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Piping Times

Vol. 24, No. 6.

March, 1972.



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Piping Times

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Editorial

Two editions of "Chanter" (it's something like the "Piping Times", only on radio) around the turn of the year touched on the touchy subject of professionalism in piping. One view expressed was that it was no quite the thing, and this coincides with the old-fashioned attitude that so far as professional pipers and hottentots are concerned, some of them may be all right to talk to, but you wouldn't want your sister to marry one.

The other view put forward was that there are no professional pipers. In a way this is quite true, because while there are some who earn their living through making bagpipes, or selling pipes, or teaching piping, or organising piping, or a combination of these, nobody makes his living solely through playing the instrument.

In a way, of course, this is too restricted a view, because the MacCrimmons were certainly full-time and so "professional", and they included teaching as a main part of their activities. However, this does not help us much, and we still remain a world-wide community without the strength to support a group of professionals, even in this slightly wider sense. We will know that the golden age has really returned when this aim has been achieved.

At present, the tag of "professional" is very confusing because so many organisations have their own peculiar interpretations, but uniformity is boring and variety is the spice of life, so let's not change it. No piper objects to being classed as a professional, because he takes it as a compliment—professionalism being at present a grade of ability and not a status. Though strangely enough some professionals might object to certain other pipers being classed along with them.

A good example of the amateur nature of the piping world is to be seen in the pipe band trip to Toronto. The organisers expect to gross half a million dollars from the four day event, but the cream of the bands from Scotland are prepared to attend for their bare expenses and a chance of winning a small part of one per cent of the gross in prize money. It's a bit like the old reading that Archie MacCulloch, Scots entertainer, used to do about the boy who got a job as a carter, driving a spring van. At the end of the week when he asked for his wages the boss replied: "Pey? For driving a spring van? Look at the hurls you got!"

"Above MacCrimmon"

from R. D. Cannon, Norwich.

The island of Tanera lies at the outer end of Loch Broom, and was once an important centre of the herring fishing industry. Nowadays it is probably best known as having been the home, for some years, of Frank Fraser Darling, the well known ecologist and authority on conservation. Professor Darling described his life on the island in a book, "Island Farm", published by G. Bell & Son, 1943, including a chapter on the history and legends connected with the island. The following story, which is reprinted by kind permission of the author and publishers, concerns a MacCrimmon piper. It was told by Mr. Murdo MacLeod, an old man who lived at Achiltibuie on the mainland :

My friend Murdo Macleod the elder is a man full of old tales. He and his son of the same name bring us a mail once a week and they usually find time for a crack before going back to the mainland. I could see the old man was happy one day, soon after we had reached an advanced stage in rebuilding the quay. He was inspecting the new work, walking the stone flags where lately the sea had covered a litter of fallen stones; and the parapet—such a wall is built along a quay for two reasons, of which that of an additional windbreak is perhaps the lesser ! The parapet has the social value of a leaning-place where men in moments of inactivity may place their elbows and gaze across the water. Such a place has an evocative quality, drawing forth reminiscence in a fine reflective style, and tales we had thought forgotten.

"The 'prentice will soon be above MacCrimmon", said my companion.

I looked at him enquiringly for I did not get his meaning, but it was better not to speak.

"I was looking at the boy", he said.

Alasdair was rowing the dinghy about the Anchorage, getting the feel of oars into his hands and making practice approaches to a mooring buoy. Murdo is an accomplished raconteur, a man with the art of a seannachie, and his remarks thus far had made me the eager listener. He reached unhurriedly for his roll of twist and his knife and began paring thinly the tobacco into his palm before continuing in a manner almost deprecatory.

"Och, it was just an old story and a saying they had in the island here."

The knife closed with a snap and was exchanged in his pocket for a pipe, with the stem of which he pointed to the foundations of those rude and ancient dwellings at the sea's edge, under the dyke of

the Little Irish Park.

“There were houses there once, though it’s not myself that remembers them. In the far one, under the rock, lived a MacCrimmon”.

The old man turned to me quickly and his bright blue eyes shone from among the wrinkles and through the haze of new tobacco smoke.

“You’ll be thinking that a queer name to be in Tanera, but it was like this: it was that Skyeman called Nicolson, a tacksman he was, who rented the whole of the island from the proprietor; and then he parcelled it out to the crofters and charged very high rents. In this way, d’you see, he was getting the herring-factory and quay for practically nothing at all. It was himself that brought people from Skye for curing the herring, and one of these men was MacCrimmon, who lived yonder with his son, just a young lad of perhaps fourteen or sixteen years old.

“Well now, this MacCrimmon was out on the sea one summer evening and the boy was alone at the house there, practising on the chanter. ‘Hidraho, horodo’ and so on he was playing to himself, but he wasn’t just getting the touch as he would have liked it. And then he was feeling he was not alone, whatever: there was a stranger standing beside him. I’m sure you’ll know that when you live on an island you are accustomed to see who will be coming ashore, and to feel a strange man beside you is a queer thing altogether. But this lad wasn’t feeling surprised at all, nor when the stranger stood behind him and brought his own fingers on to the boy’s as they rested on the chanter, like this, look you.

“ ‘Now then’, says he, ‘be trying it again with me’.

“The boy played, and he was finding himself playing as he had never played until then. He was forgetting everything else now and he took out the full pipes. The stranger had disappeared, but the boy, he was hardly noticing that as the bag swelled in his oxter. This was not the chanter any more but the pipes.

“The father of the boy came round Ard-na-goine yonder in the boat and was hearing the pipes over the water. He turned to the other fellow in the boat, very strange like, and he says:

“ ‘The ‘prentice is above MacCrimmon’.

“And that was a saying in the island ever since when a lad was getting as good as his father at doing anything”.

The old man lifted the cap from his pipe, lit another match and slowly puffed the tobacco to redness. The cap was carefully replaced; blue smoke hung on the air as he turned to me.

“And that boy grew to be a famous piper of the MacCrimmons, but it brought him a lot of envy from others not so good. There

came a day when he was to play in a great competition of pipers, and these people knew it was young MacCrimmon would surely be winning it. Those men came in the night to where MacCrimmon was lying asleep and they were sticking needles into the bag of his pipes, making such little holes in it you would never see them.

“And so in the morning, when MacCrimmon came to play before the judges, he was finding it hard to keep the bag full, and as you know, a pibroch takes a long time to play through. But this MacCrimmon, he was a proud lad altogether, and he blew the harder, rather than say there was something wrong with his pipes. He finished his piece, though all was black in front of his eyes, and then—then he spewed up the blood of his heart”.

MAY DAY—BARRY F. ANDERSON will be spending a year, from June, in Greece, and is anxious to get in touch with any pipers there.

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"Beatrix" Pipe Band.

In Holland we have been in practically every big town for flower-courses, fruit-courses, etc., etc., and on radio and television. Sometimes a few members of our band have been on student-parties, for in Holland several groups of students have Scotch names (may be for your good whisky).

For some years there was a meeting in Amsterdam of all (about 7) Dutch bagpipe-bands, and in July, 1972, when we will exist 10 years, we hope to organize such kind of meeting in Hilversum. We should like to invite a real Scotch band and we should be very glad to hear from you, if you could give us some information of possibilities about inviting a band of your people, who stay in Germany for the military service.

Notices of Pipers

This is a further instalment of the "Notices" compiled by Lt. John MacLennan, revised by Major I. H. MacKay Scobie, with further additions by Archibald Campbell, Kilberry. We are indebted to Captain D. R. MacLennan for permission to publish these.

It should be noted that the last revision took place in 1948, so modern pipers are not featured and information on the previous generation is not up-to-date.

MACKAY, IAIN (JOHN) RUADH (1753-1835 according to O. Mackenzie of Inverewe, in his "100 years in the Highlands", who got these dates from a daughter of Iain's. Other authorities say 1774-1845). Son of Angus Mackay, Gairloch, and grandson of John Dall. Was taught by his father. Went to the Reay Country as a young man, where he received further tuition on both the full and reel-sized pipes, the latter being the instrument commonly employed for dance music. He was a very fine player. Succeeded his father as piper to Sir Hector Mackenzie of Gairloch who died in 1826. He was also head gamekeeper to Sir Hector, and occupied the farm of Strath, near Loch Maree.

In 1805, he emigrated to Pictou, Nova Scotia, much against Sir Hector's wishes. The latter, it is said, would never listen to piobaireachd playing after Iain Ruadh left.

The four members of this family were pipers in succession in each case being from father to son.

The departure of so accomplished a piper was a great loss to his native land. His descendants were traced in Nova Scotia, late in the 19th century, none of whom were pipers. One, however, had the chanter which belonged to Iain (John) Dall's pipes, and a photograph of it, taken in about 1928, is shown here.

MACKAY, JOHN. Of a Reay Country family. Was Pipe-Major of the 25th or King's Own Borderers, from about 1856-1869. A good performer and a most musical man. His son John (whom see) was taught by him, and fully inherited his father's talents. Was first in the 78th Highlanders (Ross-shire Buffs) which he joined as a piper in 1846, being transferred as Pipe-Major to the 1st Battalion 25th.

MACKAY, JOHN. Third son of Iain (John) Dall, whom see, piper to Gairloch. In 1773, apparently, he emigrated to Nova Scotia, in the ship "Hector", being described in the passenger list as "John Mackay, Piper". His later history is not known. His nephew, Iain (John) Ruadh, whom see, followed him to Nova Scotia in 1805.

MACKAY, JOHN DALL (1656-1754). A piper, poet and vocalist. Born at Talladale. Succeeded his father Roderick (Rory) as piper to the Mackenzies of Gairloch. Was taught by his father and by Patrick Og MacCrimmon. While attending the College of Pipers at Borreraig, his abilities aroused much jealousy among the other students, and tradition says that an attempt was made to throw him over a rock, but he alighted without injury, on his feet. (MacKenzie's "Beauties of Gaelic Poetry".)

One of the most eminent pipers of his day. He lost his eyesight, through small-pox, when he was only five years of age. Composed some 24 piobaireachds, besides many reels and jigs, most of which are lost. He also composed several good songs, as well as a "Blessing" on the occasion of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, 2nd Baronet of Gairloch being married to his own cousin, Lady Janet Mackenzie of Scatwell in 1732; and a "Comfort" to Sir Alexander MacDonald of Sleat on the death of his first wife. He is also credited with the words of that beautiful pastoral, "Lament of Coire an Easainn" (adapted to the piobaireachd of that name which was composed by his father as a Salute), on the death of George, 3rd Lord Reay (Chief of the Mackays), 1748.

It is more likely, however, that as Angus Mackay states in his book, the poem was adapted to a Salute composed by Iain Dall's father, and a lament arranged by himself, "both now unfortunately lost".

A reel ascribed to him, namely "Cailleach Liath Raasaidh" ("The Grey Old Woman of Raasay"), is one of the finest extant. When advanced in years, his son Angus (whom see) acted for him, and he visited the Reay Country and Skye, being well received. He was well read, though blind, and possessed great store of Ossianic poetry and legendary lore. From his agreeable manners he was said to have added more to the conviviality of a company than almost any man; and thus, added to his being an excellent singer, as well as a musician of renown, the best houses in the north were always open to him, where he was ever a welcome guest. On his death, he was buried beside his father.

MACKAY, JOHN (1767-1848). A native of Raasay. The orphan son of Roderick Mackay, who had come as a young man from the Reay Country to the Island of Raasay. Herd boy to Captain Malcolm MacLeod of Ayre (whom see), cousin to MacLeod of Raasay, who brought him up. The Captain, who was an excellent piper, was teaching a young lad one day. His protege heard the lesson, picked it up and played it on the moors whilst herding. He was overheard by his master, who, recognising the boy's ability, taught him the pipe, and then sent him to Donald MacRae in Applecross (whom see), a good piper, and to the Mackays of Gairloch. It is said he also studied under the MacCrimmons for a short period, in spite of the changed times with them, being taught by Iain Dubh. In about 1785 he returned, a finished performer, and became piper to James MacLeod of Raasay. Before the latter's death in 1823, and on account of the hard conditions prevailing, he determined to emigrate with his family to America, as so many Highlanders then were doing. But it was widely deplored that such a good piper should have to leave the country, and Lord MacDonald gave him a house in Kyleakin. He was also the subject of correspondence, in 1821, between the Celtic Society of Edinburgh and the Highland Society of London, the former appealing to the latter to do something to prevent his threatened emigration. The Secretary of the Celtic Society wrote as follows:—"The fame of this man is too well known to require any praise from me. He is not satisfied with the treatment he is receiving, and as his abilities are unnoticed and his allowance so reduced that he cannot exist, he talks as a last resource of going to America. To let this man leave the Highlands will bring deserved obloquy on those institutions who have it in their power to relieve one so capable of preserving in purity the strains of our beloved ancestors", and adding that "in the event of his quitting his native land we lose a treasure, as he will leave none behind him worthy of being his successor".

In the end, he was offered and, fortunately for piping, accepted the post of piper to Lord Gwydir (afterwards Lord Willoughby d' Eresby) at Drummond Castle. He and his numerous family, we are told, arrived at the castle in 1825, on foot and with all their belongings on creels slung across two Highland ponies.

On retirement from Lord Willoughby's service, in about 1839, he settled in Kyleakin, in the house given to him by Lord MacDonald most probably. The Highland Society of London settled an annuity on him of £20 a year. There he passed his last years, renowned as a piper and respected by all. He died in 1848, at the ripe age of 81, and his remains were

interred in Raasay, under a window in the old ruined chapel, amid a large assemblage of people.

He was a very great piper and composer. His music shows great taste and smoothness, but his son Angus, it is hinted, perhaps did not do the justice he ought to have shown when recording them in his Collection of Piobaireachd.

He was the recipient of many valuable prizes at competitions, and was unanimously awarded the 1st prize at Edinburgh, in 1792. Composed some six piobaireachds. He married Margaret MacLean, of Raasay, and had by her four sons, all prominent pipers, and five daughters. It is recorded by his son Angus, in one of his M.S. books that Malcolm MacLeod sent John MacKay "to the college of the MacCrimmons and to the Mackays of Gairloch". William Maclean (whom see) says that John Mackay was "three six months in Borreraig".

MACKAY, JOHN (1814-1848). Youngest son of John Mackay, Raasay (whom see). Was born in Raasay, and taught the pipes by his father. Competed, when 18 years of age, at Edinburgh, in 1832. Was "piper to Sir Robert Gordon of

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Balmorell" when he was awarded the 4th prize at Edinburgh in 1835. Thereafter he became piper to Admiral MacDougall of Dunollie, and subsequently to P. C. Leslie, Invergarry. He died unmarried in London, when with the latter, at the early age of 34. He is said not to have composed any tunes.

He left, however, a piobaireachd M.S. and also adapted from the piobaireachds "The Unjust Incarceration" and "Finlay's Lament", two rather attractive slow marches, which appear in Ross's (the Queen's piper) Collection.

He secured but few prizes, although a good player. Was an excellent sword dancer at a time when such were rare. In 1834, he won 1st prize for the sword dance at the Stirling and Bannockburn Caledonian Society's Competition, and was also awarded 2nd prize for piobaireachd playing at the same meeting.

MACKAY, JOHN. "From Lord Reay's Country". Gained 4th prize at Edinburgh in 1810; 3rd in 1812; and 1st in 1815. Considered an excellent performer.

MACKAY, JOHN. Pipe-Major, 74th Regiment. Played, so it is alleged, before King George IV when he visited Edinburgh in 1822, and his majesty was so delighted with his music that

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he graciously said, "Say, what would you like me to do for you?" John immediately replied "To be allowed, Your Majesty, the liberty to play my pipe when and wherever I wish!" which the king granted. John is said to have often exercised the privilege, sometimes under amusing circumstances. (Fionn's "Martial Music of the Clans".)

MACKAY, JOHN (1860-1925). Born in India, a son of Pipe-Major John Mackay, 1st Battalion 25th Regiment, or King's Own Borderers (whom see). Enlisted as a piper in the 91st Argyllshire Highlanders (after 1881, the 1st Battalion Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders) and later was under Pipe-Major Meldrum (whom see) in the 2nd Battalion. Was made Pipe-Major of the 4th (Renfrewshire) Militia Battalion in 1885. In 1903 was appointed Pipe-Major of the Liverpool Scottish, a post he held until his demise. Died in 1925.

A good player, he was very musical, and a most efficient instructor. He was gold medallist at Inverness in 1889, and Oban in 1887. Also won the Army piping championship in 1888, and twice the Scottish Open Championship. Composed a number of good tunes, and should always be remembered for his composition of "The Badge of Scotland", and his adaptation of "The Hawk that swoops on high" (or "Creag Ghuanach"). Learnt piobaireachd from Sandy (Alick) Cameron.

MACKAY, CAPTAIN JOHN of Skerry, Sutherland. A capable performer on the pipes, and composer of the jig or quickstep, "The Braes of Melness". Was captain of the Tongue Company of the Northern Battalion of Sutherland Volunteers, when he died in 1808, aged 41.

MACKAY, JOHN. Of Clashneach and Musal (c.1685-c.1753). Second son of Hector (Eachuinn) Mackay of Skerry, and well-known as "Iain MacEachuinn". Was a large dealer in cattle and factor for the 3rd Lord Reay, and greatly attached to the music and poetry of his native land. The friend and first employer of Rob-Donn, the Reay Country Bard. Also the father of Isabel Mackay (Iseabail Nic-Aoidh) to whom Rob Donn composed a poem of praise, and the subject of the Piobaireachd of that name. The 6-parted reel (one of the finest known)—now carelessly corrupted into "John MacKechnie", was either composed in his honour or called after him, and is so recorded in Gunn's Collection of Pipe Music, first published in 1843. It is one of those "wild reels" mentioned by Joseph MacDonald in his "Treatise" on the Bagpipe (compiled in about 1758-60, and published in 1803). A quickstep, based on this reel, also appears in Gunn's collection, entitled "John MacEachunn Mackay of Skerry's Favourite".

The Fraser Pipe Band

In 1965, the Regina Boys Pipe Band was re-formed from the original band which was disbanded in 1939 due to the outbreak of World War II. The idea of the re-organisation was the result of a meeting of interested Scots: John Clyne, George Crawford, Mrs. Alex Fraser, Al McEachen, Miss E. MacMillan, Ian Thomson and Murray Wilkie. Aid was received immediately from Mrs. Fraser and, later, from the Sons of Scotland local section 177. The band is especially indebted to Mrs. Fraser for her unceasing and unselfish help.

It was decided in June, 1965, that the band would wear the Fraser tartan, as did the original band, and R. G. Lawrie was contracted to provide the band's pipes. In 1969, Mrs. Fraser kindly presented the band with twelve matched sets of silver-mounted Hardie pipes, and the drum corps has since been equipped with Premier Super Royal Scot snare drums.

With the preliminary preparations made, on September 14, 1965, approximately fifty piping and drumming students assembled in Regina with an instructional staff composed of Mr. Howard Chamberlain, Mr. George Crawford, Mr. Tom Ireland, Mr. Miles MacKinnon and his daughter Christine, Mr. Andrew McAnsh, Mr. Angus Spence and Mr. Al Wagner.

In the autumn of 1967 the name of the band was changed to the Regina Boys and Girls Pipe Band, to accommodate the growing number of girls in the band. The name was again changed in 1970 to the Fraser Pipe Band, in recognition of the services of a distinguished patron.

The Fraser Pipe Band was established as a junior band, i.e., with all members under the age of twenty-one years, and it remains such. Presently the band organization is composed of several levels, each of which leads to the next, up to the "A" band, with Mr. H. Chamberlain, Mr. T. Ireland, Mr. A. McAnsh, Mr. A. Spence, Mr. Rodney Sim and Mr. A. Wagner instructing. The "A" Band is instructed and directed by Pipe-Major Douglas Lutz, assisted by Drum-Sergeant Bruce Lutz. Recently, David Dech was appointed to the position of Drum-Major.

Although Canadian competitions are admittedly not of as high a calibre as those in Scotland, the Fraser Pipe Band is justly proud of its accomplishments in only four years of competition in Western Canada. In four consecutive years at the Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, Kinsmen International Band Festival, the band was placed third in the junior grade, second in the junior grade, first in junior, and in

1971, still of junior age, first in the Grade Two competition. At the Selkirk, Manitoba, Kiwanis Highland Gathering in 1969, the band was placed second in the junior category and second in the Open Slow March. A year later, the band was placed first in the junior grade, and again second in the Slow March. 1971 proved to be the most successful year to date, for in addition to first prize in Grade Two at the International Band Festival, the band won first prize in Grade Two at both the Selkirk Gathering and at the Rivers and District, Manitoba, Highland Gathering. In both of 1969 and 1971, the band



The Fraser Pipe Band.

won the Grand Aggregate Award for pipe bands at the Selkirk Gathering.

In addition, mini-bands, quartettes and drum ensembles from the band have given excellent performances at many other competitions and events in Western Canada, and the band can count among its members several outstanding solo performers.

The Fraser Pipe Band is looking to bigger and better things for the future. Next year the band will compete in Grade One competition, and plans are presently in progress for a trip to Scotland in 1973.



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HIGHLAND DRESS OF DISTINCTION

Ulster Notes

by Jackie Doran.

The Ulster solo piping championships is scheduled for Saturday, 15th April, and it is for this competition that pipers will be affected by the new ruling of the branch advisory body. Firstly, entries must be in the hands of the secretary at least one month before the date of the contest or players are liable to be fined. A novice grade will replace what was known as juvenile, followed by an intermediate grade and senior, for which competitors will be required to submit two sets of march, strathspey and reel. Possible venues are Lisburn or Newtonabbey.

Bands are once again being offered a free trip on the Stranraer excursion if they sell over 100 tickets. Branch officials are hopeful that this will encourage enough bands to take part and help the success of the venture. A new band to join the branch has already stated their intention of participating and making it their debut. This is Broomhedge band who come from somewhere in between the Maze and Trummery Crossroads (if anyone knows where this is). Let's hope they are here to stay.

A big problem to Mr. George McClean, Vice-Chairman and the one responsible for trophies, is that bands just will not bring these back when requested; at a meeting last weekend, only four of the fifty-odd branch trophies were handed in. This is the time when repairs etc., are made, and it would be most helpful if bands would comply with the rules. Incidentally, if while you are reading this there are still a few of last year's cups on the sideboard, enjoy what you see, as your band has just been fined a fiver.

Eden Band are organising a miniature bands contest for Saturday, 6th May, in the Royal Arms Hotel, Omagh, to start at 2 p.m. The lads are anxious to do something to attract more piping to that area. At the conclusion of the contest there will be a social and dance to round off the evening. Enquiries should be directed to Jack Hamilton, 24 Queens Parade, Omagh, Co. Tyrone.

DATES:

Friday, 24th March—Quartette Piping, Portadown.

Saturday, 1st April—Mini Bands, Ballygowan.

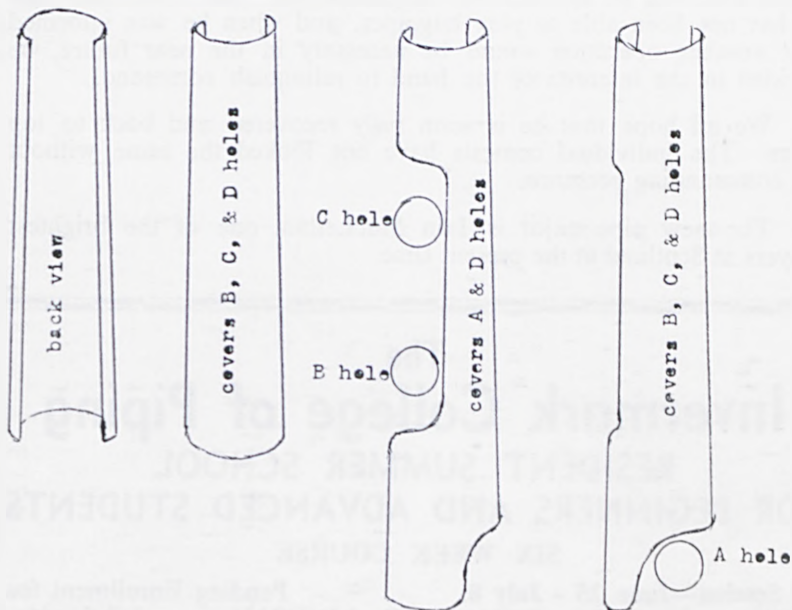
Saturday, 15th April—Solo Piping.

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by Edmund D. Allen.

This device leaves the right hand free to adjust the drone slides while matching to chanter notes, high A, E, and low A, with the correct closed fingerings. A variation of the device can be turned



to give a C with the correct closed fingering. Thin wall brass tubing with one-third of the wall cut away and lined with thin leather, rubber cemented in place, can be slipped on at the small end of the chanter and slid down to the proper place.

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and **“K.A.B.”** looks for a good Scottish piper who could send news and fresh pipe-music from Scotland. Please write—the sooner, the better.

Glasgow Police Change

Ronald Lawrie, the biggest man in the piping world, has decided to resign as pipe-major of the famous Glasgow Police pipe band. Unfortunately Ronnie has been bothered with ear trouble in recent years, involving an operation to the middle ear. For some time now he has not been able to play bagpipes, and when he was informed that another operation would be necessary in the near future, he decided in the interests of the band to relinquish command.

We all hope that he is soon fully recovered and back to top form. The individual contests have not looked the same without his commanding presence.

The new pipe-major is Iain MacLellan, one of the brightest players in Scotland at the present time.

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Petersburg, New York, 12138.**

Invermark College

by Donald G. Tyson, Jr.

The Invermark College of Piping is now in its fourth week. There is quite a lot of visible progress in the students since their arrival. The presence of R. U. Brown is most notable in the more serious students. The air about the college is filled with inspiration. Most of the students have found themselves in relation to their own respective status with the pipes.

This year's session is markedly different from the past sessions in that a much more liberal environment has been created with respect to teaching. The emphasis is on the student finding himself and working on those problems peculiar to himself. The instructors are available at all times, the students preferring to present themselves for instruction as their needs dictate and not on a scheduled basis. A student could possibly have several or no lessons on a given day. This has created a much more mature atmosphere for all concerned, including the younger (8 and up) students.

Mr. Brown has a way of bringing the student up to his level when he speaks as opposed to talking to the beginner on his own level. It is an admirable teaching quality from which every member has benefitted.

Donald Lindsay, the resident instructor, has worked very hard to raise the school's standards to a high level. This level is most accommodating for even the beginning piper.

The surroundings here among the Taconic mountains do everything to bring out the best in people. The wooded acreage of the school provides each pupil with the privacy and room he needs to develop. On a good day, pipe music can be heard from the four corners of this beautiful eighty acre tract.

As a close friend and pupil of Donald Lindsay, I feel that a great service is being done for piping. Here in the Taconics the art of piobaireachd lives on in the finest traditions and settings of Scotland's classic music.

FOR SALE—HENDERSON PIPE CHANTER. Brand new, silver sole, ivory bulb, price £17.50. Bryan Nicholson, c/o "Piping Times".

Hector A. MacKenzie

The death occurred last month of Hector A. MacKenzie, vice-president of the College of Piping and one of its earliest members.

Hector MacKenzie was a quiet Highland gentleman, intensely interested in all aspects of Highland culture, eager to help in every way but modestly leaving the publicity and the limelight to others. His influence was the more powerful because of his modesty, for he was a man who sought nothing for himself. His effect on the world has been greater than he himself ever believed.

Hector came to Glasgow in the mid nineteen-twenties to study at the university for an Arts degree. The city represented a big change from his native village of Achiltibuie, but with the adaptability which seems natural to the Highlander, he found no difficulty in adjusting to the life. Yet, although Glasgow was to be his place of work for over forty years, he never lost his desperate love of his boyhood home. Every holiday was spent there, and when he retired as headmaster of one of the city schools a few years ago he headed straight back to his home.

He was one of a large family; he and four of his brothers graduated from Glasgow University. They were part of a vanished race—lads who came out of the Highlands with very little money but plenty of intelligence and a great thirst for learning.

They were the last, we hope, of another kind of Highlander, though it probably makes little difference now. Brought up in a Highland home, by Gaelic speaking parents, they were not taught Gaelic lest a knowledge of the language be a handicap to them in later life. This seems incredible now, but there was a time when Highlanders in Glasgow pretended they could not speak Gaelic, lest they be ridiculed.

Hector's father was a piper and violinist, yet he had suffered so much persecution because of these "profane" interests that he refused to teach any of his sons to play. So Hector, when nearly forty, enrolled as one of the pupils in the infant College of Piping to recapture a lost opportunity. When Tutor I was being written he it was who urged greater simplification at every step, so that what was easy to experts could be made appear easy to beginners. Without his help (he also wrote the history section) the book would not have been nearly so successful.

Hector MacKenzie was a quiet man, of great sincerity. It is to be hoped that Scotland can long continue to produce such people.

Captain Charles A. Hepburn

When Captain Hepburn died last year he was hailed as whisky baron, millionaire, philanthropist and art collector. He was certainly all these, but in addition he had the further praiseworthy distinction of being an ardent piping enthusiast.

Charles Hepburn was a Glasgow boy, but not in the sense that the world imagines all Glasgow boys to be—barefoot urchins. He was indeed what the barefoot urchins would have called a “toff”, living in Hillhead and going to the local fee-paying school.

His interest in piping came largely through his visits to Lochaber, where the family went on holiday, but at that time he was more concerned with the feats of strength of the heavy athletes, and the endurance of the runners, being himself an athlete of considerable ability.

When the first World War came along he went off to the army, with the rest of the flower of Scotland. He served with the Black Watch, rising to the rank of Captain and being awarded the Military Cross for bravery on the field of battle.

At the end of the war he was faced with the prospect of having to establish a career for himself, and he and a fellow officer, by the name of Ross, hit on the idea of entering the whisky business. With their gratuities they bought bulk whisky one Friday and arranged to sell it at a profit on the Monday. The whisky was stored in bond but was not insured because they had no money left to pay for the insurance.

On Sunday afternoon Captain Hepburn received a phone call from his partner. “Take a three ha’penny ticket on the green tram and watch your money go up in smoke”, he said. “The bond is on fire”. Together they stood and watched the battle between fire and firemen. At length, just before their part of the bond was reached, the fire was got under control. From then onwards the firm of Hepburn and Ross, and their Red Hackle whisky, flourished—but both partners had a permanent phobia about fire and fire risks.

Captain Hepburn’s first evident interest in piping was the formation of the Red Hackle pipe band, now—under Pipe-Major John Weatherston—one of the best in the world. There are three of his Red Hackle bands in different parts of the world.

When the growing College of Piping was ejected from Pitt Street because of neighbours’ complaints, Captain Hepburn gave the free use of a flat in the Hepburn and Ross establishment in Otago Street. Later, he provided the facilities across the road which the College still enjoys. He took an interest also in the Pipe Band Association,

and when the College Tutor I was ready to print but there was no money to pay for the job he immediately advanced the sum required. Later he remarked that of all the money he had given out in this way the College was the only organisation that ever paid him back.

His gifts to deserving Scottish causes were generous and unique. He paid for under-turf heating at Murrayfield (the home of Scottish rugby football) so that weather conditions made no difference to the state of the pitch. He gave priceless carpets to Glasgow Cathedral, and renovated the Bute Hall and endowed other buildings at Glasgow University. The university honoured him with the degree of Doctor of Laws, he was Honorary President of the Scottish Pipe Band Association, and an Honorary Vice-President of the College of Piping. He was probably the greatest patron of Scottish arts of this century.

Sam Scott

It is indeed an onerous task to pay proper tribute to a great friend, player, teacher and personality of the piping world.

An auto accident on January 3rd, 1972, two miles from Manotick, was the scene of the tragic loss of Pipe-Major Sam Scott.

It is probable that someone in every piping circle in the world has had the pleasure of befriending, knowing or hearing Sam. The ceilidhs in his den were superb, for there was always hospitality, atmosphere and piping. What a treat to have been his guest!

He was born in Glasgow in 1905 and came with family to Ottawa the following year. It wasn't long before he was at the pines for his parents had given and encouraged his love of their Scottish heritage. He struggled hard to get lessons and, at the same time, supported local bands. He was also an avid soccer player with a team that for several seasons was undefeated.

He joined the Camerons (militia) in 1920 and served continuously with them until the end of World War II. He was Pipe-Major of the 1st Battalion from 1939 to 1945. He took the Pipe-Majors' course at Edinburgh Castle in 1943. Willy seemed always to be with him. In June, 1944, Sam was at Normandy to pipe the Camerons ashore during the D-Day invasion. Twenty-three years later he rejoined his Regiment when they received their new Colours, that he had helped earn, from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. He has been the Regimental Association's honorary Pipe-Major since the war. Sam was a paternal maestro in the Regiment and its band. Ten of the band's active players studied under him.

He competed in solo piping after the war with considerable success, and anyone who remembers those years will know he was

in exclusive company. He judged on a few occasions, that I can remember, but generally preferred to stay out of its accompanying hassles where he could freely applaud what he had heard. He had no pet piobaireachd, as far as I know, but found some beauty, which he loved sharing, in most tunes.

He had thirty-five pupils at all ages and stages when he died. Youthful, solo, piobaireachd players were priorities with Sam. He frequently capitalized on the use of tapes in his lessons. He conducted his own week-long summer courses and taught at the 1000 Islands Piping School for the past several years. He expected a great deal of his pupils, but never gave less.

Sam was the founding President of the Ottawa Piping Club and served on its executive in one capacity or another until this year. The majority of executive meetings have been held in the Scott residence. Seldom did he miss a meeting or not play at least a piobaireachd.

John Wilson included three from about a dozen tunes in his Canadian Centennial Collection. Peter MacLeod honoured him with a fine 6/8 march, that Sam prized. Sam worked in the Auditor General's office of the public service until his retirement seven years ago.

Sam is survived by his wife Aileen, daughters Margaret and Helen (Mrs. Murray Hartin), grandchildren Heather and Bonnie, sister Agnes (Mrs. Stanley McFarlane), and brothers William, Paul and Andy to whom are extended deepest sympathies.

The Ottawa Journal ran articles on four consecutive days. Nearly a hundred floral tributes were received. "My Home" was played in a crowded chapel. Pall-bearers and four pipers (all pupils) of the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa, took part in the service, and "Mist Covered Mountains" was played at the graveside.

Here was a warm, amiable man with principle and integrity. Sam has left us, but his enthusiasm, energy, spirit, sincerity, will, I think, make the tunes of all who knew him much richer.

G. Robertson.

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Letters to the Editor

Dear Mr. MacNeill,

After six weeks of steady performances and gracious donations from our citizens we were able to raise the last \$8,000 required to take our twelve day tour of Scotland this past August. The entire trip was fantastic. I am sorry our band missed you at the College. Give my thanks to the kind lady who gave the group a tour of the College and for the pamphlets she so kindly gave us. We were lucky enough also to get a guided tour through the "Red Hackle" trophies hall, given by a fine gentleman who happened to be at the College.

We left the States August 16th with 23 students, six parents, the Mayor of Dunedin and myself with a pre-arranged agenda of touring, performing, games, city officials and many miles of road to cover. We toured north to Grantown-on-Spey, then to Edinburgh, then to Stirling University where we spent our last week commuting to various cities and games.

The weather was beautiful, with only two days of light rain, which the students had pictured as being typical Scottish weather. Everyone we met received the students with so much hospitality. The officials at the Rothesay and Cowal Games did everything they could to help and advice us.

Some of the main events included a sail on Loch Katrine; tea at the Tarbert Hotel at Loch Lomond; St. Andrews; Oban, where we gave a concert then enjoyed Jimmy Shand's show that evening—after which the students met Mr. Shand and the group; Edinburgh and the Tattoo; Stirling Castle; Isle-of-Bute; Cowal and many other towns and villages.

Dunedin, Florida, has its own annual games which are yet small but growing each year. This and Grandfather Mountain has been the focal point in the past for these students. The students were really surprised to see thirty-two bands at Rothesay, but then we went to Cowal. They found that hard to believe. To be able to stand next to such groups as the Edinburgh Police, Shotts and Dykehead, Red Hackle, Glasgow Police and so many other great bands was an experience they will never forget.

But the main event which meant so much to us was the invitation to spend a day at Redford Barracks with the 2nd Battalion Scots Guards. I had called Pipe-Major Ingram prior to leaving the States to see if we could possibly see the Scots Guards practice. Without going into detail, we did spend the day, were given a fine dinner and a concert of piping, drumming and dancing.

P/Sgt. Holliday gave a seminar on maintenance and other fine points, then each piper and drummer took a group of our students to separate rooms to demonstrate more piping and drumming techniques. We returned the next day to perform a slow march written especially for them. We were presented with a plaque in token of our visit. As we pulled away they went marching off playing "Auld Lang Syne". I turned only to find some of our students in tears—me included. This might sound humorous to some, but to these students it was a



Dunedin Pipes and Drums.

dream come true, especially when they are not around professionals all year. My sincere thanks to the 2nd Scots Guards and all the other bands who were so nice to us. The entire trip was an educational and inspiring success.

My dream came true when I saw the students realize just how serious these traditions are, and the hard work and long hours involved in putting together an excellent band. The memories and high respect will long live with these students. This to me is the greatest value. Many bands will never become professional, but if they work hard to raise their standards as high as they can and deeply respect the needed discipline, then their ideals will be headed in the right direction.

The city of Dunedin has three pipe bands, junior high, senior

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high and the city band which is comprised of the best players from the two schools. The schools also combine the brass band with the pipe bands. The entire school is based around the Scottish theme. All of the piping was started over fifteen years ago by Mr. Mathew Forsyth, formerly from Scotland. He has a long past of serious piping and has taught the tradition and correct technique to the students.

Unfortunately, our turnover, due to graduates leaving to out of town colleges, does hurt at times, but with discipline I have been able to maintain a good standard for the past six months. I am slowly but surely getting a serious attitude within the group. I have done away with all gimmicks and commercialism (much to some people's disappointment) but they are accepting the change. All forms of ceol beag from slow airs to hornpipes, extended drum salutes, solo piping, four various Highland dances with our four dancers who are also pipers, discipline and military execution, are but a few changes.

I also believe in playing both Scottish and Irish music. Our shows last a little over an hour with a variety which holds the audience. During intermission I give a short seminar concerning the pipes and how they work and the Highland uniforms. I work on the theory that good public relations is vital and a serious presentation of the traditions brings respect from the public.

We might be back in Scotland in 1972. I want to thank you again for helping me so much when I met you in 1966. I have about a year left in earning my B.A. in Instrumental Music Education. Hopefully, I will be able to teach in a school which offers a serious approach to Scottish traditions.

The Dunedin City Pipe and Drum Corps send their best wishes to all who met them. My best to you and your staff.

Sincerely,

John Cameron Laughter,
Director.

Dear Sir,

The Army School of Piping.

In the January issue of the "Piping Times", Mr. Larry B. Ross was making enquiries about certain tunes that are not yet in publication, or, having been published in the past are now no longer available. Two of the tunes, namely "Caller Herring" and "The Silver Chanter" are included in my next book "Ceol Beag agus Ceol Mor" which is at present at the printer and will be available shortly.

"The Banks of Locheil" is published in Donald MacLeod's collection—book 1.

"The Isle of Man Highland Games" was published in the "Piping Times" in 1950 as an entry for a tune composing competition—Vol. 2, No. 6. It was then named "Douglas I.O.M. Gathering". The tune did not gain a prize in the competition, and the name of the composer is unknown.

I don't think Mr. Ross is really quite aware about the pitfalls that can ensue from publishing material without the owner's consent, and



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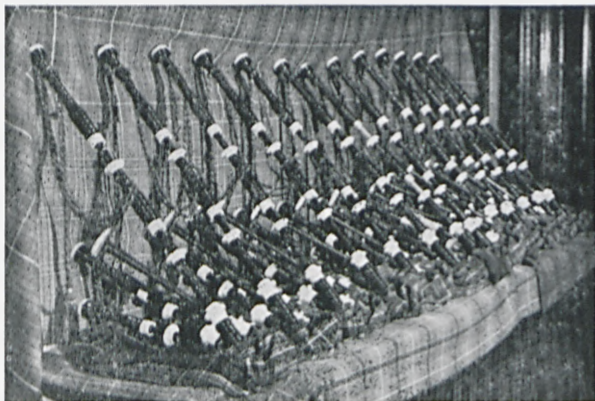
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while it is always nice to get a new tune, at times composers may wish that they keep a new piece fairly well in "purdah" so that it has the maximum impact on publication, thus, any "Trading Post", would have to use music that was once published and is now not available, being out of print, and few good tunes are in this category.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

John MacLellan.

Dear Sir,

Argyll.

I think this plastic bag idea could be a real health risk. I'm referring to the moisture-absorbent section of thick plastic "with a soft—almost fluffy—side".

Moisture-trap, no doubt. Is this also a germ-trap and a death-trap? A bit of research into this aspect followed, I hope, by re-assurance on the point, is obviously desirable. Our instrument is unhygienic at the best of times, but I can't help thinking that this new development adds a new dimension to the intrinsic uncleanness of any mouth-blown bagpipe. Previous moisture traps were quite different in kind and could be kept comparatively clean.

We knew where we were with the traditional sheepskin bag and the fact that it tended not to last for ever may well have been a blessing in disguise. With a bag specifically designed to do just that, who would go to the trouble of changing to a new one for reasons of hygiene? The answer is nobody, and on the basis of the facts given in your review I suspect that removal of the moisture-trap would not be practicable without ruining the bag.

Yours,

K.A.

Dear Seumas,

Birkenhead, Cheshire.

This is not at all like you—to offer destructive criticism rather than constructive!

For all those in touch with piping north of the border, being able to beg, borrow or steal new tunes is comparatively easy, but what about us poor folk down here, or even worse, abroad?

I, for one, am quite prepared to pay for any tunes I get, and at the moment am wanting four. What offers? They are as follows:—

"Irish Washerwoman" (Hornpipe),

"Donald Willie and his Dog" (Jig) D. Morrison,

"Lachie MacPhail of Tiree" (March),

"Lexy MacAskill" (Reel).

Yours faithfully,

John C. Breakell.

Geography has nothing to do with it. If you get these tunes you will be better off than me.

S.M.

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John Wilson's Collection of Highland Bagpipe Music— Book 1.

Another reprint of the above book has had to be made, and it is corrected, and contains the photographs which were in the edition printed in Toronto in 1950. As printing costs have more than doubled since the last reprint of this book, it will be priced as follows:—

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