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Front Cover: The late John D. Burgess takes a break after playing a lament at the graveside of John Archie MacAskill. See full story page five.

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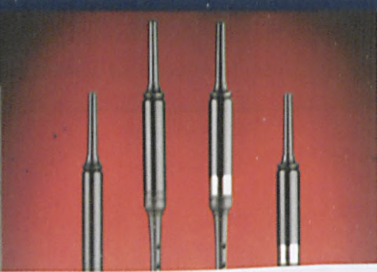
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Piping Times

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WE are grateful to retiring Convenor Richard Cameron for his compliment on our journalism in this month's report on the Northern Meeting. We promise to give his successor the same level of balanced reporting – well for ten seconds anyway. Alan Forbes has a job on his hands, but before the tough love some positives. Plus marks to the Meetings for their strict dress code. Jackets are de rigueur and rightly so. Plus marks for their acceptance of crit sheets, though they are happy to leave this up to the judges and the CPA to sort out for senior events. Probably no bad thing. Plus marks for their over-arching professionalism in the way they deal with pipers, judges and audience alike.

Now the whingefest. The first concern is the Junior Competition. We received a number of complaints about the way these were conducted and in particular the lack of tuning facilities at the TA Hall, Gordonville Road. Not having been there we cannot say too much, but we can try to reflect the anger from some of the parents and their tutors when they got back to Eden Court on the Friday afternoon. Complaints should be made through the proper channels (Alan) and will be treated seriously we're sure. Everyone on the NM committee will understand that the youngsters take these competitions just as serious as the adults do.

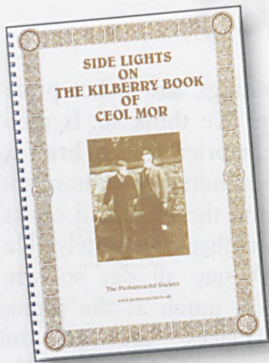
The second need is to try to get more backsides on seats. The numbers are just not coming in through the doors of the Eden Court, despite the

plush surroundings. Are ticket prices too expensive? We think so. Is there room for a cut price tourist brief to entice in the hundred of visitors still swarming round the Highland capital in early September? Definitely. The towrists won't stay all day so why charge them as much as the piping enthusiast? Prices are of no consequence mind you when the customer knows nothing of the goods that are on offer. We hardly saw one piping poster round the town, so a new marketing/advertising strategy might be in order. (Whilst on matters fiscal, given the entry fee the prizemoney is nothing short of, well, pathetic. £200 for the Gold Medal, £210 for the Clasp – come on!)

And one last thing. It is time the fourth estate, who do so much to keep the competition at the forefront of the piping mind, were given proper passes and access. An invite to the buffet lunch and a chance to mingle with the committee as happens at other prestigious contests wouldn't go wrong.

Something that Alan and his committee can't do anything about is the fact that the refreshment area of Eden Court has been, since refurbishment, totally lacking in any intimacy or any other kind of atmosphere. The hard floor, the open plan, the interminable queues all mitigate against the sort of bonhomie we used to experience at the Meetings. What was wrong with the cozy bar we used to inhabit en masse greetin' into our beer over the latest duff result?





The Piobaireachd Society

Sidelights on the Kilberry Book of Ceol Mor

Notes on the instruction received by
Archibald Campbell of Kilberry

This fascinating account of the teaching behind the best selling piobaireachd book of all time, the Kilberry Book, is available again after reprint. Published by the Piobaireachd Society – www.piobaireachd.co.uk and available from the College of Piping Shop for only £6.50 (approx. \$10US) Order direct from the CoP Shop at www.college-of-piping.co.uk The Society Conference 2010 will be at Fisher's Hotel, Pitlochry on the weekend of March 13

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Information on Iain Archie MacAskill Is Uncovered in Western Australia



The Coastal Scottish Pipe Band, Western Australia. Iain Archie MacAskill is standing third from the right. Standing in front of him and to his right is Hector MacDonald of Benbecula. Archie MacMurchie is standing fourth from the left in the second rank.

BY PIPING TIMES REPORTERS

MORE information has been uncovered about Iain Archie MacAskill, Gaelic bard and champion piper, who died destitute in Australia 75 years ago aged 35. As we reported earlier, his great niece Alina Simpson has launched a campaign to raise £6,000 to bring his body home for reinterment on his native island, Berneray, in the Outer Hebrides. BBC Alba are making a TV programme about his tragic story.

John MacMurchie (father of pipemaker 'Blue' MacMurchie) has written from Western Australia: 'It was P/M Angus Martin (Ret'd) Western Australia Police Pipe Band and myself who advised Dr John MacAskill back

in the early 80s. He did some judging here and taught at a piping school over a long weekend. We suggested he contact Mr Peter MacLean of the W.A. Cemetery Board for details of the gravesite in Karrakatta Cemetery in Perth. Those in the cemetery without surrounds and headstones were marked with a cast iron disc which had a number on it. Some such plots are said to be pauper's graves and were free. When he found his uncle's, Dr John organised and paid for the stonework and inscription you can see in the photograph [on the front page]. My late father Archie MacMurchie who was Pipe Sergeant of the Coastal Scottish Pipe Band in which he and Iain Archie played,



John MacAskill teaching in Western Australia in 1983 during which visit he discovered his uncle's grave

spoke highly of MacAskill's playing. He was a good player himself having been taught by the Bains of the Black Watch in Dundee before emigrating. He said that the band had paid the undertaker at Iain Archie's funeral. Regarding the earlier Piping Times story it was stated that his farm was at Lake Varley. That is correct, but the distance mentioned is 100 miles east of Fremantle. It should have read 250 miles – a heck of a distance in those days.



Iain Archie on the front of September's PT

'Another of Iain Archie's problems was the fact that he was situated close to a native reserve. In very hot weather and drought most of the native animals would move away and the indigenous people, with the lack of their usual food source, took to taking some of his sheep. The great

depression put an end to farming prosperity and led to failure and his return to the Perth metropolitan area.'

John Burgess's widow Sheila writes: 'Herewith the photograph of John D. at Archie's grave. It was taken just after John got off his flight to Perth, having been met by Angus Martin (ex-Edinburgh Police). Dr John was back home in Fort William by this time but John D. promised him he would play a lament at his uncle's grave. John's tour took place in 1983 and he did recitals in Perth, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and I think Albany over a period of 11 days.' Sheila kindly sent in a donation for the Iain Archie fund which we have forwarded. The ceilidh held to help realise the £6,000 needed to bring Iain Archie's body home raised £1,000. Organiser Alina Simpson said: 'I want to thank everyone who contributed and the College for giving us the premises free of charge. We are well on our way to achieving our target.' For more on the fund contact Alina Simpson on alinasimpson@hotmail.com.

Strathclyde Police Resignations Shock Band World

P/M Don Bradford and Pipe Sergeant Duncan Nicholson have resigned from their respective positions with Strathclyde Police Pipe Band. Their decisions follow months of difficulties between the band and the police authorities. P/M Bradford said: 'It was my boyhood dream to become Pipe



Major of Strathclyde Police and it has turned into a nightmare. The fact is that the shift pattern that the force is making me work to would mean that I could not run a world class pipe band, not even a Grade 3 band and certainly not Strathclyde Police. So with a heavy heart I have, along with my Pipe Sergeant Duncan Nicholson, handed in my resignation. I will remain a police officer and if the band were to continue on a civilian basis with a name change then I would happily stay with the pipers and drummers I have worked so closely with. And here I want to say a big thank you to them all for the loyalty they have shown me since I took over the band in July 2008. It was through their support and hard work that we managed to get fourth prize in the Worlds this year, my highest ever achievement. Who knows what we might have accomplished had the circumstances been different.' Don, 44, and pictured above at the Worlds, went on: 'I suppose the final straw was when one of my top pipers and a close friend Russell Weir told me that

he was leaving the band to join Scottish Power. I know others are lining up to go and who can blame them? The environment is all wrong.' Don first played with Strathclyde Police in the season 1994-97 and secondly from 2005 to the present day. 'Playing with Strathclyde Police was a dream. I worshipped Ian McLellan and to become P/M of his band – well I don't need to say how much that meant to me,' he said.

A spokeswoman for Strathclyde Police said: 'As stated in the past, the future of Strathclyde Police Pipe Band remains unchanged. The force is currently reviewing the role of the band and how it fits into the requirements and expectations of modern-day policing whilst considering our current budget constraints. A report of the findings of the review will be submitted to the force executive in November. It is the force's intention that the band which has had, and always will have, the support of the Chief Constable will continue to take part in major competitions and selected community events.'

Outstanding Success in Brittany



The pipers who enjoyed their day at Cancale

JAKEZ Pincet reports: 'Piobaireachd by the Sea' at Cancale on September 20th attracted 200 people. They have listened to 22 solo players, on a sunny day. Maïna Sicard, 15 years old, in one of her first public appearances, played beautifully 'Glengarry's Lament'. She is one of Hervé Le Floc'h's pupils. He himself played a superb 'Lord Lovat's Lament' on a beautiful sounding set of pipes. A film on the subject of piobaireachd is going to be made and cameras were at Cancale. Here by a photograph of Maïna playing her Piob.' Iain MacLeod, Jersey, writes: 'I can't tell you how much I enjoyed 'Pibroc'h en bord de mer' or – 'piobaireachd by the shore' this, the 5th year it has been held at Cancale in Brittany. Once again, no one made the trip from Scotland. What has become of the renowned

sense of adventure? It is a great day of piobaireachd playing with no pressure of competition; although naturally one is trying to give a good performance. Well known names performing included Loic Denis; Pierre Gallais; Herve Lefloc'h (P/M. Cap Caval, and whose pipes were outstanding); Denis Daniel; Xavier Boderiou (SFU); Sylvain Hamon (Scottish Power); Quentin Meunier; Anne Lore from Orleans; not to forget seasoned performers, Patrick Molard who always produces something different, and Jakez



Veteran Patrick Molard all at sea



*Maina Sicard, 15 year old pupil of
Herve Le Floc'h*

Pincet who with his band of helpers, organised and saw to the smooth running of the whole shebang. He started off the day playing 'Fair Honey', and very nice it was. Younger players who gave pleasing performances included Maina Sicard; Sebastien Boudigou; Baptiste Lemoine and Olivier Person. Incidentally, Patrick was playing his replica Donald MacDonald set of pipes made by M. Pierre Blanchet. How these wee tenors matched the huge big drone defeats me – but they certainly did to good effect. As always, the oysters followed by barbequed mackerel and saucisson in galettes with good Muscadet and red wine, went down a treat. So look out for a notice in your PT next year and try to make this part of your Breton holiday. The date is usually around the 20th. Sept. as it was this year. I will certainly plan to be there to play and to re-ignite precious friendships.'

Angus Map

IN our final report on Angus MacKay last issue there was no space for our picture of the contemporaneous map of the area showing his escape route from Crichton Royal Hospital. It is included here and shows the distance, some 3¾ miles, he ran before plunging into the Nith Estuary.



Liquidation

FORMER kilt makers Argyll Bagpipes and Kilts Ltd. went into liquidation last year owing £87,779, figures have revealed. Main creditors were HM Revenue and Customs who were owed more than £50,000. The Defence Bills Agency were owed £19,231, West Dunbartonshire Council £6,759 and Scottish Gas £4,553. The company, a

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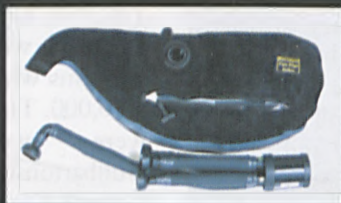
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Ministry of Defence contractor, was forced to cease trading after it failed to secure new kilt and uniform orders it had anticipated getting following the restructuring of Scottish army regiments. It had expanded its capacity and staffing in anticipation of an increased workload which didn't materialise, a report said.

Medal for Scott



SCOTT MacAulay, the late Director and Principal of the College of Piping Prince Edward Island, Canada, has been posthumously awarded the 2009 Mayor's Medal of Honour for the City of Summerside, PEI.

The award was established in 2003 to recognize those who have displayed special accomplishments or achievements. Scott became the founding Director of the College of Piping and Performing Arts of Canada in 1990 and under his guidance it grew into a top class facility with a distinguished reputation as a teaching institution. Mayor Basil Stewart stated: 'Scott MacAulay was a world renowned piper and

music educator and was an outstanding citizen of Summerside whose tireless efforts benefited Summerside and Prince Edward Island.'

The presentation of the Mayor's Medal of Honour took place on October 13. The future of the College of Performing Arts of Canada was the subject of last month's Editorial.

In Brief

IAN Duncan, formerly pipe major of Vale of Atholl pipe band has taken over as P/M of Lothian and Borders Police. Gold Medallist Stuart Shedden has announced his retirement from solo piping and has taken over as P/M of Torphichen and Bathgaten PB.

Canberra College



ROD Parker writes: The Canberra College of Piping and Drumming (Australia) have just completed their third and most successful workshop at the Canberra Burns Club on 25, 26 & 27 September.

Our presenters were Richard Hawke (NZ) Tyler Fry (USA) James Laughlin (now NZ) and Jori Chisholm (USA). The photo shows some of the organisers and the presenters, taken on our recital night.

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Post War Class at Edinburgh Castle



JOHN *Shone* writes: Harold Smith was a member of the Gordon Highlanders in WW2 and attended the Pipe Majors' course at the Castle under Willie Ross after the war. On his return home to London he became the Pipe Major of the 5th Croydon Boys Brigade until I took over in the 1960s. This photograph shows Harold and (we think) other members of the course recording for the BBC. Harold is the tall piper in the centre of the picture, what I would like to know from any reader, are the names of the other players and if possible the date and circumstances of the photo. If anyone has any information could they please email the PT at thepipingtimes@gmail.com. Thank you.

John Wins SPA Knock Out

THE SPA Knockout reached its climax on September 18th when the remaining two pipers from the original eight locked horns at the CoP. The finalists were John Patrick and Dougie Murray (right) and they treated the audience to a fine selection of light music. When the votes were counted John Patrick was declared the winner, taking away the Piping Times Trophy and a cheque for £500. Runner up Dougie received £350.





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Alastair Dunn with his Peter Henderson pipes and chanter which he played when winning the Gold Medal at the Argyllshire Gathering this year



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Stuart Caps A Wonderful Year By Taking Second Inverness Clasp

ROBERT WALLACE

THIS year's Northern Meeting went off very smoothly and was a fitting end to the ten-year tenure as Piping Convenor of Richard Cameron. The Champion Piper was the impressive Stuart Liddell (right) who completed an extremely successful 2009 season by taking the Clasp, the Hornpipe and Jig and placing third in the Former Winners' MSR. Add to this his prizes at Oban and the fact that his band, Inveraray and District, won every Grade 2 Championship on offer and you will see that surely there can be no other candidate for 'Piper of the Year' for those who wish to indulge in such frippery.

Glenn Brown from Canada continued his good work at Oban by taking the Highland Society of London's Gold Medal. Second in the medal is seen by many as the least welcome prize in piping. I would beg to differ. If you have the ability, work hard, study the music and keep a first class pipe then ultimately you will prevail as Glenn has. It is something that William Geddes will have to take on board following his second prize in the medal at Inverness for the second year in a row.

Now to the tunes. I heard all the prizewinners except Calum Beaumont who placed fifth. Winner Glenn Brown had a solid pipe though the high A was slightly flat. His technique



was for the most part sound, but some closed taorluaths and crunluaths were not always convincing. He did not quite bring out the true melody or emotion inherent in his tune 'Beloved Scotland'. For me there was a 'get through at all costs' feel to his presentation. The crucial thing from the off with 'Beloved Scotland' is to time the low A, E and C,D,E run effectively. It is very difficult to achieve rhythmically. Not many manage it. Secondly, it is important in this tune that the blocks of four crotchets don't sound like blocks of four crotchets. Trimming the middle beats without jerking the melody is the trick. Glenn thoroughly deserved

Skye for Free!

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To win the competition all you need do is collect five different numbered tokens from the Piping Times and correctly answer the five questions, one of which will appear each month in the magazine and be repeated on the **Bagpipecovers.com** website.

Once you have collected all five tokens and answers to the questions, please send your entries to 'Skye Contest', Piping Times, 16-24 Otago Street, Glasgow G12 8JH, UK. The closing date for entries is April 15. A prize draw will be held on this date and the result announced in the May Piping Times. Online subscribers can submit PDFs of tokens. These will be checked against our database.

The accommodation, along with the competition rules can also be viewed at **Bagpipecovers.com** 'Competition Page'.

Question 2: What was the date of the first MacCrimmon Memorial Silver Chanter Contest, who was the winner and what tune did he play?

Please do not submit answers and tokens separately. Wait until you have completed all five and send everything in in one envelope. Thank you!



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Northern Meeting

his medal despite these caveats and these subtleties will be something he can advance to. Appreciation will come with maturity. I always feel that winning the Gold Medal is a bit like getting your driving licence. You only really start to learn your subject once you have it.

Second placed William Geddes, equally, did not bring out the true flavour of the Nameless tune 'Hiharin Dro o Dro'. Pushing on, he snatched the connecting note between the grips to C and throws to D in the ground and in variation 1 failed to give the cadence Es the required control and variety needed in these most attractive passages. He missed one taorluath on D. The pipe was beautifully set and the remainder of his fingering precise.

New Zealand's Fiona Manson was third with 'Lament for the Dead'. She gave us a fine reading of this piece. Nicely balanced and varied throughout, Fiona displayed a real understanding of the phrase patterns and the build up of variation intensity. Her crunluath, her downfall at Oban, was much better. The pipe was in tune throughout but the chanter lacked the timbre for complete tonal integration with the drones. This would have given us the superior bagpipe sound displayed by the two pipers placed above her in the list.

James Murray from Fife was fourth with the 'Earl of Seaforth's Salute'. The pipe and finger were first rate. The timing of some of the three note runs lacked poise with F and E pauses absent. This gave the tune a sing-a-long feel (much as Marion Horsburgh had at times at Oban). Jim



*Glenn Gold . . .
worthy winner Glenn Brown*

also jumped up to the notes preceding the cadence Es in the taorluath and crunluath singlings. But for these I am sure this excellent piper would have been higher up the list.

Apart from the fifth prizewinner the rest of the contest was something of a disappointment and this was echoed by one of the judges Jim McIntosh. See his trenchant comments below. From what I heard and gathered the Clasp contest was of a better standard. Many thought Willie McCallum had a chance when he completed the marathon 'Lament for the Harp Tree'. Dr Angus MacDonald was clearly off form with 'John Garve' but had the consolation of winning with this tune in Skye. Iain Speirs, victor in the 'A' MSR, had a strongish pipe though perfectly in tune. As his 'Mrs MacLeod of Talisker' unfolded it was clear he was entering into an unwinnable struggle with the

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Northern Meeting

chanter and stopped. Brian Donaldson had an immaculate pipe but his timing of 'MacLeod of Colbeck' was unorthodox. Second placed was Roderick MacLeod (Patric Og), third Jack Lee (The Earl of Ross), fourth Murray Henderson (Mrs MacLeod of Talisker) and fifth Richard Hawke (MacLeod of MacLeod's Lament). But in the end it was Stuart Liddell who emerged ahead of the pack. His 'Donald Ban' was solid if a little square in variation 1 but otherwise hard to fault. It was beautifully fingered on a perfect instrument.

The gulf between the Gold Medal and Gold Clasp is assuming Great Glen (and I don't mean Brown) proportions at the moment. Only the most gifted and those prepared to put in the work can make the leap. There is a substantial gap too between the Silver Medal and the Gold. One young man more than equipped to handle the upgrade is this year's Northern Meeting Silver Medallist Cameron Drummond from Edinburgh. Only the week previously had he won the Oban Silver. Real talent will out and the judges at Inverness had no hesitation in declaring him the champion again. All things being equal, look out for great things from this piper in years to come.

So, as I said, overall everything went pretty smoothly and at the prizegiving Richard Cameron paid tribute to his team of stewards led by the gracious, welcoming and super-efficient Alison Harbison. It is Alison and her stewards who make the difference at the Northern Meeting and Richard's successor Alan Forbes will have an easier ride inheriting as



*Cameron Drummond –
a Silver Medal double*

he does such a strong team. And a word of praise too for the Royal Scottish Pipers' Society who supply timekeeping assistance for the competitions and whose members have made a consistent contribution to the Meetings over the years simply by being there.

In demitting office Richard said: 'I have been on the Northern Meeting committee for some 38 years and have served as Convenor for ten having taken over from Rory Walker in 1999. During this time I have seen a good number of changes, and during my Convenorship I have had the privilege of support from a knowledgeable and dedicated committee and an excellent secretary in Alison Harbison. Likewise I have enjoyed a great relationship with competitors and judges, many of whom I have known for a good number of years. I

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- 2 William Geddes*
- 3 Fiona Manson*



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Northern Meeting

am grateful to all of them for their co-operative support in continuing the prestige and success of the Northern Meetings. Alan Forbes is well known in piping circles and he will make an excellent Convenor. He will be well served by the Committee and greatly assisted by Alison and I wish him well in maintaining the standards expected by the Northern Meeting and the piping fraternity. I would like to thank the Piping Times for its fair and balanced reporting of the Northern Meeting during my term in office.'

During a break in proceedings I managed to get a word with Gold Medal adjudicator Jimmy McIntosh who was back at Inverness as a judge after a gap of 29 years. He said he had not regretted his decision to emigrate to the US 30 years ago. He said he had always kept himself busy and never had time to yearn for the old country.

'I've had a lot of satisfaction from my students. I have been teaching every day for 30 years. All kinds of students, beginners, advanced. There are recordings of what I was teaching then and they are the same as I am teaching now. When I went to America the standard was pretty low. The Open players had two tunes so I really changed the face of piping in America.'

I asked him if he had noticed any change in standards in Scotland. 'This is the reason I came over this year, to see what the standard was. The young people I am sending over come back with their score sheets and I read what the judges are writing.'

Had he been impressed with the playing in the Gold Medal?

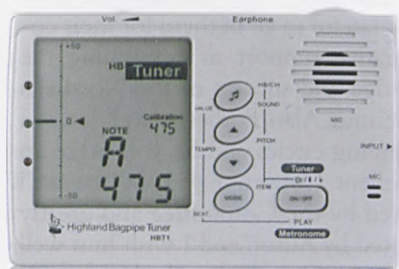


*Jimmy McIntosh,
pictured at this year's Meeting*

'No; none of the three of us were. From just sitting there listening it was quite obvious to me that some of these people should not be playing in the Gold Medal, even when you consider only basic movements. I would say that a third of them were unable to play a D throw rhythmically. There's somebody teaching that. The interpretation of some of the tunes was quite odd to me, from my experience. I just always go back to the Bob Nicol and Brown CDs and confirm what I was taught.

'One tune in particular was 'Beloved Scotland'. Only one person had any idea about how to approach that tune. I studied that tune a lot. I got the Braemar Medal and the Glenfiddich with it. Yesterday it was quite odd. They would play a phrase in 6/8 time and then the next one in 4/4 time. Rhythmically there was no common sense to it.

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THE eighteenth annual amateur piobaireachd competition for the Archie Kenneth Quaich will take place on **Saturday, 6th March 2010**, in the rooms of The Royal Scottish Pipers' Society, Rose Street Lane South, Edinburgh. Entries and enquiries to Alan Forbes, 24 Garscube Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 6BN. Tel: 0131-337 4094 or e-mail: alan.forbes@btinternet.com

Competitors will be obliged to submit two tunes with their entries, one of which they will be asked to play. Competitors may not submit any tune with which they have previously won first prize in the competition.

Conditions for eligibility are as follows:

1. Competitors must be aged twenty or over.
2. Holders of the Army School of Piping Pipe Major's Certificate barred.
3. Anyone who has ever won a prize in open competition or who has taken part in open competition within the last five years barred.
4. Anyone who has taken part in public recitals together with professional players barred.

There will be a maximum of twenty five competitors selected solely on a first come first served basis.

Northern Meeting

'Education and teaching are the way forward and I think we are doing a far better job in the States in that respect. The standard of the pipes today should allow for more practice. You're not spending hours putting hairs in reeds and that kind of stuff.

'When I started with Brown we didn't have tape recorders. Nowadays it's all things stuck in your ear. You don't need to study. I think this is a lot of the problem because what they are listening to is kind of book piobaireachd. In piping we train people as technicians not musicians. There's an art in listening to music and picking stuff out of it and I don't think that is happening either.

'You'll note the stuff yesterday was static; you don't get the fluency in the music. I still teach by singing. I get some students, generally girls, to put away the practice chanter and sing. It is very, very obvious when you hear them playing.

'I heard some better playing, more educated playing, in the 'C' grade at Perth when I was there last year than I did in the Gold Medal yesterday. They are probably anxious to get on and they are going for lessons. In my day we all had teachers. How many of the players today have teachers?

'I got all my teaching from Bob Nicol and when he died Bob Brown. Brown wouldn't teach you some of the tunes; he'd send you to Nicol. For tunes like the 'Big Spree' he sent me to Nicol. He said 'he's the expert on that tune'. It was all singing, all rhythm and expression. We have that on the critique sheets in the States. We stress that and the fundamentals of music. If you ask the average piper

what they are they can't tell you. You need phrasing, light and dark shading and the only way we can do that is by duration and rhythm. If you haven't got these things you are not making music. We don't stress this enough when teaching piping.'

Former Winners



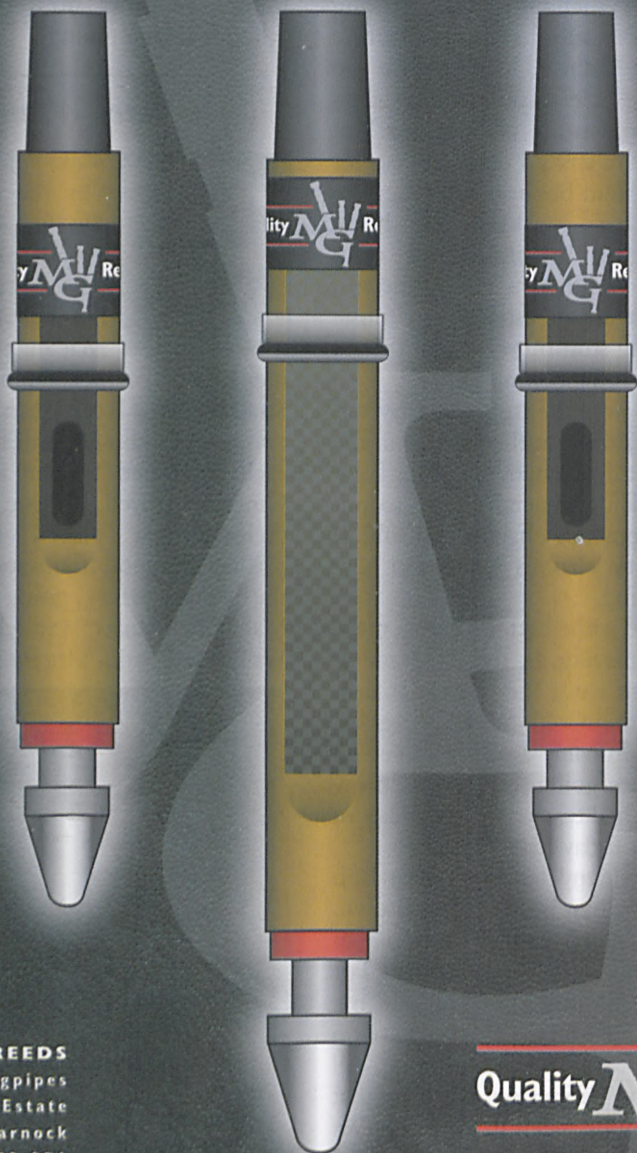
Malcolm McRae writes:

On the evening of the first day of the Northern Meeting competitions Ian MacLellan, Ronald MacShannon and I judged the Former Winners' March, Strathspey and Reel. (Each player plays two of each, chosen from lists of six of each submitted by the competitor.) Nineteen played. William McCallum (below) was placed first, with particularly good strathspeys and reels, the other prizes going to Angus MacColl, Stuart Liddell, Gordon Walker and James Murray. Even at this



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Northern Meeting

level of competition some false fingering was apparent – particularly high A to high G, with E finger not lifting, and the usual faults with hand changes. Some tight playing resulted in inaudible doublings and missed gracenotes, and many performances failed to live up to expectations.

The following morning Ronald MacShannon, Bruce Hitchings and I judged the 'B' March. Many of the players had played in the Strathspey & Reel for us at Oban. Some made a better job of their marches, others did not. Lack of consistency is a feature of the competition performances of all but the best pipers, but most performances were blemished technically. Pipes were generally good, and poor technique was the principal factor in excluding players from the prize list, although poor musical presentation also marred some performances. Alasdair Henderson (above right) was first, followed by Andrew Hall, Stuart Easton, John Mulhearn and Alastair Lee. Twenty-four played, and the event was concluded by lunchtime. More attention to correct technique, and consistency of performance under competition conditions, would pay dividends for most of these players.

The Northern Meeting had tightened up the Dress Code for competitors this year, and it was pleasing to see the men and boys wearing jackets, as befits the occasion. Most of the lady pipers wore suitable female Highland attire. The Argyllshire Gathering, on the other hand, have relaxed their requirements and this year permitted players who wished to do so to play without jackets. This



seems to me a backward step which will result in too casual an approach to dress, and to further untidiness. Also, at Oban a number of pipers played without bag covers. Will baseball caps be permitted next?

I was able to listen to the conclusion of the Clasp event, after lunch on the second day. An unfortunate aspect of this event was the withdrawal of three players upon being given their tunes. Each player had submitted six tunes from a list of 14 set tunes, the list having been published 18 months before. This year's list consisted of classic tunes, many of which would already be soundly based in these pipers' repertoires, and all of which pipers of the calibre of these players should wish to master. As each player goes on to play, the next to play is told which of his six tunes has been chosen for him. It seems that one player advised that the reason for his withdrawal was that he had not adequately prepared



Iain Speirs winner of the 'A' MSR

his allocated tune. Unless there are sound reasons for withdrawal, (and lack of preparation should not be a

good reason), competition organisers should consider imposing sanctions on such players – lest this practice become a frequent occurrence and extend to other events (where competition for the opportunity to compete is intense). Late withdrawal is unfair to the players still to play, disrupts the smooth running of the event, and is disrespectful to the audience and to the judges.

All other events at the Northern Meeting appear to have run very satisfactorily. Last year's delays between pipers appearing on the platform were eliminated, and the event now seems satisfactorily settled in once more at Eden Court. Richard Cameron, Alison Harbison, their Committee, Stewards and helpers are to be congratulated.

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Northern Meeting Results

3rd/4th September 2009

Gold Medal – 1. Glenn Brown (Beloved Scotland), 2. William Geddes (Nameless Hiharin Dro o Dro), 3. Fiona Manson (Lament for the Dead), 4. James Murray (The Earl of Seaforth's Salute), 5. Callum Beaumont (The Battle of Auldearn No.2). Judges: Jim McGillivray, Jim McIntosh and John Wilson.

Silver Medal – 1. Cameron Drummond (The MacKays' Banner), 2. John Mulhearn (The Gathering of Clan Chattan), 3. Jamie Forrester (A Flame of Wrath for Squinting Peter), 4. David Wilton (Lament for Captain MacDougall), 5. Alistair Lee (The Desperate Battle). Judges: Ian Duncan, George Lumsden and Jack Taylor.

Former Winners MSR – 1. Willie McCallum, 2. Angus MacColl, 3. Stuart Liddell, 4. Gordon Walker, 5. James Murray. Judges: Iain MacLellan, Malcolm McRae and Ronnie MacShannon.

A Grade MSR – 1. Iain Speirs, 2. Alan Johnston, 3. Callum Beaumont, 4. Colin Lee, 5. Jenny Hazzard. Judges: John MacDougall, Iain MacFadyen and Iain Morrison

B March – 1. Alasdair Henderson, 2. Andrew Hall, 3. Stuart Easton, 4. John Mulhearn, 5. Alistair Lee. Judges: M McRae, R MacShannon, B Hitchings

B S&R – 1. Alasdair Henderson, 2. Alastair Lee, 3. Gavin Ferguson, 4. John Mulhearn, 5. James Troy. Judges: I MacLellan, J Wilson, J MacGillivray.

Clasp – 1. S Liddell (Lament for Donald Ban MacCrimmon), 2. Roderick MacLeod (Lament for Patrick Og MacCrimmon) . 3. Jack Lee (Earl of Ross's March), 4. Murray Henderson (Mrs MacLeod of Talisker's Salute), 5. Richard Hawke (MacLeod of MacLeod's Lament). Judges: I MacFadyen, J MacDougall, I Morrison.

H&J – 1. Stuart Liddell, 2. Roderick Macleod, 3. William McCallum, 4. Alasdair Gillies, 5. Angus MacColl. Judges: J McIntosh, I Duncan, G Lumsden.

Under 15 March – 1. Seumas O'Baighill, 2. B MacDonald 3. Sandy Cameron 4. Brighde Chaimbeul.

Under 18 MSR – 1. Craig Sutherland, 2. Alexander Levack, 3. George Stewart, 4. Craig Wilson.

Junior Piobaireachd – 1. George Stewart, 2. Craig Sutherland, 3. Brighde Chaimbeul, 4. Sandy Cameron.



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P/M Willie Ross and Succession At the Army School of Piping

JOHN SHONE

RECENTLY, I have been asked by some of the younger members of the piping fraternity to put into the public arena some of the correspondence and conversations I have had with the notable players of the past. I don't know whether to be flattered or hurt by the thought that I have come to that age when my memories should be noted down. I suppose it is true to say that any correspondence I might have had over the years with great piping figures of the 20th century could slip away into oblivion unless I make the effort of preserving them, so here goes – and in the august columns of the PT no less.

It is now over 40 years since I first made the acquaintance of James Campbell of Kilberry. I was competing in the Open Piobaireachd in London and he was the judge. My tune was 'Too Long in this Condition' and I had the temerity to approach the great man afterwards to ask for his comments on my performance. He was kindness itself and helpful, and from then on I enjoyed regular contact. He had been President of the Scottish Piping Society of London but it was sometime after his resignation from the Presidency, that I became the London competition secretary and served as member of the committee.



Willie Ross pictured at the time of his retirement in the 1950s

He was always interested, from his base at Pembroke College, Cambridge, in the 'goings on' at the society, and we kept in touch.

When I first met him I was under the instruction of Pipe Major J.B. Robertson and was also with his (JB's) encouragement travelling to Ballater to take lessons from Bob Nicol.

It was later when I was writing a piece for this magazine concerning JB's career, that I asked James to let me have his comments on the piping scene around the games during late 1930s and the appointment of the successor to Willie Ross at the Castle



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in the 1950s. He was unstinting in the help he gave me and I value his letters which were always lengthy and in his own hand.

I now pass on some of the comments James Campbell so kindly and generously passed to me. I may add here that James held none of what I now place in the public arena as confidential. He told me to use his comments as I saw fit.

During the '30s James told me that there were a number of very fine players competing regularly around the games. These included John MacDonald of Inverness, Bob Reid, J.B.Robertson, John Wilson, Malcolm MacPherson, Bob Brown, and David Ross, Rosehall. He said these were all great players and that consequently the standard of performance was extraordinarily high. As late as 1934 John MacDonald of Inverness won the Clasp at Inverness and came third



*James Campbell pictured in 1937
at the Argyllshire Gathering*

in the Open Piobaireachd at Oban.

In the 1950s, around the time of Willie Ross's retirement from the position of piping instructor to the Army at Edinburgh Castle, it is interesting, at this distance in time, to follow the process by which Captain John MacLellan became the new and very worthy incumbent of the post. Within the ranks of the leading members of the Piobaireachd Society John MacLellan's name as the successor to Willie Ross did not arise. At the time it was the Society's remit to make the running for the appointment and so lengthy conversations and correspondence took place within the Society at the time.

The first mention I have in any correspondence concerning Willie Ross's replacement at the Castle is in a letter written in 1951 by Archibald Campbell. I quote: 'Alasdair [Anderson, past President of the PS?]



*JB Robertson, touted as a possible
successor to Willie Ross*

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said that Ross was not looking at all well . . .

'I suppose you have heard no talk about Ross wanting to retire. Should he do so, Robertson definitely would be an applicant. It would be quite impossible to find a man with all the requisite qualities, and Robertson has some of them. I know him well and he is a very decent man in himself . . .'

James Campbell, commenting to me in a letter entitled 'J.B. and the Army Class' written in 2001, wrote:

'Actually W. Ross did not retire until several years after my father's letter of 1951 was written. By the time the vacancy occurred the class had been taken over by the Army, and they made their own selection (John MacLellan). I don't know if Robbie's [JB Robertson's] hat was in the ring at that time, but I doubt it. Had the selection been made before the Army took over, JB would have been a candidate, backed by my father, but I rather think that J.P.Grant [Rothiemurchus] was not wholly on his side and that his inclination was towards Donald Macleod or one of the Bobs of Balmoral. JB lacked the feel for piobaireachd, on which JPG set great store . . .'

There then, I believe, follows comment on the other possible candidates, details of which, I'm afraid I do not have.

In later years as London correspondent for the 'International Piper' magazine run by John MacLellan, I came to know 'Captain John' quite well, and as London's competition secretary I also came to know well the other candidates 'in the frame' for the Army job at that time.

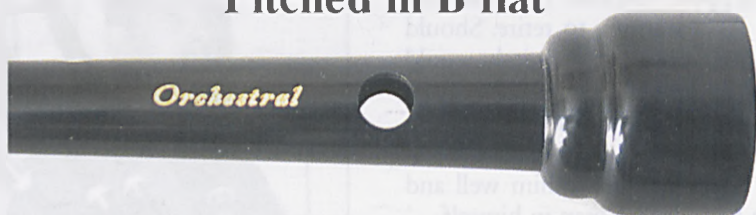


Captain John MacLellan pictured in the 1950s . . . the Army School thrived under his direction

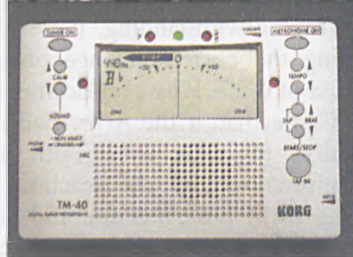
Looking back on events, I have no doubt that Captain John was a terrific choice; the Army on this occasion got it right! I think events subsequent to his appointment make it quite clear that he did a superb job for both the Army and piping in general.

This notwithstanding, it is clear, reading the correspondence on the subject of Willie Ross's replacement at the Castle that, if the Army had not decided to take over both the administration and the teaching of piping at the time, it is doubtful John MacLellan would have been appointed. The Army made the final choice, and it was clear they wanted John MacLellan, a serving soldier, unlike others on the Piobaireachd

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Society's short list who were mainly retired.

As an aside I well remember talking to Captain John on one occasion when he related to me how he took pains to hear JB play marches, and other light music, and how he modelled his own playing on him. Anyone now listening to John MacLellan's recordings will, if they were fortunate enough to have heard JB 'in the flesh', would say he succeeded.

It is so very interesting to see how just two or at the most three men within the Piobaireachd Society had such influence on piping. It was not until the Army took over the running

of the classes at the Castle that this influence waned. The Army school under 'Captain John' was pre-eminent. Now it is the civilian societies who have taken on the burden of running the piping world.

The Ministry of Defence does not appear to have given the same support to piping over recent years as it has in the past. No doubt those in Whitehall who wield the 'financial stick' could and did make cuts backed by the recent government. This has had a very detrimental effect on piping in the Army, and the great contests of today figure few if any serving soldiers.

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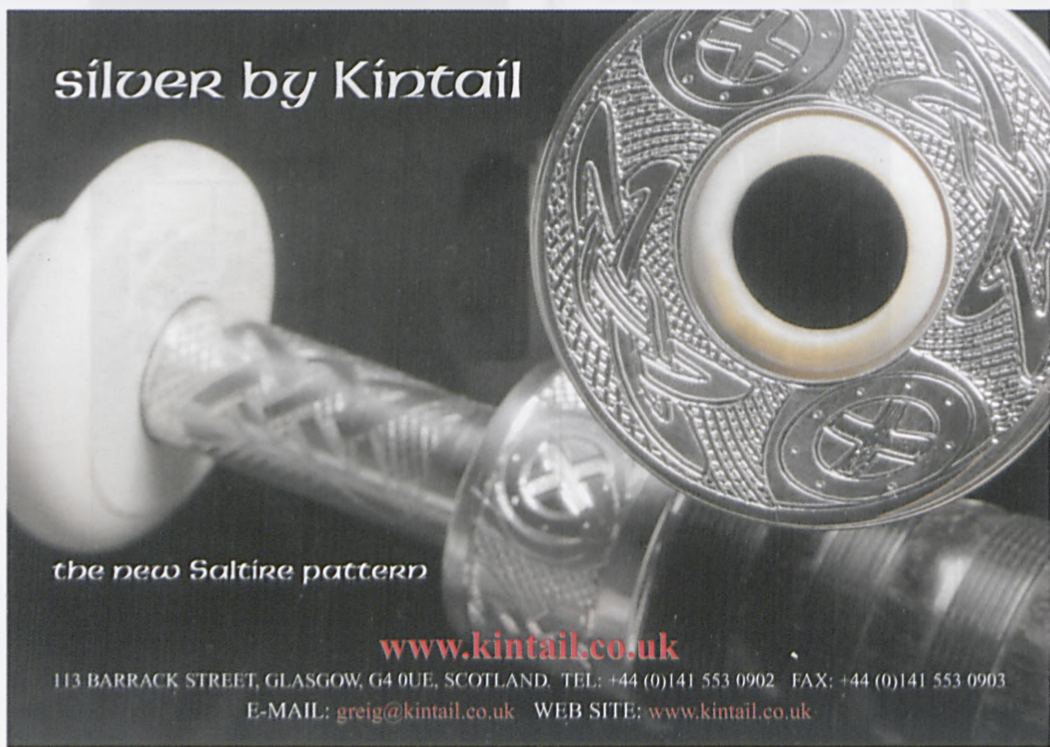
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Happy Return to Familiar Pastures For 38th CoP Californian School

DUGALD MACNEILL



IT was good to be back at the Army and Navy Academy in Carlsbad. Many of our regulars who did not go to San Diego last year came back to enjoy a good week's teaching and fellowship in piping with the usual team of instructors. After several years with no drumming instruction we were pleased to have Tom Robinson fulfil that role which he did admirably. Tom, of course, is also an accomplished piper and is minded to take up ceol mor.

McCallum Bagpipes very kindly donated a fine set of pipes to the school. We are very grateful to Kenny MacLeod and to Stuart McCallum, proprietors of the company, for their generous contribution. The pipes were 'raffled' with other prizes and the very popular winner of them was Jim Rusk (pictured right). The most improved player, who now holds the silver encrusted practice chanter for the year, kindly donated by Andrew Hassell, was J. Newman. 'Jay' is one of the several young men and women

who have attended the school over many years and continue to give the instructors much satisfaction with their high standard of playing. We look forward to welcoming everyone to the school again next June for our 39th College of Piping School.



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Rideout**



Congratulations to Bonny Rideout for this CD. There are nine tracks but they include two known bagpipe ceol mor pieces 'MacDougall's Gathering' and 'Bodach nam Briogas'. Bonnie Rideout is supported on some tracks by clarsach, flute, pipes, voice and horns. Pipers will be critical of some parts of some of the takes and I think that sometimes there is too much trying to copy the bagpipe with 'fiddled' taorluaths etc. which do not have the same effect as the bagpipe ones do. Where, however, the melodies are transferred to the violin or viola with a fiddler's 'take' on the way to express that melody with, what we do not have on the bagpipes, effective changes in volume, then the recording works very well. Some of the tunes have the variations taken too fast, especially 'Bodach nam Briogas'. In 'MacGregor's Search' a fiddle piobaireachd by Daniel Dow 1776, the variations were much more pleasing, with a tempo to suit the established feel of the tune. Track 2 is the 'Bishop of Argyll' which was composed for the fiddle and first appeared in 1742 and has indeed been scored recently (30 years ago) for the bagpipe. Some pipers acknowledge it as properly belonging to ceol mor and others do not. Track 4 is by Scott

Skinner in tribute to the famous victory by the Gordon Highlanders on the Heights of Dargai with Piper Findlater. Like most good music you must listen to it more than once to appreciate it. I am not sure what to make of the last two tracks which are about the seals – the 'selchies'. Allan MacDonald makes a contribution using his own canntaireachd which severely tested his lower register.

As I mentioned above, pipers will be critical of this CD but we should be pleased that it may introduce some of the music loving public to ceol mor and have them realise that it is a very rich music. I look forward to further CDs from Bonny Rideout.

Dugald MacNeill

**'Some of Me
Pipes'
By Julian
Goodacre on
the White
House label**



It was said of John Ban MacKenzie that he was the complete piper because he could turn the wood to make the pipes, kill the sheep, make the bag, make the reeds, compose the tune and play it. Julian does even better in one sense, as he starts with the tree, although knowing Julian I cannot imagine him killing the sheep. Julian has a personal relationship with his pipes, having as he says known some of the trees all his life as they have grown on his family's farm or places nearby. In the sleeve

notes he says 'Across the road is the churchyard where my aunt Alice was buried in 1944, near a flowering cherry. This tree died a few years ago and from this I made my Leicestershire Smallpipes. These pipes are now part of my family tree.'

Julian's playing style is unusual as he uses what he calls a covered fingering style to produce a percussive effect. To a Highland piper trained to flinch on hearing a crossing noise this is rather unnerving at first as it sounds as if he is making a crossing noise every time he goes from one note to another. However one soon gets accustomed to it and can then enjoy the music.

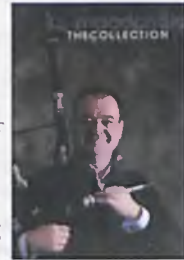
Not only has Julian re-created many of the old English bagpipes, he has also produced new melodies and arrangements which suit the instruments. Julian says he feels a pang when saying goodbye to a pipe he has made for a customer, but the joy of a new tune is that he can give it away and still have it to play whenever he wants to. Listening to his dance tunes one can imagine a lost world of English village greens, with rustic swains and maidens dancing on a summer evening, or country weddings with a piper leading the bridal party to the celebrations.

There are 17 tracks on the 75 minute CD and some of the highlights for me were track 2 with Leicestershire Smallpipes, English Great Pipes in A and English Great Pipes in Low D playing some nice harmonies, track four with High D and Low D Great Pipes, track 5 with many instruments all playing together and so obviously enjoying their music

that it is guaranteed to bring a smile to the face of the listener, tracks 6 and 12 with the amazing sound of the Cornish Double pipes, tracks 10 and 15 which have a Scottish flavour and track 16 with English Great Pipe in G accompanied by bouzouki, guitar and percussion. Julian plays English Great Pipes, Leicestershire Smallpipes and Cornish Double Pipes. The accompanying musicians and instruments are many and varied, including other players of English pipes, Scottish Border pipes, harp, melodeon, fiddle, hurdy-gurdy, guitar, bouzouki, mandolin and sousaphone. As the sleeve notes rightly say 'the results are uplifting, gorgeous and fun, a celebration of English bagpipes playing English music'.

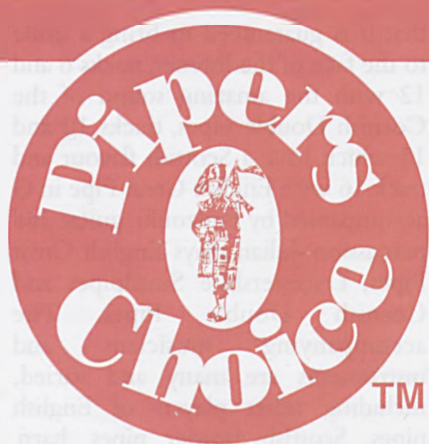
Jeannie Campbell

'The Collection' by R.S. MacDonald



The release of Roddy MacDonald's new book 'The Collection' is long overdue and greatly appreciated. Published twenty years after MacDonald's first book, 'The Clanranald Collection', this publication features most of the more popular tunes he has written since then and much more.

There is a plethora of modern classics found in the book. Most people will be familiar with many of them, as recordings of these tunes can be heard on the Vale of Atholl Pipe Band's CD 'Alive and Well', and MacDonald's own CD 'Good



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Reviews

Drying', 'Electric Chopsticks', 'Elav the Terrible', 'El Paco Grande', 'Showacho', and one of my favourites, 'The Last Tango in Harris', were all featured on the Vale CD. Tunes from 'Good Drying' include 'The Millstead' and 'The King Danced at Dawn', among others. Not limiting himself to just publishing pre-recorded tunes however, MacDonald debuts a good deal of new material that compliments the better known ones. One such tune is 'Superdry', which the Australia Highlanders Pipe Band played this year as the opener for their medley. Another new tune, though, is definitely my favourite tune of the book. 'The Apparition', a truly driving jig, is just addictive to play.

Although not mandatory, it is an especially nice touch to see a

collection of photos in the book. These add context to the tunes themselves and give the reader an insight into the musical tune-making MacDonald is known for. There are a couple embellishments that are missing and some slightly awkward note value changes that probably shouldn't be there. These don't detract from the book at all as I could only count them on one hand, but it's good to know where they are. I think fixing them on your own is intuitive enough so it shouldn't be a problem. As a combination of modern classics and new creative material, Roddy MacDonald continues to impress with his immense composing ability making 'The Collection' an excellent addition to the bagpipe music library.

Derek Midgley

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PT Archives

From Volume 11, 1959: 'One thing we pipers have to admit, and that is that we are in the minority. No matter where we go, with one or two famous exceptions, it is the gents' washroom for a tune-up and please don't disturb the neighbours . . .

'Lavatory accommodation at the Highland Games – the situation in this respect is still unbelievable in Scotland. The facilities offered can be grouped into three classes – none, a canvas screen, or totally inadequate.

'Inveraray Games 1959.

Piob – 1. Hugh MacCallum, 2. James MacGregor, 3. Ronnie MacCallum.

March – 1. Thomas Pearston, 2. Ronald Lawrie, 3. John Burgess.

S&R – 1. Kenneth MacDonald, 2. Ronald Lawrie, 3. Neil MacEachern.'

PT Pic of the Month

Reader Robert Gunther writes: I came across this statue of a piper in Wieden, Germany. It is on the main street in front of the Benetton store. I thought you would find it interesting. I was staying at a hotel as it is near the US Training Area in Grafenwoehr. Perhaps some local reader and dudelsack expert can explain the set up of the pipes and the significance of the animals.

PT Newspaper Watch

From the London based Daily Mail: 'Kilt wearers may have to obtain licences for their sporrans under EU rules brought in to protect wild animals, it has been claimed. The regulations require anyone who has acquired any part of a range of protected species since 1994 to register it with the authorities.

'Included are otters and badgers, whose fur was once commonly used to make sporrans. Fishing flies made from animal hair also fall within the legislation, just introduced in Scotland to bring it into line with the rest of Europe. Taxidermists, museums, schools and universities must all comply with the regulations. Those who do not comply face a maximum penalty of a £5,000 fine or six months in jail. Although wild animal hair was once commonly used to make sporrans, most modern versions are synthetic.'



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Spanish Memorial

Leslie Thomson writes: In 1330 Spain was in the midst of its 'reconquest' from the moors under King Alfonso XI. At that time Black Douglas was on his way to Holy Land with Robert the Bruce's heart. When Black Douglas and his 30 knights made port in Seville King Alfonso XI asked him to join in the battles taking place in Teba a village in what now is the province of Málaga. The Scots joined the Christian forces and though they died in the battle it ended as a victory for King Alfonso XI. Since then the memory of Black Douglas and his men is held in high esteem in the village of Teba. Every year the battle is celebrated with a representation of Scots. This year present were a delegation from Strathleven Artizans, The Pipe Band of the Gibraltar Sea Scouts and Salvi Caracuel, a long supporter of the College of Piping.

A wreath with thistles from Scotland was laid at the Douglas Monument in Teba. So, if next year you're in Spain during the end of August come to Teba – you'll be well greeted.

CORRECTION: Our report on the 100 Guineas competition in South Africa earlier this year did not make it clear that the overall title was won by Joshua Hogg and not Craig Sked.

Pipefest

Magnus Orr writes: Once again Pipefest is being organised to help raise funds for cancer research and cancer care. Please tell all your piping and drumming friends about this fundraising event – we need to rally as many players and supporters as possible. One or two people can make a difference – the entire piping and drumming world can make a much bigger difference to the battle against cancer! The parade route for next year's parade is published on the website and is very close to the 2000 parade route, marching past many of Edinburgh's famous landmarks. Pipefest Home Page: <http://www.pipefest.com/Pipefest> Registration Page: http://www.pipefest.com/pages/pipefest_2010.php

Facebook Pipefest Group: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Pipefest/68338274405>

If you have the opportunity please forward links to as many players as possible. If you are a member of Facebook please join the Pipefest Group.

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P/M Leslie Stuart Watson 1958-2009

LES Watson began his piping career in Annan at the age of nine where he was taught by his father Alex Watson, before being taken on by ex-Police Sergeant Jimmy McRoberts.

As a juvenile in the 1970s Les competed in solo contests all over Scotland. Early successes saw him win the Ayrshire, Dumfriesshire and Galloway Juvenile contest on two occasions. The second of these wins coincided with him also winning the adult trophy the same year.

During his teenage years he also won the Strathspey and Reel contest at the SPA in Washington Street, Glasgow, the World's Juvenile Solo Championship at Ayr and capped a very successful juvenile career by winning the Inverchapel Challenge Trophy at Cowal for the Under 18 Piobaireachd.

Les graduated to the adult scene where he was a regular around the games, picking up several prizes including a 3rd in the Silver Medal at the Northern Meeting in Inverness.

Les was also a keen band player having spent his early years in the Royal Burgh of Dumfries and Thornhill Pipe Bands before he joined the Annan British Legion Pipe Band, later to become Annan and District Ex-Servicemen's Club, along with his father, elder brother Iain and

younger brother Callum.

Les played in the Annan Ex-Service Club band when they won the Grade 2 at the World Championships in 1986. It was that year that he followed his brother Iain into the Lothian and Borders Police Pipe Band. Les was to spend most of the following 23 years with the band, including three seasons as Pipe Major.

During this spell, in 1995, the police band was to take part in the Edinburgh Military Tattoo the theme of which was 'The Royal

House of Stuart'. This was to coincide with the 700th anniversary of the 'Auld Alliance' between France and Scotland and would also lead to the strangest of requests from the BBC, who were making a documentary on the subject. Les was asked to produce a score on the pipes for the song 'Je t'aime' which they had famously banned in the 1960s

when released by Serge Gainsbourg and Jane Birkin. This caused a stir to say the least with the press taking great interest. Les was duly interviewed by the Daily Mail regarding the progress of the project and was quoted with his usual humour as saying 'I can do the heavy breathing alright, but the music is a wee bit more difficult'.

Les will be remembered by all who knew him as a warm, generous



man who was great company whether piping or working.

His impromptu renditions of 'Bonnie Mary O' Argyll', which I suspect was learned from someone who had served in the KOSBs or his superb impression of Churchill, the dog from the TV insurance adverts, won't be heard again, but certainly will not be forgotten by his friends

and family.

Les passed away at home in Edinburgh on 16th August 2009 and is survived by his son Duncan and daughter Iona.

Stewart Gardiner

• *This obituary appeared last edition with inaccuracies. Apologies to all concerned for any distress this may have caused.*

Richard Owen 1943-2009

RICHARD Owen was born in 1943 at Airthrey Castle, then a wartime nursing home, and grew up in Clydebank. Dick joined the College of Piping in 1955 at the age of 12, a venture instigated and financed by his brother Norrie (Tormod Owain), one of the early members of Fianna na h'Alba. His tutors were John MacFadyen and Seumas MacNeill, backed up by Rosemary and Hazel Currie and Pat Cameron who were former pupils and then junior instructors. Rosemary Currie was to become Mrs Norrie Owen. Pat Cameron played a presentation set of pipes made by R. G. Lawrie and presented to the League of Young Scots. When she married and started a family she passed the pipes on to Richard although she herself didn't give up piping. Richard had to stop attending the College when aged fifteen, due to night school commitments but



continued playing, first with Dunbartonshire Scouts, until 1964 when he went on his travels playing pipes all over Europe and in Turkey and Israel. He returned to Scotland in 1970 and after brief spells with the

Weir Pumps (Alloa) band and the Alloa Collieries band he became the co-founder with Gordon Simpson of the Alloa Bowmar Pipe Band, of which he became Pipe Major. When playing at the march of 10,000 pipers in New York in 2002 Richard met Pat Cameron for the first time in all those years.

She was at that time living in England but continuing to play with the Essex Pipe Band. The Alloa Bowmar band regularly led the Scottish National Party parade through Stirling at the annual celebrations on the anniversary of Bannockburn and also led the parade to Elderslie to celebrate Wallace Day. Richard Owen died on 13th September 2009 aged 66.



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The Standard of Pipe Band MSR's

Sir,

Recent letters and your editorial have been critical of the medley section (e.g. '...a bland barrel organ of nothingness') at the Worlds. You also contend that the set up at the Worlds results in bands simply trying for a clean run in the March, Strathspey and Reel. However in my opinion the Worlds and competitions generally suffer from the problem of MSR tune selection, which itself created the original need for the medley.

For example 'Susan MacLeod' is undoubtedly a wonderful strathspey, but how many times during the MSR section should we have to listen to it in one afternoon? The March and Reel provide the opportunity for variety, but not if the opener is repeatedly 'Highland Wedding' and the selected reel either 'Mrs MacPherson of Inveran' or 'John Morrison of Assynt House'.

Is the MSR repertoire being so limited the problem, or is imagination in the bands and among judges limited? I believe the answer is no on all counts, with the resultant opportunity for the bands and judges to give the listening public and themselves a break.

Howard Tindall, Edinburgh

• *Through these columns I have repeatedly urged the RSPBA to do something to spruce up the MSR section at the Worlds. Unfortunately the listening public are not always the main consideration where the Association is concerned (witness the fact that they allow bands to turn their backs on us). By simply insisting on prizewinning bands having to submit a different MSR than the one they were*

successful with in a previous year would help. But then there would be complaints of an uneven playing field ('we lud tae learn a new set and they didnae'). In his interview on CoP Radio P/M Terry Lee said he would definitely be learning a new Medley for next year. No mention of the MSR. No harm to Terry; he's only playing within the rules, but I think my 'clean run' argument stands . . . Ed.

Worlds Issues

Sir,

Ref. your article on the Worlds, I agree with what you have said. I would like to comment on the following some of which has had smoke coming out my ears at previous Worlds! The 'hiccups' by the announcer bewildered me even at the conclusion during the finale. It was announced that the Stockbridge band came from Edinburgh (fair enough) but an announcement that a band marching in was called 'Concorde' (no mention that it was from Holland) then a band from 'The Royal Engineers' (no mention that it was from Sweden). Consistency please.

The Grade 1 final tuning point was too close to the Grade 1 arena. I had the band preparing in my left ear and the performing band in my right (the preparing band won on a few occasions). Yes I appreciate that the prevailing wind was carrying the sound toward the arena but it's often windy in Glasgow and I would hope the tuning point can be taken further afield.

Why is it not a requirement for all

bands to have their name on the bass drum to assist the spectators (paying public) to help ID each band? Yes the order of performing is in the programme but if the World Champions can have a large SFU on the bass drum why not all bands?

I was astonished to see at least two Grade 1 band members with nil cap badges and also nil bag covers. Small points but important. They were home based bands. Apart from the above I enjoyed my day and it was great to watch it all again via the excellent BBC TV coverage.

James (rapidly turning in to Victor Meldrew) White,
Reston, Berwickshire

Angus and Police

Sir,

I've just returned from holiday and was catching up with Robert Wallace's Editor's Blog mainly as an ex-member to keep abreast of developments in relation to the Strathclyde Police Pipe Band saga. I noticed the piece of information in relation to Angus MacLellan being in hospital. Angus taught me for a number of years (1979-1984) prior to me joining the police myself. I would be keen to hear how he is doing. If possible, could my best wishes be passed on to him?

I would also like to congratulate you on the work you have been doing to support the police band. For those of us who are still serving officers, clearly there is a limit on what we are able to say, or do, much less contribute in print! Suffice to say, I'm sure there is a way ahead to maintain the band, and at the level it has achieved, albeit

there will need to be a change to how it is operated. There are still a large number of us from the Ian McLellan era within the force, plus others, who remain an untapped resource for players, even although we may on many occasions be constrained by operational responsibilities.

Graeme Gibson, via email

• *Angus is still in hospital but we have heard that he is a little better.*

Angus and Book

Sir,

I was just reading with interest over lunch your article on Angus Mackay and the piobaireachd manuscript composed by Mackay and printed in book form in 1838. Whilst not a piobaireachd player myself the article was excellent.

I recalled a music book recently donated to the Queensland Police Pipes & Drums that was very old and contained piobaireachd manuscript.

To my great surprise the book donated to the band is in fact a volume of the very manuscript referred to in your article, containing 61 piobaireachd tunes and has exactly the references mentioned in your article. It is bound in a red/maroon hard cover, with the words 'Pipe Music' in gold print on the cover. There is no other writing visible on the covers. The cover is a reasonably intact with the spine showing its age. The pages are in perfect condition with a few brown spots here and there.

The book was, at one time, owned by a James MacNeill of Stirling however it is unknown when he owned it, but he did pay a princely sum of £1 for it.

There is no evidence to indicate it is a reprint and, judging by the condition of the cover, would be every bit of the 171 years old. This is also supported by the entries regarding 'Account of the Competition Pipers' which has the last dated entry of 1838 and contained between pages 15 and 20 inclusive.

Can you give me any additional information regarding this historical document, is it a rare copy, value etc? I intend to now lock it away for safe keeping. Thank you for your time,

Andrew Johns,
Queensland Police Pipes &
Drums, Brisbane, Australia

• *If the title page says – “A collection of ancient piobaireachd or Highland pipe music, many of the pieces being adapted to the pianoforte with full instructions for those desirous of qualifying themselves in performing on this national instrument, to which are prefixed some sketches of the principal hereditary pipers and their establishments with historical and traditional notes respecting the origin of the*

various pieces.” then it is a first edition from 1838. If the title is the same except that there is no comma after music and a comma instead of a full stop after instrument then it is a second edition. We know of someone who purchased a first edition in perfect condition about 18 months ago for £250.

Jeannie Campbell

Hard Times

Sir,

I was interested to read the story on Iain MacAskill in the current edition of PT. Reading the story of his plight in Western Australia it brought to mind an Australian literary classic that details the difficult times had by all in the Western Australian wheat belt during that period. If anyone is interested in reading more on the situation people like Iain might have found themselves in I would suggest obtaining a copy of “A Fortunate Life” by A. B. Facey.

Phil Clark, Columbus, Ohio
(expat Australian and son
of a Scottish emigrant)

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2009 Robert Burns Piping Contest – 5th September, Dumfries

Under 11 Chanter – 1. Lani O'Neill, 2. Bethany Hanley, 3. Becky Walker, 4. Euan Leslie, 5. equal Lucy Forteath and Samuel Johnstone.

Under 14 Chanter – 1. Cory Skilling, 2. Erin Ruddick, 3. David Carruthers, 4. Jamie Wallace.

Under 14 4 parted March – 1. Christopher Gray, 2. Iain Crawford, 3. Rebecca Tierney, 4. Euan Davies.

Under 16 MSR – 1. Steven Gray, 2. Garth McIlorum, 3. Iain Crawford, 4. Ciaran Sinclair.

Under 18 MSR – 1. Steven Leask, 2. Steven Gray, 3. Callum Moffat, 4. Garth McIlorum.

Under 18 Piobaireachd – 1. Iain Crawford, 2. Steven Leask, 3. Steven Gray, 4. Callum Moffat.

Under 18 Hornpipe & Jig – 1. Steven Leask, 2. Christopher Gray, 3. Callum Moffat, 4. Iain Sinclair.

Under 21 Slow Air, Hornpipe & Jig – 1. Steven Leask, 2. Christopher Gray, 3. Steven Gray, 4. Garth McIlorum. Judges: James MacLean and Walter Cowan.

Braemar – 5th Sept., Piobaireachd

Judge Malcolm McRae writes: 1. Marion Horsburgh – 'Hiharin dro o dro'. Musical tune on a steady pipe. A few tech. blemishes, but nothing too distracting. 2. Greg Wilson – 'Lord Lovat's Lament'. Pipe not settled at start. Could have got more music from this tune. False changes. Played the cadences 'square' in singlings of T. and C. Crun. movements unbalanced. Drones stayed well. 3. Michael Gray – 'Auldearn No. 2' – Urlar and doub. rather slow, var. 2 clipped. Square cadences. Crun. movements slack, but consistent and balanced. Pipe good at end. 4. Jamie Forrester – 'Capt. MacDougall'. Slowish urlar. False Cs to Es. Singlings of vars. also slow, but musically presented. Good T movements, excellent C movements. Drones slightly out at end. 5. Jori Chisholm – 'Lament for the Dead'. False changes E to B throughout. Clipping Bs before grips to C. A bookish performance.

Square cadences. Good T and C movements, good C a-mach. Pipe stayed. Perfunctory treatment throughout however. 6. Simon McKerral – 'Ronald MacDonald of Morar'. Musical presentation, but slack and unbalanced crun. movements disappointed. 29 had entered; 19 played. Dry day mostly, but coolish on the fingers.

Dunrobin Castle – 12th Sept.

Chanter – 1. Will Ross, 2. Conner Macdonald, 3. Daniel Mackay.

Under 15 March – 1. Brighde Campbell, 2. Charles MacDonald, 3. Hannah MacDonald, 4. Ross Fraser.

Under 15 S&R – 1. Conall MacIllechiar, 2. Charles MacDonald, 3. Seamus O'Baoighill, 4. Brighde Campbell.

Under 15 Piob – 1. Charles MacDonald, 2. Seamus O'Baoighill, 3. Brighde Campbell, 4. Conal McDonagh. Judge Ronald MacLean.

Under 18 March – 1. Alexander Levack, 2. Conner MacKay, 3. Craig Wilson, 4. Karla Urquhart.

Under 18 S&R – 1. Alexander Levack, 2. Conner MacKay, 3. Craig Wilson, 4. Karla Urquhart.

Under 18 Piob – 1. Alexander Levack, 2. Craig Wilson, 3. Karla Urquhart, 4. Conner Mackay. Judge Duncan Watson.

Piob – 1. Iain Marshall (Lament for the Earl of Antrim), 2. David Wilton, 3. Tom Glover 4. Nils Michael; Judges: J Taylor, A Venters.

MSR – 1. Craig Muirhead 2. David Wilton 3. Iain Marshall 4. Pamela Whyte.

H&J – 1. David Wilton 2. Craig Muirhead 3. Andrew Hall 4. Pamela Whyte

All Ireland Solo Piping 2009

Juvenile Piping – Under 14 – 1. Scott Barr, Ravara; 2. Matthew Johnson, Bellaghy; 3. Laura Campbell, Bellaghy

Juvenile Piping – Under 16 – 1. Elaine Stone, De La Salle PB Waterford; 2. Neil Badger, Seven Towers; 3. A. Kinley, Moneygore

Junior Piping – 1. Caitlin Houlihan, Cullen; 2. Laura McMillan, Inveraray & District; 3. Ross Flume, Cullybackey

Intermediate Piping – 1. Derek Boyce, Kileen; 2. Emmett Conway, F M Montgomery; 3. Scott Wallace, Ballycoan;

Senior Piping – 1. Jonathon Greenlees, F M Montgomery; 2. Alen Tully, St. Laurence O'Toole; 3. Andrew Carlisle, F M Montgomery

Piobaireachd B – 1. Kevin Rogers, St. Laurence O'Toole; 2. Rachel Corr, St. Laurence O'Toole; 3. Scott Barr, Ravara

Piobaireachd A – 1. Andrew Carlisle, F M Montgomery; 2. Jonathon Greenlees, F M Montgomery; 3. Emmett Conway, F M Montgomery

Chatsworth 2009

Roderick Livingstone writes: Please find enclosed a few notes regarding the piping at Chatsworth Country Fair. Numbers entering this event have fallen in recent years, which is a shame given the beautiful location and excellent prize money. The fact that it clashes with Braemar and falls the two days following the Northern Meeting does not help, but surely with the number of competing pipers around who do not attend these events it could be better supported. I have briefly spoken with the organiser and stewards regarding advance publicity for next year. This competition dates back to 1981 and was originally the idea of former Country Fair organiser Andrew Cuthbert. Andrew has recently retired, handing on the organisation to Christopher Lloyd-Owen, himself a keen piper. Over the years the Country Fairs have attracted many of the top pipers — Donald MacPherson, Colin MacLellan, Mike Cusack, Allan MacDonald and Fred Morrison to name a few.

Last year, after Alan Beaton decided to retire from judging this contest, I was asked by Roger Huth if I would judge with him in 2009. The weather for a couple of days before the weekend had been very wet and the showground was very muddy. The first casualty of this was Roger's car which became bogged down but was quickly rescued by one of the stewards with a large tractor.

Saturday's Open Piobaireachd was won by

Steve Watterston playing a very good 'Desperate Battle' on an excellent instrument. Second prize went to James Stewart playing 'The Blue Ribbon'. The Novice Piobaireachd was won by Michael Basford with a very strong 'Clan Campbell's Gathering' on a nicely tuned bagpipe. Second place went to Lachlan MacDonald with a musical 'Marquis of Argyll's Salute'.

Victory in the open 6/8 went to James Stewart who played a couple of his own compositions. Both were very musical tunes in a traditional style. Second place was awarded to Steve Watterston and third to Herbert Such. The novice 6/8 was won by Edmund Fiddy with Lachlan MacDonald and Michael Basford attaining second and third prizes respectively.

The hornpipe and jig was not divided into open and novice on Saturday due to a comparatively small number of entrants: 1. Steve Watterston 2. James Stewart 3. Michael Basford.

Sunday dawned grey but dry. The weather forecast was not promising so we elected to get as much playing over as possible in the morning. The open march and the open strathspey and reel come in quite a challenging format. Each competitor must submit three tunes of each type, one of which is chosen by the judges, the other by the competitor. Some very good playing was heard and the eventual results were: **March** – 1. Steve Watterston, 2. James Gore, 3. James Stewart. **Strathspey & Reel** – 1. James Gore, 2. Steve Watterston, 3. James Stewart

The novice march and strathspey and reel were tunes of own choice. Some good playing was heard but pipes not quite up to scratch (drones not tuned and chokes) spoiled some performances. Results were: **March** – 1. Michael Basford, 2. Stuart Britton, 3. Kyle Shead. **Strathspey & Reel** – 1. Michael Basford, 2. Lachlan MacDonald, 3. Kyle Shead.

The hornpipe and jig were divided into open and novice on the Sunday. **Open** – 1. James Stewart, 2. James Gore, 3. Steve Watterston, 4. Robert Hall. **Novice** – 1.

Results

Michael Basford, 2. Lachlan MacDonald, 3. Kyle Shead.

Special mention must be made of novice player Kyle Shead (aged ten) who was competing in his first ever competition and acquitted himself extremely well. Well done Kyle, more power to your fingers!

The overall prize money at Chatsworth is nearly £1000 and some very attractive trophies in the form of decanters and medals are awarded as well so it is an attractive proposition for competitors.

Roger and I would like to especially thank Ruth Joyce, assisted by Katie McNicol, who did an excellent job of stewarding the pipers and answering questions from the public. Chatsworth will be held on the same week-end in 2010. Please support this contest. It would be great to see a big entry next year.

Northern Ireland Piper of the Year 2009

Kenny Stewart reports: The Piper of the Year competition was held on Saturday 3rd October in the Adair Arms Hotel in Ballymena. The piobaireachd event took place in the afternoon with 11 players in total. James Murray from Fife was adjudicator here. The evening event comprised the MSR and Hornpipe and Jig competitions. There were a total of 18 competitors in the evening event and adjudicators were James Murray and Norman Dodds MBE from N. Ireland.

Piper of the Year 2009: Alen Tully

Piobaireachd – 1. Andrew Carlisle, Gathering of the Clan Chattan; 2. Jonathan Greenlees, Battle of Bealach nam Brog; 3. Kevin Rodgers, Field of Gold

M.S.R. – 1. Alen Tully, 2. Kevin Rodgers, 3. Andrew Carlisle, 4. Jonathan Greenlees

Best Junior – Emmett Conway

Hornpipe & Jig – 1. Alen Tully, 2. Phillip Tasker

The 27th Nicol-Brown Amateur October 10, 2009, Albany, New York

Overall – 1. Anthony Masterson – Prizes: airfare to compete in London in November 2010 and a custom-made kilt. 2. Elizabeth Sheridan – Prize: \$250 piping scholarship. 3. Ursa Beckford – Prize: \$200 piping scholarship. 4. Avens Ridgeway – Prize: \$200 piping scholarship

Robert Nicol-Robert Brown Chalice for Piobaireachd – (Piobaireachd prizewinners received a one-year membership to the Piobaireachd Society – 1. Anthony Masterson, 'The Mackays' Banner' – Prize: Bound Piobaireachd Society Collection. 2. Elizabeth Sheridan, 'MacNeill of Barra's March' – Prize: Blackwood pipe chanter. 3. Liz Cherry 'Park Piobaireachd No.2' – Prizes: Angus MacKay's and Donald MacDonald's books on CD-ROM and a copy of Sight Readable Ceol Mor with two CDs donated by Dugald MacNeill. 4. Avens Ridgeway, 'Beloved Scotland' – Prizes: General Thomason's Ceol Mor on CD-ROM and a copy of Sight Readable Ceol Mor with two CDs. 5. Ursa Beckford 'Tulloch Ard' – Prize: A copy of Sight Readable Ceol Mor with two CDs.

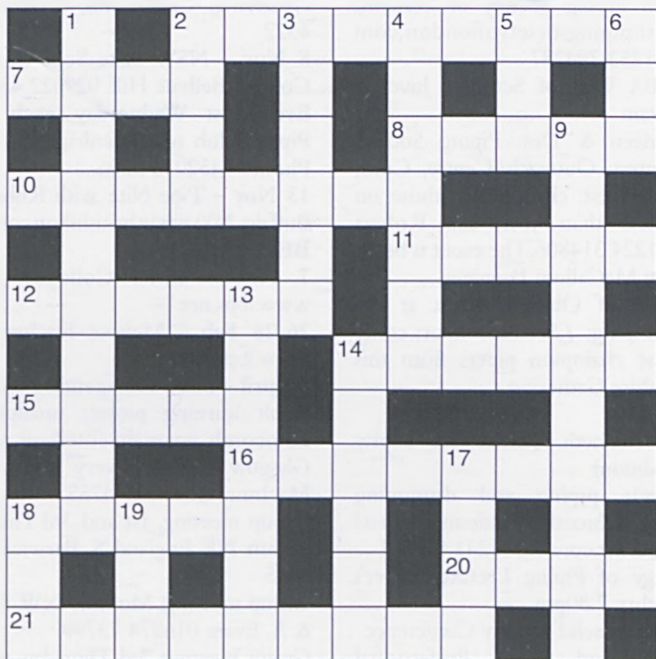
William Ross Challenge Targe MSR – 1. Anthony Masterson, 'The Lonach Gathering', 'The Doune of Invernochty' and 'Cecily Ross' – Prize: a dress sporran. 2. Elizabeth Sheridan, 'The Knightswood Ceilidh', 'MacBeth's Strathspey' and 'Major Manson' – Prize: Pipe case. 3. Ursa Beckford, 'The Lochaber Gathering', 'The Shepherd's Crook', and 'Thomson's Dirk' – Prize: William Ross's Collection, Volumes 1-5. 4. Bobby Durning, 'Edinburgh City Police Pipe Band', 'Cabar Feidh', and 'Broadford Bay' – Prize: The Gordon Highlanders Collection, Vol. 2. 5. Avens Ridgeway, 'Bonnie Ann', 'Delvinside' and 'Traditional' – Prize: 'Bagpipe Classics' CD

• Remainder next edition

thepipingtimes@gmail.com

CROSSWORD

Test Your Knowledge



Across

- 2. The piper on September's cover of the Piping Times (9)
- 7. John Paterson's horse (4)
- 8. Depart, as in many tunes (5)
- 10. Games in Argyll (8)
- 11. Precedes Nook (5)
- 12. The fingers (6)
- 14. Fiend in the Antipodes Collection Bk 2 (6)
- 15. The train to Mallaig (5)
- 16. Paddy's leather leg wear (8)
- 18. Roddy Ross from here in S MacNeill Book 2 (5)
- 20. Bird in the Clear Air (4)
- 21. Find him in Tutor One (5,4)

Down

- 1. Owner of a famous dirk (10)
- 2. El Ala---- (4)
- 3. Who's cattle? (6)
- 4. The Scottish Flag (7)
- 5. Mrs Johnstone in Angus MacDonald Bk 2 (3)
- 6. SFU PM (3)
- 9. These soldiers from Ross-shire were not conscripts (10)
- 13. His chimney is well known (3, 4)
- 14. Find a maid behind here (3, 3)
- 17. This before the storm (4)
- 18. Inverness Gold Medallist 1888 also known as William MacRae (3)
- 19. A tree, darach in Gaelic (3)

Test your piping knowledge with the Piping Times Crossword. Send completed puzzles to Piping Times, 16-24 Otago Street, Glasgow G12 8JH, Scotland. *Crossword compiled by Jeannie Campbell.* This month's crossword is sponsored by the CoP Shop. The winner receives a £10 voucher. On line subscribers can download the grid on the PT extra page www.college-of-piping.co.uk/html/ptextra **Last month's solution:** ACROSS – MacCallum, Ains, Shand, Mar, Inch, Cameron, Donald, Geddes, Kenneth, Eden, Bar, Isles, Jura, Resonance. DOWN – Music, Charm, Alder, Lomond, Marion, Brecklet, Aberdour, Dunbar, Skirls, Nairn, Ellen, Haste. The winner of the September crossword is Mary Paton from Strachur.

Piping Times DIARY

SOLOS

November

7 - Scottish Piping Society of London.
www.scottishpipingsocietyoflondon.com
J. Roberts 01252 794287

21 - RSPBA West of Scotland Juvenile solos; CoP 9am

21 - Aberdeen & Dist. Piping Society juvenile contest; Outreach Centre, Cults, 10am. Two contest: chanter and those on pipes for less than year; call Robert Thomson 01224 314806. The event is being supported by McCallum Bagpipes.

28 - Echoes of Oban Concert at the College of Piping; £5 at the door; come and hear the champion pipers from this year's Argyllshire Gathering.

March

6 - Archie Kenneth Quaich (see display advert this edition)

6 - Juvenile piping and drumming competition. Arbroath Academy. muriel.steven@btinternet.com Tel 01241 870501

12 - College of Piping Lecture, Fisher's Hotel, Pitlochry 7.30pm

13/14 - Piobaireachd Society Conference

13 - Uist and Barra Professional Competition at CoP

PIPE BANDS 2010

22 May - Scottish Championships, Dumbarton.

26 June - British Championships, Annan

31 July - European Championships, Belfast.

14 Aug - World Championships, Glasgow

28 Aug - Cowal Championships, Dunoon.

SCHOOLS

Check the CoP website for special courses over the winter and especially the Xmas/New Year period www.college-of-piping.co.uk

Feb 7-14 - College Winter School, Bruggen near Dusseldorf; places limited; http://www.college-of-piping.co.uk/html/lessons_bruggen_winter_school.html

OVERSEAS

1 Nov - Combined Scottish Societies Gathering, Castle Hill, Sydney. 02 9622 4322

8 Nov - NSW State Solo Contest, Scots College, Bellvue Hill. 029622 4322

Every 1st Wednesday each month - Pipers Club of Copenhagen tue@it.dk or Phone: +452075 3306

13 Nov - 'Pipe Nite' with Robert Wallace, Buffalo, NY; www.britishshop.com

BELLOS

7 Nov - LBPS Colloque. Edinburgh www.lbps.net

26-28 Feb - Melrose Teaching Weekend www.lbps.net

3 April - LBPS Competition www.lbps.net Adult learning project smallpipe classes, Edinburgh. www.alpscotsmusic.org Glasgow Session Every Friday. Malcolm MacInnes 0141 429 4755

Group meeting, 1st and 3rd Thursday each month NE England S. Barwick 0191 286 3545

Group meeting, Monthly NW England. R. & A. Evans 016974 73799

Group meeting 3rd Thursday each month except July and August, London. J. Agnew 01621 855447

Smallpipers Group, Australia. Malcolm McLaren mrmclaren@bigpond.com

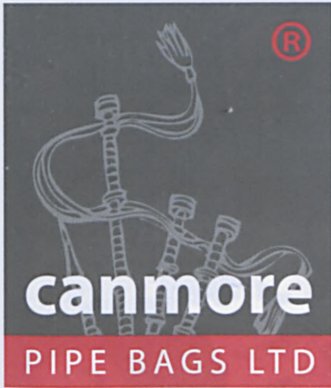
RADIO

College of Piping Radio is available on demand at www.college-of-piping.co.uk Solo and bands; archive spot; history, interviews, and informed comment.

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 Cailean MacLean at 4pm on Thursdays with repeats at 10.30pm on Thursdays.

Piping Times Diary is compiled by Jeannie Campbell. Let her know what is going on in your society or pipe band. Tell us when you are holding a contest or fundraiser. All Diary insertions are free. Send your Diary info to Jeannie at the College. E-mail: collegemuseum@ntlbusiness.com. or see page one for other contact details. Please check before travelling to events.





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