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Piping Times

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SEPTEMBER, 1960.



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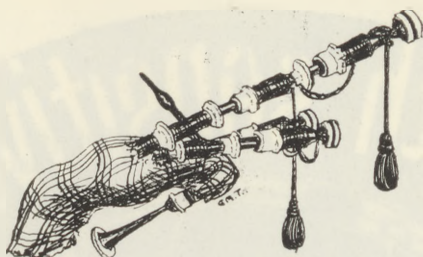
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Piping Times

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COVER PICTURE :

John MacFadyen,
Oban Gold Medallist.

(Photograph by courtesy of the "Oban Times")

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EDITORIAL

The end of September means the end of the Games, and before we are thrown into the turmoil of winter activities a brief pause to add it all up is worth while. The weather was not the best, but not the worst. In fact, like the piping, it was sometimes wonderful, sometimes middling, and sometimes pretty bad.

It gives a glow to the heart to look back on the many excellent individual performances we heard in recent months. Thank goodness we can depend on some things in this unstable world. We can be sure that quite often each summer the man, the instrument, and the tune will combine to provide yet another great performance, the memory of which will stay with us always as an inspiration, and perhaps a source of reminiscence for our old age.

It would not be fair to try to list the pipers who have reached the top in playing this summer, for some would inevitably be overlooked. Nor is it worthwhile compiling tables of results as can be done with pipe bands, which usually all attend every contest. Anyway, results do not mean too much in this connection, for not every first prize is an outstanding performance, and the converse is also true.

Two names, however, should be mentioned. Consistently, and without fuss or furor, attending just a few more games than last year, **Pipe-Major Donald MacLeod** showed once again what a great piper he is. For consistent brilliance nobody could match **Donald MacPherson** who, after a long lie-off, returned to show that the flame of genius burns just as strongly as ever.

The games themselves continue much as before, with perhaps a regrettable increase in the number of gimmicks introduced by games secretaries, presumably with the object of boosting attendances. Water ski-ing is an admirable sport, but surely not one to be tacked on to the traditional arts and pastimes—unless as an event we can depend on to be completed no matter what the weather. The marching display of the Scots Guards at Oban was interesting even if untraditional, but the rifle demonstration at Pitlochry was a real flop. The audience was quite unimpressed by the accuracy of a rifle when that very day they had read of Russia sending a man into space.

Of all the new features, those introduced by the Cowal committee were, as is usual with Cowal ideas, the most successful. The Highland Tattoo on the Friday evening was a first-class show, and the prizes for the march-past (for which the "Piping Times" of May can take some credit) seemed to add to the smartness of a show which is always a lasting memory.

The College of Piping Summer School, 1960

By Robin Bennett

This year we held our Summer School in Dunvegan Junior Secondary School, Dunvegan, Isle of Skye. It is the second time it has been held there and the fourth time in Skye. Other places were Tiree last year, and Tobermory, Mull, the year previous.

These significant facts always provide us with the usual questions, and this year's were no exceptions. "Why pick an island and why keep going back to the one that is hardest to get to?"

The answer to the first has always been rather vague, but reasons which have been given in the past are that the general quietness of island life leads to an atmosphere of strictly gracenotes, and doting parents are kept from their loving children, or more important vice versa.

The second one is easy. Skye has always been the home of piping and a place where pipers are always welcome, especially Dunvegan which is only 9 miles from Borreraig. There the ruins of the ancient MacCrimmon College are in possession of and being rebuilt as a museum piece, by the College.

The piping school is once again in action, as it were, and it is this atmosphere of history being repeated that prevails over the student's mind as he takes up his pipes to play. It is as if one of the MacCrimmons was looking over his shoulder and anything but the performer's best would be sacriligious. Even those still at the chanter stage were spurred on by the thought that they were learning in the very parish that turned out the most famous pipers in the world as long ago as 1600.

The more practicable of our friends bemoan the long voyage by rail, sea and road, and the isolation of Dunvegan from the amenities of the big city, but as any lover of his instrument knows, piping is very much a thing of the soul, and inspiration of the type to be had in Skye is a most adequate reward for the discomfort suffered, financially or otherwise, in getting there.

This year we had an even harder job reaching our destination because of the boat strike, but we were re-routed via Inverness and Kyle of Lochalsh, crossing by ferry there. Fortunately our numbers were smaller than previous years and this change in plans went fairly smoothly.

We were disappointed with the lack of response for applications for the school, especially from overseas and from those who have reached a fairly good amateur status. We usually have quite a few foreign students and an equally varied selection of students of

different standards. We have not yet diagnosed this state of affairs but sincerely hope that there will be a big response next year. Certainly there will be a good number of those present this year back next year after their highly successful progress. A month at the summer school under concentrated tuition as well as three or four hours practice a day is worth as much as a year's piping in many cases.

The students who did apply were, with a few exceptions, all of "tutor" standard and due to the small number—seventeen—we amended the duration of the school to two weeks.

Consequently the College handed over the running of the school to its junior instructors and student committee members. The latter are nominated for election to the committee after having attended the College for seven years or more, and two of them went in that capacity, as well as that of instructor. The staff consisted of Evan MacKay, Robin Bennett, John MacAskill, Dugald Murdoch and James MacNiven, all of whom have experienced at least four summer schools as pupils.

This experience proved to be a great advantage as we were able to anticipate any ruses thought of by the younger ones by way of having done them ourselves in previous years, although I must admit we have since learnt a few new ones.

For instance we discovered that the air beds that we had provided to put on top of the camp beds for those and such as those, kept mysteriously being deflated. On investigation we caught two enterprising little characters lying on them, playing away at the chanter, but with the mouthpiece stuck in the "lilo" in place of the plug! Thus they were able to chew large lumps of toffee whilst carrying on a conversation about the merits of their respective instructors. The explanation given was that they were able to sing and play "Scots Wha Hae" at the same time, thus getting the beat! In the face of such cunning we could only retire to the background and gnash our teeth in anger—at not having thought of that ourselves when we were at "Scots Wha Hae".

All of the staff taught, but there were many other duties to be shared, such as the supervision of games, chanter practice, the organisation of rear parties and of travelling arrangements. Evan took charge of the latter as well as the finances and pocket-money bank. He assumed an immediate importance in the eyes of the younger ones but lost their favour when he deducted fines from their bank balance on any misdemeanours.

An extract from the daily time table was as follows:—

- 7.00 a.m.—Reveille (Played by Duty Piper).
- 8.00 a.m.—Breakfast (Meal Call by Duty Piper).
- 9.00 a.m.—Classes (Orders of the Day).

9.15 - 10.30 a.m.—Lecture.
10.45 a.m. - 12.00 noon—Individual Instruction.
12.00 noon—Dinner.
1.00 p.m.—Games.
2.00 - 4.00 p.m.—Individual Instruction and organised bagpipe practice
4.00 - 5.00 p.m.—Games.
5.00 p.m.—Tea.
6.00 - 7.00 p.m.—Grade III Practice.
9.00 p.m.—Supper.
10.30 p.m.—Lights Out.

The lecture would be on such things as drone reeds—adjustment and what to look for when buying them—how to tie in a bag, staff notation and composing etc. We would also include in the lecture period things like “Tartan Tests” and “mistake guessing competitions”. The rest of the day would be taken up with practice and lessons.

For example, a pupil there of five years experience received eleven lessons of one hour duration during the fortnight along with bagpipe practice in the afternoon. He learned nine new tunes and brushed up some older ones by doing about 3 - 4 hours concentrated practice per day. Generally the progress made by students was extremely good, for we were fortunate in having a very keen group.

Sometimes the younger ones would be inclined to scrimp on the practising, so these pupils were given a dosage of “MacCrimmon Practice Pills” by Dugald Murdoch. These were distributed at meal times and guaranteed by Dugald to bring on a desire to practice for many hours on end. They were in fact cake decorations, but the psychological effect of them was quite amazing.

We have a system of grading pupils into three groups on their progress from the previous day alone, not on ability. Grade I's made good progress, II fair, III none at all. The grade III's were compelled to a supervised grade III practice from 6 - 7 p.m. in the common room, while the instructors played table tennis.

One of the highlights of the camp was a visit to Dunvegan Castle at the invitation of Dame Flora MacLeod of MacLeod. There we were treated to a tour of the Castle and a really excellent meal. Many of the older lads had been through it before, but not all had played in the former banqueting hall where MacCrimmon used to perform for the pleasure of his chief. They were thrilled, on the request of Dame Flora, to play there, and everyone enjoyed a very pleasant evening. In this very room, where MacCrimmon's pipes now are, we have in previous years held piobaireachd appreciation classes for the older ones. The same gracious offer for using the room for this purpose each morning was repeated.

Dame Flora MacLeod also arranged a visit for us, by boat to the Coral Beach. The arrangement was that half of us would go on a route march there and then swap over to the boat for the return

journey while the others walked back. Unfortunately on the only suitable day for the weather and the availability of the boat, the sea was too rough to attempt a voyage. Among other expeditions, a party from the camp also climbed "MacLeod's Table" for the first time in summer school history.

On some of the more beautiful evenings it would be hard to find a secluded spot to practice, for the sound of the pipes echoed down from every direction. Quite often you could see the local people coming out of their houses or stopping their work to sit down and listen. There were some particularly wonderful moments such as when all others fell quiet save for a lone kilted figure playing on the skyline, against a sunset that only Skye can tell off. Far below him was a very picturesque scene—the deep blue Loch Dunvegan widening out to take in Dunvegan Castle standing guard like a faithful watchdog, as it has since 1300, over the cruel sea whose relentless toil has cut deep into the coast line, throwing up breath-taking cliffs which lead the eye on to the Cuillins themselves, caught by the sun's rays in indescribable shades of red and brown. One had only to look at their noble peaks, jagged and sharp, rising straight out of the sea to be at once both proud and humbled.

Then as the player warmed to his tune, one realised that all this was in his music and more, as if all that makes life dear to a man was being revealed to those that could hear and appreciate the Ceol Mor that night. The tune came down from the hill and drifted back over the water to its birthplace in Borreraig where it was played for the first time. There it has been telling its secret for centuries to those that will listen carefully.

It can only be told in the old way—in piobaireachd—on the bagpipe—in the Isle of Skye.

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Cowal Games

PRIZE LIST

Piping—Friday.

Juvenile Piping.—**March** (confined to boys under 16 in Argyll and the Isles).—1st and Warner Cup, Islay Carmichael, Glasgow; 2nd, Hector McD. Russell, Dumbarton; 3rd, A. J. Wilson, Campbelltown. **March, Strathspey and Reel** (boys under 16, open)—1st and Lamont Shield, Gordon Hall; 2nd, Islay Carmichael; 3rd, Hector McD. Russell.

Open Piping.—**Piobaireachd**—1st and Glen Caladh Trophy, Donald Macpherson, Glasgow ("The Old Men of the Shells"); 2nd, Kenneth Macdonald, Glasgow ("Lament for the Only Son"); 3rd, Neil MacEachern, Islay ("The Bicker"); 4th, John MacFadyen, Glasgow ("Lament for Mary MacLeod"); 5th, Ronald MacCallum, Inveraray ("The MacFarlanes' Gathering"); 6th, Iain MacFadyen, Cardonald ("The Blind Piper's Obstinacy").

March—1st and John MacLellan Trophy, Ronald Lawrie, Oban; 2nd, Hector MacFadyen, Gartcosh; 3rd, Roderick Macdonald, Dunoon; 4th, Roderick W. Macdonald, Kirn; 5th, Norman Gillies, Glasgow; 6th, Iain MacFadyen, Cardonald.

Strathspey and Reel—1st and MacCallum Trophy, John D. Burgess, Edinburgh; 2nd, Hector MacFadyen, Gartcosh; 3rd, Donald Macpherson, Glasgow; 4th, Ronald Morrison, Bishopton; 5th, Ronald MacCallum, Inveraray; 6th, Duncan J. MacFadyen, Glasgow.

Brymay Trophy (for most points in open piobaireachd, march and strathspey and reel competitions)—Donald Macpherson, Glasgow.

Piping—Saturday.

March, Strathspey and Reel (confined)—1st and Burgh Cup, Martin Wilson, Dunoon; 2nd, Angus Lawrie, Oban; 3rd, Ian Henderson, 8th A. and S.H.; 4th, William A. MacLean, Dunoon.

Piobaireachd (boys 18 years or under, open)—1st and Inverchapel Trophy, James Jackson, Balloch ("Patrick Og MacCrimmon"); 2nd, Ian Macdonald, Lewis ("Piobaireachd of Donald Dhu"); 3rd, H. McD. Russell, Dumbarton ("Grain in Hides"); 4th, Robert M. Stewart, Inveraray ("MacFarlane's Lantern").

Territorial and Army band contest—1st and Campbell Trophy, 402 (A. and S.H.) Light Regiment R.A. (T.A.) (Pipe-Major John C. Weatherston); 2nd and Cameron Trophy, 8th (Argyllshire) Bn. The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (Pipe-Major Ronald MacCallum); 3rd and Maclachlan Trophy, 7th Bn. The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, Stirling (Pipe-Major Lawrence Georgeson).

Milton Trophy (for best dressed band, H.M. Forces—1st Bn. The London Scottish (Gordon Highlanders) T.A.

Territorial and Army Drumming Contest—1st and Walter Scott Trophy, 8th (Argyllshire) Bn. A. and S.H.; 2nd, 402 (A. and S.H.) Light Regiment R.A. (T.A.).

Strathpeffer Highland Games

LOCAL PIPING.

March—1st, R. MacRae, Tain; 2nd, George Innes, Alness; 3rd, Ian MacPhee, Conon.

OPEN COMPETITIONS.

Piobaireachd (Littlejohn Brooch)—1st, Donald MacLeod, Fort George; 2nd, Donald MacLean, Lewis; 3rd, John MacLellan, Edinburgh.

March (Colin Mackenzie Brooch)—1st, John MacLellan; 2nd, Donald MacLean; 3rd, Allan Dodd, New Zealand; 4th, Donald MacLeod.

Strathspey and Reel—1st, Donald MacLeod; 2nd, Allan Dodd; 3rd, John MacLellan; 4th, William MacDonald.

Judges—Angus Macpherson, Lairg, and D. P. MacGillivray, Calrossie.

Abernethy Highland Games

OPEN.

Piobaireachd—1st, Donald MacLeod, Fort George; 2nd, William MacDonald, Inverness; 3rd, John MacDougall, Bucksburn.

March—1st, Donald MacLeod; 2nd, John MacDougall; 3rd, J. Stewart, Aviemore.

Strathspey and Reel—1st, Donald MacLeod; 2nd, Donald Morrison, Aberdeen City Police; 3rd, John MacDougall.

Jig—1st, Donald Morrison; 2nd, Donald MacLeod; 3rd, William MacDonald.

The Gordon Cup for the piper gaining the most points was won by Donald MacLeod, Fort George.

LOCAL.

March, Strathspey and Reel—1st, Ian Fraser, Carrbridge; 2nd, James MacLeod, Nethybridge; 3rd, Noel Smith, Nethybridge.

Judging was in the capable hands of Col. J. P. Grant of Rothiemurchus, assisted by Sheriff Bell, Edinburgh, and Neil Angus MacDonald, Inverness.

The Abernethy Highland Games Association wish to say that they are greatly indebted to Col. Grant for continuing to organise the judging of the piping. He has done so ever since the revival of the Games, and his help has been quite invaluable. They feel that the consistently high standard being maintained at the Games is largely due to the fact that the pipers realise that in Col. Grant they have a judge whose integrity, experience and knowledge ensure that merit is the sole criterion.

Bettyhill Games

Saturday, 16th July, 1960

Piping, Marches (open)—1st, Lilian Coghill; 2nd, Eileen MacBeath; 3rd, Anne MacDonald.

Juvenile—1st, Maureen Davidson; 2nd, Grace MacKay; 3rd, Janice More.

Dunbeath Games

Friday, 22nd July, 1960

Marches—1st, Allan R. Dodd, New Zealand; 2nd, A. Pirnie, Pitlochry; 3rd, G. Innes, Alness.

Strathspey and Reel—1st, A. R. Dodd; 2nd, Cpl. Campbell, Fort George; 3rd, H. Coghill, Wick.

Jigs—1st, A. Pirnie; 2nd, H. Coghill; 3rd, G. Innes.

Halkirk Games

Saturday, 30th July, 1960

Marches—1st, H. Coghill, Wick; 2nd, A. Forbes, Thurso; 3rd, J. Mackay, Thurso.

Strathspey and Reel—1st, J. Mackay; 2nd, H. Coghill; 3rd, A. Forbes.

Wick Games

Saturday, 20th August, 1960

Marches—1st, G. Innes, Nigg; 2nd, R. MacDonald, Thurso; 3rd, A. Forbes, Thurso.

Strathspey and Reel—1st, A. Forbes; 2nd, J. Mackay, Forres; 3rd, G. Innes.

Jigs—1st, J. Mackay, Thurso; 2nd, R. Macdonald, Thurso; 3rd, Ian Mackenzie, Lairg.

Dornoch Games

Friday, 5th August, 1960

Marches (under 20)—1st, A. K. Mackay, Golspie ; 2nd, R. Sutherland, Golspie.

Strathspey and Reel—1st, R. Sutherland ; 2nd, A. K. Mackay.

Seniors—1st, Hugh Mackenzie, Dornoch ; 2nd, Hamish Mackenzie, Dornoch ; 3rd, J. D. Cowan, Dornoch.

Open Piobaireachd—1st, Wm. MacDonald, Inverness ; 2nd, Pipe-Major D. MacLeod, Seaforth Highlanders ; 3rd, Pipe-Major J. MacLellan, Edinburgh.

Marches—1st, Pipe-Major D. MacLean, Lewis ; 2nd, Pipe-Major D. MacLeod, and Pipe-Major J. MacLellan (equal).

Strathspey and Reel—1st, Pipe-Major D. MacLeod ; 2nd, Pipe-Major J. MacLellan ; 3rd, A. R. Dodd, New Zealand.

Aboyne Highland Games

Piobaireachd.—1st, John MacDougall, Bucksburn ; 2nd, John MacLellan, Edinburgh ; 3rd, Donald MacLean, Lewis ; 4th, R. A. Barron, St. Andrews.

March.—1st, John MacDougall ; 2nd, John MacLellan ; 3rd, Wm. MacDonald, Inverness ; 4th, Donald MacLean.

Strathspey and Reel.—1st, Donald MacLean ; 2nd, Allan Dodd, New Zealand ; 3rd, John MacDougall ; 4th, Donald Morrison, Aberdeen.

March, Strathspey and Reel (under 18 years).—1st, Wm. Fraser, Aberdeen ; 2nd, J. MacRae, Ballater ; 3rd, G. MacDonald, Lumphanan ; 4th, I. Anderson, Inch.

Lochearnhead Highland Games

Piobaireachd—1st, Ian MacFadyen ; 2nd, Wm. Connell ; 3rd, John MacLellan ; 4th, John Burgess.

March—1st, James Young ; 2nd, John MacLellan ; 3rd, John Burgess ; 4th, Ronald Lawrie.

Strathspey and Reel—1st, John Burgess ; 2nd, Wm. Connell ; 3rd, Kenneth MacDonald ; 4th, James Young.

Wanted—Piper living near Lockerbie, Scotland, to teach young boy. Please write to J. Norrie, East Seaton, Arbroath.

Wick Girls' Pipe Band



One advantage at least of having the World Pipe Band competition in Inverness was that the bands of the north had an easier time getting to the contest. The Wick Girls' for example have obviously found trouble in travelling great distances for competitions, and it was very heartening to see their name appearing once again on the prize list.

This young girls' pipe band is a triumph of enthusiasm over adversity. Situated very far away, even in Scotland, from centres of piping, the good people of Wick must surely have had some hard-working person to organise such a successful combination. The band might, in fact, be termed a one-man band or a one-man-and-his-wife band, for surely no other organisation has been so dependent on one person as the Wick Girls' have been on Mr. J. M. Christie.

Mr. Christie started the band in 1942 as a result of having a lot of young people coming around to hear him play the pipes at his home. In that year he had three pupils, and the success of his venture is evident from the fact that he now has over sixty girls learning pipes and drums. During the past eighteen years he reckons to have taught over two hundred and fifty people. With no committees to assist (or to bother him, if you look at it that way), he does all the tuition in both piping and drumming, and his wife makes the uniforms for the band, including doublets, kilts, plaids, jabots and stockings. Funds are raised by local concerts and dances and, of course the expenses, apart from uniforms and travelling, are quite small, no-one being paid for their performances. It is small wonder therefore that the fame of this young pipe band has spread throughout the length and breadth of the country, and they have played in Orkney, Brighton, Wiltshire, Inverness, Aberdeen, Dunfermline, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

In 1948 they won the Scottish Ladies Contest but lost it last year to the Lochgelly Ladies. The ages of the girls range from about six to twenty years with, of course, the very heavy loss of pupils which is common in girls' bands at about seventeen or eighteen years of age.

The band has attracted the attention of several well-known pipers, and a tune was composed in its honour by Pipe-Major Willie Taylor. Another tune, "Mrs. Lily Christie", was composed in honour of Mr. Christie's wife, and appears in the Edcath Book 2.

We are sure that the efforts of Mr. Christie and his wife are well worthy of any helping hand which any of us can give, and it is to be hoped they will be long spared the health to continue the good work.

Skye Highland Gathering—PORTREE

WEDNESDAY, 24th AUGUST

6/8 Marches (Open)—1st, Donald MacLeod, Fort George; 2nd, John MacLellan, Edinburgh; 3rd, J. MacKenzie, Uig; 4th (equal), William MacDonald, Inverness and John MacFadyen, Glasgow.

Piobaireachd (Open) for Dunvegan Medal—1st, Donald MacLean, Glasgow ("The MacDonald's Salute"); 2nd, Donald MacLeod ("Lament for the Children"); 3rd, William MacDonald ("Lament for Donald Duaghal Mackay"); 4th, John MacLellan ("I Got a Kiss of the King's Hand"); 5th, John MacFadyen ("The MacLeod's Salute").

Local Piobaireachd—1st, J. MacKenzie ("MacLeod of Raasay's Salute"); 2nd, D. C. MacLeod, Portree ("Lament for Mary MacLeod"); 3rd, Calum MacPhee, Edinburgh ("MacCrimmon's Sweetheart").

THURSDAY, 25th AUGUST

Open Marches—1st, John MacLellan ("Craigendarroch"); 2nd, Donald MacLeod ("Lochaber Gathering"); 3rd, William MacDonald ("Inveran"); 4th (equal), John MacFadyen ("John MacDonald of Glencoe"), and James Young, Perth ("74th's Farewell to Edinburgh").

Open Strathspey and Reel—1st, Donald MacLeod ("The Blackbird", and "Mrs. Macpherson of Inveran"); 2nd, John MacLellan ("The Blackbird", and "Pretty Marion"); 3rd, Alan Dodd, Glasgow ("Delvinside", and "Pretty Marion"); 4th, John MacFadyen ("The Blackbird", and "Maggie Cameron").

Open Jig—1st, Donald MacLeod; 2nd, J. MacKenzie; 3rd, John MacLellan; 4th, William MacDonald.

The judges on both days were Mr. Angus Macpherson of Invershin and Mr. Seton Gordon of Skye.

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Pipe-Major Donald MacLean. Mrs. Peter R. MacLeod (by Peter R. MacLeod).
Heather MacPherson. The Curlew (by Donald MacPherson).
MacNeill of Ugadale. John Seton (by P/M John M. MacKenzie).
Major David Manson at Clachantrushal. R.S.M. Colin MacKenzie
(by P/M Donald MacLean of Lewis).

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Each book contains about sixteen piobaireachds with alternative settings and historical notes—6/- or 90 cents.

Kilberry Book of Ceol Mor (116 piobaireachds)—46/- or \$7.00. Postage, 1/9 or 30 cents.

"Some Piobaireachd Studies" by G. F. Ross—7/6d. or \$1.25.

"MacCrimmon and Other Piobaireachd" by G. F. Ross—5/- or 85 cents.

"Piobaireachd as performed in the Highlands" by Ian MacLennan—
5/- or 85 cents.

The Caledonian Games— Vancouver

By R. MacLeod.

For weeks green carpeted Brockton Point Oval, in Stanley Park, basked lazily in bright sunshine, sheltered by towering mountains, and the Pacific Ocean tides ebbing and flowing almost at its edge.

All in the place was drowsiness; then suddenly, on Saturday the 13th, there burst upon it, with all imaginable colours of Scottish tartans, and excitement of piping and dancing, the "Annual Caledonian Games".

Gorgeous costumes blended well with the green of the trees, and blue of distant mountains, and an audience waited in the stands, to view what is always a wonderful display, by these Highland dressed performers.

From a platform at one end of the field, the deep tone of the pipes boomed forth the piobaireachd tunes. At the other end the chanter notes of younger players sounded clearly, and in the centre, the nimble fingers of pipers Billy Lamont and Alick Reid kept pace with the flying feet of the dancers. To all this the heart of the audience sung in harmony.

The opening ceremony was performed by Captain James Gray, of the U.S. Navy, who, at 2 p.m., stepped from a helicopter which landed on the field.

This was the same Captain Gray who brought the U.S. carrier "Coral Sea" into Vancouver harbour to the tune of "The Skye Boat Song" played by Pipe-Major Ed Esson who used a helicopter to land on the carrier, the picture of which appeared in the "Piping Times" of June last.

This American captain could well have been a "MacNeill", a "MacLean" or a "MacLeod", for he started out with a burst of Scottish song which stirred the hearts of every Scot present.

Before the opening ceremony took place, track and field events and some piping and dancing contests were in full swing.

The professional piobaireachd began at 10 a.m., and although ten were entered, only six competed in the event, and they were all fine players.

Good tunes were heard, but it is quite safe to say that Pine-Major Ron Forman who was placed first, deserved the honour. He played "The King's Taxes", and no one ever hinted that he gave any thought to politics, despite what we hear about taxes, with the Provincial Election only a month away.

It is said that MacDougall of Kilmore composed this tune when some authoritative person imposed heavy taxes on poor people who could ill afford to pay them.

There were over thirty in the amateur piping events, and they all played well. The younger players showed that their aim was to play their tune well and, if they didn't win prizes, they contributed to the enjoyment of the listeners.

The parade of massed bands, in this Scottish like setting, made it a day to remember.

The results are as follows :—

- Professional Piobaireachd.**—1st, Ron Forman, "King's Taxes"; 2nd, Fred MacLeod, "MacLeod of Raasay"; 3rd, James Yardley, "Desperate Battle".
- Professional Strathspey and Reel.**—1st, James Yardley; 2nd, Ron Forman; 3rd, Ben Mason.
- Professional Marches.**—1st, James Yardley; 2nd, Cathie MacDonald; 3rd, J. MacKenzie.
- Professional Jigs.**—1st, James Yardley; 2nd, Fred MacLeod; 3rd, Ben Mason.
- Amateur Piobaireachd.**—1st, Arnie Stone; 2nd, Dave Wilson; 3rd, Raleigh Smith.
- Amateur Marches.**—1st, Rae MacInnes; 2nd, Peggie Gillies; 3rd, Dave Wilson.
- Amateur Strathspey and Reel.**—1st, Dave Wilson; 2nd, James Troy; 3rd, Bill Elder.
- Junior Piobaireachd.**—1st, Terry MacHardy; 2nd, Gordon Ross; 3rd, David Ross.
- Junior Marches.**—1st, David Ross; 2nd, Tom Richardson; 3rd, Karen Ruddick.
- Junior Strathspey and Reel.**—1st, Tom Richardson; 2nd, Terry MacHardy; 3rd, David Ross.
- Juvenile Marches.**—1st, Bob MacDonald; 2nd, Dave MacKenzie; 3rd, John MacLeod.
- Juvenile Strathspey and Reel.**—1st, Bob MacDonald; 2nd, Dave MacKenzie; 3rd, John MacLeod.
- Novice March.**—1st, Colin Stuart; 2nd, Robert Heggie; 3rd, Tom Skinner.

The Pipe Band Competitions are as follows :—

- Class A.**—1st, Powell River; 2nd, Seaforth Highlanders.
- Class B.**—1st, Seaforth Cadets; 2nd, Vancouver Ladies.
- Class C.**—1st, Kiwanis Boys' Band; 2nd, Optimist Boys' Band; 3rd, Canadian Scottish Cadets.
- Drumming, Class A.**—1st, Powell River; 2nd, Seaforth Highlanders.
- Drumming, Class B.**—1st, Vancouver Ladies; 2nd, Seaforth Cadets.

Trophies :—

- Gen. J. W. Stewart Trophy**—Powell River Pipe Band (P/M Westie).
- Robert Fiddes Trophy**—James Yardley.
- Piper's Star Trophy**—James Yardley.
- Walter Douglas Trophy**—Bob MacDonald.
- St. Andrews and Caledonian Society Trophy**—Terry MacHardy.
- Ian MacKenzie Memorial Trophy**—David Wilson.
- B.C. Pipers' Association Trophy**—Terry MacHardy, Dave Ross, Tom Richardson (tie).

The Adjudicators were :—Pipe-Major Kenneth MacLeod, Pipe-Major Jim MacMillan, Dan Murray, and George Allan.

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Letters To The Editor

Dear Sir,

Recently comment on the "Piping Times" was invited.

I suggest that some endeavour should be made to get the magazine back to what it was say nine years ago. We had smaller print then and a lot of interesting comment on various activities by such writers as "The Chiel". There is not enough news in the "Piping Times" these days. I realize that the work is voluntary, but I am quite sure that the necessary keen individual, such as "The Chiel" was, could be found. I would like to see an article or articles on the evolution of the Great Highland Bagpipe, particularly comparing the dimensions of drones and chanters, spacing and size of holes, etc., of the oldest right up to the present day with photos of the various instruments when possible. I would like to see a whole series of articles on "Stories of the Tunes",—surely there is a vast amount of scope for such a series. More on maintenance of pipes, pipe bags, reeds, etc. is required. Many of your overseas readers have little contact with players of any great experience or knowledge, and your magazine I am sure, if you wanted to, could supply a host of practical hints to the embryo piper. Many things which you good folk take for granted, are unknown to those of us in the "wilderness". The idea might be "let 'em find out for themselves", but in the interests of the Great Highland Bagpipe and all it stands for, such an attitude, if it exists, is to be deplored.

And now I would like to ask a couple of questions which I would very much appreciate being answered in the magazine in the form of a statement, or if you would do me the honour of a personal note.

- (1) How many proficient players have you now passed out from the College ?
- (2) Where do they go after ? Do they go out to the bands or do they stick to solo playing, or do they combine the two ?
- (3) In the general sphere of piping in Scotland, in what esteem is the College held ? What other organisations teach piping ?

I gather from some comment I read some time ago in the "Piping Times" that there is conflict of opinion on the scheme for a college at Borreraig. Is any other criticism of the College's activities voiced, and if not, why ? And now, just before you hurl this into the waste-paper basket, I would like to wish you the best for your future endeavours on our, the readers' behalf.

Australia.

David James Sinclair.

The Editor replies :

Well we certainly asked for it, and of course we are very grateful for the suggestions. One at least has already been adopted and we hope the others also may be put into effect soon. We would remind readers, however, that we are dependent on them for most of the material which appears in these pages. All contributions of information and opinions will be gladly received.

With regard to the specific questions, the first two are being made the subject of a special enquiry, the results of which will appear here in due course. The third question is a real poser which would be difficult to answer without conducting a very wide survey. If any Scottish readers care to comment we shall be glad to publish all contributions on the subject.

Dear Sir,

I would like to thank Mr. MacNeill for the series of articles he has written on Music Theory—perhaps now I will not be at such a loss when discussing pipe music with musicians who are not pipers. I would also like to see something in the same vein on the structure of pipe music, especially Ceol Mor.

Washington, U.S.A.

Raleigh Smith, Jnr.

Dear Sir,

In the latest issue of "Piping Times" mention is made of a chanter in the College's collection which has a "lever" to produce a higher note, "presumably B".

As an old time (U.S.) army bandsman, I suspect that this is an attempt to add, not another note, but an entire octave. The clarinet, oboe, English horn and saxophone all have such keys which throw the instrument to the next higher harmonic, an octave or a twelfth higher. I should be interested to know what happens if low G is fingered and the "pipe key" depressed to open this extra hole.

Incidentally, I saw a French chanter in the museum in Inverness, in 1951, which had several keys to make half steps possible. It did not have such a key as you describe, as I recall.

Piping in Texas progresses. There are several good pipers in and around Dallas. San Antonio has a small school under the competent tutelage of Rob Roy MacGregor. Here in Austin, there are several of us at the University of Texas, where I teach mathematics.

The Clan Donald rallies, two or three times a year, bring out pipers and dancers enough to make a good show. Unfortunately, we are more than a thousand miles from the "piping centre" of the United States, which seems to run east from Chicago, so bands don't come here—except Scots Guards, etc.

I doubt that I shall ever be a really good piper, although I am much admired by people who have never heard any pipes but mine! (I was more than forty before I started).

I would like to hear from any pipers who are in this area, also dancers. Our Scottish Country Dance Group meets weekly at the University commons (Thursday evening). We are now starting our fifth year. All are welcome.

Texas, U.S.A.

Robert R. Buntten.





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