellent. Seumas MacNeill took the part of Bonnie Prince Charlie and pictures taken of him escaping in night attire are reported to be sure-fire blackmail material, while Kenneth MacLean as the MacCrimmon Piper rendered the MacCrimmon Lament in noble fashion before expiring and being carried from the field.

Those familiar with Cape Breton commonly refer to it as the Highlands of Canada and it is well worthy of the title. The Gaelic College itself is within sight of the Bras D'Or Lakes, surrounded by hills and on the famous Cabot Trail. Particularly during the Summer Course the College is alive with life, movement, colour and music and the steady flow of tourists are fascinated when they happen along while dancing classes are in progress or the Pipe Band is practicing. Not a few were fortunate enough to be

Continued on page 15.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

'Thogail Nam Bo.

I have heard the letter of Mr. MacDonald, Dunoon, in the last issue of the Piping Times. It seems to me that there is a great misunderstanding about the paternity of the above tune. Let me say quite bluntly that MacDougall Gillies had nothing to do with the published version of 'Thogail nam Bo. The known story of this tune is better authenticated than many another well known pipe melody.

In 1894 Bailie Donald MacLeod of Dumbarton was engaged on his book "Past worthies of the Lennox", and one of the "worthies" dealt with is Andrew, who succeeded his father, Sir John, who fell at Flodden, in 1514. Andrew was educated at Rome and while there also received instruction in "the Black Art". On assuming the chiefship of the clan Andrew astonished his clansmen with his feats of legerdemain and by this became popularly known as "the Wizard", and a tradition ascribes to him the authorship of 'Thogail nam Bo,"but this need not be stressed. Andrew died about the year 1544. In MacLeod's "Worthies" appears for the first time in all the glory of print "Thogail nam Bo."

Provost Robert MacFarlan of Dumbarton, head of an important legal firm in that town, as befitted a loyal clansman was very anxious to find the air known as "MacFarlane's Gathering" but had no success until he met Mr. Duncan Whyte, a Glasgow business man who had an extensive connection with Argyllshire agriculturalists. Mr. Whyte put him in touch with two brothers Leitch, Donald pilot of the MacBrayne steamer Iona, and John in Glendaruel. Both these men were pipers and knew the tune, and Provost MacFarlan made the arrangements for the tune to be recorded.

The Provost had an acute legal mind and knew the frailties of human nature, so to prevent any disputes in future about the paternity of the tune he had several gentlemen of integrity present. Both Donald and John played over the tune several times. Mr. J. W. Anderson, law student, himself a piper, noted it down, mainly from John's playing, while piper Hugh M'Indewar, a local

piper of repute, who knew the tune but did not play it, watched that it was correctly noted. John gave the history of the tune as known to him as he learned it from his father who had learned it from his grandfather who in his turn learned it from an old shoemaker who was his first employer.

In November, 1894, Malcolm MacFarlane edited and John MacKay published a vocal setting of the tune, and this was reprinted at intervals for years afterwards. In the following year Provost MacFarlan arranged with Alexander Lawrance, printer, Church St., Dumbarton, to have the melody published in proper form for the bagpipes. This printed edition carries a fine portrait of Walter MacFarlane of Arrochar, succeeded 1705, and died in 1767. Later on this pipe setting appeared in the Highland News (Inverness) with a lengthy editorial note. The tune also appears in the official history of the clan. In October, 1910, there appeared in the now defunct Glasgow Weekly Herald a paragraph ascribing the whole credit for rescuing this air from oblivion to Provost MacFarlan. The same information is conveyed in a letter to the Oban Times in September, 1911.

I have not consulted the MacFarlane Papers now preserved in Oban when compiling the above notes but I have no doubt the whole particulars are carefully detailed in them. I knew Malcolm MacFarlane personally and those of us who remember him will recollect what a stickler he was for accuracy even in the smallest detail. In every one of these mentions of the tune there is not a word said about MacDougall Gillies, or that he had any part in the noting of the published tune, because he had not.

Now for a curious piece of news about 'Thogail nam Bo. General Thomason R.E. in a letter now before me pointed out that "The similarity of the air must strike everyone to Sheridan's "Here's to the Maiden of Bashful Fifteen". I have not the original score of the air and knowing what arrangers are I take it that the General is correct in this though he makes a serious mistake as to the date of Sheridan's publication of his "School for Scandal". The correct date is 1777.

Taking the usual computation of a lifetime John Leitch's story of the air of "Thogail nam Bo" carries us back to the closing decades of the eighteenth century, and the question arises which is the original tune? The MacFarlane's "Thogail nam Bo" or Sheridan's "Here's to the Maidens"?

Here I leave my readers to ponder over the matter.

James E. Scott,
Stronchullin, Ayrshire.

Dear Sir,

It may interest your Virginian correspondent to learn that I bought a Brian Boru keyed pipe chanter about 1912. As far as I remember I bought it from Hawkes of London. Whether they manufactured it or not I cannot say, yet it was meant for use in the Highland Bagpipe. The range of this chanter was from E on the first line of the treble clef to C Sharp on the second ledger line above. The scale was as follows:—

E Natural, F. Sharp, G. Sharp, A. Natural, B. Natural, C. Sharp, D. Natural, E. Natural, F. Natural G. Diminished Seventh, A. Octive, B. Natural, C. Sharp.

The drones tuned to A. The maker of this chanter must have made a mistake as the octave F should have been F sharp. I tried to rectify this by raising the hole further up the chanter and filling the bottom edge with plastic—being young at the time I had not much experience as a chanter doctor.

The octave B was sounded by pressing open a key above the G hole with the first finger, and C Sharp by opening the key above the octave A hole with the thumb.

My reason for purchasing the chanter was to enable me to play tunes that were popular with people other than pipers. The holes that sound G Sharp and F Sharp were manipulated by the little finger of the top hand. There were two flanges to the left hand side below E, by pressing the little finger on the top key G Sharp was sounded and slipping the little finger on to the next flange closed both holes and sounded bottom E. This chanter at that time cost 27/6. It was quite an ingenious idea of the maker to invert the long rod to close the keys below tonic A, so therefore it wasn't suitable for tunes such as "The Drunken Piper" or tunes with G natural, but I could play "Killarney",

"Loch Lomond", extra variations of "MacIntosh's Lament", "Laird of Drumblair" properly, also all the good Irish Jigs. I believe it would suit an American enthusiast to play some of his own country's tunes.

The low G. sharp wouldn't please a Highland piper as it forms a discordant chord with the drones.

Probably Boosey and Hawkes of London could give Mr. George more information as to the possibilities of purchasing this chanter.

Archie MacNeill.

Dear Sir,

I have just read Morag Fraser's letter in your October issue and my cheek still burns. My entire being revolted at some of her words and I turn to hide from what surely must be her embarrassment.

If a coolie from the China Seas could render music as fine as some of our present day pipers, better by far to award him the MacCrimmon pipes than that one set of pipes be burned in the fire of ignoble pride and Highland snobbishness.

Riff-raff indeed!!!

P. Kean,

Ardrossan, Ayrshire.

We received quite a few letters in this vein. Apparently the position is that Nethybridge always engages a piper for the dancing but this year by an oversight this was not done. We understand however that the normal arrangements will be in operation next year. Many thanks to all who wrote

Dear Sir,

Please receive my subscription which is slightly overdue.

I am enclosing a Five Dollar Bill from which I ask you to take the amount of one year's subscription. The remainder of the money you can use for any good purpose, say the helping of some young lad starting out to learn one of the greatest arts I know—playing pipes.

Tom Nimmo,

Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

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Anyone else like to adopt a budding piper?

Dear Sir,

Who is the bearded piper on the cover picture of February N.5, Volume 7. ? Several pipers have asked me who he is as the photo seems to be familiar and I cannot find any reference to it in the magazine.

Thomas L. Manson,
Burnside Murkle, Thurso.

We too wish we knew. There is a suggestion that Dr. MacInnes knows the answer.

Dear Sir,

Please find enclosed a money order for £3.6d. to cover my subscription to "Piping Times" to September, 1956.

I enjoy the magazine very much and hope you and your associates are able to keep up the good work you have done in the past.

I do not think it is possible to publish too many articles on "Piping Tips" and "Care of Pipes" etc., especially for the younger piper, as I know I have learned very much from articles you have published in the past. Perhaps you could persuade some of your top artistes over there to take turns writing articles on this line for the magazine (this is merely a suggestion mind you, not a criticism).

All the best to you and yours,

Bill Ferguson,
Ontario, Canada.

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for the last issue of the "Times" which I received a week ago. As you wanted to hear from your readers, well here is my donation though my subject is not about pipes or pipers.

Yesterday I was giving my pipe maker a call and, the time before I was in, he gave me a loan of "The Cowal Collection - 1931" so after writing out the tunes I

wanted, all P/Major John MacLennan's music, I was in yesterday morning handing it back. During the time I was in he gave me a loan of another book to copy from. This book was George S. MacLennan's and is one book I have been on the hunt for years. Another book I would like to get my hands on is Wm. Ferguson's. As it is, I am thinking that these old books should be brought back into circulation and I am willing to bet that they would sell just as good, if not better than the new books. Look at the contents of George MacLennan's book and you have "Lillie Long or Wade's Welcome to Inverness", "Alick C. MacGregor", and "Mrs. A. MacPherson of Inveran", though I prefer "Mrs. MacPherson" the way it is written in the Scots Guards Collection. Anyway George S. MacLennan's book is the only one I know that gives the six parts to the "Balmoral Highlanders". Whether Angus MacKay wrote this as being 4 or 6 parted I don't know, but all the books I possess give it out as being 4 parted. Is there any word about "Brigadier Fitzroy MacLean" yet? There are lots of pipers who have never heard of it but I heard it broadcast in a group of Marches. I enjoyed Tommy Pearston's last broadcast, most of all his last tune "H.M.S. Renown" It is not very often I hear hornpipes played so I was pleased to hear it being played by somebody who knows his stuff, and anyway it happens to be my favourite hornpipe. Well, that is all I have to say so I close now and as always wish you the very best for the future.

David Sadler,
Haddington.

Dear Sir,

During the course of his inspection of our band here in New Zealand, the Dress Inspection Judge informed our members that the ribbons on the Glengarry bonnet were for the purpose of letting rain water run off. This has touched off considerable controversy in our band as some members, including myself, are frankly sceptical of this explanation.

Could you possibly clear up this matter for us as it is interfering with band practice.

Puzzled Bandsman,
Wellington

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