

B. C. PIPERS' NEWSLETTER



The official monthly publication of
the **British Columbia Pipers' Association**

JULY, 1961

No. 16.

AN ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF BAGPIPE MUSIC

AND THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF PIPE PLAYING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

B. C. P I P E R S' N E W S L E T T E R

Published monthly by the British Columbia Pipers' Association.

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BI-MONTHLY COMPETITION - JUNE 16th.

The final Bi-Monthly Competitions of the season were held on June 16th, 1961, at the lecture room of the Seaforth Armoury. Those present were entertained by an enjoyable performance by the Kiwanis Boys Pipe Band. They played an interesting and difficult selection of tunes, and are to be commended for the fine standard which they have attained.

It was rather amusing to note a complete absence of all the winners in the Juvenile, Junior and Amateur Classes, when the prize certificates were being awarded at the end of the evening. It was therefore necessary for the President to award the certificates to these winners' mothers, who perhaps were equally deserving of the prizes, in any event.

George Allan judged the following performers the winners of these competitions:

Novice Marches:

1. Linda Rowe
2. Dorothy MacArthur
3. Bill McMichael

Juvenile Jigs:

1. John MacLeod
2. Bruce Topp
3. Douglas Graham

Junior Marches:

1. Bobby McDonald

Amateur Old Highland Airs:

1. Bill Elder

Senior Amateur Strathspeys & Reels:

1. Bill Paterson

The Aggregate winners of this season's Bi-Monthly Competitions will be announced at an early date. Prizes will be awarded in the fall, at our annual Ceilidh.

If any of you have any suggestions concerning the improvement of the Bi-Monthlies, we would like to hear them. We hope that they have been successful, and have done their share in improving the standard of competitions amongst the younger players.

B.C. HIGHLAND DANCING ASSOCIATION 28th ANNUAL COMPETITION:

The 28th Annual Competition of the B.C. Highland Dancing Association was held on July 1st at the University Stadium, of the University of British Columbia.

After three years of wet weather, these games were finally blessed with fine weather, and the sunny day was much appreciated. The day was officially opened by Brig. Alasdair Maclean, and selections were given by the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada Cadet Pipe Band.

Ronald Forman judged the piping events, with the following results:

Under 12 years - Marches:

1. Raymond Irvine 2. Robert Heggie 3. David Irvine

Under 12 years - Strathspeys and Reels:

1. Raymond Irvine 2. David Irvine 3. Robert Heggie

Under 14 years - Marches:

1. Bruce Topp 2. Bobby MacDonald 3. John MacLeod

Under 14 years - Strathspeys and Reels:

1. Bobby MacDonald 2. John MacLeod 3. Gordon Hardie

Under 16 years - Marches:

1. Larry Gillott 2. Allen MacLeod 3. Gordon Whaley

Under 16 years - Strathspeys and Reels:

1. Larry Gillott 2. Karen Ruddick 3. Bruce McRae

Amateur over 16 - Marches:

1. Tom Richardson

Amateur over 16 - Strathspeys and Reels:

1. Bill Elder

Amateur - Old Highland Airs:

1. Bobby MacDonald 2. Bruce Topp 3. Tom Richardson

The following persons were the winners of challenge trophies:

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Ernie Topp Trophy - Under 12 years: Raymond Irvine
Wm. Miller Trophy - Under 14 years: Bobby MacDonald
Ruddick Trophy - Under 16 years: Larry Gillott
Scott Memorial Trophy - Amateur over 16: Tom Richardson, Bill Elder (tie)
Rod MacIsaac Trophy - Old Highland Airs: Bobby MacDonald

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HIGHLAND GAMES - CALEDON EAST, ONTARIO:

On a recent visit to eastern Canada, I attended the Highland Games at Caledon East, Ontario. I thought that my observations concerning these games might be of some interest to our readers.

Caledon East, a village sixteen miles north of Toronto's Malton Airport, appeared to be approximately the size of Horseshoe Bay. It was therefore somewhat surprizing to see games being held in such a place, since there would be such a small population from which to draw the audience. However, it appears that many of the best Games in Ontario are held in little rural towns in the middle of large agricultural districts. Apparantly, they do not suffer from a lack of audiences. I would assume that the games here would receive excellent local support, and there would also be a larger following which would make the circuit, and which would be prepared to travel more than a few miles to the various games.

There was a regular country fair at Caledon East on June 24th, the day of the games. As well as the regular concessions, there were two tents set up by dealers in Highland equipment and accessories. At one tent I was interested to see the new Powell River record for sale, and was told that it was being very favourably received in the east. The piping and dancing competitions also had to share the spotlight with a Tractorama display, a midway, a helicopter which regularly and noisily left the grounds at ten minute intervals, and a gentleman, who didn't look particularly Scottish, but was selling a kitchen implement that would make cooking a dream for the housewife. As far as I could see, all it made was a lot of extra vegetable peelings!

The chief piping judge of the day was the famous John Wilson. Mr. Wilson is one of the leading judges in eastern Canada, and is the teacher of many of the top competitors. He had warm praise for the work of our Association in Canada.

Unfortunately, on the same day, Highland Games were being held in Grimsby, also in the environs of Toronto. I was told that some of the better bands and competitors were attending these games, and that I was seeing only a part of the regular solo and band entries.

I was very much impressed with the high standard in the Open Classes. In general, the open players seemed somewhat younger than ours, although one gentleman gave a very creditable performance, who was, I was told, approaching eighty. One of the professional players was Ben Manson, formerly of Powell River, and now of Toronto. Ben, who was seen frequently on the boards in Vancouver, is now back with the Toronto Scottish Pipe Band. He got a 3rd in the Marches and a 4th in the Strathspeys and Reels. If there hadn't been the duplication of games, I was told that there would be from twenty to twenty-five in the Open Class, which would obviously indicate a larger number of good competitors in the east. When one considers the large population, this, of course, is not surprising.

One feature in the open competitions which I found rather annoying was that between each performance the competitor would spend from five to ten minutes tuning his pipes on the boards. This, in my opinion, certainly dragged out the competition, and would tend to scare away all but the hardiest of spectators.

The Junior Classes were very small with only two or three in the 16 years and under and in the 14 years and under classes. I assume that the bulk of the Amateur players were at the Grimsby Games.

Four bands competed with the following results:

Class "A" Bands:

1. City of Toronto Pipe Band

Class "B" Bands:

1. Canadian General Electric Pipe Band, Peterborough, Ont.
2. Toronto Scottish Pipe Band
3. Toronto Girls Pipe Band

I was very much impressed with the City of Toronto Pipe Band, which was formerly known as the Cabar Feidh Pipe Band. Most of the pipers of this band were pupils of John Wilson. It would compare favourably with our best bands piping-wise, but I would not dare to compare its drumming section with those of the Powell River Band or the Seaforth Highlanders Band. It was interesting to note that only one of the four bands made use of tenor drummers, and in no instances did the bass drummers do anything than simply beat the drum.

After the "A" Class and "B" Class Band Competitions, an Open Slow March Band Competition was held. This Class was especially enjoyable, and I would like to see it tried at one of our local competitions. It was interesting to see the judges slow marching behind the bands during their performance.

I was also considerably impressed by the prize list in the band competitions. Had there been a larger band entry, I would think that a large loss would have been incurred by the sponsors of the Games, who in this case were The Canadian Pictorial News Magazine. The following prizes were awarded, or at least were offered:

Class "A" Bands:
1st - \$300.00 2nd - \$200.00 3rd - \$125.00 4th - \$100.00

Class "B" Bands:
1st - \$150.00 2nd - \$125.00 3rd - \$100.00 4th - \$75.00

Class "A" & "B" - Open Slow March:
1st - \$150.00 2nd - \$125.00 3rd - \$100.00 4th - \$75.00

Consolation Money to Non-Winning Bands: \$50.00

All in all, the day was very interesting, and I found it quite useful and informative seeing how games were operated in eastern Canada.

- C. I. Walker -

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"TAPED" REMARKS OF AN ABERDEEN PIPER

Hello, frien's. - I should gie ye a tune on the pipes, but they're oot o' order, so I'll just say a word or two instead. As ye ken, the history o' the pipes is full o' guesswork. According to one story the Irish had them first, but couldna do a thing with them, so gave them to the Scots. The Scots were grateful, and presented the Irish with wheelbarrows to help them learn to walk upright. Anyway, we've got in the pipes a grand but persnickety instrument, with four reeds, and any one of them can get oot o' kelter at any time, especially if the piper has an audience. Aye, and sometimes all four go on strike thegither. Man, that's a scunner!

They tell about the Hielan' piper remarking to a frien', "Donald, I have been hearing that maybe you may be thinking of getting married". "There is no truth in that whatever", said Donald. "I am having trouble enough already with my reeds".

Well, if by good luck or good management the reeds are behaving, there's aye the chance that the bag is leaking. That's anither scunner! Ye're sae forfochten with the blawin' that you make a clean hash o' the fingering.

We've a' run into folk who say that the pipes are a primitive instrument, noisy and disagreeable and a' that. Said an auld piper to one such customer, "Man, they were making pipes and playing pipes long before you were born, and they'll be making pipes and playing pipes long after you're rotten and forgotten". I'm thinking that the billie had his kale put through the reek that time all right.

Then some folk - reporters especially - canna get away frae the word "Skirl" when mentioning the pipes. We ken Robbie Burns used it in a sort o' humorous way, but it was worn threadbare long ago. If the pipes skirl, then a trumpet brays, a horn grunts, a flute tootles, and a piano tinkles. Say that a pianist "tinkled" a composition by Chopin, and he'd resent it, but the piper, poor chiel, has to hear that he "skirled" a pibroch, and say nothing.

Hooever, here's to the pipes, with the music for every occasion and every mood. I might read ye this bit o' verse:

A blythsome air to please us weel,
Or rantin' jig, or birlin' reel,
A liltin' march mak's licht the stride,
The pibroch's notes we hear wi' pride,
Lament, when sands o' life are run,
Is saddest music 'neath the sun.

To a' pipers. - Good lungs and supple fingers. Ta - ta.

Compliments of
James A. Berry
Secretary Treasurer
Vancouver Island Pipers'
Society

St. Andrews & Caledonian Society's

75th Annual

Caledonian Games

1886 — 1961

at

BROCKTON OVAL

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VANCOUVER, B.C.



SATURDAY, JULY 22nd

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and PIPING COMPETITIONS
TRACK and FIELD EVENTS**

MASSED PIPE BANDS

ENJOYMENT GALORE



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ADVANCE SALES:

Games Secretary
J.M. Thomson
2086 Parker Street
Vancouver, B.C.

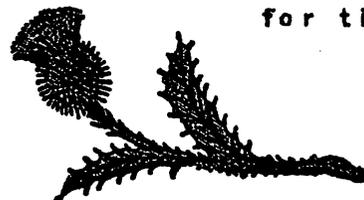
GAMES OFFICE (FROM JULY 4th)

Scottish Auditorium
12th Avenue & Fir Street
Vancouver, B.C.

SEARCHLIGHT TATTOO:

A special section will be reserved for members and friends of the Society on Saturday, July 22nd, following the Games.

Contact the Games Secretary for tickets.



WORLD PIPE BAND CHAMPIONSHIP - JUNE 24th, 1961.

It is Saturday forenoon on Princes Street, in the middle of June, the day and time when Edinburgh promenades that wonderful mile of shops and gardens lying below the Old town and the Castle. We have walked along it from the Waverly Steps to the West End, and have noted the hardy Edinburgh girls making the best of it in their short, wide-skirted cotton frocks, their elders in tweed costumes exactly right for Princes Street, and two Canadians, still in their middle of winter clothing from inside out; for the fierce west wind blows the flag on the Castle so hard that the outer edge of it is fraying. We turn at the Caley Station and retrace our steps, and notice by the North British Hotel clock that it is noon, so we make for Crawfords on the Bridges, where we are remembered and welcomed, and have one of those Edinburgh lunches that it is a treat to come back to.

This is a prelude to the afternoon, for we are going to the World's Pipe Band Championship contest. This is held at Murrayfield, the home of Scottish Rugby, a short bus ride from Princes Street.

There is a concrete grandstand down the west side of the field, and a high terraced concrete ramp around the other three sides of the football pitch, which is of the finest turf that Scotland can produce.

The use of this stadium has been given by the Scottish Rugby Union to the pipers for the day. By the time we get there the junior contests are all over and the intermediates are just about to start. There were sixty-five bands in four classes, the last eighteen being the heavy-weights, so to speak. The number of pipers to a band varied from nine to sixteen, the average being about eleven. They marched in fours, not threes, and there was every grade of pipe from the hand-me-downs of the Boys Brigades to the matched pipes and chanters of Muirhead and Sons. About half the bands had dressed their pipes with ribbons instead of cords. Quite a number of the side drums had top heads of clear plastic.

The bands in waiting were penned in a large enclosure back of and beyond the concrete grand stand, which acted as a perfect sound barrier, and as their turn came, these bands entered the football pitch alternately from either end, so that as one band finished and moved off, the next was ready to move in. The number of the band and its set of tunes were telegraphed on a sign board, for example, "Band 62, Set 87". By reference to the programme the particulars of each band and set of tunes were available; in this case 62 was the City of Glasgow Police and Set 87 was "Balmoral Highlanders", "Maggie Cameron", and "Alec McGregor". The band came from the

halt playing its march, formed circle and completed its tunes, then reformed ranks and marched off and out. The three judges were hidden in plywood hutches forming three of the four corners of the square that surrounded the playing circle, and from time to time each judge passed out sheets of results over the top of his prison. It was very cold and windy, and most of the pipers who had long plaids busked them up and under their waistbelts. There were all kinds and conditions of bands, from Boys' Brigade, British Legion, Glasgow Street Cleaners up to world famous Muirhead and Sons, and Shotts and Dykehead, with an arresting array of tartans from Black Watch to Dress Macpherson, and a wide variety of dress between band and band.

The standard of playing was very good, and considering the day, excellent, for not one band failed to finish, and one and all got a good hand from the crowd as it moved off. The main contest was a close one; Muirhead and Sons - $89 \frac{3}{4}$, Shotts & Dykehead - $89 \frac{1}{2}$, Edinburgh City Police - $88 \frac{1}{2}$. Shotts & Dykehead had been champions for the last three years. These three bands seemed to play and move with the tradition of victory, and I felt thrilled at having marked them on my programme, though my choice for first was Edinburgh City Police.

There were two invitations bands, the one, that of Churchill School, of Southern Rhodesia, fine, well set up young men of about 18 years of age, in violet blazers and Gordon Kilts. Each year the Committee brings such a band from a Commonwealth country. The other band was quite an eyeful. It was the Faulat Girls' Brian Boru Pipe Band, from Ireland. These girls work in the Faulat Shirt Factory, and there were 12 pipers and 12 drummers. The girls had saffron kilts and plaids, black tunics, and a lemon coloured plume in their navy blue berets. They gave an entrancing display of precision marching, and the programme stated that they would play a selection of old Irish airs. These, to my surprise, included Annie Laurie, Loch Lomond, and God Save the Queen, but as soon as I heard the drumming, there was no question that these colleens came from Ulster.

I was curious about two things. Out on that large field these girls looked small and very young, but on closer inspection they were really quite grown-up, as they must have been, to be working in a factory. The reason they could play these tunes as sung was that the chanters on their pipes had no less than four extra holes, two at the top and two at the bottom, manipulated by keys on the chanter.

There was another fascinating competition. This was none other than a competition for drum majors, of whom there were 27 entered. The modus operandi was as follows: These birds of paradise were first divided into two flocks. The first flock was drawn up in line abreast, 10 paces apart, facing the grand stand. At a signal, a duty band, posted at right

angles to the line of march, struck up, and the constellation of **drum** majors, each "doing his stuff" as he thought fit, advanced a hundred yards, turned round, retraced his steps to the starting point, turned again to face the grand stand, and as the band stopped playing, elevated his silver-mounted staff. From these two flights, a "short leet" of six were picked, and these repeated this performance with frills, and were thereafter individually inspected by two veritable archangels of drum majors and a judge for dress and deportment. The winner was Drum Major Ian Lang, Ceanloch Pipe Band, Ancient Campbell Tartan. I later saw this gentleman get on a bus behind the one I was on, and he was proudly carrying two silver-mounted staffs, the one he had used, the other he had won.

When these competitions were over, and right on schedule, the bands massed for the prize giving. In the centre field to the left were the Irish Girls, to the right the Rhodesian Boys, and in the centre some 250 pipers and drummers of the senior bands. At a signal, from the right hand entrance marched in about 350 pipers and drummers playing "Scotland the Brave", and took up position along one end and half of one side of a rectangle surrounding the bands now in the centre field. When they were in position, the remaining 350 bandsmen entered from the left hand entrance, playing "Blue Bonnets" and completed the other end and half side of this rectangle. The presiding announcer brought the whole parade to attention, called on the centre drummers only to be ready but all the pipers, and said "One, Two", then the massed pipers played the "79th's Farewell to Gibraltar" as a general salute. Then "One, Two", once more and they played the "Highland Laddie" as a compliment to Captain Chalres A. Hepburn of Hillhead, the Chieftain, who then distributed the prizes, and in a dry Scots fashion stated that he was just handing over cups and shields, but that incidental financial arrangements would be handled at once at adjacent tables.

The parade was then dismissed as it stood. So ended for me an unforgettable day. Murrayfield hasn't the setting of our Brockton Point, and, having regard to the number of bands competing, I think that we make an excellent showing, in every way, and as for spectator appreciation, we are far ahead, for at Murrayfield, when we got there, there were more pipers than spectators, and these the next of kin, while the newspaper report gave just the bare results.

The presiding genius of the day was undoubtedly Hugh Macpherson, piper, bagpipe maker, Councillor of the City of Edinburgh, President of the Bands Association, who managed to get 65 diverse pipe bands and their clansmen in and out of Murrayfield and Edinburgh without incident, delay or accident, and to whom the citizens of that fiar city are indebted for a memorable, if unappreciated spectacle.

- Eric R. Thomson -

DONALD SUTHERLAND

This month we would like to acquaint further our readers with one of our new advertisers, Donald Sutherland, of Glide, Oregon.

Donald Sutherland has compiled a Collection of Bagpipe Music from the Pacific Coast, which is apparently the first book of its kind to be produced in the Western United States. Two aspects of the Donald Sutherland Collection are unique. The composers of all the melodies contained in it are contemporary, that is to say, all the compositions are new ones. The geographical source of the compositions in the collection range from Scotland to the Antipodes, the United States of America and Canada. The titles of many of its tunes bear witness to this fact.

Pipers everywhere will find Donald Sutherland's Collection an excellent addition to their repertoire.

Donald Sutherland is a native of Rogart, Sutherland, Scotland. At the age of 14 years, young Donald was playing the piob mhor under the able tuition of Mr. George Murray, a piper of the old school of Canntaireachd. Donald's next teacher, Pipe-Major Colin Thompson, was a prominent competitor and prize winner at all the important Highland Games of that period. This gentleman was also a noted judge of piping.

The cumulative result of the labors of these two instructors became apparent when their ardent young pupil competed successfully in the Northern Scottish Games, and when he was appointed piper to His Grace the Duke of Sutherland, at Benarmine Lodge. Sutherland held this position from 1908 to 1909, when he immigrated to Australia.

Arriving in the land of "Down Under", Sutherland again entered the competitive field of piping. It was in Australia that he met and became the pupil of Simon Fraser, a piper of high distinction in the annals of piping. Fraser, an eminent authority on piobaireachd, was himself a direct link in the Art from the MacCrimmons of old-time.

Some time later Sutherland took up the study of piping under the expert tutelage of A.K. Cameron, a former pupil of Simon Fraser. Cameron, then a contemporary of Pipe-Major William Gray, of Dumbarton, Scotland, was likewise a noted authority on the art of piping, especially piobaireachd.

Throughout the long years of his piping career, the flame of his art has burned bright within Donald Sutherland. His correspondence during this period has been with men who are exemplars in that art.

Donald Sutherland made his own bagpipe entirely by hand. In fact, he has fashioned two sets. One he presented to Harry Fenley's Museum, in Portland, Oregon. His hobby is playing tape-recordings of pipe music, mostly piobaireachd. For this purpose he uses the MacCrimmon Chanter, made by Pipe-Major William Gray. In his repertoire are two piobaireachds of his own composition, which he hopes to have published in the near future.

Donald Sutherland has been a citizen of the United States for many years. He is well known in piping circles on the Pacific Coast, and has judged at Vancouver, Portland, and at games held in California.

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LOS ANGELES HIGHLAND GAMES:

The 29th Annual Highland Games of the United Scottish Societies of Los Angeles was held in Santa Monica on June 24th, 1961. The Games were held in a beautiful setting - vast areas of green lawns surrounded by palm trees. The good crowd was treated to some very nice piping, both by bands and individual performers.

The six "A" Class Bands were required to play March, Strathspey and Reel and Slow March, and the two "B" Class Bands played a 2/4 March only. Since I was judging in a tent and did not see the bands, I can only surmise by the applause from the crowded stands that the audience were being treated to a very nice show by the bands.

In the Amateur events, there were a few very capable competitors who in a year or so may quite easily be a threat to the open pipers.

The outstanding performer in the open class was James McColl, who played beautifully on an immaculate instrument to take four firsts. His rendition of "The Lament for the Children" was a tremendous effort. I can truthfully say that I have never heard that Piobaireachd played better. James is in top form and is now playing better than he has ever played. He has not too much competition just now, but some of the lads in the open class could quite easily be a bother to him in the near future. They have been taught by James, who incidently has all of the outstanding pupils. Their tone, the care of their instruments, and their knowledge of piobaireachd is better than average, and in a year or so, I am sure that we will be hearing great things in open competition in California. Should these lads decide to enter our B.C. Competitions, I am quite certain that a good portion of our prize money would be taken back to California.

- James McMillan -

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NANAIMO HIGHLAND GAMES:

The 4th Annual Highland Gathering of the Upper Island Highland Games Association was held at Nanaimo on July 8th. The Games, which were officially opened by the Lieutenant Governor Maj.-Gen. The Honourable George R. Pearkes, V.C., P.C., C.B., D.S.O., M.C., were conducted at the Caledonian Grounds, an excellent setting for Highland Gatherings.

The piping events were judged by James McMillan and Donald Murray.

The results are as follows:

Juvenile Marches:

1. John MacLeod 2. Bruce Topp 3. Stephen Geddes 4. David Dakin

Juvenile Strathspeys and Reels:

1. John MacLeod 2. Bruce Topp 3. Jim Reid 4. Stephen Geddes

Junior Marches:

1. Bobby McDonald 2. Gordon Ross 3. Karen Ruddick

Junior Strathspeys and Reels:

1. Bobby McDonald 2. Karen Ruddick 3. Gordon Ross

Amateur Marches:

1. David Wilson 2. Rae Marie McInnes 3. Arnie Stone
4. Bill Elder

Amateur Strathspeys and Reels:

1. David Wilson 2. Rae Marie McInnes
3. Arnie Stone 4. Bill Elder

Amateur Piobaireachd:

1. Bill Elder 2. Ian Walker 3. Arnie Stone 4. David Wilson

Open Marches:

1. James Yardley 2. Ronald Forman 3. Donald McInnes

Open Strathspeys and Reels:

1. James Yardley 2. Ronald Forman 3. Donald McInnes

Open Piobaireachd:

1. Ronald Forman 2. Donald McInnes 3. James Yardley

"A" Class Bands:

1. MacMillan, Bloddel & Powell River Pipe Band
2. Seaforth Highlanders of Canada Pipe Band

"B" Class Bands:

1. Vancouver Ladies Pipe Band
2. Royal Canadian Engineers

Trophies:

Nanaimo Realty Trophy - Juvenile:	John MacLeod
Drs. Brown & Hamilton Trophy - Junior:	Bobby McDonald
D.M. Greer Trophy - Amateur:	David Wilson
P. Inkster Memorial Trophy - Open:	James Yardley & Ronald Forman (tie)

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KIWANIS JUNIOR BOYS PIPE BAND: TEA & GARDEN PARTY

The Ladies Auxiliary to the Kiwanis Junior Boys Pipe Band are organizing a Tea & Garden Party to be held on Saturday, August 12th. The proceeds from this function will be used to help send the Band to Scotland in August, 1962.

The Garden Party will begin at 2:00 p.m., and will be held at the home of Mrs. L. Osborne, at 1158 East 26th Avenue. There will be entertainment supplied by the band, as well as selections of Highland Dancing. There will also be a sale of home cooking, and bingo games will be played. Admission is only 50¢, which includes tea and sandwiches.

During the evening a dance will be held. Refreshments will be available, and the evening should be a most enjoyable one.

Mrs. Doreen MacLeod is convenor of the Garden Party, and warmly invites you all to attend. Any inquiries should be made to Mrs. MacLeod at HE 4 8009.

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Many choice Tattoo tickets are still available, for this spectacular performance, which is being held nightly until July 22nd, at the Empire Stadium. Get your tickets at the Queen Elizabeth Box Office, or at Eatons.

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