



FEBRUARY, 1961. No. 11.

The twenty-ninth Annual Gathering will be held on March 25th, 1961. As in past years, the Gathering will take place in the Seaforth Armoury. We will announce further details in the next issue of the "Newsletter".

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We wish to announce the dates of the remaining Bi-Monthly Competitions:

February 10th.
April 21st.
June 16th.

You are reminded that these competitions will now be held in the Lecture Room, on the second floor of the Seaforth Armoury.

The classes on February 10th will be as follows:

Novice Old Highland Airs
Juvenile Strathspeys and Reels
Junior Piobaireachd
Amateur Jigs
Senior Amateur Marches

We hope to have a good entry, and would urge you all to attend. The competitions will commence at 8:00 p.m.

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An Evening of Piping will be held in the Men's Canteen at the Seaforth Armoury on February 24th. You will recall that three such evenings were held last year, and were much enjoyed. Why not come out and play us your favourite tune?

These evenings are intended to give the members the opportunity of hearing one another play in an informal and sociable atmosphere. Refreshments will be available. All members, wives and friends are welcome.

A short General Meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m., prior to the programme, in the band room. If anyone has any suggestions concerning the forthcoming Annual Gathering, this will be the time and place to make them.

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MEMBERS' BANQUET:

The Members' Banquet, held on January 14th at the Stanley Park Sports Pavilion, was apparently enjoyed by all who attended. Although the night was about as rainy as a Vancouver night can be, and although several carloads went first to the other pavilion in Stanley Park, once festivities started, seventy members, wives and friends spent a pleasant evening. The head table guests, who included Pipe Major John Robertson, D.C.M., Pipe Major Esson, M.B.E., Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth MacLeod, Mr. Roderick MacLeod, and Pipe Major and Mrs. Malcolm Nicholson, were piped into the banquet by James MacMillan.

At the conclusion of the dinner, life memberships were presented to Edmund Esson, Kenneth MacLeod, Roderick MacLeod and Malcolm Nicholson. These life memberships are the first which have been bestowed unto members of the B.C. Pipers' Association, and were awarded in order to pay a tribute to the contribution and special services rendered by the recipients to this Association and to piping in British Columbia.

Before making the presentations, the President, Ian Walker, spoke briefly on each Life Member. The highlights of his remarks may be of some interest to you.

PIPE MAJOR EDMUND ESSON, M.B.E.:

Pipe Major Edmund Esson, of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, is widely recognized as being the dean of Canadian Pipe Majors, and in British Columbia he can be described as "Mr. Piping". His exemplary military career is well known to all of us, and his contribution to piping, both in the army and in civilian circles, is unexcelled.

I don't know if I am speaking out of turn, but I was recently somewhat surprized when Ed told me that he had been associated with the Seaforths since 1919, when he joined the Cadet Pipe Band. He moved up into the Regimental Band in 1922, and became Pipe Major of it in 1936. Since that date, he has served as Pipe Major, and led the band during the Second World War, when the Seaforths and their band received many honours and achieved a proud record. Pipe Major Esson was recently promoted to the rank of Warrant Officer First Class. It would be interesting to know how many Canadian and Commonwealth records he has established, as far as service is concerned.

Edmund Esson's attentions have by no means been exclusively centered on the army. Soon after the formation of this Association, Ed became an active member and served as one of its first Secretaries. He has since, with the exception of the war years, been actively involved with the affairs of the society, having served four terms as its President. During one of these terms, Pipe Major William Ross, of Edinburgh Castle, and his pupil, John Burgess, visited our Annual Gathering. This was the first of a series of visits made by celebrated pipers, and much credit for the success of these trips can be given to Edmund Esson.

Furthermore, Ed has always played a key role in the White Heather, from which our Association has greatly benefited. Finally, I would like to mention how grateful we are for the hospitality which is always shown to us at the Seaforth Armoury. This hospitality is, in part, a recognition by the Seaforths of the great respect which they have for their Pipe Major.

Although a Life Membership is being bestowed upon Pipe Major Esson tonight, it is done only on the condition that he remains active in our affairs in the future. His advice will always be highly valued. It is hoped that Pipe Major Esson will accept this Life Membership as a recognition of the great service which he has rendered to the B.C. Pipers' Association and to piping in British Columbia.

KENNETH MACLEOD:

The next recipient of life membership is our grand old Ceol Mor Veteran, Kenneth MacLeod. Mr. MacLeod, although no longer a young man, is still hail and hearty, and can probably attribute his good health to the fact that he still plays his beloved pipes almost daily.

Kenneth's name was always thought of in the earlier days when piobaireachd was spoken about. Among men of the older school he was considered as one of the best in that class of music, and I am told that there were a good many players in those days. More than thirty years ago, when bands from distant points, such as Winnipeg and Edmonton, were competing in Vancouver, Pipe Major Lachlan Collie of the Cameron Highlanders competed in the piobaireachd event. Kenneth, to whom the Pipe Major had given lesson several years previously, took first place, which is another case of the pupil beating the master.

Kenneth MacLeod has been a member of this society since its inception, and was one of the early workers who helped to put the association on its feet. To him, as well as to the others who had to cope with the many difficulties of those days, we of the younger generation of the piping fraternity must give a great deal of credit.

Kenneth MacLeod taught piobaireachd to a large number of pipers. Our first President, Rod MacLeod, tells of taking lessons from Kenneth when the latter was a customs inspector. As such he was in charge of a warehouse in which there were stored thousands of cases of whisky, which were unfortunately sealed. Rod says that he started "The Glen is Mine" seated on a "White Horse", with "Grant", "Haig and Haig" and "Johnnie Walker" as companions. Few pupils can boast that they received instruction with such a fine Scottish flavour.

As well as having been frequently employed as a judge during the past several years, Kenneth MacLeod has also been a regular competitor in the Veteran's Class. He is held in high regard by all who have the pleasure of his acquaintance, and pipers of the present day can be grateful to him and to his wife, who has also always been an active and loyal supporter of our cause. It is with a great deal of pleasure that I present Kenneth MacLeod with this life membership.

RODERICK MACLEOD:

We are honouring tonight Mr. Roderick MacLeod, who has been one of the key figures in the piping community in Vancouver for many years. Mr. MacLeod began piping more years ago than he would probably like us to mention. In the First World War, he joined the 231st Battalion in Vancouver. He was later transferred to the 72nd Battalion in France under Pipe Major John Gillies, who in later years was also to become a founding influence in our Association.

Rod was a pupil of the late Donald MacIvor, also a charter member of this Association, and the two of them can be credited with the forming of the Vancouver City Police Pipe Band. Donald taught many of the original members, while Rod's energies were turned to persuading the civic authorities to shoulder the cost of instruments, uniforms, etc.

Rod MacLeod was instrumental in forming our Association in 1932

and served as its first President. The early years, which are often described as "the hungry thirties" and which were certainly hungry ones for the pipers, presented many problems to the fledgling society. Finances were almost non-existent, and many of the members were out of work. I am informed that at one of the Indoor Gatherings there were only a few dollars on hand for prizes, and no prospects for raising any more. Rod MacLeod, the President, ever popular with the pipers, persuaded the competitors in the Open Classes to play for ribbons as prizes. I wonder how popular I would be if I tried to institute this now.

Mr. MacLeod spent an active career with the Vancouver City Police Force and attained the rank of Detective Inspector.

Rod has always taken a great interest in Piobaireachd and has been a prolific contributor to the "Piping Times". Through his efforts, news of events in British Columbia seems to appear in almost every issue of the "Piping Times", and his excellent articles dealing with the history and lore of various piobaireachds are read with great interest.

During the past years, Roderick MacLeod, although severely handicapped by rheumatism, has been a constant attendant at all of our competitions. He has shown a special interest in the development of piping amongst the younger people, and has given them many kind words of encouragement while awarding prizes at the Bi-Monthly Competitions. We can truly say that a large measure of success of this Association is directly as a result of the enthusiasm and efforts of our first President, and I am pleased, on behalf of the B.C. Pipers' Association, to award this Life Membership to Roderick MacLeod.

PIPE MAJOR MALCOLM NICHOLSON:

The final recipient tonight is Pipe Major Malcolm Nicholson, who has been Pipe Major of the Vancouver City Police Pipe Band for many years, and who has had a career which marks him as something of a crusader in the development of piping in Vancouver.

It is without a doubt that Malcolm Nicholson has taught more pipers than any other teacher in British Columbia, and probably in Canada, and through his magnificent efforts, a great deal of progress has been made both with respect to numbers and level of playing amongst the younger members of the piping community.

One of Malcolm's proudest achievements, no doubt, consists of the fact that he has taught his three lovely daughters, all of whom are very proficient pipers and have had a great deal of success in all classes of the music. We are certain that Pipe Major Nicholson and Mrs. Nicholson, who is also a popular and keen supporter of piping, are very proud of their daughters.

We cannot say enough about Malcolm's contribution in furtherance of the aims of our association, when we see the encouragement which he has given to so many young people to take up the pipes. Countless pupils have been taught by him, and our large entries today are largely as a result of his labours. As well as leading the Police Band, Malcolm has been very actively involved in junior band work. There probably isn't a band in town which hasn't at least one piper taught by him. It was most appropriate that Pipe Major Nicholson tendered our motto "Tog orm mo phìob" , "lift up my pipes".

Malcolm Nicholson has always shown a great interest in the B.C. Pipers' Association, and although in later years, because of heavy teaching commitments, he has been unable to attend regularly, his presence is always felt, and he is always recognized as being one of the foremost leaders of the piping community. It is seldom that one meets a person who has his genius and success as a teacher. It is our hope that he continues for many years in this field of endeavour.

We are very proud to have Pipe Major and Mrs. Malcolm Nicholson with us tonight, and are pleased to award him life membership.

At the conclusion of the presentations, and after a brief adjournment, a programme of piping was enjoyed. Selections were given by Jim MacMillan, Bill Paterson, Harry Mumford, Albert Duncan, Norma Nicholson, Ian Inkster, Ian Walker and John MacLeod. The Highland Fling danced by Georgina MacPhail and accompanied by Ed Esson was received very favourably.

Let us hope that this banquet will become an annual event, and that the fellowship of members and friends may be enjoyed more frequently during the years to come.

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We would like to remind the competitors in the Open Piobaireachd classes of the changes which were made in this class, to be held at our Annual Gathering and at the Highland Games following the rules of this Association.

All Piobaireachd competitors in the Open Class will be required to submit two piobaireachds to the judge. One tune will be of his choice, and one will be selected by the competitor from the following list of six tunes:

The Earl of Seaforth's Salute.
The MacKay's Banner.
MacCrimmon's Sweetheart.
MacFarlane's Gathering.
In Praise of Morag (Marion).
Donald MacKenzie's Lament for his Father.

The competitors will be informed of the tune which he will play just before he begins to perform.

We would ask you to make these changes known to those who will be competing in this event.

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It is gratifying to note the number of kind compliments which we have been receiving regarding the "Newsletter". Your good wishes and encouragement are much appreciated.

A number of our readers have commented on certain of the articles, and have mentioned anecdotes or different aspects of the various subjects which we have omitted. We would strongly urge all of you to commit these observations to paper, in order that we might reprint them. All letters and comments concerning material contained in the "Newsletter" or dealing with piping in general will be included wherever possible. Your support is needed to make the "Newsletter" a Success.

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We are sorry to hear of the recent illness of Mr. Ian Duncan, President of the Pacific Coast International Highland Games Association and a leader in the Victoria piping community. Let us hope that Ian will soon be on his feet again, and we send him our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

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On March 4th, 1961, the 10th Annual Pipers' and Drummers' Stag Dinner will be held in Seattle, at the Windsor Room of the New Washington Hotel. This dinner is sponsored by a joint committee from the Washington Scottish, Seattle, Keith and Clan Gordon Pipe Bands. The total cost will be five dollars which will include dinner, refreshments and entry fees.

The programme is as follows:

5:30 Cocktail Hour
6:30 Dinner
7:30 Local dancing competition
8:00 Novice Marches
8:30 Amateur Marches
9:00 March, Strathspey and Reel (Open to pipers from
Seattle and vicinity not competing in other events)
9:30 Drumming (Pipe Band Drum Sections)
10:00 Open Jigs - 2 jigs required
10:30 Quartet Competition
11:00 Piping - Open to anyone to compete with any tune;
winner to be acclaimed by popular vote. This is
an event for laughs and the prize will consist of
a Totem Pole, suitably engraved.
11:30 Massed Pipe Bands - Open to all pipers and drummers
present.

All reservations should be made with:

Robert Dunshee
2002 Boyer Avenue
Seattle, Washington.

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The following musical festivals will include piping classes amongst their events:

MacMillan Club Festival - February 10th.
Information is available from Miss Beryl Wright,
121 East 19th Street, North Vancouver. YUkon 7-7705.

Coquitlam District Musical Festival - March 13 - 18.
Information is available from Mrs. D. Bennie,
Box 496, Port Coquitlam. Whitehall 2-8059.

Vancouver Ladies Pipe Band Festival - March 16, 17, & 18.
Information is available from Miss Norma Nicholson,
3460 Triumph Street. CYpress 9-3589.

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DON'T FORGET:

BI-MONTHLY COMPETITION: FEBRUARY 10th.
GENERAL MEETING &
PIPING EVENING FEBRUARY 24th.
ANNUAL GATHERING: MARCH 25th.

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