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An appreciation



Vol. 72, No. 6

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Piping Times

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Piping Times est. 1948

It is not every day we find ourselves defending the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association (RSPBA). Last month, the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) decided not to proceed with a formal inquiry into the financial affairs of the organisation over its recent refurbishment of its headquarters. There is, evidently, 'nothing to see here'. OSCR merely recommended the organisation become a bit better at communicating. That's all.

Now, of course it's common courtesy to engage with people, but only in a proper forum and only with thought and respect from both sides. Further, the RSPBA is rightly reticent in responding to online complaints. Too many pipe band people who are vocal on social media expect answers and action. And when there's no instant response or no response at all they become even angrier and more vocal. It seems to us that some have become trapped in a self-fulfilling cycle by which their own anger creates the condition to justify that anger, as though Sophocles were presiding over pipe band social media and 'below the line' comments on online articles.

The RSPBA is not perfect and there are legitimate concerns on some issues, such as prize money. However, the answer is surely for the pipe band world to get itself organised and do something about it? We are not quite advocating the pipe band world should adopt George Bernard Shaw's motto for the Fabian Society – agitate, educate, organise – but there is no reason why the pipe band world should not at least look after itself in the same way the solo piping world has. Solo piping has long had organisations that look after its varied interests: the CPA, SPJA, APA, PPA, JCJ ... the list goes on of those that have come and gone. But there are no equivalents in the pipe band world. We don't know why that is. Perhaps, as some suggest, the pipe band world as a whole cares less about the running and politics of what for most participants is a hobby.

"I just want to compete." How many times have we heard those words from members of pipe bands?

Stuart Letford.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Someone once said that most of us would rather carry a heavy load for a mile than sit down and write a letter or send an email. It is important that we should never weary in trying to set the piping world to rights. Email the *Piping Times* at: **otago@thepipingcentre.co.uk** or write or fax. Full contact details on page 1.

Missing correspondence

Sir,

Keith Sanger's article on why the Campbell Canntaireachd was written [*Piping Times*, October 2014 and bagpipe.news] has come to my attention. My family were of the senior line of the MacGlasrich Campbells and as such were hereditary bodyguards to MacDonnell of Keppoch. My ancestor was beside him when he was assassinated at Culloden and seems to have been killed at the same time.

My grandfather, who was the last publicly known chieftain of the MacGlasrichs, was a Gaelic enthusiast who kept up a lifelong correspondence on, inter alia, Gaelic place-names, with his old classmate from Inverness Academy, Prof. William Watson. My father told me his father had carefully preserved this correspondence, but when he died, it seems to have vanished along with all his Gaelic books (except one, *The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry*).

I wonder if these letters ended up in the same place as the Nether Lorn Manuscript, but I have no way of finding out.

Lastly, I would mention that my grandfather and Pipe Major Willie Ross were neighbours in Glenstrathfarrar, and my father's two oldest brothers



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were tutored by Willie on the strength of their coaching, not by their father, but by their mother, a MacDonald, who was reputedly an outstanding talent.

George F. Campbell, Inverness, Scotland.

Not the role of the state

Sir,

I don't usually write to magazines and newspapers but I wish to express my views on a subject that continually rears its head these days, that of the teaching of bagpipes and drums in Scotland's state schools. No doubt, I will be going against the grain here but hey ho ...

For the past two years my son has been receiving weekly chanter lessons at his school. His school is a state primary school in Renfrewshire. I pay a modest fee towards this. He is really keen and is now on the pipes. He also is a member of his local pipe band where he receives further instruction on Tuesday evenings. This tuition is free.

It seems to me that the wailing and gnashing of teeth we hear these days about the teaching of piping and drumming in state schools is entirely misplaced. The latest example of this is the recent outcry over North Lanarkshire Council's attempts to balance its budget by considering cuts to the provision of music it provides in its schools. To me, that is a reasonable thing for the council to do if it needs to find savings.

Firstly, as the recent report on the bagpipe.news website pointed out, the teaching of music is *not* a statutory requirement for Scotland's state schools. We can all acknowledge and agree on the value of music tuition to children but it is not a requirement of the schools to provide it. Therefore, if cuts need to be made, then this is where the axe must fall. No reasonable person could argue against this, surely?

P.M. Donald MacLeod's books

**Books 1-6 are available from The Bagpipe Shop
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Secondly, and more importantly I feel we now have a generation of parents who are content to abrogate their responsibilities to the state. They expect the state, via the schools, to do everything for them. This is unsustainable. It is simply not the role of the state to ensure their kids are taught



Chanter practice in a Scottish state primary school.

how to play a musical instrument whether pipes, piano, piccolo ... whatever. How on earth did we get to the stage where parents feel their kids are *entitled* to this?

There are other avenues. There always have been. It used to be the case that local organisations such as pipe bands and Boys' Brigade companies were *the* route for kids leaning to play pipes and drums. Today, it seems to me, they are now only *a* route.

The fact that my son is receiving piping tuition in his local school is neither here nor there. His parents can afford it. However, if his school did not offer this tuition – and it's something I certainly did not expect it to offer – then he would simply be receiving all his piping tuition from the local pipe band.

I read with incredulity a report in today's [February 23 – Editor] *Daily Record* that quoted an ex-member of the North Lanarkshire Schools Pipe Band as saying he, "worries that if the band is axed, children who are aspiring pipers and drummers will have nowhere to go and learn." In the North Lanarkshire area there are plenty of pipe bands around where aspiring pipers and drummers could go. Indeed, I am sure these bands could do with having more youngsters in their ranks.

There are many bands that we don't see at the competitions these days because they are depleted in numbers. And they all teach, as they always have done, for free. My grandfather played in a pipe band until he became too old and frail. He was a youngster in the years prior to the outbreak of the Second World War and I well remember him telling me about the sheer numbers of local bands back then. This was where youngsters learnt piping

and drumming – and all for free. Many of these bands are still with us, of course, but where have all the others gone? They’ve disappeared through a lack of support in their localities ... and because the kids are now being taught in their local schools.

As I say, I have no doubt gone against the grain with my comments and you will probably not print them.

Linda Cunningham, Renfrewshire, Scotland.

** See report on page 15 – Editor.*

It's good to talk

Sir,

I'm sure it will not have escaped your notice that since your report, 'Gaelic declining in heartland' appeared [*PT* November 2019] – and further to Mr MacAulay's letter last month – the Duolingo app has now reached 200,000 downloads.

The language may well be declining in the heartland but clearly there is a huge amount of widespread interest, and maybe, just maybe, this will also have the effect of turning the tide in heartland in the decades to come.

By the way, I think Mr Baxter was a little harsh in his criticism of today's folk bands.

Blair Walker, London, England.

Pop goes Pachelbel

Sir,

I enjoyed reading about Jim Johnson's arrangement of Johann Pachelbel's Canon in D ['Pibroch and Baroque music' *PT*, October 2019]. Your younger readers [*Eb?* – Editor] may be interested to know that the American pop group Maroon 5 used the melody quite blatantly in its song, *Memories*. The chord progression and the melody are one and the same.

The band will not be sued, however, as the piece is long out of copyright and has been in the public domain for many decades. It's a beautiful piece of music and, as per Mr Johnston's suggestions, I enjoyed hearing how it has been played in various bagpipe ensembles. My band is currently rehearsing his arrangement for a concert in Bavaria in April.

Maroon 5 is not the only pop group that has used this piece of music. In

1990 The Farm used it for *All Together Now* and the Pet Shop Boys used it in *Go West* in 2009. There are plenty of other examples.

Yes, I know, I must get out more.

Rainer Dietmar, Munich, Bavaria, Germany.

Tune for dad

Doctor Bruce Ewan Thomson

1

Born in India, Bruce returned to live on a Buchan farm with his grandfather, a friend and patron of the renowned Scottish fiddler and composer,

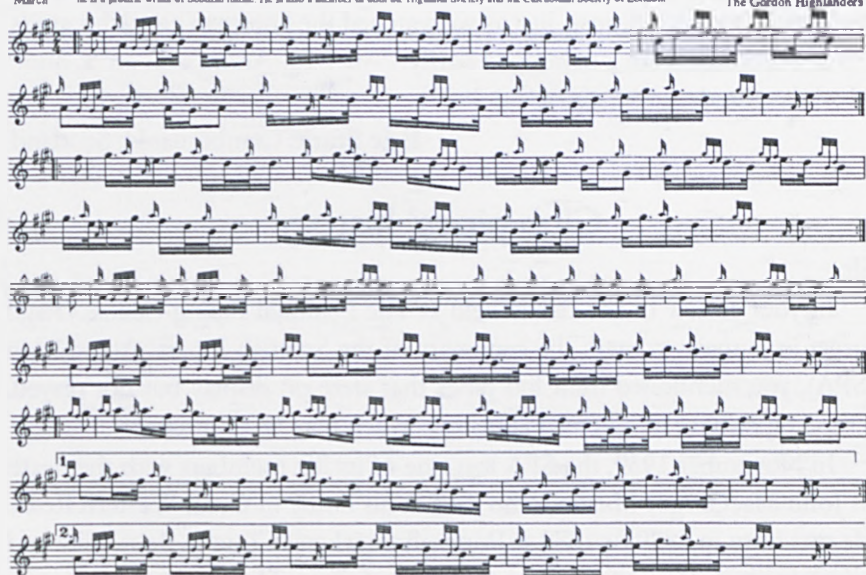
Scott Skinner, and was educated in Aberdeen Grammar School and then Glenalmond, where he learned to play the pipes. After National Service as a

Gordon Highlander he became an Oxford double bass, and represented Scotland at rugby. A well known accordionist in the London area, P.M. Brian MacRae, RVM

he is a prolific writer of Scottish music. He is also a member of both the Highland Society and the Caledonian Society of London.

The Gordon Highlanders

March



Sir,

I found this lurking in a pile of my dad's tunes and thought the attached might interest you and your readers. This is the tune that Pipe Major Brian MacRae wrote for my dad. Brian, as you know, went on to become a Sovereign's Piper.

Ewan Thomson, London, England.

"Aw naw!"

Sir,

I read your editorial last month anent [*great word!* – Editor] language and wish to relate the following true story. In the mid-late 1990s I worked in

Glasgow and one Saturday I found myself at Queen Street station. I arrived early for my train so I sauntered in to a bar nearby. It was packed with Celtic football supports watching the television screen that was showing a live transmission of their team playing some other team whose name I have forgotten.

Judging by the comments coming from the chaps, I gathered their team wasn't performing too well. At one point, the manager decided to bring on his second substitute, a recent signing by the name Enrico Annoni. The Italian had clearly been struggling to make a name for himself among the team's supporters, because, just as we watched the linesman check his studs, the cry came up from a behooped barfly: "Aw naw, Anoni's on an' a' noo!" Much laughter!

Eric Stark, Cumbernauld, Scotland.

Club pipes' history

Sir,

In your review of the recital held at The National Piping Centre Otago Street in January to mark the centenary of the Scottish Pipers' Association (SPA), you mentioned the Club pipes that were on display but not played. Those pipes have an interesting history which may be of interest.

In November 1939, the SPA lost one of its life members with the death of John MacGregor Murray, who died at his home in Great Western Road. He was born in 1879 or 1880 at Portmahomack near Tain in Ross-shire and his piping tuition was from Donald McLeod, Tain. MacGregor Murray was one of the oldest members of the SPA and contributed generously to the prize lists of the various piping competitions. He gave his active support

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John MacGregor Murray with his pipes that were later donated to the SPA.



to everything which had for its object the fostering of pipe music. He was piper to Clan Gregor and was involved with many other piping and Highland associations. His remains were interred at Cove, Dunbartonshire and at the funeral the SPA was represented by Hector MacLean who was the vice-president and Honorary Pipe Major. He played a lament and placed a wreath on the grave on behalf of the SPA.

At the next Club Night, the President, Duncan MacMurchy, spoke in tribute. A lament was played which

was followed by a five minute silence.

At the SPA committee meeting on December 9, MacGregor Murray's handsome silver and ivory set of Henderson* pipes were handed over to the SPA by Pipe Major Archie McPhedran on behalf of Mr MacGregor Murray's relatives. An engraved silver plaque was made for the bass drone. It reads: "Presented to the Scottish Pipers' Association in memory of the late John MacGregor Murray, piper to the Clan Gregor 1939."

John MacGregor Murray had a large collection of photographs and these, too, were given to the Association but some years later were passed on to the College of Piping.

The trophy that was placed beside the pipes on the centenary night depicts, as you say, John MacDougall Gillies playing the bagpipe. Gillies died in December 1925. The names of the winners start in 1928. The trophy used to be awarded to the winner of the piobaireachd prize at the SPA's spring competition for juveniles and amateurs. Until 1982 there were two competitions each year but the spring one was discontinued after 1982 as it was too close to the school exams. The list of winners includes all the top players. There used to be a big medal which went with it but that has been lost.

Jeannie Campbell, Glasgow, Scotland.

- There is some doubt as to the maker of the pipes. They are said to be MacDougall. The silver mounts are a later addition as there is ivory underneath them and this may have been done by Henderson. If I remember correctly, the drones are brass lined.

D. A. Cameron of Fassifern

19

Quickstep— "Donald A. Cameron of Fassifern"

The Edinburgh Collection, Part VIII.

Sir,

I very much enjoyed reading Stephen Marshall's account of [PT, December 2019]. His ancestor sounds like a fascinating man, a typical Scots pioneer of a bygone age.

Mr Marshall mentioned a march, *Donald A. Cameron of Fassifern*, played by the composer of Cameron's pibroch, James MacDonald, at a competition in New Zealand in 1881. Like most, I am sure, I hadn't heard of this tune but I came across it purely by chance the other day whilst browsing the David Glen collection. It's a decent tune, too. I enclose it for your interest and that of your readers.



Donald A. Cameron.

Bob Coffey, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

19



Lookalikes

Sir,

Whilst watching a documentary today on cable TV about my country's legal system I was struck immediately by the resemblance of two famous figures of our time. One is an American piper and the other is a popular English piano player. Are they by chance related?



John.



Barr.

Nick Lindsay, Richmond, Virginia, USA.



The Hirsute Hall of Infamy



Jimmy Lindsay, who tells us he was born in Ayrshire but emigrated to British Columbia in the 1980s, wishes to nominate Eric Evans into the Hirsute Hall of Infamy.

Jimmy writes: "I don't actually know Mr Evans but I saw his photograph in a newspaper sent to me by a piping friend who lives in Seattle.

"I hope this doesn't preclude my nomination of Mr Evans and his formidable face fleece into the hallowed hall."

Certainly not, Jim, in it goes!

Does a piping friend of yours have an impressive crumb catcher or bristle baton that deserves inclusion in the Hirsute Hall of Infamy? Email your nominations to:

sletford@thepipingcentre.co.uk or post them to us in the usual way.

NEWS

North Lanarkshire Schools Pipe Band avoids axe



North Lanarkshire Schools Pipe Band parading down 6th Avenue in Manhattan last April.

North Lanarkshire Schools Pipe Band has avoided becoming a victim of a council's budget cuts. Councillors in North Lanarkshire, Scotland, last month rejected options which would have seen the cessation of music groups in its area including the Novice Juvenile A World Champion-winning pipe band which is comprised of schoolchildren from schools in the area.

However, councillors instead voted to raise local taxes by 4.84%. One concerned parent said: "Rises in Council Tax are a natural. I've absolutely no issue in contributing towards any public service."

LBPS adds Professional category to its competition



This year's annual competition organised by the Lowland & Border Pipers' Society (LBPS) will feature a category for professional pipers. The Society is in the process of inviting eight pipers to play at the end of its usual amateur competition. Confirmed so far are Gary West, Neil Clark, Andrew McIntyre and Malin Lewis.

The audience will decide the winner.

The LBPS annual competition takes place on March 28 at the National Piping Centre Otago Street. Further details at www.lbps.net.

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General terms: For all of these roles, potential applicants should be UK nationals, aged between 25-55, capable of passing medical examinations and willing to accept appointment to any of the RAFO stations.

Interested candidates are invited to submit an up-to-date CV along with copies of qualifications/certificates to RAFO Recruitment Office via rtg@rafo.gov.om. Potential applicants will be subsequently provided with the job offer letter which includes details of the salary, health insurance, catering, accommodation, annual leave and more.

George's device bridges the gap



George Steele, a well known face on the Glasgow piping scene, has designed a watertrap which he hopes will prove a hit with pipers. The South Uist-born piper calls his invention the Piper's Friend™. Essentially, the blowstick is in a split stock which funnels the hot air from the piper's breath to the bottom of the stock. The moisture is trapped in the stock but the air circulates inside the bag from holes around an inch from the bottom of the stock.

George told the *PT* the idea for his invention came to him recently when driving across the Queensferry Crossing near Edinburgh. The bridge, opened in 2017, remains open in strong winds due to the way the crosswinds are funnelled above it.

George has engaged McCallum Bagpipes to manufacture his device. He said: "I have sent a few prototypes to some well known pipers and judges and they have all given me really positive feedback. I'm delighted with it. There is no restriction experienced with it whatsoever and it's incredibly efficient. It's easy to remove and clean, too."



"Some moisture systems are too efficient in that no moisture gets to the chanter reed with the results that the chanter becomes too sharp. However, the warm air that enters the bag via my invention will result in only a tiny bit of moisture condensing on the chanter reed, just enough to free the blades and no more. The result is a stable instrument and a lovely sound."

The watertrap will go into production this month and will retail at around £40-£50.

For further information go to pipersfriend.com



BBC Radio Scotland 'Pipeline' producer, Iain MacInnes, retires from the BBC at the end of this month.

The 60-year-old piper has been with the organisation for 30 years. As well as producing the weekly show, Iain also presented the programme with Lt. Col. David Murray for a decade.

We wish Iain a long and fulfilling retirement.

The winner of last month's competition to provide a suitable caption for this photograph is Angus Grant of Glasgow, Scotland:

Bust to stag: "Oh deer, he's about to play *Cabar Feidh Gu Brath!*"

One of the editor's old pipe chanter reeds is on its way to Mount Vernon.



Charles M. Usher / Lochaber Gathering



Two old photographs caught our attention this month. The first harks back to the days when the bench comprised many individuals rather than two or three persons. The photo, above, was taken in 1924 at Pitlochry Games and shows *six* judges. The photograph is not so rare – it was used in *The Judge's Companion*, of which we still have plenty of copies – and in it can be seen John MacColl (third from the left) and Major Charles Milne Usher (second from the right). Much is known about MacColl, of course, but not so much about Usher.

Born in September, 1891, Charles Usher's father worked for the family's Edinburgh brewing business, S. & J. Usher. Charles was educated at Merchiston College then Sandhurst before joining the Gordon Highlanders in 1911. He was a keen and capable piper and during his army service had tuition from G. S. McLennan.

Along with many in the regiment, Usher was captured during the retreat from Mons in 1914 and spent four-and-a-half years as a prisoner. During his captivity he was able to practise daily. Reels were taught to help keep the men fit and active. In Holland he organised a pipe band of 13, two of

whom were Pipe Majors. His efforts to maintain morale, keep others fit and attempt escapes were recognised and he was awarded the OBE. After the war he married Madge Elsa Bell in 1919 and had two sons.

In 1939, on the outbreak of the Second World War, he commanded the 1st Battalion of the Gordons and, for his work at Dunkirk, when he organised the defence of a line vital for the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force, he was awarded the DSO. He returned to France again with the troops invading Normandy.

Usher captained Scotland in both rugby and fencing, playing 16 times for the Scotland rugby team between 1912 and 1922. He was appointed Director of the Department of Physical Recreation at Edinburgh University in 1946 and held the post with distinction until 1959, when he retired. He took charge of the Scottish teams at the British Empire Games in New Zealand and at Vancouver, and was at Cardiff in the summer of 1958. He died on January 21, 1981 aged 89.

Usher was clearly someone deserving of a tune in his name. In fact, he has three tunes named for him, *Major C. M. Usher OBE* by G. S. McLennan, *Captain Usher's Wedding* by J. O. Duff and *Captain C. M. Usher's Reel* by James Robertson.

The second photograph, page opposite, top, comes from Lyndsey Ross, the late Roddy Ross's eldest son, who showed us this newspaper clipping from his dad's scrapbook. The photograph shows a few well known pipers of the pre-WW2 era marching to the Lochaber Gathering in the early 1930s.

Some of the text has been torn but, as the caption states, we can see on the far left Major Leckie Ewing, Rev. Dr Neil Ross (Lyndsey's grandfather),



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PIPERS HEADING THE PROCESSION



Chief, Major Leckie Ewing; Rev. Dr Neil Ross, Laggan; Mr E. S. Mac
 art William. The picture also shows Pipe Major John MacDonald, Inver
 e Major William Ross, Edinburgh Castle; Pipe Major Robert Reid.

who were two of the judges that year. Also to be seen are Pipe Major Willie Ross, John MacDonald of Inverness, Malcolm MacPherson and Robert Reid. In our archive is a photograph, below, which may have been taken later that same day.





Piping our way around the world – Malaysia: Easter 2019

By SEONAIID ROBERTS

Joining a pipe band encourages teamwork, discipline, raises confidence and most importantly, it enables members to make fun and lasting friendships. However, for the pupils at Perthshire's Morrison's Academy, being a part of the school pipe band has also given them the opportunity to broaden their horizons and travel the world. In recent years, some of our tours have included travelling to Hong Kong, Oman, and even New York city where we had the privilege of leading the famous Tartan Day Parade. Last year's tour took us to Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia.

Thirty excited members of pipe band along with Feoras, a Celtic-fusion band, jetted off during the recent Easter break. This trip focused on connecting our band with former pupils living in Kuala Lumpur, experiencing



Morrison's Academy playing at the Impiana Hotel in Kuala Lumpur.

the Malaysian culture and of course sharing our Scottish culture and heritage with new friends.

During our short tour, the bands participated in four events. The first performance was a charitable concert at the renowned Bentley Auditorium in aid of OrphanCare. We were also delighted to have donated items provided by some of our Morrison's Academy families. Our second event was a Scottish-themed dinner event hosted by the Selangor St Andrews Society at the Impiana Hotel in central Kuala Lumpur. The hotel live-streamed our performance, so our parents back in Scotland were thrilled to be able to watch their children performing on the other side of the world.

Our third event took place high up in the city's famous Petronas Towers (think 'James Bond'), where we entertained at Khazanah Nasional's (Malaysia's Sovereign Wealth Fund) weekly Friday Tea Talk. This was followed by informative talks about Scotland, the pipe band and Morrison's Academy. Our final opportunity was to spend time rehearsing with Sri Dasmesh Sikh Pipe Band, the largest Sikh pipe band in the world. We

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The band with the British Ambassador, Charles Hay (an ex-Gordon Highlander) at a charity concert for Orphancare held at the Bentley Music Academy.

received a fabulous welcome and our pupils made many friends. The Sri Dasmesh Sikh Pipe Band visited Scotland in 2015 and 2019. The band was, in fact, World Champions in Grade 4B in 2019.

You can't travel to the other side of the world, though, without making some time to relax and take in the local sights and sounds. We visited a Hindu Temple set high up in limestone caves and populated by a huge troop of very entertaining monkeys. The next stop was at an elephant conservation area where we were able to feed the rescued elephants and also swim with two of the baby elephants. We had an overnight stay at a national park resort and had great fun going down river on fast long boats soaking everyone in the process. This was followed by a leisurely trip upriver through overhanging foliage to a natural swimming hole.

Our pupils have made memories that will last a lifetime. Scott Murray, Morrison's Academy's Piping Instructor, said, "I was very proud of the way our band conducted themselves throughout the trip and especially during the performances. They were a credit to themselves, the school and our country."

There is no limit to where piping and drumming can take you and the friends you will make along the way through a shared love of music.

• *Seonaid Roberts is Morrison's Academy's Pipe Band and PE Administrator.*



Elephant session.

OBITUARY

Robert J. K. Semple O.A.M, B.E.M., 1920-2020

For decades, the most instantly recognisable member of Australia's pipe band community was its Chieftain, Robert J. K (Bob) Semple O.A.M, B.E.M. who died in January after a short illness, a few months short of his 100th birthday.

Bob was born on May 4, 1910 in the Melbourne suburb of Essendon. He was the eldest of four children. A Life Member of the Hawthorn Pipe Band, Bob had been involved in the world of pipe bands since 1936, when he joined the Victorian Scottish Regiment — 5th Battalion. At the outbreak of World War II, he put aside his pipes and joined the 2/12th Australian Field Regiment — 9th Australian Division as an original member of the unit. Although Bob never focussed on it, the 9th Division saw more front-line combat action than any other Australian division.

Allied Generals and the German Field Marshall, Erwin Rommel, are often quoted for their fulsome praise of this highly decorated unit. They were best known as 'The Rats of Tobruk'. They saw action, not only there but at the first and second battles of El Alamein, in Papua New Guinea and with American troops in the beach landings in the Pacific. Bob spent 1,245 days in active combat service overseas. The siege of Tobruk, at 241 days, is often described as the longest siege in British history. The Pacific war against the Japanese was notable for its ferocity. Bob contended, not only with such a long and arduous war but suffered several bouts of malaria in the Pacific campaigns.

Apart from his love of pipe bands, Bob's life was one of continual service of remembrance for those who had fought alongside him. He was far too humble to ever make himself the focus of his recollections. Bob never made a point of telling people that he had been mentioned in despatches. As he



would say, "There are more Victoria Crosses lying under the sands of the desert than have ever been awarded".

As his old mates passed away, Bob took up the task of keeping their memory alive. In 2019, at the age of 98, he delivered the address at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra for ANZAC day. Until that date, he marched the full length of the annual parade when so many others of his generation had either passed or were too frail to do so. At the conclusion of the parade, Bob led the massed bands across the forecourt of the Shrine of Remembrance. He had been asked recently by a journalist if he felt he needed to march after almost 75 years. Bob looked straight at him and said, "Yes, and I'm never embarrassed to say so".

In 1946, in same month he returned to Australia, Bob joined the Hawthorn City Pipe Band, after listening to the band playing in a local park. So began one of the great success stories of the Australian pipe band scene. Between 1946 and 1960 Bob served as a piper with the band when the foundations were laid for the great success of the future decades.

At the conclusion of his piping career, Bob assumed the position of Drum Major of the band, a position he has continued to hold until his death. As Drum Major, Bob made an indelible stamp on the character of the band – and on the pipe band fraternity as a whole. Bob won the Victorian Champions Drum Majors' title on 24 out of a possible 28 occasions up to 1987. He won the Australian title no fewer than seven times.

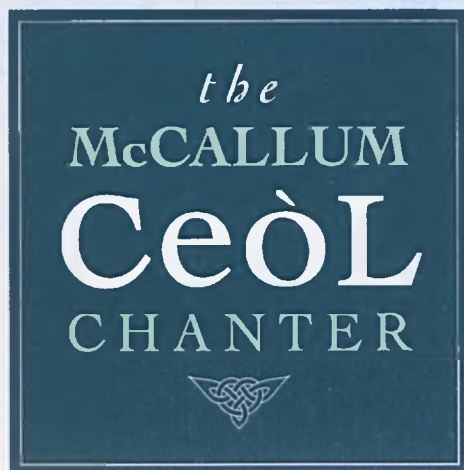
In 1977 Bob was elected Principal of the Dress & Drill Panel of the Australian Federation of Pipe Band Associations. He continued to be re-elected until his retirement in 1987. He was regularly called upon as a most highly regarded Dress & Drill Judge.

In 1983 Bob was awarded the B.E.M. for his services to pipe bands and in 1990 he was the inaugural winner of the Sir Rupert Hamer Perpetual Trophy – which is awarded annually by the Victoria branch in honour of its inaugural Chieftain, Sir Rupert Hamer AC, KCMG, ED for outstanding service to the pipe band community. In 1993 he was made a Life Member of what is now Pipe Bands Australia. Bob was so highly regarded in the broader pipe band world that in 1998 he was appointed as Honorary Chieftain of Pipe Bands Australia.

In 1997, Bob was invited by the members of the Rats of Tobruk Pipe Band to parade with them at the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo (REMT).



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It took very little time for the Tattoo's producer, Brigadier Melville Jameson, to discover he had a genuine 'Rat of Tobruk' on parade. The then Pipe Major of The Black Watch, Steven Small, who is now the Tattoo's producer, also made a point of introducing Bob to his band. He had met Bob years before in Jakarta when both Hawthorn and The Black Watch had come to compete. A letter of condolence from the REMT was read at Bob's funeral.

In 2005, Bob again performed at the Tattoo. Aged 85, he was the oldest performer. The youngest cast member was a six-year-old on a bicycle. He and Bob swapped roles. Bob rode the bike whilst the youngster attempted to play Bob's pipes! In 2007, Bob again performed in a Tattoo, this time the inaugural Moscow Military Tattoo. He was only 87.

In June 2016, aged 96, he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia. Bob contributed astonishingly over a lifetime of pipe band involvement. He was at the centre of the pipe band movement in Australia for most of the 20th century. What all of us will miss is his genuine warmth and interest. His love of life and regard for others set Bob apart and above the rest of us. His life was genuinely one of service; to pipe bands and the community in general. In October 2018, he featured on a commemorative stamp to celebrate 100 years of Australia's government support for veterans.

At their own request, a former Governor-General, Quentin Bryce, and a former Victorian Premier, Ted Baillieu, delivered readings and personal comments at Bob's funeral. Two pipe bands played, the army sent a troop of soldiers and the Scots' Church Melbourne was filled to overflowing. The police closed part of the street to allow for mourners. This was not a state funeral, just a private service for a humble man who touched us all.

They all came for one reason: to say goodbye to Bob.

For decades, Bob Semple stood as the perfect example of what people imagine pipe bands are about. In his last few years and at his funeral he showed us all that it is really friendship that matters.

We will miss him.

Andrew Scott.

CHOICE TUNE (I)

Jig

A Jig Inspired by Duncan Johnstone

By John Dew

Ahead of this month's Duncan Johnstone Memorial competition, the prolific John Dew has composed this jig. Says John: "With the contest coming up, entrants are polishing off Duncan's compositions. I've been playing them so much that I feel I've really gotten to understand his style of composition." Digital subscribers can hear John play the tune. 

Tommy Graham, a correction



In the caption to the photograph of the Liverpool Scottish Pipes and Drums that appeared with our obituary of Tommy Graham last month it was stated that Tommy was standing in the Pipe Major's position.

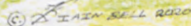
DONALD DRONE



We are grateful to Corporal Joe Davies of The Army School of Bagpipe Music & Highland Drumming for pointing this out and for providing us with this photo of the 103 Pipe Band.

Inveraray & District Pipe Band will perform the annual pre-Worlds concert this year. The show is entitled 'A Night in That Land', a reference to the name of a tune the band played in its medley over the 2018/19 seasons. The tune will be played at the concert and it suggests the concert will see the band take the audience to the land of Argyll musically.

NEXT MORNING-



Return to Oz

Alisdair McLaren, Director of the National Youth Pipe Band of Scotland (NYPBoS) for the past decade, leaves his post in early April to return to his native Australia. He remains as Pipe Major of 'The Pipers' Trail, the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo's civilian house band. Duncan Nicholson has replaced the 40-year-old as Pipe Major at Glasgow Police Pipe Band.

McLaren's last concert with the NYPBoS took place last month at the Edinburgh Corn Exchange. The show featured a mixture of new sets put together specifically for the show and also a couple of McLaren's personal favourites from the last decade. The senior band opened its performance with a new arrangement of a suite composed by him called *The Annihilator*. The band first performed this in 2009 at McLaren's first concert as Director.

Said McLaren: "It was a great evening for everyone involved as both bands performed to an extremely high standard to over 500 very enthusiastic members of the audience with over an hour and a half's worth of innovative music with a lighting display as good as any rock band concert."

By Iain Bell

*A KEEN PIPER
WILL AYE FIND
TIME FOR A
WEE BIT O'
PRACTICE!*





Photo: Alister Sinclair

“The final encore saw for the very first time nearly 100 members take to the stage to perform the suite, *Our Musical Journey*. This piece of music was composed in 2016 by members of the band to reflect their time in the NYPBoS. It’s become tradition for the band to perform this at the end of each show to farewell and to also celebrate members that are performing for the last time with the band in concert.”

Also retiring from the NYPBoS are current Pipe Major, Harris MacLennan and senior piper, Sean McHugh along with Drum Sergeant Callum Edwards, Drum Corporal Eilidh Wynd and Fergus Bryce.

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FAMOUS PIPERS

Erwan Ropars



By GILLES HOUENZ



Erwan Ropars (1950-2015) was a multi-instrument musician who played the bagpipes of Scotland and his native Brittany. He also played the long, black flute, the low whistle, the bombarde and the clarinet. He composed and arranged music and was an expert in traditional Breton and Celtic music. Erwan was a music teacher at the music school in Quimper, a maestro and a master piper whose talent was widely acknowledged. He was a member of Bagad Kemper for 30 years (1968-1998).

Erwan Ropars was one of the first pipers to compete in the first Macallan Trophy competition held annually at the Lorient Interceltic Festival. The competition is now called the MacCrimmon Trophy. Many years later, Erwan became a regular judge in the competition thus becoming an inescapable personality in this famous annual gathering.

I was a very close friend of Erwan and was a fellow traveller within



Erwan in 1986 with Kemper at the Championnat de Labour outdoor agricultural festival.

Bagad Kemper during those beautiful years. Erwan taught me how to play the pipes and trained me in its music. In 1984, in Quimper, we initiated an annual bagpipe quartet competition and concert. We judged the 2014 competition on December 20 that year. It was the last moment we shared together as Erwan died shortly afterwards on January 8, 2015.

From childhood, he immersed himself in the family tradition, rooted in Breton language, Breton music, Breton dances and the history of Brittany. He built his cultural heritage thanks to his father, Loeiz Ropars as well as with his mother. He then enriched it by mixing with the greatest people in their fields in Brittany, Scotland and Ireland.

From 1965-70, bagpipe leaders in bagadoù shared the same passion: Breton music, the practice of the bagpipe and Scottish music. Breton musicians had just started discovering how to master such a charming instrument. Erwan had the opportunity to complete his knowledge by going to Scotland. He exchanged with other leaders, Hervé Renault especially, who was then managing the Bagad Bleimor and who was also training in Scotland. They exchanged on the use of this Scottish technique, which was deeply linked to the bagpipe and on its adequacy to Breton music, both in a bagad environment and as a bagpipe soloist.



Erwan with Bagad Kerne at the 2009 Festival de Cornouaille in Brittany.

Erwan showed the way to the Bagad Kemper. He passed on the traditional music to all its musicians. Erwan served as a model, a reference and he inspired generations; great numbers of us are, and will be, admirers of this man who put his mark on the history of Celtic music in general.

Erwan impressed by his technique, his imposing presence and his tenacity. He worked hard and with such conviction that he managed to lead the Bagad Kemper to win the National Bagadoù Championship 13 times. His determination and the way he led the Bagad Kemper earned him the nickname, Big Blue.

From 1980, the friendly and musical relationships established with Scotland's Wallacestone & District Pipe Band led to concerts. In 1982, the band's George MacNeil took part in the Bagadoù Championship with us. He was the first Scotsman ever to be Champion of Brittany.

In 1984, with Jean-Pierre Pichard, Hervé Jaouen and Hervé Le Meur's complicity, the Bagad Kemper, led by Erwan, along with the Wallacestone and District Pipe Band, led by Tom Anderson, were invited to the the leading international event for global music, the Marché International du Disque et de l'Edition Musicale (Midem) in Cannes. I still have excellent memories of

this event. What a challenge it was at that moment! To gather Breton and Scottish people, in a brotherly complicity, and get them to play in a show in the Palais des Congrès in Cannes and get them to parade on la Croisette!

Then, during numerous years, at the Interceltic Festival in Lorient, we paraded with Scotland's pipe bands. The links Erwan maintained with pipe bands were very strong. The Bagad Kemper had already practiced pipe band music for a long time and exchanges began with Ian Duncan's Vale of Atholl, and with Kenny MacLeod, Glasgow Skye Association's Pipe Major. Erwan composed numerous pieces of Scottish and Breton music for his Scottish friends. He made Breton music known in Scotland. He also forwarded Breton music scores to the Scottish and Irish soloists who had been invited to compete for the Macallan trophy.

The door to competing in Scotland had been opened to Breton pipe bands in 1970 following An Ere's visit there. Patrick Molard was a member of this pipe band. In 1992 and 1994, the Bagad Kemper competed in Scotland in Grade 1.

Erwan's knowledge of Scotland, its people and music widely greatly contributed to the development of pipe band music within the current bagadoù; moreover, several leaders of Breton groups came to train in Scottish music with the Bagad Kemper.

Erwan was also interested in acoustics, in sound recording techniques, in the cutting of LPs. The hours we spent together listening to the bagadoù recordings, made by Jacques Bernard, will remain unforgettable. A series of LPs, *War An Dachenn*, by Bagad Kemper was produced out of this double musical and technical passion.

Erwan also managed an event entitled Bagpipes of Europe for the Festival de Cornouaille in 1990. It was a magnificent and unforgettable meeting of passionate musicians who had come over from Scotland, Ireland, Galicia,



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Jean Louis Henaff, leader of Bagad Kemper from 1994 till 2010, holds Erwan's arm aloft in tribute. The photo was taken at the Festival de Cornouaille in 2014 and was the last time Erwan played on stage.

Asturias, Brittany, France (Languedoc), Italy (Calabria), Bulgaria, Belgium, Austria, Estonia, Yugoslavia, Greece and England (Northumberland). A double album followed this exceptional project, allowing people to discover new tones, popular instruments and varied but nevertheless remarkable traditional music.

In 1991, Erwan and Jean-Louis Hénaff arranged a suite of Bulgarian traditional dances, entitled *La Kopanitzza*, and interpreted it in the Bagadoù Championship, which the Bagad Kemper won with flying colours.

Erwan was widely respected by pipers and musicians such as Dan Ar Braz, Donal Lunny, Paddy Keenan, Andy Irvine, Davy Spillane, Tony MacMahon, Donald Shaw, Fred Morrison, Allan MacDonald, Mike Katz, Gordon and Ian Duncan, Richard Parkes, Robert Mathieson, Terry Tully, John Wilson ... all of them knew Erwan very well and respected him. His presence was inescapable at major cultural events in Brittany, Bagadoù competitions, festivals, but also the World Pipe Band Championship; he was regularly in

Glasgow, where the Bagad Kemper was invited several times, in particular to Celtic Connections.

Erwan's judge's presence was highly appreciated in competitions. He listened to everybody, and especially to the youngest ones, so as to guide and advise them. The maestro was the long-awaited reference in a jury. He was like a light for many pipers and also a lighthouse which guided them towards an ideal bagpipe music, and ideal traditional music in general. He was a tremendous person in handing down and passing on tradition, like his father, Loeiz – who was responsible in the 1950s for the revival of the Breton fest-noz (ceilidh) – and his uncle, Marcel had been before him. His name will remain in our memories for a long time.

With his departure five years ago, the history of Breton music turned a great page.

** I would like to thank the following friends who helped me write this article: Jacques Bernard, Hervé Jaouen, Patrick Molard, Hervé Renault, Ronan Le Bars, Catie Honez, Ian Duncan and Kenny MacLeod.*



March

Great and Blue March

By Hervé Renault

CHOICE TUNE (2)

Piobaireachd

Salute to Pipe Major Alasdair Gillies

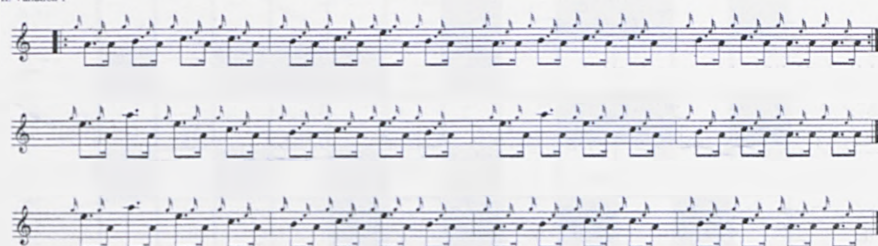
By Niall Matheson

4, 4, 4

I. Ground



II. Variation I



III. Variation I Doubling



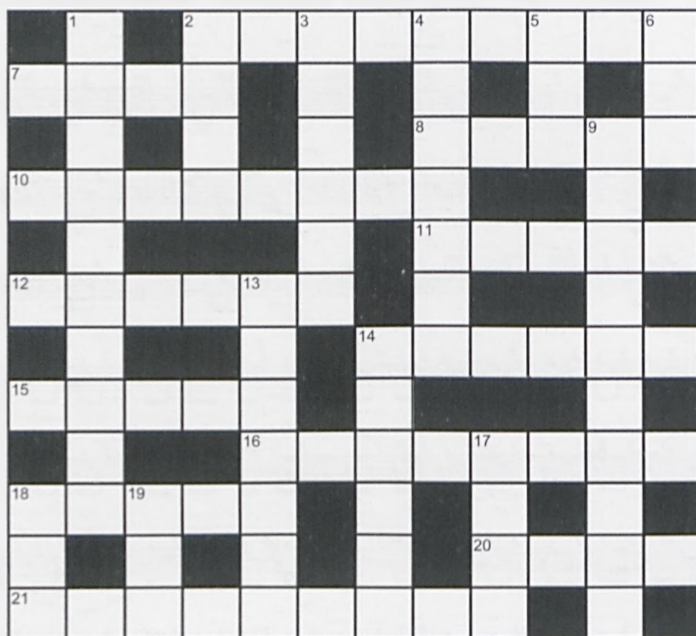
IV. Taorluath V. Taorluath Doubling
VI. Cruinluath VII. Cruinluath Doubling VIII. A Mach



Niall Matheson composed this fine tune last month for his former comrade in the Queen's Own highlanders, the legendary Pipe Major Alasdair Gillies. Digital subscribers can hear Niall play the tune. 

CROSSWORD

— compiled by Jeannie Campbell MBE



Across

2. Last month's cover picture (2,3,4)
7. Major Chalmers in the Edinburgh Collection Bk 1 (4)
8. A famous old Cameron and a young one (5)
10. Town on the Cldye coast opposite Helensburgh (8)
11. She's Hoover Happy in Chris Armstrong's Book (5)
12. The O of OSCAR (6)
14. Summer School in S Uist (6)
15. Ad --- in D Bishop Highland Harmonys Bk 2 (5)
16. Fife town on the Firth of Tay (8)
18. Aberdeenshire village west of Rhynie (5)
20. Dunarva --- in Edcath Bk 3 (4)
21. Alisdair McLaren's returning to here (9)

Down

1. The title of Wilkie's painting (3,7)
2. --- Mull (1,3)
3. The Lads of this Irish County in D Johnstone Vol 1 (6)
4. A Clyde Bridge and a military hospital (7)
5. The O of KOSB (3)
6. The Dawning of the --- (3)
9. Burns character in Wilkie's painting (6,4)
13. Sandy's was new and Bruce's was dusty (7)
14. Les of David Naill (6)
17. Mr Beckford or a bear (4)
18. The Pipers' Union (1,1,1)
19. The --- in the Graveyard by Terry Tully (3)

Snap your crossword entry to win a prize



Test your piping knowledge with the *Piping Times* crossword. Send completed puzzles to: *Piping Times*, 30-34 McPhater St, Glasgow G4 0HW. Or, photograph your entry and email it to: otago@thepipingcentre.co.uk. A £10 voucher awaits the winner.

Last month's solution: Across – Bide, Character, Skirl, Lawrie, Alan, Mad, Eil, Alva, Hamish, Tango, Henderson, Slot. Down – Capital, MacLean, Brown, Dolina, Castle, Tilt, Platter, MacNish, Dunoon, Isabel, Night, Shin. The winner of the January crossword is Andy Graham of Wallyford in East Lothian, Scotland.

Please note: those who prefer to fax their crossword solutions should note our fax number: 0141 353 1570.

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Photograph mystery solved

After last month's *Piping Times* hit the streets, a few readers contacted us to confirm the identity of the other two pipers in this photograph, the two standing beside Duncan Johnstone and Angus J. MacLellan. Neil Fraser is the gentleman to the left of Duncan and John Garroway is to the right of Angus.



The occasion was the 25th anniversary of the College of Piping held at the Glasgow's Central Hotel on St Andrew's Day, 1970. The Master of Ceremonies was Kenneth MacLean.

Among the others who were present were Captain Charles A Hepburn, Dr. Kenneth MacKay, General Frank Richardson, Baillie John Fraser, Pat Sandeman, John Inch (Chief Constable of Edinburgh), Chief Inspector Angus MacDonald, Archie Kenneth, John MacFadyen, Robert Hardie, John M. MacKenzie, Dugald MacNeill, Brigadier Hope Thomson, John Marshall, A. Black, Alasdair Milne, J. Alasdair Anderson, Terry MacDonough, John M. Buchanan, John Bain (Director of Education, Glasgow), John Weatherston, a Miss Aitken, Dame Jean Roberts, George McIlwham, Councillor Hugh Macpherson, Jack Holmes and Fred MacAulay.

At one point during the proceedings, Baillie John Fraser handed over a scroll on behalf of Glasgow Town Council to mark its appreciation of the College's work. On looking at the presentation scroll later, it was discovered that it was a blank piece of paper. Seumas MacNeill said afterwards that this epitomised the support the College had received from the city. The real scroll was supposed to arrive later but it never materialised.

Interestingly, the celebrations were held in two other countries on the same date. In Canada, College Honorary Vice-President George M. Beley held a special

ceilidh, sponsored by the Brockville branch of the Pipers' Society of Ontario and the 1000 Islands International Council. Piping and dancing were provided by the Wee MacGregor troupe and by members of Brockville Pipe Band, including Gary Allan, drumming instructor for the 1,000 Islands International School.

In Spokane, Washington, Lt-Col. John McEwing, who was also an Honorary Vice-President of the College, organised a magnificent St. Andrew's Ball in the Davenport Hotel, attended by pipers and friends from as far away as Vancouver, B.C.

RESULTS

Contest secretaries and other organisers should forward all results and photographs to sletford@thepipingcentre.co.uk. Please include date and place of contest and a list of the judges. Editorial and comment on individual events and performances is also encouraged.

British Army Piping and Drumming Championships, Army School of Bagpipe Music and Highland Drumming, Inchdrewer House, Redford Barracks, Edinburgh, Scotland, February 22-23

Champion Pipe Band: The Highlanders, 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

Champion Piper: Pipe Major Ben Duncan, The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards.

Senior Light Music: OCdt Hutcheon, Aberdeen University Officer Training Corps.

Senior Piobaireachd: WO2 MacKenzie, Royal Corps of Signals.

Full results:

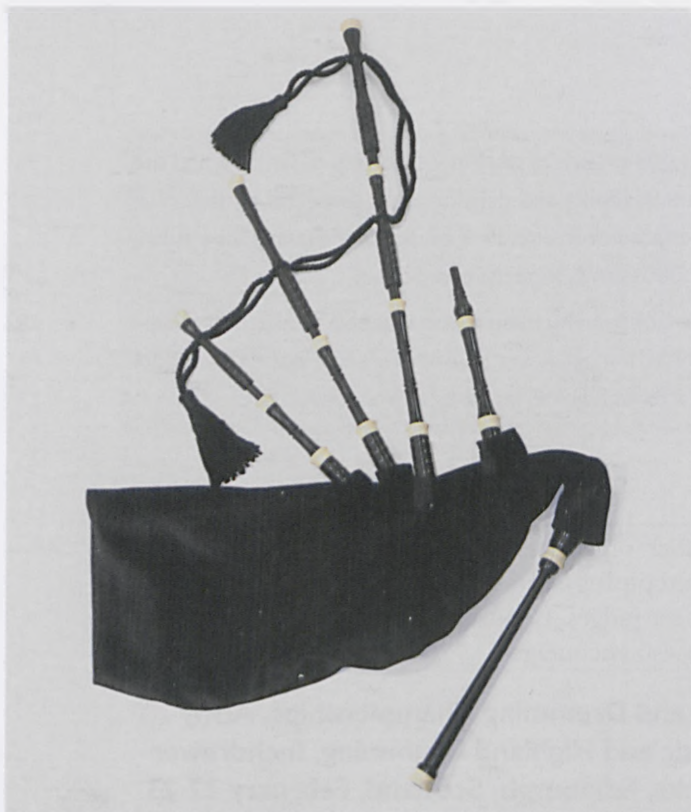
Solo Piping

Novice March – 1. Rfn Bimal Rai, 1 RGR; 2. Ppr Fair, 1st Bn Scots Guards; 3. Tpr Duff, Scots DG; 4. LCpl Grant, 1st Bn Scots Guards.

Confined Piobaireachd – 1. OCdt Hutcheon, AUOTC; 2. OCdt Chiang, EUOTC; 3. Ppr Simmons, 4 SCOTS; 4. Cpl Beaton, R Sigs.

Confined March – 1. OCdt Wallis, EUOTC; 2. OCdt Holmes, GSUOTC; 3. Ppr Killorn, 4 SCOTS; 4. OCdt Chiang, EUOTC.

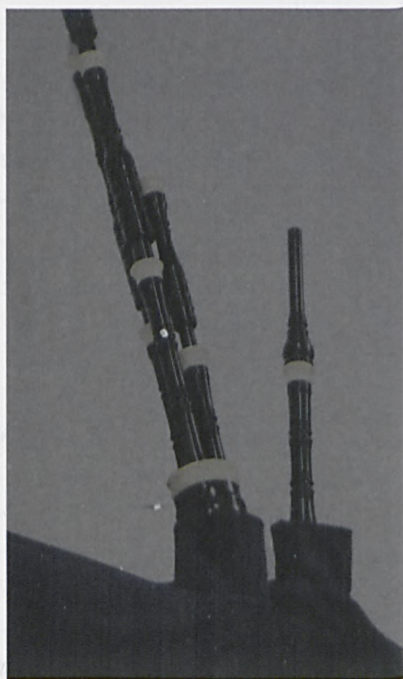
Confined Strathspey & Reel – 1. OCdt Wallis, EUOTC; 2. OCdt Holmes, GSUOTC; 3. LBdr Hand, 19 Regt RA; 4. Pte Wainwright, 3 SCOTS.



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Senior Piobaireachd – 1. WO2 MacKenzie, R Sigs; 2. Cpl Jardine, Scots DG; 3. LCpl Bell, R Sigs; 4. LCpl McRobb, 1st Bn Scots Guards.

Senior March – 1. OCdt Hutcheon, AUOTC; 2. LCpl Bell, R Sigs; 3. PMaj Laing, AUOTC; 4. Cpl Black, R Sigs.

Senior Strathspey & Reel – 1. OCdt Hutcheon, AUOTC; 2. LCpl Bell, R Sigs; 3. PMaj Laing, AUOTC; 4. LCpl Fraser, 1st Battalion Scots Guards.

Hornpipe & Jig – 1. LCpl McCaskill, 3 SCOTS; 2. PMaj Duncan, Scots DG; 3. Tpr McKay, Scots DG; 4. OCdt Frame, GSUOTC.

Open Piobaireachd – 1. PMaj Duncan, Scots DG; 2. Tpr McKay, Scots DG; 3. Ppr Gillies, 4 SCOTS.

Open March – 1. PMaj Duncan, Scots DG; 2. Tpr McKay, Scots DG; 3. Ppr Gillies, 4 SCOTS.

Open Strathspey & Reel – 1. PMaj Duncan, Scots DG; 2. Ppr Gillies 4 SCOTS; 3. OCdt Frame, GSUOTC.

Champion Piper – PMaj Duncan, Scots DG.

Bands

Mixed Ensemble Medley – 1. The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards; 2. 1 Bn The Scots Guards; 3. 3 SCOTS The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

Mini Band MSR – 1. 4 SCOTS The Royal Regiment of Scotland; 2. The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards; 3. 1 Bn The Scots Guards.

Mini Band Medley – 1. 4 SCOTS The Royal Regiment of Scotland; 2. The Royal Scots Dragoon Guard; 3. 1 Bn The Scots Guards.

Mini Band Champions – 4 SCOTS The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

Graeme Johnston Memorial, The National Piping Centre Otago Street, Glasgow, Scotland, February 22



Age 15 -18 (MSR) – 1. Bobby Allen (Shotts & Dykehead Caledonia); 2. Josh Essen (Renfrewshire Schools); 3. Aly Williams (Dollar Academy); 4. Donald Morris (Boghall & Bathgate Caledonia).

Age 14 and Under (MSR) – Duncan Winters (Dollar Academy); Fraser Hamilton (Renfrewshire schools); 3. Gregor Grierson (Dumfries Pipe Band); 4. Calum Campbell Dollar Academy.

Judge: Ian McLellan BEM.

Fifth Annual Boney Music Memorial Invitational, Seaforth Armoury, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, February 15

1. Alan Bevan; 2. Alastair Lee; 3. Zephan Knichel.

Jori Chisholm and Gordon Conn, also played.

Metro Cup Professional Solo Piping Competition, Holiday Inn, Newark International Airport, New Jersey, USA, February 15

Ceòl Mòr – 1. Nick Hudson (*Lament for the Laird of Anapool*); 2. Matt MacIsaac (*My King Has Landed in Moidart*); 3. Derek Midgley (*Lord Lovat's Lament*); 4. Ian K. MacDonald (*Lament for the Viscount of Dundee*); 5. Alex Gandy (*The MacKays' Banner*).

Judges: Chris Armstrong and Jim McGillivray.

Medley – 1. Alex Gandy; 2. Matt MacIsaac; 3. Nick Hudson; 4. Andrew Carlisle; 5. Ian K. MacDonald;

Judges: Sandy Jones and Jim Stack.

Pipe Major George Bell Memorial Amateur Championship

Ceòl Mòr – 1. Tyler Destremps; 2. Alastair Martin; 3. Colin Johnstone.

Judge: Glenn Brown.

MSR – 1. Steven MacDonald; 2. Tyler Destremps; 3. Kevin Darmadi;

Judge: June Hanley.

Annual Bagadoù Championships, Brest, Brittany, France, February 16

1. Kevrenn Alré, Auray; 2. Ronsedmor, Locoal-Mendon; 3. Bagad Cap Caval; 4. Bagad Kemper, Quimper; 5. Bagad Vannes, Melinerion; 6. Bagad Ar Meilhoù Glaz, Quimper.

The National Piping Centre's Annual Junior Competition, McPhater Street, Glasgow, February 15

Under 15

Ceòl Mòr (Ground) – 1. Andrew Pattison; 2. Luke Nisbet; 3. Logan Howie; 4. Christopher McCartan; 5. Archie Johnston; 6. Alexander MacDonald.

Ceòl Mòr – 1. Euan Lindsay; 2. Ruairidh Drennan; 3. Gregor Grierson; 4. Hector Finlayson; 5. Finlay Peden; 6. Laura Robertson.

Age 15-17

Ceòl Mòr – 1. Luke Kennedy; 2. Gregor MacDonald; 3. Hazel Whyte; 4. Liam McElhinney; 5. Jamie Brownlie; 6. Jack McGowan.

MSR – 1. Gregor MacDonald; 2. Chris Happs; 3. Luke Kennedy; 4. Cameron May; 5. Hazel Whyte; 6. Bobby Allen.

Jig – 1. Kyle Cameron; 2. Luke Kennedy; 3. Bobby Allen; 4. Cameron May; 5. Andrew Orr; 6. Jake McGowan.

March (Overall) – 1. Ross Aitchison; 2. Ellis MacDonald; 3. Sine Bremner; 4. Evie Busher; 5. Harris Robertson; 6. Angus Robertson.

March – 1. Gregor Grierson; 2. Fraser Hamilton; 3. Euan Lindsay; 4. Duncan Winters; 5. Lewis Maxwell; 6. Ewan Allen.



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Strathspey & Reel – 1. Duncan Winters; 2. Fraser Hamilton; 3. Euan Lindsay; 4. Jake Robertson; 5. Angus Crockett; 6. Hector Finlayson.

Slow Air – 1. Alexander Glass; 2. Sine Bremner; 3. Ross Aitchison; 4. Harris Robertson; 5. Angus Robertson; 6. Ellis MacDonald.

• The NPC wishes to thank sponsors McCallum Bagpipes, Wallace Bagpipes, R. G. Hardie & Co. Ltd., G1 Reeds, MG Reeds, Ezeedrone, Kyle Warren Bagpipes and Scott Wallace.

Vale of Atholl Pipe Band Junior Solos, Pitlochry High School, Perthshire, Scotland, January 18

Ceòl Mòr

Age 15-18 Years – 1. Archie Clark, Crieff; 2. Lachlan Latto, Dundee; 3. Fraser Robson, Broughty Ferry; 4. Milly Fox, Crossgates; 5. Cameron Stewart, Crieff; 6. Brogan Townsley, Luncarty.

Under 15 – 1. Katie Duthie, Luncarty; 2. Jamie Willbourn, Madderty; 3. Annabel Charlton, Pitlochry.



March

Under 15 – 1. Archie McNab, Methven; 2. Annabel Charlton, Pitlochry; 3. Brodie Barrie, Perth; 4. Katie Duthie, Luncarty; 5. Wallace Mackie, Madderty; 6. Joshua Gordon, Carnoustie.

MSR (Age 15-18 Years) – 1. Fraser Robson; 2. Cameron Stewart; 3. Archie Clark; 4. Milly Fox; 5. Roddy Kilpatrick, Glenalmond; 6. Lachlan Latto.

Jig

Age 15-18 Years – 1. Archie Clark; 2. Fraser Robson; 3. Brogan Townsley; 4. Lachlan Latto; 5. Milly Fox; 6. Roddy Kilpatrick.

Under 15 Years – 1. John William

Brown; 2. Archie McNab; 3. Katie Duthie; 4. Annabel Charlton; 5. Wallace Mackie; 6. James Henderson.

Novice Piping

Age 13-18 Years – 1. Wallace Mackie, Madderty; 2. Jamie Willbourn, Madderty; 3. Jan van der Kuyl, Broughty Ferry; 4. Alastair Leonard, Newport-on-Tay; 5. Archie Ritchie, Gourdon; 6. Sophie Cuthill, Auchterhouse.

Age 12 Years and Under – 1. Isla Fletcher, Aberfeldy; 2. Angus Robson, Broughty Ferry; 3. Daniel McLeod, Dundee; 4. William Cuthill, Auchterhouse; 5. Mitchell Clark, Dundee; 6. Finlay Liddle, Dundee.

Chanter

Age 12-18 Years – 1. Andrew Peock, Trinity Gask; 2. Harry Russell, Comrie; 3. Millie McNab, Aberfeldy; 4. Cameron Harrison, Balgowan; 5. Easson Leitch, Pitlochry; 6= Millie Emma Kudarenko and Isla Rose Kudarenko, Madderty.

Age 10-11 Years – 1. Finlay Liddle, Dundee; 2. David Sands, Blairgowrie; 3. Daniel McConnachie, Forfar; 4. Gregor Murray, Ceres; 5. Cailen Ness, Luncarty; 6. Cairn Robb, Balgowan.

Nine Years and Under – 1. Oliver Gordon, Carnoustie; 2. Hamish Stephens, Blairgowrie; 3. Mungo Stewart, Milnathort; 4. Calum-James Bulloch, Crieff; 5. Johnny Spinks, Auchterarder; 6. Chloe Scougall, Madderty.

Champion Pipers – Katie Duthie (Under 15) and Archie Clark (15-18).

Dress and Deportment – 1. Katie Duthie; 2. Archie McNab; 3. Brodie Barrie.

Judges: Bruce Hitchings MBE BEM, Andrew Frater, Derek Fraser and Iain MacInnes.



Prizewinners from the Vale of Atholl's annual Junior competition.

PT DIARY

TUITION

Saturday morning classes run at The National Piping Centre Otago Street and also on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings. The course fees are £90 for adults and £80 for under 16s. Telephone 0141 334 3587 or go online to: www.thepipingcentre.co.uk/learn and click 'Evening classes'.

Bellows/Smallpipes class each Tuesday evening (in association with the Lowland & Border Pipers' Society). Contact details as above.

Evening Classes/Saturday morning Class – The current terms at both McPhater Street and Otago Street run until April 9. Telephone 0141 334 3587 or go online to: www.thepipingcentre.co.uk/learn

Intensive Courses – The National Piping Centre offers intensive courses for pipers of any age. The courses consist of 15 one-to-one lessons of 50 minute duration taken over five days, normally Monday-Friday. These courses are tailored to suit the individual. Contact details as above.

EVENTS

March 7 – The 'Uist & Barra' annual invitational solo piping competition, The National Piping Centre Otago Street, Glasgow.

March 14 – The Duncan Johnston Memorial, The National Piping Centre, Glasgow.

March 13-15 –The International Bagpipe Conference, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA.

March 21 – The Piobaireachd Society Conference, The National Piping Centre, MacPhater Street, Glasgow.

March 28 – The LBPS' annual Easter competition for bellows pipes. The National Piping Centre Otago Street, Otago Street, Glasgow. www.lbps.net

March 28 – CLASP competition, National Piping Centre, McPhater Street, Glasgow. theclasp.co.uk

RSPBA MAJOR PIPE BAND CHAMPIONSHIPS FOR 2020

- May 23 – British: St James Playing Fields, Paisley, Scotland
- June 13 – United Kingdom: Lurgan Park, Northern Ireland.
- June 27 – Europeans: Bught Park, Inverness, Scotland.
- July 25 – Scottish: Levensgrove Park, Dumbarton, Scotland.
- Aug. 14-15 – World Pipe Band Championships, Glasgow Green, Scotland.

April 3 – SPA Club Night at The National Piping Centre Otago Street. 7.00pm. All welcome. www.scottishpipersassociation.co.uk

April 3 –The Pipe Major Donald MacLeod Memorial Invitational Solo Piping Competition, Caladh Inn, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, Scotland.

April 11 –Kingdom Thistle annual junior competition, Lochgelly High School, Fife, Scotland.

May 1 –SPA Club Night, The National Piping Centre Otago Street. 7.00pm.

May 2 –SPA Knockout **Final**, The National Piping Centre Otago Street. 7.00pm.

May 9 –VE Day 75. www.veday75.org

May 10 –Gourock Highland Games, Battery Park, Eldon St, Greenock, Scotland.

May 24 –The Atholl Gathering, Blair Castle, Scotland.

June 5 –SPA Club Night, The National Piping Centre Otago Street. 7.00pm.

June 6 – CLASP competition, Army School of Piping, Edinburgh. theclasp.co.uk

June 12 –Donald MacDonald Cuach, Clan Donald Centre, Isle of Skye.

Every other Tuesday – Eagle Pipers Society, 7.30pm at the Scots Guards Club, Clifton Terrace, Edinburgh. www.eaglepipers.wordpress.com

Every other Wednesday – Highland Pipers' Society at the Scottish Arts Club, 24 Rutland Square, Edinburgh – contact bob@boblawsen.co.uk

USA / CANADA

March 7 – Phoenix Scottish Games , Steele Indian School Park, Phoenix, Arizona.

March 20-21 – Winnipeg Scottish Festival, Manitoba (winnipegscottishfestival.com).

March 21 – South East Alabama Highland Games & Scottish Festival.

March 28 – Alma Regional Solo Piping Event (www.mwpba.org).

April 4 – Dunedin Highland Games, Dunedin, Florida, (dunedinhighlandgames.com)

May 2 – Celtic Spring Festival, Anchorage, Alaska.

June 13 – Georgetown Highland Games, Halton Hills, Ontario. (georgetownhighlandgames.com)

June 27-28 San Diego Scottish Highland Games & Gathering of Clans (www.sdhighlandgames.org).

July 1 – Pugwash Gathering of the Clans, Pugwash, Nova Scotia.

July 9-12 – Grandfather Mountain Highland Games, near Linville, North Carolina (www.gmhg.org).

EUROPE

First Wednesday of each month – Pipers Club of Copenhagen. Contact: fear-an-tigh@c.dk or +452075 3306.

Every Friday at 11.00am, the Costa Blanca Pipers meet in the Casa Cultura in Finestrat Village near Benidorm. Pipers and drummers of all levels would be most welcome: email drewthepiper@yahoo.co.uk or call 003467 6993716.

August 7-16, 2020 – Festival Interceltique de Lorient, Brittany, France.

AUSTRALIA / NEW ZEALAND

March 13-14 – RNZPBA National Championships, Invercargill.

First Thursday of each month – The NSW Pipers' Society. Contact Adam Wishart on 0409 1 58 237 or via email: adamwishart@live.com.au

Piping Society in Perth, Western Australia, meets monthly. Contact Aiton Sheppard on +61 417 097 687 or email: shepap@bigpond.com

RU Brown Piobaireachd Society of South Australia: www.rubrown.org.au or call Craig Masson 08 8261 1119.

The Smallpipers' Group – first Tuesday of the month at Milton, Queensland. Contact Malcolm McLaren for details at: mrmclaren@bigpond.com or 3820 2902.

BELLOWS / FOLK

The Glasgow Smallpipers meet each Tuesday at The National Piping Centre Otago Street. From 7.30pm

Monthly group meeting, NW England. Contact Richard and Anita Evans on 016974 73799.

Monday evening weekly session in south London in East Dulwich. Contact Calum Galleitch via Facebook

Monthly group meeting in London on the third Thursday each month except July and August. Contact Jock Agnew on 01621 855447

RADIO

BBC's 'Pipeline' is on FM 92.4/97.7MHz; MW 810 (Dumfries 585) and on Radio nan Gaidheal FM 103.5-105 at 9.05pm on Saturdays and repeated at 7.05pm on Sundays. Also on Radio nan Gaidheal 'Crunluath' with Carriona MacNeill at 4.00pm on Thursdays and repeated at 10.30pm on Thursdays and 1.30pm on Sundays.

Piping Times

Let the piping and pipe band world know what's going on in your society or band. All Diary insertions are free. Send your information to: otago@thepipingcentre.co.uk.

Please check before travelling to events.

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