

COLLEGE



OF PIPING

# Piping Times

JUNE, 1958

Vol. 10, No. 9.



1/-

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# **HENDERSON**

a name famous the world over



## **Peter Henderson**

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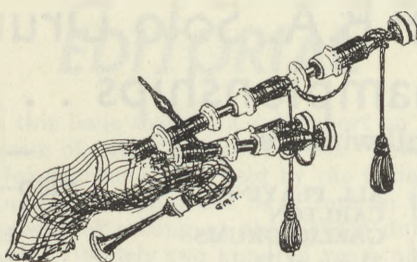
**BAGPIPE MAKERS AND HIGHLAND DRESS OUTFITTERS**

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# Piping Times

Vol. 10, No. 9.

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### COVER PICTURE.

Alexander MacRae of Seattle.

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# 1958 S.P.B.A. Solo Drumming Championships . . .

Congratulations to all winners.

- 1st A. Helie (Renfrew)
- 2nd D. Splitt (Lochore)
- 3rd M. Stewart (7 A&SH)
- 4th J. Scott (Lochore)
- 5th A. Young (Lochore)
- 6th H. Wallace (Woolmet)

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also—

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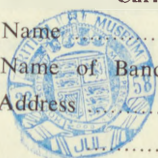
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# EDITORIAL

Elsewhere in this issue there is a full report on the handing-over ceremony of the site of the old MacCrimmon College of Piping at Borreraig. The feu-charter is now held by the College of Piping and this Historic document will no doubt be of interest to the many overseas visitors who will be calling at the College during the summer months. Now, approximately two hundred years after the closing of the famous College of the MacCrimmons, the first steps have been taken to establish the MacCrimmon Memorial College on the site of the old school. Already the site has been marked out and this summer a party of volunteers will go to Borreraig to construct a wall round the site. Much will have to be done before the actual building commences.

It is my belief that this great project should be the work of Piping Societies throughout the world and they should feel that the College is their responsibility. If this takes place, I am sure it will be like the MacCrimmon School come to life again and our fellow pipers in other lands will know that they have a stake in this fine world-wide centre where they will be able to feel at home among people who have similar interests.

If all pipers would co-operate, a system might be devised whereby each society could be responsible for the maintenance of a section of the new establishment, a plaque bearing the name of the source from which the donation came being displayed.

We hope the College will emerge as a finished work within a year or two and that the official opening will mark the beginning of a New Era of Piping. It would be pleasant to think that eventually we may be able to have permanent resident instructors in Skye, so that pipers in every country may have expert tuition all the year round—that the MacCrimmon Memorial College will be the Mecca of the Piping World; and that a pilgrimage to Skye will be the ultimate goal of every student of piping who aims to reach the summit of perfection.

Whilst speculating on the future, we must not forget the work done in the past by several famous pipers in South Uist and elsewhere, with the backing of the Piobaireachd Society and it is to be hoped that these societies will continue their good work in this field.

A unique feature is the Piping Museum which already contains some very fine relics of the past. If readers have anything which they think may be of interest to visitors, we would be obliged if they could send them to the College where they will be kept in safe custody.

Opinions on administration and all other aspects of this important project will be very welcome.

## **Robin Hastie—Town Piper**

Sir Walter Scott, in his introduction to "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border", has an interesting reference to the pipers of Border towns. "By means of these men", he says, "much traditional poetry was preserved, which must otherwise have perished".

These travelling minstrels, besides greatly adding to the gaiety of the country districts through which they passed, were also the bearers of news, and, supplying in a measure the want of newspapers, were doubly welcome. It is from this source that the expression "Piper's News" and "Piping Hot" originated.

To-day, the bagpipes are recognised as the characteristic instrument of the Highlander—this was not always so. In olden times, the musical skill and graceful execution of the Border pipers could not be surpassed.

Robin Hastie, born in 1705, was the last of the family of Hasties who, generation after generation, are reputed to have held the office of Town Piper of Jedburgh from about 1500.

It is said, indeed, that one of the family, by name John Hastie, played the pipes on the fatal field of Flodden in the year 1513; it is even alleged that the identical instrument was in existence until a recent date. Robin's predecessor was his uncle, John Hastie who died about 1730. His death was lamented in this quaint elegy.

### **ELEGY ON JOHN HASTIE.**

O death! thou wreck of young and auld  
How slie, and O how dreadfu' bald!  
Thou came unlooked for, not anes tald  
    What was the crime;  
But Hastie at the mouth turned cald  
    Just at his prime.

"The spring" that ilk ane lik'd he kend;  
Auld wives at sixty years wad stend;  
New pith his pipes their limbs did lend,  
    Bewitching reed!  
'las that his winsome sel' sou'd bend  
    Sae soon his head.

"Lilting tune."

When bagpipes newfangled lugs had tir'd  
They'd sneer; then he, like ane inspir'd,  
We's fiddle their faggin' spirits fir'd  
    Or e'er they wist;  
Gi' every taste what they desir'd  
    He never missed.

A fiddle spring he'd let us hear,  
I think they ca'd it "Nidge-nod-near"

He'd gi' a punk, and look sae queer,  
Without a joke.  
You'd swore he spoke words plain and clear,  
At ilka stroke.

Whan other pipers steal'd away,  
He gently down his join wad lay,  
Nor hardly wad tak' hire for play,  
Sic was his mense !  
We rair aloud the ruefu' day  
That took him hence.  
"Thoughtful kindness."

He hated a' your sneaking gates,  
To play for beer, for pease, or ates ;  
His sould aspired to higher fates,  
O mensfu' John !  
Our tears came rapping down in spates,  
Since thou art gone.

After the death of John, the Town Council of Jedburgh appointed Robin to the ancient office of piper. It was decreed that the swasher (i.e. drummer) and piper were to go round the town every morning at four o'clock and every evening at seven, and if these musical officials failed to do their duty they were to be put in the stocks and to forfeit twenty shillings from their wages. In those days, it was an easy matter "to pay the piper", for Robin's wages were only £3 per year !

One can readily picture what a rollicking duet it would be between Robin Hastie, the newly elected piper, and Wat Boyd, the swasher, as they marched through the quiet streets of Jedburgh in the early morning intent on their duty of awakening the citizens.

Miss Crombie, a native of Jedburgh who died in 1846, was authoress of the "Autobiography of a Scottish Borderer", which deals fully with the stirring scenes which took place in Jedburgh when the Rev. Thomas Boston originated the Relief Church in 1757.

The bells rang a merry peal and parties paraded the streets preceded by the Town Piper. "Walk in, gentlemen, quoth Kitty Rutherford; "Cum in, Watty Boyd; cum in, Robin Hastie, to the kitchen; ye're fighting the Lord's battles, and there nane sic shall gang by my door this blessed day".

The same writer states that Robin was rather eccentric in the matter of clothes. "He wore a coat with scarlet neck and sleeves, gun knee'd breeches, large shoe buckles the size of your head and a three-cocked hat".

Robin lived at No. 1 Duck Row, on the west side of the old Cannongate Bridge. It is still known as the "Piper's House", and on the top of one of the gables there is a stone figure of a piper, seated and playing the pipes. Robin Hastie, the last of the Jedburgh pipers, died in 1793.

His death did not form the subject of an elegy; even the place where he is buried is unknown.

## HIGHLAND GATHERINGS—1958

### JULY.

- 5th—BANCHORY.
- 19th—BIRNAM.
- 23rd—LUSS (Loch Lomond).
- 24th—TOBERMORY (Mull).
- 26th—DINGWALL.
- 26th—INVERARAY.
- 29th—SOUTH UIST (Askernish Machair).
- 31st—NORTH UIST (Sollas Machair).

### AUGUST.

- 2nd—STRATHALLAN MEETING (Bridge of Allan).
- 9th—STRATHPEFFER.
- 9th—EDINBURGH.
- 15th—LONACH GATHERING (Strathdon).
- 16th—PIPE BAND CONTEST  
(Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh).
- 16th—KINLOCH RANNOCH.
- 21st—BALLATER.
- 29th—30th—COWAL GAMES (Dunoon).

### SEPTEMBER.

- 3rd—ABOYNE.
- 4th—BRAEMAR ROYAL HIGHLAND GATHERING.
- 6th—PITLOCHRY.
- 24th—25th—NORTHERN MEETING (Inverness).

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## RADIO HIGHLIGHTS

Tuesday, 8th, July—10.30-10.45 p.m.

Piobaireachd "The Battle of the Pass of Crieff).  
By Pipe-Major Robert Brown.

Tuesday, 15th, July—8-8.15 p.m.

Pipes and Drums by Shotts and Dykehead Caledonian Pipe  
Band.

Friday 25th, July—7.45-8 p.m.

Piping by Hector MacFadyen (Pennyghael).

# The Scottish Piping Society Of London

## ANNUAL COMPETITIONS—12th APRIL, 1958

(a) PIOBAIREACHD (Bratach Gorm).

Judges—Col. J. P. Grant, D. J. S. Murray, D. R. MacLennan.

- 1st—Iain MacFadyen (Cameron Highlanders), "The Old Men of the Shells".  
2nd—Pipe-Major Donald MacLean (Lewis), "The Blue Ribbon".  
3rd—William Connell (Glasgow), "The MacGregors' Gathering".

(b) PIOBAIREACHD (Open).

Judges—J. Campbell, O. Gallagher.

- 1st—William Connell (Glasgow), "The Bells of Perth".  
2nd—Pipe-Major Alex. MacDonald (Windsor), "MacDougalls' Gathering".  
3rd—Pipe-Major J. B. Robertson (London), "Donald Ban MacCrimmon".  
4th—James Young (Edinburgh), "Sobieski's Salute".

(c) MARCH, STRATHSPEY and REEL (Confined).

Judges—Col. J. P. Grant, D. J. S. Murray, D. R. MacLennan.

- 1st—R.S.M. John MacLennan (Seaforths), "The Pap of Glencoe",  
"Atholl Cummers", "The Smith of Chilliechassie".  
2nd—James Young, "74th Farewell to Edinburgh", "Lady MacBeth",  
"Alec. C. MacGregor".  
3rd—William MacDonald (Inverness), "Bonnie Anne", "Caledonian Society of London", "Miss Proud".

(d) MARCH (Confined to Civilian Pipers in South of England).

Judges—D. J. S. Murray, D. R. MacLennan.

- 1st—Lawrence R. MacCormick (Harrow), "Duke of Roxburgh's Farewell to the Blackmount".  
2nd—Kinnear Forbes (London), "Mrs. John MacDonald".

(e) MARCH (Open to those not eligible to compete in (c) or (d).)

Judges—D. J. S. Murray, D. R. MacLennan.

- 1st—Iain MacFadyen, "The Lonach Gathering".  
2nd—Pipe-Major Calum Campbell (Gordon Highlanders).  
3rd—James M. Robertson (London).

(f) AMATEUR PIOBAIREACHD.

Judge—O. Gallagher.

- 1st—L. R. MacCormick, "The Vaunting".  
2nd—John L. Graham (Avonbridge), "MacCrimmon's Sweetheart".

(g) AMATEUR MARCH, STRATHSPEY and REEL.

Judge—Malcolm MacMillan.

- 1st—Kinnear Forbes, "Mrs. MacDonald of Dunach", "Maggie Cameron", "Duntroon".  
2nd—Robin J. M. Bennett (Milngavie), "The Edinburgh Volunteers",  
"The Shepherd's Crook", "The Blackberry Bush".

# MacCrimmon College Handed Over *Borreraig to be Restored*

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May 28th, 1958, will long live in the annals of piping, for on that day a dream which has held the imagination of pipers for over a century began to be realised. The very name MacCrimmon is enough to bring shivers of ecstasy to those who love the pipes, and Borreraig has for long been the Mecca for enthusiasts all over the world. Now, at last, thanks to the generosity of Major-General I. S. S. Martin of Husabost, some of the ancient glories will soon, we hope, be restored to the spot which was for centuries the cradle of piping genius.

The great day began about eleven o'clock, when various groups began to arrive at the famous spot. Some came by road, some walked across fields from their homes, and one party (including Seton Gordon, Seumas MacNeill, John MacFadyen and various young pipers) arrived by sea from Dunvegan, travelling in the time-honoured style by boat with the great music sounding across the water.

Skye produced a day of clear skies and burning sunshine for the historic occasion. Not a wisp of cloud was to be seen, from MacLeod's Tables near at hand to the distant, breath-catching Coolins.

The entire forenoon was taken up with the piobaireachd competition.

In view of the importance of the occasion, the College of Piping was represented (in addition to the officials) by some of its best pupils, including six from Glasgow, the best pupil from Edinburgh and the best from England.

Official judges for the event were Seton Gordon and Colonel Jock MacDonald of Viewfield. Seven different piobaireachds were played, and the audience obviously enjoyed every minute. No one could fail to be inspired in such surroundings, and to rest on the warm grassy mounds which mark the site of the old College while listening and watching these young talented people against such a magnificent background was surely one of the greatest pleasures one could imagine. No place in all the world is so perfect a setting for piping.

The result of the contest was as follows:—1st, Robin Bennett ("MacCrimmon's Sweetheart"); 2nd, Evan MacKay ("The Old Sword's Lament"); 3rd (equal), John MacAskill ("MacLeod's Salute") and Dugald Murdoch ("MacLeod of Raasay's Salute").

At the close of this competition the judges addressed some remarks to the competitors and the audience. Seton Gordon said that he had been amazed at the high standard of playing, every competitor having shown talent of a high order. It reminded him of listening to the

competitions in South Uist when John MacDonald's classes were in their hey-day. Colonel MacDonald remarked that he had heard a worse standard at some professional competitions, and he congratulated the players and their teachers on the excellent playing that had been heard. He said that it augured well for the new future of piping at Borreraig.

The contest was efficiently carried through with the assistance of Dr. Murdo MacLean of Dunvegan and General Martin. Seumas MacNeill and Dugald MacNeill looked after the tuning of the pipes, and among the interested audience were Dr. Allan MacDonald of Uig, Mr. Duncan Phillip of Australia, and Mr. Ross of Portree.

The afternoon's activities began when the Chief's launch was sighted at 2.30 p.m. coming across Loch Dunvegan. Down the hill from the college streamed hundreds of people, led by the seven boy pipers playing a welcome. As the boat came nearer the pipers on the shore fell silent and over the water came the stirring sound "MacLeod's Rowing Piobaireachd" played by John MacFadyen. In a scene which must often have been duplicated in the past, the boat grounded on the shore and the MacLeod chief stepped on to the lands of Borreraig, followed by the party from Dunvegan Castle. After preliminary greetings the pipers formed up again and piped Dame Flora MacLeod of MacLeod and assembled clansmen and friends up the hill.

At the boundary of the MacCrimmon College they met General Martin, making a most impressive figure as he stood on a grassy mound. One of the few remaining MacCrimmons was at his side. As the pipers stopped and the procession came to a halt, General Martin addressed the assembly :

" Dame Flora MacLeod of MacLeod, ladies and gentlemen, I bid you welcome to the lands of Borreraig. Here on this site, for three-hundred years, flourished the greatest school of piping ever known. We are gathered today to take the first steps in the restoration of its former glory."

General Martin went on to say that he had long cherished the desire that something tangible should be done to commemorate still further the genius of the family which had made piping the noblest of our arts. In the College of Piping and its desire to build a permanent summer home he thought lay the answer. Many legal difficulties had been encountered, but now with the co-operation of his heir Olaus Martin and of Mr. Nicholson, tenant of the ground, these had been overcome.

General Martin then read the Charter as follows :—

"At Borreraig, Glendale, Skye, on the 28th day of May, 1958, there was presented to the trustees for the College of Piping by Major General John Simson Stuart Martin, C.S.I., I.M.S. (retd.) of Husabost, Glendale, Skye, with the consent of his son Olaus MacLeod Halkett Martin,

“ That area of ground, extending to one acre or thereby, in the Township of Borreraig, Parish of Duirinsh, Isle of Skye and County of Inverness, part of the Lands of Husabost and others, and comprising the reputed site of the Ancient MacCrimmon School of Music; and that for the purposes of the College and in return for payment of an annual feuduty of 1d. sterling if asked only and with the request that a Piobaireachd said to be composed by a MacCrimmon should be ceremoniously played once a year at the Memorial Cairn at Borreraig to the MacCrimmons, the hereditary pipers of MacLeod, by a Member of the College, due intimation of the date and the time of playing to be given to the Superior.”

General Martin then presented the Charter, amid acclamation, to Seumas MacNeill, and called on him to pay the feu duty.

Accepting the Charter and the lands on behalf of the College, Seumas MacNeill said that this was the culmination of a dream which had been cherished for many years. Fourteen years ago he had come to Skye with three friends, and the inspiration which they had found, first from Dame Flora at Dunvegan Castle and then from the present surroundings, had been a constant source of strength in the formation and development of the College of Piping.

It was their intention to do two things at Borreraig. One was to restore the MacCrimmon buildings and make them into a museum. The other was to build a permanent summer school, so that pipers from the whole of Scotland and from all over the world would be able to receive instruction in what must be the perfect environment for learning piping.

The College had been fortunate, said Mr. MacNeill, in finding that General Martin had similar ideas in mind for Borreraig, and the piping world would be forever in his debt for this most generous gift.

Mr. MacNeill then paid to General Martin the feu duty of one penny, saying that even if the feu duty were ten times as much the College would pay it just as gladly.

General Martin then called on the prize-winner of the morning competition, Robin Bennett, to play the required piobaireachd. The tune was “MacCrimmon’s Sweetheart”, and the beautiful music was obviously thoroughly enjoyed by the large audience.

At the conclusion of this part of the ceremony General Martin, on behalf of Mr. Duncan Phillip of Australia, presented Seumas MacNeill with the first relic for the proposed museum—a pipe chanter which had been taken out to Gowrie, Warrnambool, Victoria, Australia, by Norman Bruce of Milivaig, Glendale, a pupil of the MacCrimmons who left Skye in 1853.

To show the boundaries of the land included in the gift, the young pipers, in single file, headed by Evan MacKay, then paraded the marches, playing a stirring selection of well-known airs. When this had been completed, they formed up as a band again, and with everyone following, marched up the hill and on to the promontary and to the memorial cairn.

At the cairn General Martin explained that during Borreraig Day of Skye Week, which they were also celebrating today, a MacCrimmon piobaireachd was always played at the cairn in memory of the master pipers. He then gave a translation of the Gaelic inscription on the cairn, and, after requesting the audience to keep silent during the performance, called on John MacFadyen to play the tune. The piece chosen was "I got a kiss of the king's hand", and once again everyone had an opportunity of enjoying the great music performed within a few yards of the home of its composer.

As the last notes died away over hillside and loch, the official ceremonies came to an end. Back at the College site again, and after a brief interval for tea, the march and strathspey and reel competitions were held. The judges this time were Dr. Alan MacDonald, Mr. Donald MacPhee of Harlosh, and Dr. Murdo MacLeod. Among the distinguished audience who listened attentively to every note were Dame Flora MacLeod, Mrs. Woolridge Gordon, General and Mrs. Martin, Olaus Martin, Seton Gordon, Mr. Duncan Phillip, and many enthusiasts from both home and abroad.

Once again the standard of playing delighted the judges. A particular surprise to them was the ability shown by Pauline Mellor of Manchester who gave an excellent account of herself against the seasoned young campaigners.

The results were :—

**March**—1st, Dugald Murdoch ("74th's Farewell to Edinburgh"); 2nd, Lawrence MacIver ("Parker's Welcome to Perthshire"); 3rd, Pauline Mellor ("Arthur Bignold of Lochrosque"); 4th John MacAskill ("Leaving Glenurquhart").

**Strathspey and Reel**—1st, John MacAskill ("Blair Drummond" and "The Smith of Gilliechassie"); 2nd, Evan MacKay ("Arniston Castle" and "John Morrison of Assynt House"); 3rd, Vic Black ("Arniston Castle" and "The Rejected Suitor"); 4th Dugald Murdoch ("Caledonian Canal").

The prizes were presented by Dame Flora, who expressed her great pleasure at hearing such fine piping, and wished the College every success in its efforts to re-build at Borreraig.

The last scene in this day of pageantry began as the pipers played on the shore as the Castle launch set off again for Dunvegan. Either of the two views would have made a fitting finale for this memorable day—the green hillside with the tartaned host and the seven pipers of Borreraig, or the lone boat carrying the MacLeod chief over the blue surface of the loch.

# The Hertfordshire Highland Gathering

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On Saturday, 7th June, the Hertfordshire Highland Games Society held its eighth Highland Games in the delightful surroundings of Rothamsted Park, Harpenden.

The weather was kinder than in recent years and there was a large crowd in spite of the London bus strike, for the opening at 2 p.m. by His Grace, the Duke of Atholl.

Calum Gillies the Chairman, Alexander Macrae the Secretary, and the other committee members are certainly to be congratulated on providing a very well organised day, packed with competitions and displays.

Piping was well patronised, eight bands competing, among them the City of Wellington Pipe Band who are over here on a tour from New Zealand.

To add to their many competition successes, they won the band competition in a very convincing manner, and in the opinion of the judges should do well against some of the first in Scotland when they compete up there.

They also gave a marching display in quick-time. This needs much practice to reach such perfection and they had obviously spent a great deal of time training. They made a great impression on all present, and it is to be hoped that they too will enjoy their visit to this country.

In individual competitions the standard was reasonably high, and the results were as follows:—

## PIOBAIREACHD.

Judge—David Ross.

1st—Kenneth Bell, "The King's Taxes".

2nd—Harry J. Denyer, "Padruig Og MacCrimmon".

3rd—George A. MacRae, "MacCrimmon's Sweetheart".

## MARCH, STRATHSPEY and REEL (Open).

Judges—Pipe-Major Alex. MacDonald and R. Thompson.

1st—Kenneth Bell.

2nd—P. MacKinnon (New Zealand).

3rd—George A. MacRae.

## MARCH, STRATHSPEY and REEL (Confined).

Judges—Pipe-Major Alex. MacDonald and R. Thompson.

1st—Kenneth Bell.

2nd—Charles Turnbull.

3rd—Harry J. Denyer.

MARCH (Boys under 18).  
Judge—George A. MacRae.

- 1st—K. A. Forbes.
- 2nd—Andrew J. T. Gray.
- 3rd—T. Fleming.

QUARTETTES (Slow March, March, Strathspey and Reel).  
Judge—David Ross.

- 1st—Wellington Pipe Band Quartette.
- 2nd—Walter Campbell's Quartette.

#### PIPE BAND COMPETITION.

Judges—David Ross, Pipe-Major Alex. MacDonald (Piping);  
Drum-Major W. Hay, Drum-Major Sullivan (Drumming).

- 1st—Wellington Pipe Band.
- 2nd—Peterborough Highland Pipe Band.
- 3rd—Society of Old Caledonians Pipe Band.

#### BEST JUNIOR BAND.

Harrow County School for Boys' Pipe Band.

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## Alexander MacRae

The cover photograph this month is of Alexander MacRae of the Seattle Highland Pipe Band. He is a native of Inverinate, Ross-shire—on the shores of Loch Duich and has been associated with piping since his boyhood.

Before emigrating to the U.S.A. Alec served with the Seaforth Territorials.

On leaving Kintail he settled in Montana and there he married Lillian Taylor. They now have a family of five, who are all interested in piping and highland dancing. Alasdair and Donald are Pipe-Major and Pipe-Sergeant respectively of the Washington Scottish Pipe Band. Colin is principal of the Oregon College of Piping, while Anna Rose and Avis Joan are highland dancers.

After coming to Seattle Alec became associated with the Seattle School District, but as he has recently retired he now has time to devote himself to teaching piping more than he ever did before and there are many people in Washington who have felt his kindly influence.

When asked how his pipes are going. Alec invariably replies, "Good ! They are always going well !"

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# Teaching Problems

By *Seumas MacNeill*

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## III. THE PUPILS

Everyone, whether he has done some teaching of piping or not, will appreciate that many of the problems arise from the pupils themselves. An onlooker might think that this would be the major source of difficulties, but although it is not so fertile a fount as might be imagined, it is nevertheless an important cause of wasted effort and inefficient working.

It is essential to be clear about certain basic facts regarding pupils. The first thing to be understood is why they want to learn the pipes at all. In our thirteen years of teaching in the College we have found that there are seven main reasons why boys come for tuition. These are as follows:—

1. Because they want to become great pipers.
2. Because they want to entertain their granny the next time she visits.
3. Because they want to play in a Pipe Baun.
4. Because Dad wanted to be a piper.
5. Because Mum thinks pipers are wonderful.
6. Because the psychoanalyst sent them.
7. Because Mum and Dad want to get out to the pictures once a week.

It will be appreciated that these are not the reasons offered by pupils on enrolment—according to them they all want to be great pipers. Sometimes it takes a session before we find the real reason.

On the other hand we have only one reason for teaching boys, and that is to make them as good pipers as they can possibly become. Teaching any musical instrument has got to be done mainly individually, so the result is that each boy gets the same course of instruction, only each one progresses at his own rate.

Almost the whole effort in the College is directed to producing first-class individual pipers. With large numbers of boys there are no sharp boundaries between budding experts and permanent duds. Where the good teacher stops and the average teacher takes over is just a matter of the relative numbers of teachers and pupils. At the very top of the scale are the few geniuses we are fortunate to enrol every now and again, and at the bottom are those who have no interest at all in piping. All we do for the latter is keep them quiet and happy.

Sometimes one of them takes a notion and decides to become a piper, and for that reason few pupils are thrown out of the College. Only if a boy becomes a nuisance or a bad example does he get the heave.

Systems of teaching would take too long to discuss at present, and the other problem that boys present—the discipline one—is quite independent of piping and can be ignored here. The problem of the individual relationship between teacher and pupil is a subject for the educational psychologist, and every teacher develops his own ability to deal with the various problems and attitudes which arise. The measure of his success with these is an indication of his ability as a teacher.

One general point deserves comment. A boy who is tending to be always second-best in his group requires some special attention. The frustration of nearly, but not quite, being the top can have queer effects. For one thing the boy may tend to become a poor loser, which must be jumped on quickly. He may instead seek assistance outside, feeling that there is some favouritism in the teaching. This is a healthy sign, for it shows that he feels inside himself that he has the ability to be the best, and unless he believes this he will never reach the heights. Still, this must also be dealt with firmly. Once it is clearly established that he is getting the best teaching he can absorb in the College, then he can only go to an outside teacher at the cost of leaving the College.

There are a few possible exceptions to this rule, but only a very few. No boy can serve two masters, and certainly we do not intend to compete with another style of teaching. For that reason, and also to discourage any others, those who stray in this way are unfortunately lost for good.

The solution to this problem is to let the rule be clearly understood and to make membership of the College so attractive to a good boy that he will be very unwilling to risk losing it.

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The College is recognised by the Education Authorities as an Educational Institute, and by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue as a Charitable Organisation. Donations to Hon. Treasurer, Kelvin House, Otago Street, Glasgow, W.2.

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# Pipe Band Notes

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## GLASGOW BRANCH CONTEST

May, 24th was an eagerly awaited day, being the first open band contest of the season. The Glasgow Branch had decided to go farther afield than usual and to hold their contest in the beautiful village of Balfron, which is about 18 miles from the city centre. No doubt the argument in favour was that as many people would enjoy a day in the country as would go to any junior football pitch that might be taken over in the town, and, in any case, it would be much more pleasant for the bands. In addition, the local people could be relied upon to show a lot of interest in such an event.

No effort was spared to make the day a real success. But as the Bard said, "The best laid schemes . . ."

The big disaster was the weather. As the popular song almost has it, rain in the morning, rain in the evening, and deluges all the rest of the time. The common greeting was, "Rothesay again". Bad weather we are prepared for in our so-called summer, but this was out of order. It reminded me of the Aberdeenshire minister who gathered his flock together in time of severe drought so that they might pray for rain. For two hours they entreated the Almighty to send rain to their parched land, and then suddenly the lightning flashed, the thunder rolled and water cascaded down from the heavens. As the ground turned to a quagmire beneath him, the minister, soaked to the skin, turned his streaming face upwards. "Guid Lord", he said, "Dinna be rideeculous".

It is a tribute to our bands that every one went out as if it were a fine sunny day and gave of their best. The standard of playing of the Grade I particularly was very good. Right enough, there were a few bands in the lower grades which have obviously not found the winter long enough, and a lot of rough edges will have to be knocked off in the next few weeks, but on the whole the playing was very enjoyable.

The organisation went off very well considering the weather, although, perhaps the massed band performance might mercifully have been cancelled. And it might be an idea to try some improvements on the judges' boxes—one at least was causing its occupant a deal of trouble with leaks.

Lord Bilsland managed to brave the storm and play his part as Chieftain of the gathering (whatever that is), and probably his appearance was the necessity for having the massed band. Lady Bilsland presented the prizes.

The judges were Peter Bain for piping, D. Lyle for drumming, and Bob Gorman for marching and discipline. The results were announced in the most fantastic fashion—third prize winner, second

prize winner, then first prize winner. Some strange inverted mind must have invented this system. The result is that nobody cheers at any time. Of course maybe the bands have been feeling that too many bonnets have been lost in past hallaballoos and so have decided to go in for the death cell atmosphere. Nobody is going to cheer for being placed third while the two major prizes have still to come out of the bag. When the first prize winner is announced, only that band cheers, and even then the strain is so great that half of them have lost their voices; only a strangled yelp comes out in the cathedral silence.

I expect that soon we'll see Donald MacIntosh wearing a lum hat and a mourning band when making the announcements.

Here are the results (in order of merit, and cheer if you like):—

**GRADE 1**—1, Renfrew (Pipe-Major J. Helie). 2, Clan Macrae (Pipe-Major Alex. MacLeod). 3, Red Hackle (Pipe-Major Angus MacLeod).

**GRADE 2**—1, Kenmure Park (Pipe-Major W. C. Martin). 2, Anchor Mills (Pipe-Major R. Murdie). 3, 214th Glasgow Company B.B. (Pipe-Major A. MacIver).

**GRADE 3**—1, Helensburgh Clan Colquhoun (Pipe-Major A. MacNichol). 2, 214th Glasgow Company B.B. (Pipe-Major A. MacIver). 3, Knightswood Juveniles (Pipe-Major J. D. G. Crichton).

**MARCHING and DISCIPLINE**—1, 402 Light Regiment R.A. (Pipe-Major J. Weatherstone).

## LESMAHAGOW

After a week of warm sunny weather, Saturday, 7th June, turned out to be just another band contest day—wet and dull. Only a small contest was held, as this was the first venture of the kind made in the district, but it is to be hoped that the organisers will feel encouraged to continue with it in future years.

Mr. Templeton and the other officials of the Vale of Nethan Pipe Band were behind the drive which launched the contest. Only a Grade Three event was held, but eight bands made it quite an interesting day and an enjoyable spectacle.

The playing was, as is usual in the humble grade, a bit mixed. The starts were particularly bad—only the local band, Vale of Nethan, avoided obvious raggedness. The judges were Peter Bain and Alex. Duthart.

**RESULTS**—1, 214th Company Glasgow B.B. (79½ points). 2, Pumpherston (76½ points). 3, The College of Piping Juveniles (76 points). 4, Vale of Nethan (75 points).

A special prize was offered for the best juvenile band not on the prize-list. It is significant that this prize did not require to be awarded, as the three juvenile bands in the competition all received places.

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# Letters To The Editor

Dear Sir,

Your magazine provides a link between piping in this Australian State and the mother country. I enjoy reading the articles about and the letters from other countries which tell of the standard of piping and the problems facing piping throughout the world.

Your editorials are a very pleasing feature for they show that the world of piping is awake and active on many fronts, and while that attitude prevails it will continue to advance.

The majority of pipe bands in Western Australia are suffering from a lack of members. Though there are at present more bands than ever before all are suffering from lack of members. One, the Geraldton Pipe Band, has advertised in Scotland for pipers and drummers, and we are waiting to see the result of this experiment.

The Western Australian Caledonian Pipe Band, of which I have the honour of being treasurer, is the current champion pipe band in this State. We managed to win most of the main trophies at this year's Gathering held on Easter Saturday.

May your magazine continue in its fine tradition for many years to come.

GRAHAM W. MATTHEWS,  
Victoria Park, Western Australia.

Dear Sir,

I noted in your October issue of 1957, that Major A. L. MacCall of 1st Bn. The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, was asking for some information concerning a recording of pipes and organ made by pipers in his regiment. If he has not so far received any information, perhaps he will be interested in the following. This information is supplied by the courtesy of Mr. K. Ritchie of the Wholesale Records Division of E.M.I. (Australia) Ltd. :—

B8001 "Medley of Scottish Airs" (Parts 1 and 2)  
Pipe Band of the 2nd Battalion (Queen's Own) Cameron Highlanders  
Organist—Herbert Dawson.  
(Recorded in October, 1933).

The recording is not now available.

D. J. SINCLAIR,  
North Queensland, Australia.

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## BEST TIPS OF THE MONTH

Have you any tips to offer on anything connected with piping. If so, please address them to The Editor at this address. A 5/- prize will be awarded to those printed.

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