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Piping Times

Vol. 8, No. 6.

MARCH, 1956



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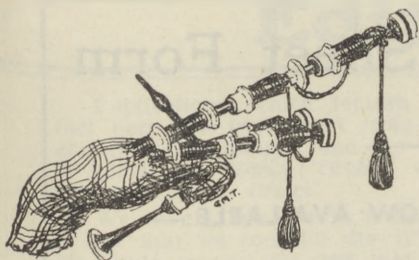
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Piping Times

Vol. 8, No. 16.

March, 1956.

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COVER PICTURE:

Evan MacKay—Senior Amateur Champion, 1956.

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Editorial

Publications which feature piping prominently are very few; in fact here are two apart from this magazine,—the Canadian "Piper and Dancer Bulletin", and the "Pipe Band". To these perhaps should be added the "Oban Times" which still gives some prominence to news of piping affairs.

We should not like it to be inferred from anything we are about to say that we consider the "Piping Times" to be infallible. Rather we would favour the view that our contributors are about as accurate as the editorial boards of the Canadian "Bulletin" and the "Pipe Band". We have reluctantly come to the conclusion however that no subject lends itself more readily to false and distorted reporting than does piping. The three magazines mentioned are clear of this charge, except where the "Bulletin" propagates the odd misconception by reprinting, without comment, articles from various newspapers.

Recently we have had a real crop of howlers. These ranged from slips in reporting to downright terminological inexactitudes. The prize must go to the "Oban Times" for publishing in February, a photograph of Peter R. MacLeod junior, calling him Donald MacLeod of the Seaforths, and awarding him the combined prizes won by these two at the Uist and Barra contest.

Closely following that (as a candidate for the wooden spoon engraved with raspberries) was the article by "Artair" on piping in Glasgow, which appeared in the "Stornoway Gazette" and was reprinted in the "Piper and Dancer". Such bilge would have fouled the most efficient pump. In particular his account of the formation of the College of Piping sounded as if it had been inspired by a rueful and imaginative piper seeing history through a contrite and alcoholic haze. For the record, MacNeill and Pearston formed the College without, at the start, the assistance of anyone. It is doubtful if either of them has been a member of the S.P.A. at any time in the last twenty years, so Artairs' attempt to give the S.P.A. the credit for the College of Piping falls a trifle flat.

How else can a story be twisted? Donald MacLeod was presented, at a recital in Fort William, with a powder-horn won by Donald Cameron over a hundred years ago, the presentation being made by Mr. Cameron, grandson of the great piper. "Oban Times" reported that this had been won as a first prize at Inverness, awarded to the king of pipers and that appropriately it was being handed on to the present-day king of pipers. The truth is that the horn is inscribed as a third prize. No innuendo is intended.

The "Toronto Globe" tells us that the bagpipe "originated in ancient Egypt as a simple chanter and drone, played together". The information is interesting but has no foundation in fact.

We shall be pleased to have news of your Group's activities, or news of individual pipers. Keep in touch by 'phoning Kelvin 3587.

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Judgement on the Judges

By IAIN C. DEWAR.

Criticism of the judge's decision at piping competitions is common place. Indeed, it must be seldom that one member of the audience, or competitor at least, does not give comment to the merits of the decision. Criticism tends to originate most frequently from the audience and this may be due to the fact that competitors may be loath to mentioning that they thought the decision was incorrect feeling that to do so would be unsporting when they had agreed to be judged by the adjudication bench.

Judging is no easy task and judging piping is fraught with difficulties. Obvious mistakes should be noted. A faulty pipe and missing gracenotes are facts and the alert judge can pick out these facts accordingly. However, it requires an experienced judge to be able to sit for several hours at a competition and strain his ears to ensure that every note was correct. A faultless technical performance may be discounted by a poor sense of timing and expression, as gauged by the judge, and perhaps quite rightly so, although the audience and competitors may not have agreed that timing and expression were poor. The judge's taste for tempo, style or expression are all matters of opinion and it is here that the danger lies. There may be certain accepted styles of playing which are well known and adopted by competitors and acceptable to the judges. Where the judge has his own opinions and these are unknown to the competitors it is unfair to expect a certain style, or setting, of a tune when several different styles, or settings, would be acceptable to different judges. Truly, disagreement with the judges does not rest solely on matters of opinion and, quite often, the judge has missed some fault that the audience, or some members of the audience, have not. No doubt where judges were excellent in their standard of marking there would still be dissatisfaction in some quarters. If everyone was happy with the decision there would be nothing to talk about afterwards and the unplaced competitor might find small solace in his beer if not supplemented by generous helpings of flannel from his thirsty compatriot. Piping criticisms must not be discounted lightly. Some judges have their favourite competitors. Other judges try to spread the prizes around so that every competitor has a place in the honours list. Neither method is commendable. Examples of the former method are quite common. In fact, during the Games season many of the competitors plan their Games circuit according to the composition of the judging benches. At other times it is a favourite sport of some players, and spectators, to forecast the result before the competition has begun, purely on the personal character of the judge, and as often as not the forecasts are correct. Allied to this, the question often arises as to the merits of judgments one's own pupils. This places a severe test upon the impartiality of the judge. He may be influenced by public opinion which frowns on awards to his students. Contrariwise he may feel that any competitor who does not play the tunes the way he teaches them should not figure in the prize list. In any case, knowing the abilities of the competitors he may have, unconsciously, decided the result before he sits down to judge.

Some judges are prone to take account of the ability of the piper and his circumstances before making their decision. For example, a local competitor might not be up to the standard of the visiting pipers but the judge feels that some recognition should be given to his effort to encourage him to compete in future and so he gives a local competitor second or third placing. Surely, if the judge feels that recognition should be given to effort, and encouragement given to the younger



competitors, the answer should be a special award, but where no provision for this has been made in the competition, the judge has to fall back on including his name in the prize list. If the conditions of entry state that age, experience and ability to play are to be taken account of in determining the prize lists then I suppose it would be in order, but where there is no such stated condition the displacement of a superior performance in order to provide a place for a young competitor, or local man, is out of order. A similar case arises where a competitor has travelled a great distance in order to attend the competition, and the judge feels that he should be awarded a prize to encourage him to attend future competitions. Here, again, the decision is undefendable.

The question of "under-cover" judging has been raised in the past and the writer feels that where the competitors are known to the judge, either as regards piping ability or personal circumstances, the judge should, in fairness to the competitors, be under cover. This may imply that the judge is not impartial in his decisions. However, many judges would feel a considerable weight of responsibility lifted from their minds, if under cover judging was adopted, and if under cover judging was the rule then there could be no question as to the impartiality of the judge. Mr. D. Graham-Campbell of Shirvan, in his admirable little book "A Guide to the Judging of Piping" is clearly against under cover judging and when it comes to authorities on judging he is the expert, whereas the writer is merely a layman.

There is no doubt that at some of the smaller Games and competitions held during the winter, judges are not technically qualified to judge because they lack the experience and ability to discern faults. In such cases I do not know how the judges arrive at their decisions, but perhaps it is that they have a liking for the tune that the competitor played, perhaps his appearance appealed to them, or perhaps, again, the competitor who is playing brings back happy memories of the past which colour the judge's opinion of the performance.

Although judging at the major competitions throughout the year is, no doubt, competent, there is still no one accepted standard of judging and no method of qualifying to the judges' bench. Judges are often appointed by Games Committees because they are known to be pipers and when these pipers are asked to judge they agree to do so. The question of technical qualifications does not arise but it certainly should.

The Piobaireachd Society, The Royal Scottish Pipers' Society and the Professional Pipers' Association have their own panels of judges, It would be interesting to find out what qualifications were demanded in each case and whether any examination of judges was ever held to determine whether they had the requisite ability. Perhaps these societies, and the other big societies, might get together in future to establish a universally acceptable standard of judging and initiate some form of judges' qualifications, especially for the smaller competitions. This might overcome some of the difficulties outlined in this article. Perhaps some day we might have an Inspector of Judges who would go round the competitions judging the judge and reporting on his work to the higher authorities and judges who were biased, unfair, or technically unqualified would be black-listed. Whether or not that day will come will rest largely upon the Piping Societies and their members.

CERCLE CELTIQUE

By A. I. BOWMAN

Erquy is a pleasant town on the north coast of Brittany. It has the usual equipment of a French seaside resort—two fine 'plages', a miniature golf course, a 'syndicat d'initiative'; but it has something else which is peculiarly Breton. As I walked down one of its streets, my eye was caught by a notice-board, which displayed pictures of Bretons in the broad-brimmed black hats and the high lace caps which form the traditional headgear of men and women respectively. The men were playing the 'biniou' and the 'bombarde'—the Breton equivalent of the Scottish bagpipe and chanter—and the women were dancing. The pictures were accompanied by a notice reminding readers of the fine traditions of Breton music and dancing, and urging the young men and women of Erquy to help in the preservation of those traditions by joining the local 'Cercle Celtique'. Those interested were asked to get in touch with its officials—M. Petton and M. le Dore.

I was interested. Articles which I had read in 'The Piping Times' about the friendly relations established between Scots and Bretons encouraged me to hope that the 'Cercle Celtique' of Erquy would not be unfriendly. I resolved to seek out M. Petton and M. le Dore.

That same day I found M. Petton, and was confirmed in my expectations. His obvious enthusiasm for piping was infectious, and his invitation to me to attend the next meeting of the 'Cercle Celtique' was spontaneous and cordial. The hopes raised by what I had read in 'The Piping Times' were amply justified.

As I approached the 'Parc du Sport' at the appointed time, the well-known sound of the chanter greeted my ears. The air was foreign to me, but the sweetness and tone were familiar. The 'Cercle' was meeting in the pavilion, and thither I went. Entering the long, single-storied building, I found M. Petton and M. le Dore each playing the 'biniou' with a group of young men and women performing the intricate steps of a Breton dance. They broke off to welcome me with that characteristic French cordiality which sets the newcomer instantly at his ease; and then they started to dance a Gavotte—a stately, graceful dance, accompanied

by pleasant music. The rhythm and melody were quite different from their Scottish counterparts; the playing was unembellished by grace-notes, and seemed to go straight on without the repetition of parts which marks the music of Scottish country dancing. After the Gavotte, M. Petton and M. le Dore played a 'Marche'—a stirring air in 2/4 time. Again, I noted the absence of grace-notes and repetition of parts. The 'biniou' were basically similar to the Scottish bagpipe, having the same type of drones, chanter, mouth-piece and bag. M. le Dore, whose pipes were gaily painted red, had three drones; M. Petton's pipes were black, and had only two drones, decorated with the black and white ribbons which are traditional. The bags had no covers. The chanters were exactly the same as the chanter of the Scottish pipe, but the technique of playing was different, the tips of the fingers being used to cover the holes. This is understandable, in view of the absence of grace-notes in playing. M. le Dore produced a 'bombarde' (splendid name!), which is not unlike a chanter, but which lacks the hole at the back for the left thumb, and has instead, at the bottom of the scale, two keys, after the manner of a clarinet or a fife. Mr. Petton played his 'biniou', and Mr. le Dore accompanied him on the 'bombarde', embellishing the melody given by the 'biniou' with his own variations. The effect was most pleasing. As the 'bombarde' has no bag, its player has to stop from time to time, while the 'biniou' continues. Thus, the basic melody, expounded on the 'biniou', is enlivened by the periodic entry of the 'bombarde', upon the virtuosity of whose player depends the enhancement of the effect. M. le Dore amply demonstrated his skill in this respect. There was more dancing, something after the manner of 'The Dashing White Sergeant', but with variations in time. The 'Cercle Celtique' of Erquy was going to the great Breton Festival at Quimper, and was practising local dances for the event. M. Petton explained that each district of Brittany has its own particular dances and music, as well as its own particular costume. There is considerable variety in all three—more, perhaps, than has been found in Scotland for some time.

Both M. Petton and M. le Dore were good enough to let me try their 'biniau', and I also tried the 'bombarde'. The 'biniau' offered no problems and took march, strathspey and reel without difficulty. As I played, I was conscious of the feeling that one experiences sometimes at competitions, of a great many pairs of critical eyes directed at one's fingers. I could well believe the remark I read in a copy of 'The Piping Times', about the Bretons striking matches in the dark to watch the fingering of Scottish pipers. My friends in Erquy did so from technical interest, which was very gratifying. They discussed afterwards the different techniques of the 'biniau' and the bagpipe; and if my understanding of the conversation was correct, it appears that the use of grace-notes on the 'biniau' is a matter of the individual performer's taste, there being no stereotyped forms, such as the Scottish 'grip' or 'shake', and there being no such emphasis on grace-notes as is found in the Scottish technique. The embellishment of the melody depends rather on the 'bombarde'. I tried this instrument. It was easy to blow, but the fingering was unfamiliar, and I had no time to master it. The combination of 'bombarde' and 'biniau' is an interesting one, and raises the speculation as to whether it is not perhaps an older, more basic means of enlivening a melody that the conventionalised use of grace-notes in Scottish pipe music.

The 'Cercle Celtique', with true Breton courtesy, accorded me the privilege of becoming an honorary member, and I was introduced to its President, M. le Maire of Erquy. The gesture, I am sure, carried with it more than the formal politeness of modern society. It was a recognition of the bond which unites different peoples of common Celtic origin, and which leads them to appreciate and respond to each other's music and dancing, and other forms of expression. The pipers and dancers of this little Breton town love and value their heritage of music and dance in the same way as do so many groups in Scotland; and the strong similarity of the two traditions was at once appreciated and expressed by the 'Cercle Celtique' of Erquy in this graceful and (to the recipient) most satisfying gesture. In the darkness of the Dark Ages, the Celtic genius set all over Europe the groups of scholars, artists, musicians and craftsmen who did so much to preserve the civilisation and culture of Europe. There was continual coming and going between these groups,

and the Celt who wandered far from his home could be sure of a welcome and hospitality from the groups which he encountered. It is good to know that in the electric brilliance of the Atomic Age, a man of Celtic origin can still receive such a welcome and hospitality from a group of fellow-Celts in another land.

ALL ABOARD.

When Royal Marine Wareing went ashore at Freemantle, Western Australia, he met Robert Sinclair of Freemantle Highland Pipe Band. On returning to his ship, the tank-landing ship 'Narvik', John got permission—despite "strict security measures"—to bring the entire band and two dancers aboard to entertain the crew. As the pipes played, the dancers staged an impromptu show on the fore-deck hatch covers. The nautical audience thoroughly enjoyed the spectacle.

John Wareing, a Fifer, is taking part in the Narvik's atomic tests at the Monte Bello Islands in April.

FIFTH TIME LUCKY?

Down Southend, Essex, England way, the locals do not take kindly to the sound of the pipes, so Iain Laidlaw has just moved into his fifth headquarters in an attempt to establish a pipe band; he was forced to move from the other places on account of local residents' complaints about noise.

A nephew of the late P-M Laidlaw, V.C., Iain hopes soon to realise his aim of a full membership of forty pipers and drummers.

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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.

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PIPERS DIARY



PIPES IN GLASGOW.

During the past month we have had two professional contests in Glasgow, both of which appear to have been successful in most respects.

Once again it is unfortunate that only two such contests exist between the end of September and the middle of July, and it is doubly unfortunate that these two fall within four weeks of one another. However, unless some new bodies are prepared to sponsor professional contests, it is unlikely that this state of affairs can be changed.

The two recent contests showed, once again, the respective advantages and disadvantages of the Highlanders' Institute and the Boys' High School as places for piping. In the Institute it is apparently impossible to find more than one room for preparatory tuning. As a result pipers are harrassed, and the pipes are not at their best in the various events. The Boys' High School, on the other hand, has excellent tuning facilities, but the hall itself has very poor acoustics for the pipes. Members of the audience hear a great deal of echo, and as a result their enjoyment of the performances is considerably affected.

In one apparently important respect, however, they reach equality—in their proximity to houses of refreshment.

THREE EXPORTS.

The news that Albert Sheath is leaving for New Zealand was quickly learned by pipers in Scotland because of his association with Peter Henderson, Ltd. We only heard, recently, that another well known piper, James MacColl, emigrated some months ago to California. His presence there should be a considerable advantage to piping enthusiasts in the far West, and we take this opportunity of offering our belated good wishes for his future career.

Another intending emigrant is Cpl. Donald MacKinnon of the Seaforth Highlanders who intends settling later this year in Australia. Donald, it will be remembered, gave a most enjoyable performance, both so far as instrument and the playing were concerned, at Oban

last year. It would seem, in fact, that quite a deal of piping talent is being exported these days.

OVER THE ISLES.

On March 15th, Donald MacLeod leaves for another visit to Vancouver, B.C., where he will be teaching young pipers and delighting old and young alike with recitals. It is not necessary to wish Donald an enjoyable trip, for that goes without saying. Most of us probably envy him. This chiel certainly does.

A NEW POLISS.

The future of John Burgess has been the subject of many rumours since he left the Army last year. At one time he was apparently bound for the Glasgow Police, but the new Chief Constable of Edinburgh, Mr. Inch, has turned out to be a piping enthusiast, and John is now (moustache and all), a stalwart member of the Edinburgh City Police Force. It is to be hoped that he does not have to quell any riots with his fists, although perhaps the chance of having to do that in Edinburgh is less than the chance would have been in Glasgow.

Talking of the Edinburgh Police reminds us that a strange rumour reached here the other day to the effect that Donald Ramsay's band was preparing to play the "Old Woman's Lullaby", not only as a band, but also in threepart harmony. For the good of the peace of mind of many pipers, including especially Willie Ross, we hasten to add that we are now informed that the project has been abandoned.

B.B.C.

Innovations in piping are, of course, sometimes quite necessary. In fact, we hear that a prominent London producer for the B.B.C. is putting on "MacBeth" as a full scale production, and in order to get the proper atmosphere, he has commissioned the composition of a number of pieces of pipe music which will be characteristic of the Scottish Middle Ages. It will be interesting to hear what can be done in the way of reconstructing such period pieces.

N.Z.

The programme of Hastings Highland Games has just reached us, and we see that our old friends, John A. MacGee and Angus MacAulay, will be officiating there as adjudicators of the piping competitions. The events seem to be fairly normal except for the fact that a contest advertised as for a Jig and Hornpipe carried a first prize of £10, whereas the Piobaireachd event brings only £6 to the winner. It would appear that there must be some hot stuff jig players in New Zealand, or else some pretty poor Piobaireachd players.

U.S.S.R.

Once again we hasten to assure casual readers of the daily press that John Burgess and Donald MacLean are still with us here in Scotland. The press conference given recently in Moscow was by two other diplomats.

DEPARTURE OF ALBERT SHEATH.

On 21st February Albert Sheath, the well known manager of Peter Henderson, Ltd., left Scotland for New Zealand to take up a post there as Sales Manager for Charles Begg and Co., Ltd. of Hamilton.

Albert has been well known to pipers in Scotland, for apart from hearing him at competitions, he has been one of the chief purveyors of piping equipment for some time now. A visit to Henderson's was always an opportunity for an enjoyable talk about matters pertaining to piping. In fact, it might be said that almost his entire adult career has been spent, apart from war service, in some branch of the bagpipe business.

In 1939 he joined the staff of R. G. Lawrie and was employed in the workshops there until 1942. From then until 1946 he was in the Fleet Air Arm, but on his demobilisation in March of that year he took over the management of the bagpipe department of Lawrie's, a job which he held until 1952. In that year Archie MacPhedran retired from Peter Henderson's and Albert transferred his allegiance from Renfield Street to Renfrew Street.

He was first taught the pipes by Willie Norris, who gained considerable fame before the war with his Clan Fraser Pipe Band. Albert was also a member of this band, but later left to become pipe-major of the Newmains and District Pipe Band. He later joined the Clan MacRae Band of which he was a member until he left Scotland.

In more recent years he has become a keen student of piobaireachd and for four

years has been an active pupil of Mr. Iain MacPherson. In addition he appeared in the news regularly as Hon. Piper to the Scottish Burns Club and also as Hon. Piper to the Glasgow Galloway Association.

He has also been an active worker for the S.P.B.A. and was on the Advisory Committee for instructing future pipe-majors. When the Highland Pipers of Glasgow was inaugurated he became one of their early members and last year took over the duties of Hon. Treasurer.

The position of manager of either Lawrie or Henderson is a most interesting one in the world of piping, since it brings the holder into contact with most pipers in the world, either by personal contact or by post. At the time of going to press it is not known who will succeed Albert Sheath but it will certainly take a very active personality to fill his shoes.

Albert should arrive in New Zealand on the 27th March, which will just be in time for him to play at the last of the New Zealand Highland Gatherings, Hastings Games, at the Easter week-end. In addition to his other commitments he will be taking over the Hamilton Caledonian Society Pipe Band and no doubt he will have much to show them from his experience in Scotland.

His friends everywhere will wish him a pleasant voyage and every success in his new life.

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AN EXAMINATION FOR THE DIPLOMA OF PIPING WILL BE HELD IN THE COLLEGE OF PIPING, ON SATURDAY, 19th MAY, 1956.

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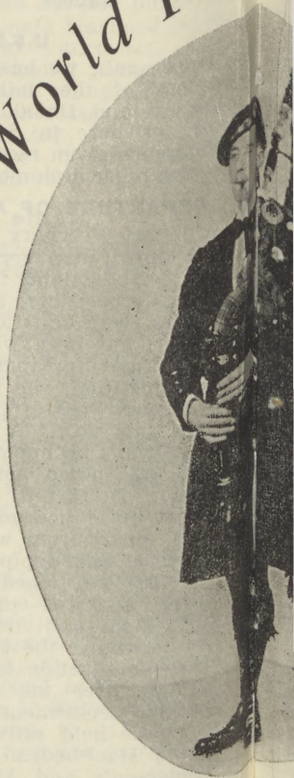
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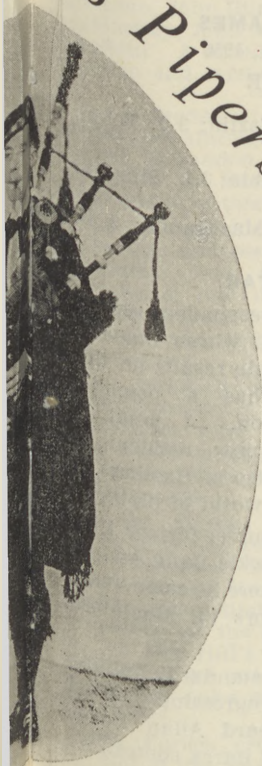
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NEWS FROM NEW ZEALAND

Drum-major John Seton has been invited to judge the Best Dressed Highlander event at the Auckland Highland Games on March 24th. On the same date there will be Games at Lower Hutt.

COMPETITION RESULTS

WANGANUI, 14th January, 1956
A GRADE.

March—

1 J. A. Magee; 2 D. Thorensen; 3 D. Fitchett.

Strathspey and Reel—

1 I. L. MacKay; 2 D. Thorensen; 3 J. A. Magee.

Jigs and Hornpipe—

1 I. MacKay; 2 D. Thorensen; 3 R. MacKenzie.

Slow March (Wellington Championship)—

1 J. A. Magee; 2 D. Thorensen; 3 R. MacKenzie.

B GRADE

March—

1 G. Foster; 2 J. Tobin; 3 G. N. Nixon and R. I. MacDonald.

Strathspey and Reel—

1 J. Tobin; 2 G. Foster; 3 R. I. MacDonald

Slow March—

1 J. Tobin; 2 S. Donald; 3 G. N. Nixon and Pritchard.

March (Novice)—

1 G. Foster; 2 G. Donald; 3 C. Wipoeki.

PALMERSTON (N) GAMES

January, 21st, 1956

A. GRADE

March—

1 D. Thorensen; 2 R. MacKenzie; 3 L. Turrell and N. MacKay.

Strathspey and Reel—

1 D. Thorensen; 2 I. MacKay and J. A. Magee.

Jigs and Hornpipe—

1 N. Mackay; 2 D. Fitchett; 3 L. Mackay.

Slow March—

1 J. A. Magee; 2 D. Fitchett; 3 N. Mackay and L. MacKay.

B GRADE

March—

1 J. Tobin and E. Wilse; 2 G. Buchanan.

Strathspey and Reel—

1 G. Buchanan; 2 J. Tobin; 3 G. Foster and C. Fraser.

Slow March—

1 W. Smith; 2 G. Buchanan; 3 G. Foster.

March (Novice)—

1 L. T. Smart; 2 J. Strong; 3 E. Whynam

FIELDING GAMES

23rd January, 1956

B GRADE

March—

1 L. Simpson; 2 L. Martin; 3 J. Tobin.

Strathspey and Reel—

1 G. Buchanan; 2 J. Tobin; 3 L. Simpson

Slow March—

1 L. Simpson; 2 L. MacKinnon; 3 G. Buchanan.

RISING STAR.

Our New Zealand correspondent reports that in young J. Tobin, whose name is featured in the "B" Grade results on this page, New Zealand has a potential Antipodean MacCrimmon. A pupil of Angus Shaw (Islay), now resident in Hastings, John Tobin, also of Hastings, is tipped to go far in the world of piping.

Angus Shaw is, of course, former Pipe Sergeant in the Red Hackle Band and an ex-Scots Guardsman, where he came under the wings of Pipe-majors M. MacIntosh and J. B. Robertson.

We also hear that the standard of piping in the Dominion is progressing beyond all belief. Having heard Allan Dodds recently in the Uist and Barra contest, we can agree that Kiwis make fine pipers.

PRIZE MONEY.

Despite the fact that prize money is not particularly generous—£3 is the usual first in the piping events—the enthusiasts are very keen to tackle each other on the boards. "Let me get in there and win" seems to be the attitude rather than "What is the money offered?" We trust organisers do not take advantage of this healthy state of mind among performers.

London Notes

By D. M. Allan.

reparations for the Annual Competition at 58 and 59 Buckingham Gate, V.I., on 7th April, are now well in hand and from the number of competitors already entered a first class day of piping is assured. The contingent from the island will be strong and is expected to contain, among others, Donald MacLean, John Burgess, Wm. MacDonald, MacKay, John MacFadyen and Seumas McNeill. A strong entry is also certain in and around London.

In a Members' Competition held on Monday, 9th March, by the Scottish Piping Society of London, the Lewis Beaton Cup was won by Harry Denyer with "The MacFarlane Gathering".

In the competition, organised by two committee members of the society, Alec MacAulay and F. Graeme Ferguson, acted a fair number of competitors for spectators. David Ross, Donald MacLean and Arthur Gillies judged the competitions.

The standard of playing was up to expectations but it was noted that several instruments were slightly out of tune. There was a great pity as it spoiled, in a number of cases, what would have been good performances.

In the March, Strathspey and Reel competition, the two awards went to two young members of the society Lawrence Cornick and Kinnear Forbes. Another young competitor Donald Ross was appearing for the first time. He is now one of Bob Hill's pupils and from the expression he made on the audience it is felt that more will be heard of him in the future.

Mrs. Forbes presented the trophy at the end of the meeting.

RESULTS.

MacFarlane Gathering.

Harry Denyer—"The MacFarlane Gathering".
F. Graeme Ferguson—"Lament for Donald of Laggan".

March, Strathspey and Reel.

Lawrence M'Cornick—"The Braes of Brecklet, Blair Drummond, Miss Proud".
Kinnear Forbes—"Mrs. MacDonald of Dunach, Maggie Cameron, Duntroon".

BETHNAL GREEN AND EAST LONDON FESTIVAL OF ARTS—1956.

This festival, the sixth, was held during the two weeks beginning, 18th February, in the York Hall, Bethnal Green. The first day was set aside for piping and dancing.

The afternoon started with dancing competitions, all well patronised and arranged in about fifteen classes. George A. Macrae was the adjudicator.

Later in the afternoon there was a competition for miniature pipe bands, maximum number of players allowed—eight. This event was sponsored by the Pipe Band Society (England) and organised by F. C. MacColl Botly. Unfortunately this event was not supported by the bands in the society as it should have been. The Challenge Trophy presented by the Festival of Arts was won by the Harrow County School C.C.F. Band, with Beaumont Hamel, Loudens Bonnie Woods and Braes and Tail Toddlle. Their piping instructor Alec M'Coll of Harrow was, much to his disgust, in bed with flu and missed hearing the result of his labours. He and their drum instructor A. S. Shand are to be congratulated along with the boys on a fine performance. The band judges were Col. F. B. Beedle, G. A. MacRae, R. Hill and M. Sullivan.

In a solo competition for ladies, Bob Hill supplied the three winners all of whom have considerably improved since their last appearance. An open March, strathspey and reel competition was won by Arthur Gillies, now making a name for himself in piping circles in London. Peter Quinn judged both these competitions.

RESULTS.

March (Ladies).

1. Catriona Hill—"Millbank Cottage".
2. Mary Jones—"Beaumont Hamel".
3. Anne Thomas—"Beaumont Hamel".

March, Strathspey and Reel.

1. Arthur Gillies—"Leaving Glenurquhart". "Caledonian Canal", "Rejected Suitor".
2. Kinnear Forbes—"Mrs. MacDonald of Dunach", "Maggie Cameron". "Duntroon".
3. William Speedie—"Captain Carswell Arniston Castle, Grey Bob".

Certificate of Merit—Cadet Sgt. Shears.

New Zealand Pipe Band Championships, Lancaster Park.

The New Zealand Pipe Band Championships were held at Lancaster Park, Christchurch, over the weekend of 3-4th March; competing were 19 Bands in two grades, 10 in the A and 9 in the B grade. Local C. grade bands took part in the massed bands display on the Sunday.

At the official opening on Saturday, the day on which both A and B grade championships were decided, the Mayor, Mr. R. M. MacFarlane, M.P. paid tribute to the generous way in which the bands gave their services to many organisations. President of the New Zealand Pipe Bands' Association, Mr. J. V. Nicholson also welcomed the contestants.

After the Drum Head Service conducted by the Rev. Stuart C. Francis, the A grade drum-majors' display took place. This was followed by the display of the winning bands and the massed bands.

There was some criticism of the 120 paces tempo adopted by the bands; it was felt that a tempo four paces slower was more in keeping with the pipes and the swing of the kilt.

An entertaining concert on Sunday evening, concluded with the presentation of nearly fifty awards, an exhausting business for the hand-clappers. All the judges complimented the bands on the high standard of playing and marching.

RESULTS.

A. Grade Championship.

City of Wellington, 573,099, 1; City of Christchurch, 571,574, 2; Burns Highland, Dunedin, 562,616, 3; Hamilton Caledonian, 554, 883; Dunedin Highland, 554,091; Ashburton County, 551,283; Invercargill Caledonian, 549,774; Ruahine Highland, 544,124; Timaru Highland, 539,157.

A Grade Inspection.

Dunedin Highland, 111.5, 1; Ashburton County, 108.625, 2; Scottish Society (Christchurch), 108.5, 3; Burns Highland, 108.25, 4.

A Grade Street March.

City of Christchurch A, 42,915, 1; City of Wellington, 42,728, 2; Scottish Society (Christchurch), 41,561, 3; Ashburton County, 41,435, 4.

A Grade Drumming.

City of Wellington, 34.6, 1; Hamilton Caledonian, 33.8, 2; City of Christchurch, 31.4, 3.

A Grade Quickstep.

City of Christchurch A, 280,741, 1; City of Wellington 279,216, 2; Burns Highland, 273,966, 3; Invercargill Caledonian, 272,458; Dunedin Highland, 272,358; Hamilton Caledonian, 270,183; Ruahine, 268,166; Scottish Society (Christchurch), 266,741; Ashburton County, 265,525; Timaru Highland, 261,541.

B Grade Championship.

Hawke's Bay Scottish, 554,333, 1; Temuka Highland, 546,133, 2; Canterbury Caledonian, 539,191, 3; Ellesmere Highland, 537,624, 4. City of Christchurch B, 521,541; City of New Plymouth, 518,591; North Canterbury, 517,708; New Plymouth Caledonian, 501,582; Wairarapa, 500,749.

B. Grade Selection.

Hawke's Bay Scottish, 178.25, 1; North Canterbury, 176.833, 2; Canterbury Caledonian, 175.8, 3; Temuka Highland, 169.8; City of Christchurch B, 166.5; Ellesmere Highland, 166.166; City of New Plymouth, 161.8; New Plymouth Caledonian, 156.166; Wairarapa Caledonian, 155.666.

B Grade Street March.

Ellesmere Highland, 43,342, 1; North Canterbury, 42,394, 2; Hawke's Bay Scottish, 40,519, 3; Canterbury Caledonian, 4.

B Grade Drumming.

City of New Plymouth, 103.75, 1; North Canterbury, 99.166, 2; Temuka Highland, 98.5, 3.

Drum Major's Display.

City of Wellington, 109.416, 1; Scottish Society of New Zealand, 96.916 2; Invercargill Caledonian, 95.916, 3; Ruahine Highland, 95.666; Timaru Highland, 86.666. Five bands were disqualified for excessive tempo.

Open Staff Flourishing.

A. Soutar (Scottish Society of New Zealand), 46½, 1; I. J. Sergeant (Hawke's Bay Scottish), 43½, 2; R. J. Binning (City of Wellington), 43, 3; H. Pay (Invercargill Caledonian), 41½, 4.

DO THEY WEAR THEM OR NOT?

The great mystery has been cleared up at last, so far as 10,000 New Zealanders are concerned. During the course of the New Zealand Highland Pipe Band championships at Lancaster Park, Christchurch, the elastic holding the underpants of a member of the Ruahine (Dannevirke) Highland Pipe Band gave way and the garment fell to the piper's ankles. While the audience roared their heads off, the unfortunate bandsman, keeping a cool head managed to disentangle himself from the offending article as he continued to mark time.

Chief drill instructor of the Ruahine band, Mr. C. C. Gibson remarked: "It showed excellent discipline on the part of a new recruit for without having to bend down or stop playing—or indeed batting an eyelid—he got them over his spats and boots; a really good show".

The recently published drum tutor by Drum-major John Seton has been favourably commented on in Australia, Canada and America as well as in New Zealand and Scotland. General opinion is that it has filled a long felt want. The Grey and Seton tutor, published in 1922, blazed the trail and the Army Manual came 13 years later; there has not been anything between till now.

It is passing strange that this important new tutor has escaped the attention of the bandsmen's magazine "The Pipe Band".

RANDOM REMARKS

By Alick MacGregor, N.S.W.

Celebrating the anniversary of an important event in the world's history, there was witnessed in one of our cities some time ago, a religious procession which was headed by a fully equipped pipe band. In a stately and imposing display of ceremonial vestments and streaming banners, very ably supplemented by the colourful accoutrements of the band, and witnessed by thousands lining the route, this procession presented a spectacle most impressive and unforgettable.

And the band—in the midst of this saintly and devotional atmosphere and in the presence of these symbols of adoration and purity—what were they playing? Elsewhere, back on the line of march it may have been "Onward Christian Soldiers" or "Abide with Me"; but passing my stance—in grand style and with a fine military swing—they were playing, believe it or not, "The Muckin' o' Geordie's Byre".

The majority of us (including a well-known and highly melodious pipe corporal) consider it about time that that verbal abomination, **skirl** when used to denote the music of the pipes, was "given the works"; in plainer English, totally expunged from the vocabulary of piping, and declared obscene. The dictionary defines the term as "a shrill shriek".

A friend, an Australian-born Scot, about to set out on his first overseas trip is very much thrilled at the prospect of his first sight of Edinburgh; so much so that the journey has the appearance of being a holy pilgrimage with "The Fabulous City" as the sole objective. On his arrival there, I told him of two wonderful and beautiful sights he must see, without fail: the River Clyde and Kelvingrove Park.

SENIOR AMATEUR AND JUVENILE CHAMPIONSHIPS, 1956

The above competitions were held in the College of Piping, on Saturday, 24th March, 1956, the judge being Donald MacLean (Lewis).

This year's outstanding competitor was Evan MacKay, a student of the College, who gained all the first prizes in the senior events and one first in the juvenile event.

Evan, who is a member of a piping family, began his piping career in the College at the age of eight, and has been a consistent prize-winner in recent years. His long list of honours includes 1st Prize in the Chanter Competition at Glasgow Local Mod, in 1954, Junior Champion of the College in 1954, Senior College Champion, 1955 (Donald MacNeill Rose-bowl), The MacNeill Challenge Trophy for the Champion March player, 1955, the Peter Henderson Challenge Trophy—Junior Amateur Piping, 1955, Cowal Silver Medal for March, Strathspey and Reel, 1955, the Peter Henderson Challenge Trophy—Knightswood Highlanders Association—best all round player, 1956, and four first prizes at the Knightswood Community Centre Festival, 1956. He has won numerous silver and bronze medals as well as many other prizes. Last year he won prizes at Strathpeffer and Dingwall Highland Games as well as the prize for the youngest competitor at Dingwall.

The runner-up in this year's competition was Freena MacFadyen, also a member of a well known piping family in the city and a member of the College of Piping. For a girl, Freena is really outstanding and we can expect great things of her in the future.

The Juvenile Champion was Donald MacNeill, Port Glasgow, a cousin of Finlay MacNeill of the Seaforth Highlanders and late of the College of Piping.

The complete results were as follows:—

Senior Amateur Championship (Dunvegan Trophy).

Geol Mor (Lawrie Challenge Trophy)—1. Evan MacKay, 2. Freena MacFadyen.

March (MacNeill Challenge Trophy)—1. Evan MacKay, 2. Freena MacFadyen, 3. Angus MacTaggart.

Strathspey and Reel—1. Evan MacKay, 2. Freena MacFadyen, 3. Walter Wilkie.

Slow March—1. Evan MacKay, 2. Freena MacFadyen, 3. Angus MacTaggart.

Jig—1. Evan MacKay, 2. Angus MacTaggart, 3. Freena MacFadyen.

Juvenile Championship.

March—1. Evan MacKay, 2. Donald MacNeill, Port Glasgow, 3. Tom Dingwall, 4. Freena MacFadyen.

Strathspey and Reel—1. Donald MacNeill, Port Glasgow, 2. Donald MacNeill, Glasgow, 3. Freena MacFadyen, 4. Evan MacKay.

Senior Amateur Champion, 1956—Evan MacKay.

Juvenile Champion, 1956—Donald MacNeill, Port Glasgow.

VANCOUVER PIPERS' ANNUAL MEET

Canada is proud of people of every race who have settled in her great open spaces, built homes and reared children to whom were handed down the traditions of the countries they left behind.

Through generations they have passed on among other gifts, a deep love of the music of their homeland.

On the 17th of March, lovers of pipe music had an opportunity to witness this when the spirit again moved in that great pile of masonry—the Vancouver Seaforth Armoury—and young men and women of the Scottish race, who had never seen the homeland, took part in many events and won most of the trophies at the B.C. Pipers' Annual Indoor Competitions which took place on above date.

The world would be gloomy and a poorer place to live in were it not for piping, and piping would be poorer were it not for the Clan MacLeod.

Their Chiefs for centuries had as pipers, members of that great MacCrimmon piping clan and encouraged them in playing, teaching and composing. It is evident MacLeods now do their own playing as they took part this year in almost every event from "Novice" march to professional piobaireachd.

Judging, and travelling a long way in making his second official appearance, was another of the MacLeod clan, and one of the greatest living pipers of today, Pipe-major Donald MacLeod of Fort George, Scotland.

His task was an unenviable one as the quality of performances in open and amateur events made this year's gathering the best yet.

It is gratifying to see that the younger pipers are throwing themselves wholehearted into taking advantage of the splendid efforts put forth by members of the B.C. Pipers Association, and those who join them from the old land, in their work in putting piping in a forward place in Canada.

Fifteen-year old Catherine MacDonald won the coveted Gordon Sinclair Memorial trophy Saturday. Her performance was a high-light of the 24th annual B.C. Pipers' Association competitions.

Miss MacDonald, of 1728 East Fourteenth, won the special trophy in the amateur piobaireachd competition for pipers under 16 years. The trophy is in memory of the late Constable Gordon Sinclair, who was president of the association when he was killed last December by a murderer's bullet.

The association picked the amateur piobaireachd class because of Constable Sinclair's interest in training young pipers.

Other winners are—

Aggregate awards—Pipe-major E. Esson, MacCrimmon Memorial trophy; Fred MacLeod, Laurie Henderson trophies; Rae Marie MacInnes, William Urquhart trophy.

It is an established fact that bands playing—

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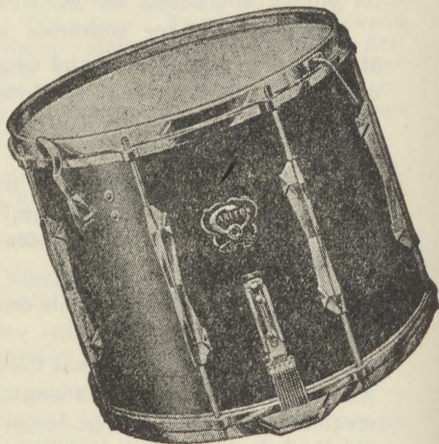
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Seaforth Highlanders, Walter Douglas trophy; Donald MacInnes, Catherine MacDonald and Duncan MacInnes tie, Alex. Lobban trophy; Angus MacLennan, Caber Feidh trophy; John Taylor, Alex. MacNab Memorial trophy; and Seaforth Highlanders, Tait's Jewellers trophy.

Novice marches: Larry Gillott, Allan MacLeod.

Amateur Piobaireachd under 16: Miss MacDonald, Terry MacHardie, Duncan MacInnes. Over 16: Angus MacLennan, Donald MacInnes, Colin Sutherland.

Ladies marches: Rae Marie MacInnes, Raebelle MacInnes, Norma Deans. Ladies strathspeys and reels: Rae Marie MacInnes, Norma Deans, Raebelle MacInnes.

Amateur marches, under 16: Duncan MacInnes, Catherine MacDonald, Terry MacHardy.

Amateur strathspeys and reels, under 16: Duncan MacInnes, Catherine MacDonald, Ken Osborne.

Amateur marches, over 16: Donald MacInnes, Ian Sinclair, Ian Walker

Amateur strathspeys and reels, over 16: Ian Sinclair, Donald MacInnes, John MacDonald.

Open piobaireachd: Pipe-major E. Esson, Ronald Foreman, John Low, Albert Duncan.

Drumming: Seaforth Highlanders, Seaforth Cadets.

Dancing, professional Irish jig: Mary Anne Elliot, Marilyn Ritchie, Beth Buchanan.

Old Highland airs, veterans over 60: John Taylor, Seb Nelles.

Quartette competition, pipe band: Seaforth Highlanders, Powell River.

Open march: Fred. MacLeod, Ronald Foreman, John Low, Ian MacDonald.

Open strathspeys and reels: Fred. MacLeod, Albert Duncan, John Low, Ronald Foreman.

Open jigs: Fred. MacLeod, John Low, Ronald Foreman, Albert Duncan.

RADIO HIGHLIGHTS

Thursday, 5th April—9.30 p.m.-9.50 p.m. Pipes and Drums of the London Scottish Regiment. Pipe-major Leslie de Laspée.

Wednesday, 11th April—6.45 p.m.-7.00 p.m. Piping by Arthur G. Gillies.

Wednesday, 18th April—8.00 p.m.-8.20 p.m. Piobaireachd by Wm. Connell. "MacGregor's Salute" and "Lament for Donald of Laggan".

Tuesday, 24th April—9.45 p.m.-10.00 p.m. Pipes and Drums. Muirhead and Sons Pipe Band. Pipe-major John Smith.

Tuesday, 1st May—7.30 p.m.-7.50 p.m. Piping.

Thursday, 11th May—8.15 p.m.-8.30 p.m. Pipes and Drums.

Wednesday, 16th May—6.45 p.m.-7.00 p.m. Piping.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

In your January issue you published part of a letter I wrote to you but I'm afraid you have mis-quoted me. P/M. W. Leadbetter was a pupil of P/M Wm. Ross at Edinburgh, prior to his joining the Scots Guards in 1936, and not a pupil of P/M George MacRae as you have stated. The latter is the piping instructor to the London County Council.

The Essex Educational Authorities have had piping on their evening Institute curriculum for nearly four years now, and it goes on the whole year round, unlike other evening class subjects. Even during the school holidays the class carried on as usual but transfers to a nearby T.A. Drill Hall. The class consists entirely of members of the Essex Pipe Band and meets twice a week, Monday and Thursday. One evening is devoted to chanter work, the drummers doing table work in a separate room. The other evening pipers and drummers get together for band practice whilst our dancers meet and practice on yet a third night.

Most of our members have belonged to Pipe Bands in Scotland before coming south—Shotts and Dykehead; MacKenzie, Dundee, Singer of Clydebank, Michael Colliery—to name a few at random, and are drawn from all trades and professions—Engineers, Policemen, School Teachers, Master Builders, Shopkeepers, etc. Our greatest difficulty is trying to get together all at one time as most of us are affected by Shift Work. The Educational Authorities are very helpful to us in every way possible. What a pity the same co-operation wasn't forthcoming from our Authorities at home!

Any pipers, drummers or dancers coming this way can always be sure of a warm welcome if they care to look us up at our meeting place in Leytonstone High School, London, E. 11 or by getting in touch with me.

William Stevenson,
Hon. Ass. Secretary, Essex Pipe Band.

Dear Sir,

In forwarding my subscription for your valued paper I also wish to forward, on behalf of the Scots of MacLean and on my own behalf, to all of you at the College our best wishes for a Happy Christmas and a bright and prosperous New Year. We thank you for your efforts in the past the results, which are world wide, should be gratifying to you.

I have to hand the points score for the Pipe Band contest at Kyogle Highland Gathering, held on 26th November, 1955.

1. Ipswich Thistle, 371.
2. Brisbane Thistle, 370.
3. MacLean and District, 355½.
4. Tenterfield, 352½.

Also playing were Border Scottish, Kyogle and Tweed Pipe Bands.

Again thanking you,

Fred. Douglas,
MacLean, Clarence River, N.S.W.

Dear Sir,

I wonder how many of your readers are like myself, fed up with the apparently systematic preaching of Scottish Nationalism in your Editorial columns. More, I suspect than the hitherto total lack of objection might suggest. However, even on the assumption that in taking offence at the tone of many of your leading articles I am in a minority of one, should conceive myself to be on strong ground in making protest. Piping is an art, and the use of an art as a peg on which to hang political opinions, however meritorious, is wrong in principle.

James Campbell,
London, S.W.5.



Dear Sir,

We heard the Broadcast in Science Survey with interest. We are now anticipating articles on the same subject. Harmonic components, formants, relative amplitudes, effect of different fingerings and many other things. Let us know the lot.

N. Petrie, Sharpness.

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