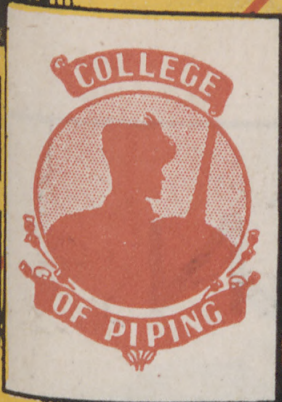


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Piping Times

Vol. 4, No. 10

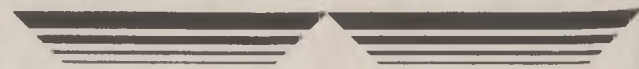
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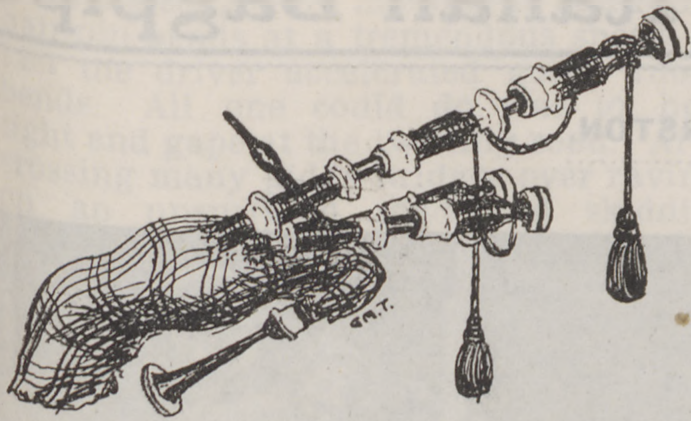
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Vol. 4, No. 10.

JULY, 1952.

EDITORIAL

The new dress proposed for lady dancers by Aboyne Highland Games Committee has produced the expected controversy and ballyhoo. Based on the traditional dress as worn by Highland ladies some centuries ago, it is a decided improvement on the garb as worn by female dancers in recent years. Our opinion on this, however, is of no more importance than the opinion of the next man, but unfortunately we are all slowly being dragged into the argument as it widens its scope.

The normal writer may be complimented, perhaps, for taking the opportunity of exposing once again the ridiculous attire affected by girl Highland dancers (the little horrors), but it is surely out of order to start complaining about the kilt as worn by our individual pipers. Mr. Alastair M. Dunnet, writing in the "Sunday Times," appears to hope that Aboyne Committee will take some action to restrict civilian solo pipers from wearing uniform which resembles the army piper's outfit, and hints darkly—selling Scotland once again for a handful of bawbees from his Sassenach employers—that the worst that they wear is not to be seen.

Mr. Dunnet has obviously never been at Aboyne Games, or at any other Highland Gathering in recent years. He may look up back numbers of the "Piping Times" and take shelter behind the excuse that he was talking about band pipers, but the context was "Aboyne" and he said "bagpipe players."

There is no need to point out to Scottish readers that the day of the complicated outfit is long past. In recent years the only professionals to wear plaids have been James MacGrady and "Mickey" MacKay, both army pipe-majors. It is

significant to note that Donald MacLeod, George Stoddart, John MacLellan and other army men manage to avoid wearing a plaid of any kind, and members of bands with complicated uniforms such as John MacDonald, Charles Scott, John Garroway, John C. Johnston, James MacColl, all appear on the solo platform in kilt and tweed jacket.

The "Sunday Times" should be sure that its writers know their subject.

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In Search of the Italian Bagpipe

By T. PEARSTON.

A bagpipe is played in isolated parts of central and southern Italy, mainly in the Appenines and in the Calabrian peninsula which represents the toe of Italy. The bagpipe, which is constructed on the same principle as our own, is found mainly in the mountains of Calabria and to a lesser extent in the Abruzzi and Molese provinces of central Italy. There is a bagpipe in Sicily, but it is after the same style as on the mainland. In the island of Sardinia there is also an instrument which is reeded and played as the bagpipe, but the reeds are blown directly by the mouth, there being no air bag.

Although the bagpipe has been used in classical orchestral music in Italy, it is generally considered as an instrument of shepherds and mountain herdsmen and it does not have the same prestige as the great Highland bagpipe in this country. There is no organisation of Italian bagpipers, no printed music of any sort, no bands and no official bagpipe making industry.

Firstly, we will review the bagpipe proper as used in Calabria. The names for the Italian bagpipe can be Zampogna, Ciaramella, or Cornamusa.

About six months ago I started making efforts to contact Italian bagpipe players so that I could pin-point my route and save time and searching. To proceed to Italy without any definite plan of investigation would have involved many days of questioning and searching, and Italy is a very large country. In Italy the organisation most likely to assist me was the Ente Provinciale per Il Turismo, or the Italian Touring Club. Their offices are spread all over Italy in the important towns and tourist places of any consequence. I wrote to several of these offices in the areas in proximity to the districts where the bagpipe was supposed to exist, but each in turn reported no contacts. It was evident that these musicians lived in a very isolated part of the country and this was substantiated later. Some weeks before my departure



I received a communication in Italian from a school teacher in a village called Fabrizia, in Calabria, who promised assistance in my search. Also, by a lucky stroke of fortune a communication was received from Reggio di Calabria the day before I left Glasgow, with names and addresses of Italian pipers.

With these two contacts I departed for Southern Italy. On reaching Reggio di Calabria, I immediately let myself be known to the Italian Touring Club and their very kind sub-director, Dr. Gangemi Giovanni. After spending a morning in this office, I was amazed by the suggestion of the use of the touring club car in order to transport me to the pipers in the mountains about 30 miles in the interior. Permission was granted by the director, an interpreter was supplied and we set



off with the assurance of finding a piper.

We zig-zagged up mountains and round hair-pin bends at a tremendous speed—in fact the driver accelerated going round bends. All one could do was to hold tight and gape at the twisting road. After crossing many giddy bridges over ravines on an unsurfaced road and skidding round rock-walled canyons, we at last reached a lonely house perched on the mountainside. The zampognari was working with his olive trees or orange groves, and he asked for about an hour so that he could get his pipes going, as he had not played them since last Christmas. He must have been astonished at a foreigner wishing to hear the Zampogna, but he was very willing to perform, so in the meantime we proceeded to the next village for a refreshment of wine and cherries.



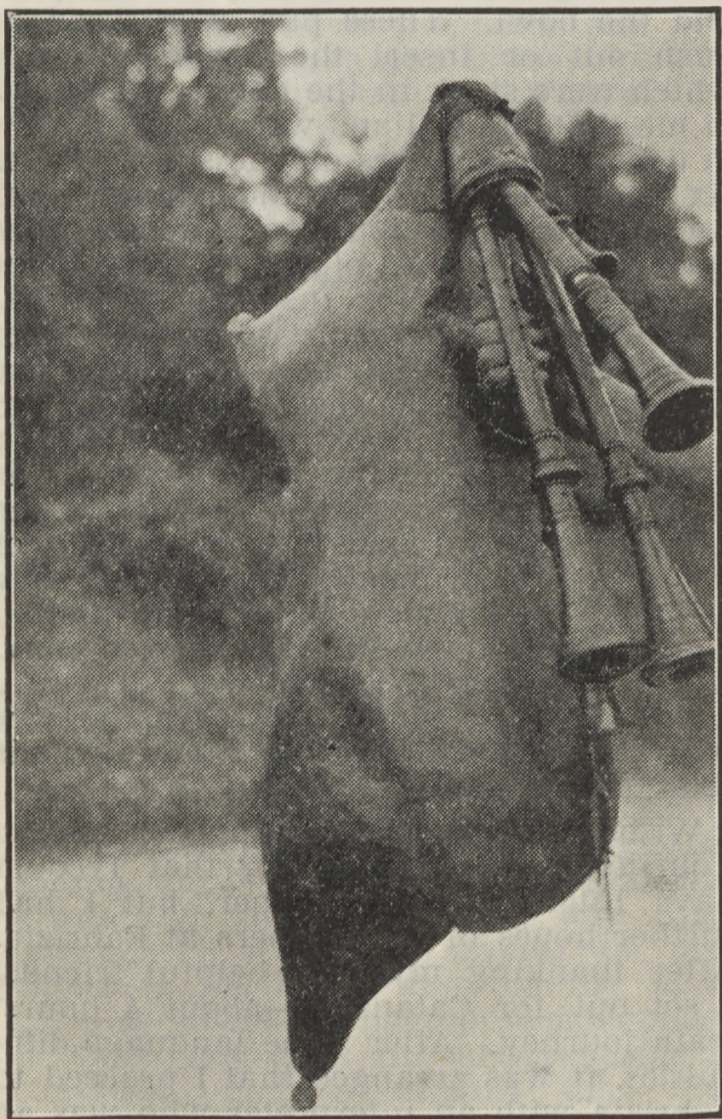
Piper A.—The bagpipe in appearance looked enormous, as the bag, prepared from goat skin, almost spread over the front of the piper. The complete goat skin is used; the part where the legs had been was sealed off and from the top leg the blow pipe had been tied in. The head of the goat had been cut off and that end

sealed. In the same manner as the blow pipe, the chanter and drone stock had been tied. This instrument had two drones and two chanters all protruding from the same stock. An additional stock comes down the back of the instrument and this is only used for holding the bagpipe. The small drone was about 12 cms. and the larger 35 cms. The chanters were about 50 cms. One chanter was for the right hand and the other for the left. The right hand was a little above the left, and in sound was about an octave above the left chanter. There seemed to be no scale like our own. The player played with one hand and with the other he seemed to chord by vamping. All the music was played by ear and the piper knew nothing about written music. The reeds were all of the single beating variety, including the chanter reeds, and were inverted. In appearance the reeds resembled half-size tenor reeds.

Attached to the drone was a wooden plug which was pushed into the drone for stopping. Also attached to the instrument was a pointed pin similar to measuring pins used in a bowling match for measuring the distance between the jack and the bowl. These pins were used to push out or insert the pieces of wax which were stuck in the holes. It seemed to me that the Italians were past masters in doctoring chanters on the spot. Of the six vents of the right-hand chanter, two were sealed, the four on the left were open. However, the piper had other holes for air and also for inserting the wax, depending on whether it sounded correct to his ear. The difficulties of tuning are exactly the same as the Scottish bagpipe, and the Italian piper was complaining about the heat drying up his reeds, as he was not accustomed to playing in the summer time. I had the opportunity of trying this instrument and found it easy to blow, but the right hand being the top one made it impossible for me to play, and in any case the holes were different. After taking some photographs, we returned to Reggio by the same tortuous road.

Without the assistance of the Italian Touring Club it is unlikely that I could have interviewed this piper, but I had further hopes of more pipers at Fabrizia. After thanking my very helpful friends, I set out for Catanzaro—about 4 hours' train journey. After some language difficulties, it was arranged that I proceed to Fabrizia with an interpreter who was an American-Italian, back in his home town on holiday. After a long drive not quite

so dangerous as the first, we arrived at Fabrizia, a small town about the middle of the Calabrian Peninsula. I had the intention of taking photographs and information about the bagpipe and departing as soon as possible. However, I was to realise later how difficult it was going to be to encounter them. My Italian friend, Signor Elio de Angelis, had arranged for pipers to come along that evening, but they did not appear, probably because of the difficulties of travel, as all the bagpipe players lived in the isolated houses many hours' journey over rough mountain tracks. I learned that the nearest piper was about three hours' march away in the hills. I thought that the best way out was for me to go to the pipers on the following morning, and we consequently arranged for the piper's son, who, luckily, was in town, to inform the pipers of our intention. At 5 a.m. the next morning we set out with the escort of the piper's son, who had come from his home on a donkey. There are no buses in this part of Italy. One has either to walk or take a donkey.



On leaving the village, we began a steep zig-zag descent over a narrow boulder-

strewn track. At the foot of this gorge we came across a partly dried up river bed which we followed through the hills. This pathway seemed to be a very popular route, as we were continually meeting people carrying stone jars or baskets. The women carried their jars on their heads and walked bare-footed despite the rough rocky ground. We met a donkey laden with heavy planks of wood, and it seemed that it must fall on the narrow steep path. However, it was cannily, hoof by hoof, edging its way down without the least sign of sliding. After fording several large rivers and traversing tree-lined hills, we reached a steading where we were supposed to wait for the pipers. Faintly in the distance I could hear the sound of a chanter playing, and I knew that they were tuning up. We sampled some home-made bread, chestnuts and fruit, and rested in the shade. The warbling chanter kept reaching our ears from time to time, but after about an hour there were still no pipers. This seemed just like home, so I intimated my intention of ferreting out the pipers and we agreed to move on in the direction of the music. We scrambled up the tree-lined pathway and in a short time the elusive musician came to view. This instrument looked even stranger than the first one and the drones and bag were bigger. After being introduced, I was informed that we would proceed to the house across the valley, where the accompanist of the piper lived. Usually the Zampognarii play in twos—one plays the bagpipe proper and the other plays the pipe chanter alone (see photographs). In a further ten minutes I was listening to the Calabrian airs on the pipes.

Piper B.—As one can see, this instrument is a bit different, but of course the essentials are there. Both pipers claimed that their instrument was the oldest, but I think that the smaller instrument as played by piper "A" would be the oldest as it was simpler and had no rudimentary keys. The piper was a small man, but he certainly knew how to handle his instrument, despite the size of the bag. After a few preliminary chordings and shifting his reed up and down, the chanter player joined in and the ensemble was really worth listening to. However, they had only played a few tunes when the reed went out a bit.

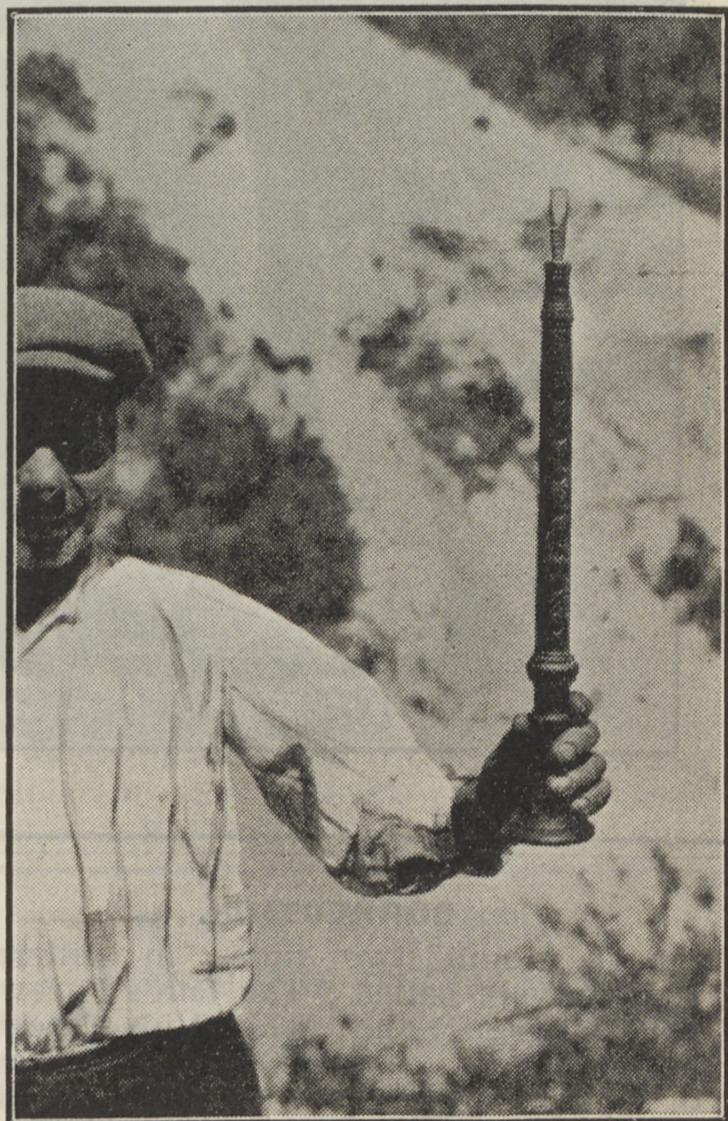
There were five drones in the bagpipe, measuring from 1 meter, 60 cms., 50 cms., 70 cms., 10 cms. The piper fingered the 1 metre drone and the 50 cms. one. The other drones were tuned in the usual



or mulberry, and the total cost of a new instrument was from 6,000-10,000 lire, which was about £5. There was little ornamentation on the wood and some of the joints showed cracks. Piper "B's" instrument was completely reeded with double-beating reeds which in appearance all looked exactly like our practice chanter reeds.

The chanter proper which accompanied the piper was constructed on the same principle as our pipe chanter. The notes are the same in number (see photograph). The wood is walnut, about 32 cms. long and can be halved in two by unscrewing. The low A hole is smaller, but the others are roughly similar in size to our own. The Italian could quite easily perform on our chanter, and vice versa. The reed for the chanter is again similar to our practice chanter reed. The piper had some in a box and, as like home, he picked the one with a crow. The fingering of the Pipita (chanter) was irregular and there was no systematic scale of fingering like our own. Again, the right hand was on top and the piper seemed to use all his fingers as required.

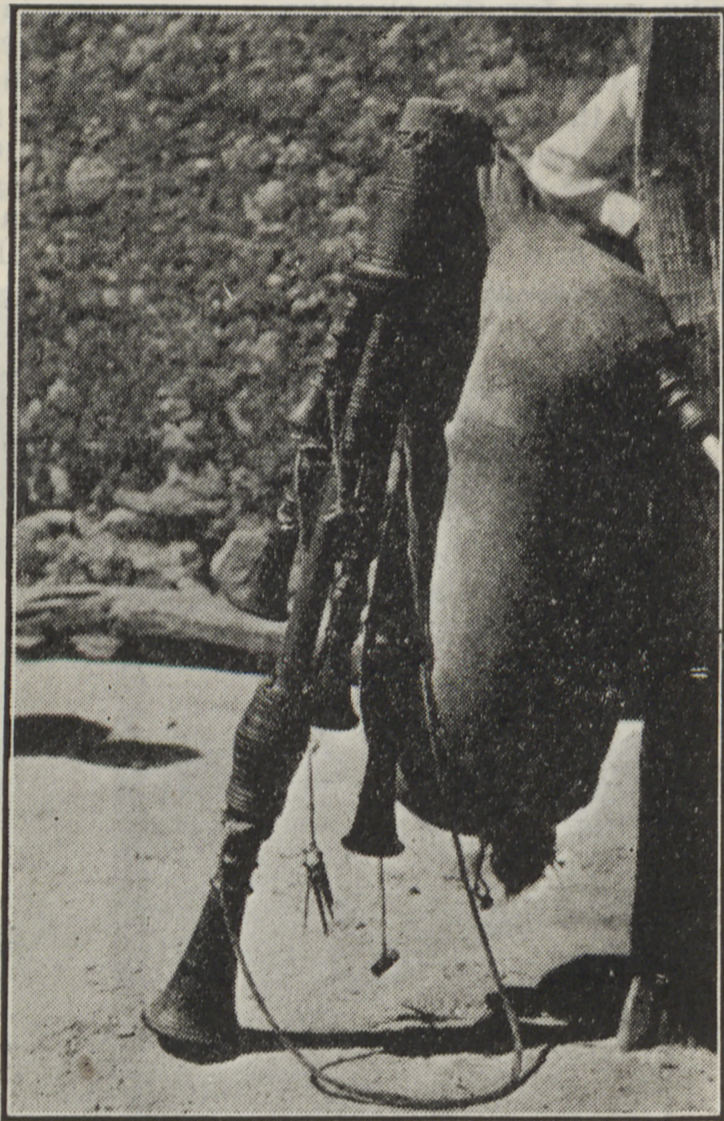
manner. A cord was attached for going round the neck, and also hanging from the bagpipe was the set of "bowling green measuring pins" the very same as on piper "A's" instrument. Piper B, however, was even better equipped for doctoring the sound vents. Our sealing wax or tape seemed primitive compared with the way this chap had everything organised. Inside the bell or bush of the big drone there was a chunk of beeswax, and up the stock of another drone was a chunk of tallow. Both substances seemed to be used for the same purpose and I could not discover what the difference was. The manner in which they flicked out the wax on the measuring pin, grabbed a new portion from up the big drone and slabbered the chanter vents was electrifying to my technical instinct. There did not appear to be any gracenotes in the playing and their fingers, although plastered with grease, did the job with plain notes. Attached to the "big drone chanter" was a rudimentary key which one can see in the photograph, also a revolving perforated tube. What the functions of these two implements were I could not guess. I learned that the wood used for construction was heather root



The pipers are most prominent in times of festivity and especially at Christmas and other religious occasions. The Italians believe that when Christ was born several Zampognarii were playing on their bagpipes. This is supported by the number of paintings which illustrate the bagpipe during the nativity.

Sometimes the Zampogna is accompanied by singers, and it is also used for dancing (see photograph). The Italians in some provinces think that when the Zampogna is heard it brings rain.

In the film, "The Wolf of the Sila," shown throughout this country, one can see and hear a snatch of the Calabrian bagpipe.



CORRECTION.

Last month two tunes in different reports were called "The 75th's Farewell to Edinburgh" and "The 14th's Farewell to Edinburgh" respectively. In each case of course "The 74th's Farewell to Edinburgh" was intended. Many thanks to readers who pointed this out.

Abruzzi — Sicilian Bagpipe.— Although time did not permit me to visit this part of Italy, I have been informed by the Italians that they use the same instrument in Sicily. I was fortunate in purchasing a gramophone record of the Sicilian bagpipe, and it sounds the same as the Calabrian instrument.

Sardinian Pipe.—Sardinia, the island of the Mediterranean south of Corsica, is inhabited by a very ancient race, and they, too, have a type of pipe which the shepherds use for their flocks. Although I had no time to visit this island, I had the opportunity of examining the instrument in a museum. The instrument is not strictly a bagpipe, as there is no wind reservoir, the pipe being sounded directly from the mouth. There are three reeded stocks, one of which is a drone and the other two are chanter—one for the left hand and one for the right. There were four square vents cut in each chanter. The length of the chanter was about 30 cms. and the drone about 50 cms. The material used for construction was cane. All reeds were of the inverted drone reed variety and all were inserted into the mouth of the player for sounding. Again the right hand was on top.

I wish to thank the following people, without whose assistance and guidance this article on the Italian Bagpipe could not have been presented to the pipers of this country:—

Doctor Adamo Domenico, of Reggio di Calabria.

Sr. Beppe Castelluci, of Reggio di Calabria.

Sr. Gangemi Nicola, of Reggio di Calabria.
The Director Ente Provinciale per il Turismo, Catanzaro.

Thomas Mirante, of New York and Catanzaro.

Sr. Elio de Angelis, of Fabrizia.

Sr. Barrera, of E.P.T., London.

Note.—Sometime during the winter a programme dealing with the bagpipes of Europe will be organised by the College, in which the public may hear gramophone records of the French, Spanish and Italian bagpipes.

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A PIPER'S DIARY

By "ANOTHER CHIEL."

The "Chiel" on Holiday.

Our usual contributor to this column has departed from Glasgow on vacation. My own Piper's Diary is somewhat scrappy, as I myself have not been up-to-date with the latest events, but like Ceol Mor, news moves slower among bagpipe players.

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World Champions.

Congratulations to Shotts and Dykehead Caledonia Pipe Band on winning decisively the championship. Although the experts say by 0.13 of a point according to their performance on the radio broadcast of their selection during the World's Championship, they were clear winners. Of all the amateur pipe bands, the Shotts have been the most consistent prizewinners.

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Edinburgh.

During the visit of Her Majesty the Queen, the bands of the Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow Police were in attendance. This was on the same day as the World's Championship. In the evening, on the radio, we could hear Pipe-Major John MacDonald, of the Glasgow Police, playing "Lord Lovat's Lament."

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Gatherings.

This year's Gatherings will be commencing shortly, and already Luss Highland Gathering is sponsoring a pipe band plus an individual competition. Uist Games are going to be bigger and better and the prize money has been raised. It is a pity that larger numbers of the professional pipers could not attend this Gathering, as it really is a piper's dream competition.

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Manchester.

On hearing an alien pipe band played by non-Scotsmen, a reporter in an English newspaper says: "They wore kilt and sporran, plaid socks, Border tunic, Glengarry, and a general air of 'Scots wha ha'e' . . . and played the bagpipes with an effect not noticeably worse than one has heard elsewhere. They also

danced the strathspey and reel to good Highland tunes, and danced them well. Up to this point any double-distilled Caledonian might have applauded."

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Cremona.

It has been reported erroneously in newspapers in America, Canada, France and Holland that Mr. Pearston had discovered that the bagpipe was exported from Italy. This mangled report has caused widespread alarm among pipers both here and in Brittany. The history of the MacCrimmons has developed into the history of the bagpipe.

Mr. Pearston's report on his visit to Cremona will appear in the "Piping Times" in due course, and at present his investigations have not yet been completed.

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Jersey.

During French week in the Channel Islands, several parties of French people came across from Cape Finistierre to give dances in their national costumes. Also represented were the Breton pipers with their bombarde and binion.

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Canada.

Received word from Mr. Archie MacNeill from Canada. He is having very hot weather—80 degrees—but this is not keeping him from getting about. He has been to Montreal and Toronto Highland Games, where the Alex. MacNeill v. John Wilson rivalry is being fought. Soon the blind piper will be off to Embro and Oshawa.

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In the "Oban Times" of Saturday, 5th July, Mr. Seton Gordon, of Duntuilin, Isle of Skye, has written a very interesting article on the pibroch "The Piper's Warning to his Master."

N. & A. MACPHEE,

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Piping Enthusiast Dies at Elgin



A leading authority on pipe music, Pipe-Major David B. Mathieson, Morrison Road, Bishopmill, Elgin, died on Sunday in his seventieth year.

Born at Kirn, Argyll, Pipe-Major Mathieson joined the Seaforth Highlanders in 1900. The following year he was drafted to the 1st Battalion, then stationed in Cairo, and two years later proceeded with that Battalion to Nasirabad, India.

After seeing further service with the Battalion at home and abroad, Pipe-Major Mathieson went with the Battalion to France in September, 1914. He was severely wounded in November of that year and was invalided home.

Short though his service was in France, it was none the less gallant, for he was mentioned in despatches and awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for "gallant conduct on many occasions in conveying messages under heavy fire, and also for gallantry in attending the wounded in an exposed part of the trench."

Not allowed to go back to France, Pipe-Major Mathieson was posted to the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion at Cromarty in February, 1915, and three years later he was appointed Pipe-Major of the 3rd Battalion. He was then appointed Pipe-Major with the 1st Battalion at Fort George, a position which he held until 1924.

"Cabar Feidh."

On his discharge he joined the 6th Seaforth Highlanders (T.A.) at Elgin as pipe major and was employed in the orderly room from 1926. He left the battalion in 1939 and served on the clerical staff of the R.A.S.C. in Elgin.

Pipe-Major Mathieson did much to standardise pipe tunes and to eliminate 'tinkers' variations. Regimental settings were carefully preserved and the present rendering of "Cabar Feidh" is owed to him and his researches which proved that previously a "bowdlerised" version was being played.

Young pipers could always turn to him not only for careful instruction but for accurate information from his store of knowledge of piping and its history.

Pipe-Major Mathieson, who is survived by his wife and a family of one son and two daughters, was a keen Burnsite and was for many years secretary of St. Giles' Burns Club, Elgin.

PIPING DATES IN SCOTLAND, 1952.

- Aug. 2—B—Inverkeithing.
 - " 5—I—Uist.
 - " 6—I—Uist.
 - " 9—B—Carluke. I—Morvern.
 - " 16—B—Milngavie. IB—Nairn.
 - " 22 and 23—**Piping Exhibition and Recitals, Edinburgh.**
 - " 23—B—Nethybridge.
 - " 25—I—Arisaig.
 - " 26—I—Lochaber.
 - " 27—I—Kyleakin.
 - " 28—I—Portree.
 - " 29—I—Cowal.
 - " 30—IB—Cowal.
 - Sept. 3—I—Aboyne.
 - " 4—IB—Braemar.
 - " 6—B—Shotts. IB—Pitlochry.
 - " 10 and 11—I—Argyllshire Gathering.
 - " 13—I—Invergordon. B—Dunblane.
 - " 16 and 17—I—Northern Meeting.
- "B" signifies band contest; "I" stands for Individual.

COMPETITION RESULTS

COLLEGE ANNUAL CONTEST.

The annual competition confined to members of the College of Piping was held in June. The judge for piobaireachd, march, and strathspey and reel was Charles D. Scott, and for slow march and jig was John C. Johnstone.

The annual display and presentation of certificates and prizes also took place last month. Joint chairmen for the night were the joint Principals, Seumas MacNeill and Thomas Pearston. They were supported on the platform by John MacFadyen and by Mrs. Hector A. MacKenzie, who presented the prizes. A large audience of parents and friends enjoyed the piping, the tea and the reports of progress.

Results :

Piobaireachd.—1, A. Russell; 2, F. MacNeill; 3, K. MacLean; 4, C. Carmichael; 5, N. MacLean.

March.—1, N. MacLean; 2, Andrew Bell; 3, D. MacNeill; 4, F. MacNeill; 5 (equal), K. Torrance, K. MacLean.

Strathspey and Reel.—1, N. MacLean; 2, A. Russell; 3, F. MacNeill; 4, D. MacNeill; 5, C. Carmichael.

Slow March.—1, K. MacLean; 2, F. MacNeill; 3, C. Carmichael; 4, D. MacNeill; 5, A. Russell.

Jig.—1, N. MacLean; 2, K. MacLean; 3, D. MacNeill; 4, F. MacNeill; 5, C. Carmichael.

Senior Championship.—1, F. MacNeill (19 pts.); 2, N. MacLean (17 pts.); 3, K. MacLean (16 pts.); 4, A. Russell (15 pts.); 5, D. MacNeill (10 pts.); 6, C. Carmichael (9 pts.); 7, A. Bell (4 pts.); 8, K. Torrance (1 pt.).

Juvenile Championship.—1, N. MacLean; 2, Andrew Bell; 3, C. Carmichael.

Junior Chanter.—1, Donald MacNeill; 2, Finlay MacNeill; 3, N. Kirkham; 4, A. MacTaggart; 5, Duncan MacKay.

Senior Chanter.—1, Iain Dougan; 2, Freena MacFadyen; 3, Ewan MacKay.

Special Prize—John Moir (aged 7 years).

DALZELL WIN THE SCOTTISH PIPE BAND CHAMPIONSHIP.

Dalzell Highland, Motherwell (Pipe-Major David Ross) won the Scottish Pipe Band Championship Cup at Dens Park, Dundee, with 94½ points.

Edinburgh City Police (Pipe-Major Donald Ramsay) were second with 94½, Govan Red Hackle (Pipe-Major Alexander MacLeod) third with 93 21/24, and the holders, Shotts and Dykehead (Pipe-Major Thomas MacAllister) fourth with 93 13/24.

Other Results :

Grade 2—1, Kelty and Blairadam, 89½; 2, Wishaw Highland, 89½; 3, Glasgow Corporation Transport, 88½; MacLeod (Dundee), 88.

Grade 3—Kirkcaldy British Legion, 86½; 2, Cowdenbeath Public, 85½; 3, Dundonald Colliery Juveniles, 84; 4, 24th Dundee B.B., 83½.

Ladies—1, MacLean Dundee (Pipe-Major Reta Stewart), 75½.

Juveniles—1, 24th Dundee B.B., 82½; 2, Dundonald Colliery, 82.

Drum-Majors' Contest—1, Leonard Scott, Jute Industries, Dundee; 2, Alexander Slater, Montrose.

PAISLEY B.B. ANNUAL CONTESTS.

On Wednesday, 4th June, were staged the annual individual piping, drumming and bugling competitions of the Paisley Battalion of the Boys' Brigade. Although the playing was up to standard, the entry for the piping events was rather small, seven entering for the junior event and five for the senior. The results were as follows:—

Juniors.—1, I. Jenkins, 14th Company; 2, H. Leask, 18th Company; 3, I. Nish, 6th Company.

Seniors.—1, L/Cpl. D. Ropper, 22nd Company; 2, L/Cpl. E. McIntyre, 6th Company; 3, Cpl. W. Calgie, 6th Company.

The corresponding band contests were held in Barshaw Park, on Saturday, 11th June, and the placings were:—1, 6th Paisley Company; 2, 12th Paisley Company; 3 (equal), 7th and 27th Paisley.

The winning band is connected with Wallneuk Mission and is taught by Mr. A. Sunter. The second band, trained by Mr. T. Anderson, is attached to St. Andrew's Church.

The adjudicators were—Piping, Seumas MacNeill; Drumming, Mr. J. Cairns; Marching and Discipline, Mr. R. Gorman.

HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHLAND GAMES.

The Hertfordshire Highland Games were held at Harpenden on 14th June, 1952. The following are the results of the principal piping competitions. All the competitors came from London or the vicinity.

Piobaireachd (Open).—1, Andrew Bain ("The Vaunting"); 2, Pipe-Major J. B. Robertson ("Maol Doun"); 3, David Ross ("Rout of Glenfruin").

Also played, Pipe-Major G. A. MacRae ("Lament for the Only Son"); Pipe-Major Angus MacAulay ("Blind Piper's Obstinacy"); Alex. MacAulay ("Seaforth's Salute").

March, Strathspey and Reel (Open). Ten competed.—1, Pipe-Major Robertson ("Jeannie Carruthers," "Blair Drummond," "Lochiel's Awa' to France"); 2, Andrew Bain ("Donald Cameron," "Arniston Castle," "John Morrison"); 3, Pipe-Major MacAulay ("Charles Edward Hope de Vere," "Arniston Castle," "The Blackbird").

March (Winners of Oban and Inverness Gold Medal and London Gillies Cup excluded). Fourteen competitors.—1, Andrew Bain ("The 71st"); 2, E. Findlater ("Pipe-Major John Stewart"); 3, Pipe-Major P. T. Quinn ("Millbank Cottage").

The Judges were Brigadier F. M. Richardson, R.A.M.C., and Mr. James Campbell.

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BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIPS

Western Park, Renfrew—Saturday, 14th June, 1952.

Judges—Piping: Pipe-Majors S. Halliday, W. Jack, and W. Norris.

Drumming: Drum-Majors C. Davis and A. MacGregor.

Marching and Discipline: R. Gorman.

Results:

Juveniles.—1, 214 (Glasgow) Company B.B. (85.8 pts.); 2, 184 (Glasgow) Company B.B. (83.3 pts.); 3, 6 (Paisley) Company B.B. (81 pts.).

Grade 3.—1, 47 (Edinburgh) Company B.B. (ex-members) (87.75 pts.); 2, Glasgow Shepherds (87.708 pts.); 3, Carluke Caledonian (86.9 pts.).

Drumming Prize—47th (Edinburgh) Coy. B.B. (ex-members) (20.75 pts.).

Grade 2.—Airdrie Highland (91.1 pts.); 2, Kinning Park (90.7 pts.); 3, Torphichen (90.4 pts.).

Drumming Prize—Allandale (21.6 pts.).

Grade 1.—1, Shotts and Dykehead Caledonia (96.3 pts.); 2, Edinburgh City Police (95.2 pts.); 3, Red Hackle (95.1 pts.).

Drumming Prize—Red Hackle (23 pts.).

Notes.

Keen competition—very close results. Grade 3—.85 points separating 1, 2 and 3. Grade 2—.7 points separating 1, 2 and 3. Grade 1—1.2 points separating 1, 2 and 3.

Playing was up to the high standard usually heard at this popular annual contest.

Total entries, 37 bands—very good.

Congratulations to Red Hackle on securing their first major award—British Drumming Championship—and special congratulations to Leading Drummer A. Ross of the "Hackle."

The weather was dull and one very heavy shower in mid-afternoon possibly affected the attendance, which was only fair.

Final Parade.

Provost D. M'Cracken of Renfrew complimented the bands on their fine playing and deportment, and was very proud to act in the capacity of Chieftain of the Contest.

Councillor W. MacLean, President of the S.P.B.A., also addressed the parade, expressing his appreciation of the very fine display by the bands.

Verdict:—A very well run contest, enjoyed and appreciated by an audience obviously mainly composed of pipe band enthusiasts—a reflection on the work of the Hon. Contest Secretary, D. MacIntosh, Secretary S.P.B.A.

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SCOTTISH CHAMPIONSHIP PIPE BAND CONTEST,

Den's Park, Dundee, Saturday, 21st June.

Chieftain: Major A. Eric Larg, T.D.

Judges: Piping, P.-M.'s D. M. Forbes, W. Jack, D. M'Leod, J. MacLean. Drumming: D.-M.'s MacGregor and Bruce. Marching and Discipline: A. M'Ewan and D.-M. P. Roberts.

Results:

Juveniles.—1, 24th (Dundee) B.B. (82½ pts.); 2, Dundonald Colliery Juv. (82 pts.).

Ladies.—1, MacLean Ladies, Dundee (75½ pts.).

Grade 3.—1, Kirkcaldy British Legion (86½ pts.); 2, Cowdenbeath Public (85½ pts.); 3, Dundonald Colliery Juv. (84 pts.); 4, 24th Dundee B.B. (83½ pts.).

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Grade 2.—1, Kelty and Blairadam (89½ pts.); 2, Wishaw Highland (89¼ pts.); 3, Glasgow Corporation Transport (88½ pts.); 4, MacLeod (Dundee) (88 pts.).

Grade 1 (Scottish Championship).—1, Dalzell Highland (94.875 pts.); 2, Edinburgh City Police (94.5 pts.); 3, Red Hackle (93.8 pts.); 4, Shotts and Dykehead Caledonia (93.5 pts.).

Feature of the contest was a very fine display of country dancing, under the direction of Mrs. Hutchison. The weather was showery. The contest was very well run, and congratulations to Dundee, Perth and Angus Branch S.P.B.A. for their enterprise in combining with the S.P.B.A. to promote this important contest.

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WORLD'S PIPE BAND CHAMPIONSHIP.

Somerset Park, Ayr,
Saturday, 28th June, 1952.

Chieftain: Capt. Charles A. Hepburn.

Judges: Piping, P.-M.'s P. Bain, D. M. Forbes, N. MacCallum, D. A. MacLeod and W. Norris. Drumming: D.-M.'s R. Bruce, C. Davis, N. Campbell, D. Lyle and A. MacGregor. March and Discipline: P.-M. A. MacGee and Mr. A. MacEwan.

Results:

Juveniles.—1, Lochore and District (89¾ pts.); 2, Dundonald Colliery Juv. (88½ pts.); 3, Newtongrange (87¾ pts.); 4, 214 (Glasgow) Coy. B.B. (85½ pts.); 5, Woolmet Colliery (85 pts.).

Drumming.—Dundonald (21½ pts.).

Ladies.—1, Clan Stewart Ladies (75¾ pts.); 2, Lochgelly Ladies (74¾ pts.); 3, Edinburgh and District Ladies (74¼ pts.); 4, Airdrie Ladies (73½ pts.).

Drumming.—Clan Stewart (18½ pts.).

Grade 3.—1, Torphichen and Riddochhill (83¾ pts.); 2, 47th (Edinburgh) ex-Members B.B. (81¾ pts.); 3, Ayr (81½ pts.); 4, Beith, Kilbirnie and District (81½ pts.); 5, Cowdenbeath Public (80½ pts.).

Drumming.—Beith, Kilbirnie and District (20¼ pts.).

Grade 2.—Kelty and Blairadam (94 pts.); 2, Allandale (92½ pts.); 3, Glasgow Corporation Transport (91½ pts.); 4, Wishaw Highland (91¼ pts.); 5, Stevenston (91 pts.).

Drumming.—Allandale (2 pts.).

World's Championship.—1, Shotts and Dykehead Caledonia (95.58 pts.); 2, Glasgow Police (95.45 pts.); 3, Kelty and Blairadam (94.79 pts.); 4, Edinburgh City Police (94.7 pts.); 5, Renfrew (94.58 pts.).

Drumming.—Glasgow Police (23.12 pts.).

Drum-Majors' Championship.—1, Eric M. Allan, Ardeer Cadets.

The Final Parade and Presentation of Prizes was marred by rain. The country dance display was much appreciated by the audience. In the Drum Majors' contest, a challenge staff was presented by the Chieftain, the first holder being as above.

The Drumming Championship was a popular win for L./D. A. MacCormick, Glasgow Police, who is awaiting sailing date for Australia, where he intends to settle. Note.—All contests rank as World Championships, viz., Grade 3 World Championship.

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S.P.B.A. (AYRSHIRE BRANCH) PIPE BAND CONTEST,

Vineburgh Park, Irvine, Saturday 5th July, 1952.

Results:

Grade 3.—1, Torphichen and Riddochhill (89¾ pts.); 2, Beith, Kilbirnie and District (89 pts.); 3, 214 (Glasgow) Coy. B.B. (88½ pts.).

Drumming.—Beith and Kilbirnie District (21 pts.).

Best Juvenile Band not in Prize List.—184 (Glasgow) B.B. (76½ pts.).

Best Ladies' Band—Clan Stewart (77½ pts.).

Grade 2.—1, Torphichen and Riddochhill (89¼ pts.); 2, Beith, Kilbirnie and District (89 pts.); 3, Stevenston (87½ pts.).

Drumming.—Stevenston (21½ pts.).

Very good display by 214 (Glasgow) Coy. B.B.—individual successes in Glasgow Battalion B.B. competitions—Piping (Sen.), 2nd prize, Wm. Grant; Jun., 2nd prize, Robert Greenock; Jun. 3rd prize, Alex. Clapperton.

Drumming—Sen., 1st, David M'Roberts; 2nd, Stirling M'Murchie; Jun., 1st, R. Kinloch.

Weather tropical.

Salute of massed bands taken by Provost Hamilton Stewart of Irvine.

Half proceeds of contest donated to St. Dunstan's and Newington House.

Judges.—Piping, P.-M. J. MacLean; Drumming, D.-M. Neil Campbell. March and Discipline—P.-M. A. MacGhee.

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MONTREAL GAMES.

Results:

Open March.—1, Hugh MacInnes; 2, George Greig; 3, Alex. McNeill; 4, Donald MacFarlane.

Strathspey and Reel.—1, Alex. McNeill; 2, W. Gilmour; 3, H. MacInnes; 4, H. MacDonald.

Slow March.—1, S. Scott; 2, H. MacInnes; 3, Alex. McNeill; 4, W. Gilmour.

Pipe Band Contest—March, Strathspey and Reel.—1, C.N.R.; 2, Gen. Motors; 3, Air Force.

Slow March (Bands).—1, C.N.R.; 2, Gen. Motors; 3, Air Force.

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TORONTO HIGHLAND GAMES.

Results :

Pipe Band Contest—Grade A.—1, C.N.R. (Montreal); 2, Caber Feidh; 3, General Motors.

Slow March.—1, C.N.R. (Montreal); 2, General Motors; 3, Caber Feidh.

Individual Piping—Ceol Mor.—1, Alex. McNeill; 2, John Wilson; 3, J. Cairns.

Marches.—1, J. Wilson; 2, A. MacInnes; 3, W. Gilmour.

Strathspey and Reel.—1, J. Wilson; 2, J. Cairns; 3, A. McNeill.

Slow March.—1, A. McNeill; 2, J. Wilson.

NEW ZEALAND NEWS LETTER.

We were fortunate recently in receiving a very interesting letter from one who has been described as "The only drummer to gate-crash the pages of the 'Piping Times'"—namely, the King of them all, Drum-Major John Seton, D.C.M., O.B.E.

Drum-Major Seton is now settling down in the land of his adoption after receiving a welcome, and being pressed into a round of engagements which would have exhausted most younger men.

His most recent honour, awarded him by the late King George VI, travelled out separately and was presented to him at a function, after which was held a celebration ball.

In addition, he has been travelling around quite a bit, listening to drumming and giving out instruction and encouragement as needed.

We were particularly interested to hear of his casual meeting with a Maori who was very fond of the bagpipes and had been for some time in a Scottish hospital during the first world war. The Maori pointed out that his own liking for Scotsmen had perhaps run in the family, because his great-grandfather had eaten a Scotsman during the Maori War.

All of John's impressions of New Zealand seem to be on the very favourable

side. He was particularly struck by the individual performances. There was Mr. Bruce Fordyce, a teacher at Napier High School, who won all the Solo "B" Grade Competitions at Hastings Highland Games, much to the delight of his school pupils. Another interesting piper he has met is Pipe-Major Sergeant, of Dannevirke Pipe Band, who is apparently another Bobbie MacLeod on the piano accordion and who has a young pupil who is reputed to be another John Burgess in the making.

"The keenness and healthy rivalry amongst the piping fraternity in New Zealand," says Drum-Major Seton, "is unsurpassed. The same can be said of the pipe bands and the marching girls, who seem to have a large public following. Hastings Highland Games are likely to become the Oban Games of New Zealand."

We look forward to hearing more notes and comments from one who, apart from being an expert drummer, has a wealth of experience on all piping matters too.

We received other word of Drum-Major Seton's activities through a Mr. MacKenzie from New Zealand, who arrived in Scotland three weeks ago. He called up to see the College of Piping and was able to give us first-hand information regarding the activities of both the John Setons and of Pipe-Major John Allan Macgee.

THE LATE MR. FRANK BAIN.

Mr. Frank Bain, who has died suddenly at his home, 11 Lewis Terrace, was well known in piping circles in Scotland, and indeed in many parts of the world, as a reed and bag maker.

A native of Ross-shire, he came to Edinburgh as a youth, and joining the railway service, was a guard with the Caledonian and L.M.S. Railways. During these years the making of pipe reeds was merely a hobby, but after the last war he was engaged full-time on orders from expert pipers, among them Pipe-Major William Ross, and his pupil John Burgess. Until recently he supplied reeds to the pipe band of the 10th Gurkhas in Johore, and he also sent a consignment to the Sea-forths in Malaya a short time ago.

He was a fine piper himself, but did not often compete. At one time he was hon. piper to Tir nam Beann. He was 59 years of age, and is survived by his wife and a grown-up family.

THE JUDGING OF BAND CONTESTS

(Continued).

.....
By Seumas MacNeill.
.....

The five basic evils of the present system of judging are—

1. The effect of the rule: "If less than the maximum is given for any part of the performance, give reasons for the deduction of points." This leads also to—

2. The fact that all the bands are crowded together so that only fractions of a point separate the prizewinners. Then—

3. The sheet containing the judges' points and comments on a band's performance is removed by stewards before the next band begins to play, and

4. Not enough time is allowed the judges between the performances.

5. Unless a scale of markings is agreed, one judge may wash out the efforts of all the others.

Let's look at these one at a time.

1. "Give reasons for deduction of points."

It is usually difficult to make out what was in the minds of administrators when they were formulating rules and regulations, but I imagine that the general idea which activated earlier S.P.B.A. officials was to encourage judges to give helpful comments while they performed their main duty of placing the bands in order of merit. No doubt it was clearly appreciated, to begin with, that the judge was there principally to produce a result. Any bandsman keen to help his band to improve would be keen to have comments regarding the playing, and in fact the addition of this instruction to judges was for many reasons inevitable. Probably someone suggested putting in an instruction to the judge to comment on all playing, and this was amended to the present form.

Whatever the history of this rule, the fact remains that it can be interpreted in two ways. Either the "if less than the maximum" can be looked on as a hardly necessary qualification intended only to advise the judge that he need not waste his energies in compliments—only the faults have to be detailed—or (and this is the current practice) it can be looked on as an instruction to the judge to award the maximum points whenever possible, and to explain himself when he doesn't. Either way the idea of awarding

maximum points is put into the judge's head, and this, for reasons detailed last month, is fundamentally wrong.

The position is aggravated by the fact that judges (contrary to what some may imagine) are very anxious to award the maximum. For one thing this saves the necessity for some writing, and the judge finds time to be a precious commodity during a contest. For another thing, a band which is unplaced will feel more kindly towards the adjudicator if he awards them a lot of marks. Marks have come to have a very special meaning to members of bands, and this is all wrong. In no other art is the stupidity of estimating value by marks attempted, except in some singing contests by men who should know better. The Clan Cameron Pipe Band may go home as happy as pigs after a contest in which they were not in the first five but gained 90 marks, just because 90 looks a pretty good mark. But that 90 mark means absolutely nothing. A band could be an abomination and a disgrace and still get 90 points. And conversely, a band could be one of the best in the world and the mark the judge awards it doesn't increase or diminish its ability one iota.

The false scale of values so widely accepted can best be exposed by quoting a particular case. Newtongrange Juveniles have been known to play in four different grades of contest in one day. Each time the same people played the same tunes and presumably the performances in each case were about the same in quality. But the higher the grade Newtongrange played in, the more marks they received. If marks were intended to give a value to a performance, then surely this band would have received roughly the same number each time. The cold truth is that a judge decides, before the contest begins, that Grade 1 will be 90 to 95, Grade 2 85 to 90, Grade 3 80 to 85, and so on, irrespective of the merits of each band's playing.

Marks mean nothing by themselves. It is only in relation to what other bands score that the mark given for a performance is important. The marks scored by bands should not be announced when the result is given out, for they don't mean a thing.

(To be continued).

MAINLY ABOUT REEDS

By Robert Thomson, M.A.

(2) THE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A WELL-MADE REED.

A well-made reed should possess the following physical characteristics:—

1. **Staple.**—Strong enough to withstand the pressure of the tying. Consistent in size for each individual maker to ensure some degree of uniformity in the finished reed.

2. **Blades.**—Made from seasoned cane and strong enough to withstand tying. Reasonably open at mouth. Blades should be of equal weight and strength. This is easily checked by examination of mouth—the curves should be symmetrical.

3. **Reed.**—The reed should contain plenty of room at the “waist.”

4. The tying should be **level** with the staple. This, of course, can only be measured if you have a staple by the same maker.

5. Blades should be airtight at the sides.

1. **The Staple.**—As previously stated, I regard the staple as the foundation of a good reed. Much time is saved if these are made from a light copper but later on the pressure of the tying may cause the staple to collapse. Even a partial collapse will have a serious effect on the efficiency of the reed. Further, carelessly made staples may differ slightly in length and this may result in under or over-tying (see 3). Although the staple does not figure prominently in the finished reed, it still remains the foundation on which the reed is built. If you have some old reeds by you, cut out the staples and examine them.

2. **Blades.**—I am not writing instructions on reed making and so, naturally, what I have to say on the subject of blades is merely superficial. What constitutes the correct weight of a blade is very difficult to define. It varies from maker to maker and is dependent to some extent on the texture of the cane. That is why I stated that machinery is useless for this part of reed making. Blades **could** be cut to a size and shaped, but the actual fashioning of the blade can only be done by hand. Experience decides the correct weight.

If blades are unequal in weight, then obviously one blade will collapse, and this is reflected in the mouth of the reed. This collapse will be hastened as the reed becomes weaker with playing. Before testing reeds I **always** glance at the mouth—the signs of a good reed being—(a) symmetrical curves, and (b) blades reasonably open.

3. **Room at the Waist.**—Again this is really in the realm of the maker. Probably the chief part of the reed is the section adjacent to the tying. I find by experience that a certain width is necessary to give the volume required. I cannot explain it. Too much width is as dangerous as too little. My father always held the view that the strength of a reed lay here, and this was revealed in his reeds. They possessed plenty of room at the tying. Be suspicious, then, of reeds which are very neat at the tying. They have been made too easily. The good reed must show a certain ugliness at this point.

4. If the conditions mentioned in 2 and 3 are observed, then the maker will find difficulty at this stage. The reed takes a good deal of tying in order to close the blades. The easy way out of this is to continue the tying above the staple for one or two turns. This closes the blades but also puts paid to the reed. It requires no argument of mine to show that the tying will cause blades to close beyond the staple and so reduce the necessary space at the waist. The reed will lack volume and “freedom.”

5. This is allied to No. 4. Test by holding mouth of reed between forefinger and thumb and blowing through the other end.

I think I ought to mention here that sometimes a reed possesses all these points and yet may not be perfect. If so, look through the reed from the staple end. It may be some little obstruction lodged usually between the end of the staple and the tops of the blades. If nothing is visible, it could be a tiny particle lodged between the blades. Take a thin knife blade and insert into mouth of reed, drawing it out via the sides of the reed. This may remove the obstruction. When doing this, listen for the “click” of the

blades. Well made blades should give an equal click on both sides of the reed.

I find now that I have missed quite a lot which is equally important, but if the above is carefully noted the thinking piper will find out much more for himself. Questions from pipers would do a lot to help, as I could then deal with any important queries as they arise.

The following diagrams explain some of the questions raised in these notes.

Next article:—The Pipe Reed (continued).

LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

All Letters in connection with the Magazine should be addressed to—

The Editor, "Piping Times,"
Kelvin House, Otago Street,
Glasgow, W.1.

Sir,

Re your "Piper of the Deep South" article in the May issue of the "Piping Times." I knew Murdoch MacKenzie as old Pipe-Major of the Seaforths who lived at Connal Ferry and during the late war was Pipe-Major in charge of the Royal Caledonian Schools and was very well known in piping circles, and I understood he belonged to Dundee. Could you please explain. Regarding famous pipers, I have never seen an article on "John Garroway" who, I am sure, is one of the high lights on our national instrument, his father being a Sergeant in the Scots Guards, and who originated from Peebles-shire.

Peebles.

Alex. Mitchell.

(Owing to lack of space, a number of letters are unavoidably held over.—Ed.)

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