

# B. C. PIPERS' NEWSLETTER



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

NOVEMBER, 1974

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B. C. PIPERS' NEWSLETTER

Published by the British Columbia Pipers' Association.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

This letter was prompted by the many relatives playing with the Victoria Junior Boys Pipe Band. They were operating around 1923 up until about 1926 when they signed on with the 16th Canadian Scottish as a Cadet Band. About 1929 we moved up to be the Senior Band of the regiment. By this time the personnel of the band had changed with some leaving and new faces being added.

Getting back to the Junior Band, we had Pipe Major Sandy Wallace with sons Ian and Norman (one a piper, the other a drummer); next was Pipe Sergeant John Milton with son Charles, a drummer; then Andrew and Danny Pollock with step brother J. Marrs (all pipers); next, we had Peter Alexander, a piper with brother John, a drummer. On from here, we had Archie MacMillan, piper, with brother Hugh, a drummer, and cousin Jimmy MacMillan, a piper. The latter two were cousins of Archie and Hugh MacMillan.

Looking back our practice sessions and our band outings always seemed like family gatherings. I just wonder if any other band could come up with anything near to this relative group.

Ian Wallace

Dear Sir,

I hesitate to enter further into the distasteful correspondence with regard to the "l'affaire scandaleux" at Inverness. I would only say that Colonel McEwing is quite inordinately fearful of coming out into the open in his letter. Instead of hiding under a cloak of innuendo and ambiguity, why cannot he be more precise?

For instance, your readers must be interested to know that the "individual" who wrote to a northern Scottish newspaper and offered £100 for the contentious tape was none other than the Colonel himself. Not only did he offer to buy the tape but humbly suggested to the paper that such an offer, he knew, was minute in comparison with the enormous sums which would accrue to the owners were they to dabble in the market-place!

Colonel McEwing is quite right in congratulating us on having a free Press, but even he cannot really be so naive as to imagine that what any Scottish newspaper is not free to do, is to indulge in character assassination. They would do so at their peril.

John MacLellan

Dear Sir,

They are still with us and going strong!

Who are they? None other than the Vancouver Ladies' Pipe Band; a group that display perseverance plus ability along with tradition which other lady pipe bands put forth many years back.

My first look at a Vancouver Ladies Pipe Band was during the Caledonian Games at Hastings Park, the year 1928. The leader at that time was the late Pipe Major W. Urquhart and the drumming instructor was the late Alex Dewar. If one just thinks back that would make it forty-six years - a pretty fair run for any Band. I'm not sure if there was a lapse between 1928 and 1974 but some of the Vancouverites might know.

Most male band members thought it was just a passing fancy, something that would soon pass on. Fancy it was, but the passing part was an idle dream; as the years moved along, so did the ladies. It was soon accepted that they were here to stay. Some of the ladies entered the competitions and were winning prizes much to the surprise of the men.

Their winning years started during the late twenties and the early thirties. Each year a few more would enter and the men were hard pressed to keep ahead of the new move by the opposite sex. Even during the early years of competition, the ladies left their mark. All one has to do is take a peek at some of the perpetual trophies from years gone by and see the names of some of the lady winners.

As of today more and more young girls are taking to the bagpipe. Now mixed bands are common with some good bands resulting.

The Vancouver Ladies have travelled to many places here in North America, plus trips to the British Isles and jaunts to Hawaii. They have been received with much acclaim wherever it may have been. No band ever looked any smarter than the ladies on and off parade. One would have to say that they were the goodwill Ambassadors of the B. C. piping fraternity over the many years. A good deal of thanks should go out to the ladies for without them many of our Highland Games might not have enjoyed the success because of shrinking band appearances.

Here are some of the names of band members who played away back when:

Pipers: Jessie McLeod, Betty Pringle, Bella Mackie, Isobel Thompson, Myrtle Dewar, Thelma Collins, Kathleen Nicholson, Jessie Nicholson, Mary Murphy, Zelpha Murray and Georgina McPhail.

Drummers: Florence Cameron, Gwen Collins, Irene Levie, Lilian Hardy, Patsy Taylor and Jessie Simmons.

Bass Drummers: Doris Young and Doris Elphick, and Tenor Drummer Phyliss Thompson.

Ian Wallace

### LAST MONTH IN AND AROUND THE ASSOCIATION

#### October Mini Gathering

The first of two winter competitions was held on Saturday, November 2 at the Scottish Auditorium. The descendant of the old bi-monthlies was greeted by a disappointing turnout of both spectators and competitors. However, the superior piping, particularly in the Senior Amateur class, and the superb organizing saved the day.

The Association's crackdown on late entries and delays during the competition was welcomed by spectators and organizers and didn't seem to bother the competitors.

#### Results

##### Novice Old Highland Airs

1. Glen McEachran
2. Gordon Redmond
3. Pat MacNeil

##### Juvenile Marches

1. Maureen Lee
2. Mike Guillemin
3. Owen Reid

##### Junior Piobaireachd

1. Donald MacNeil
2. Ruth Tremaine
3. Grant Wilkie

##### Novice Marches

1. Marcia Campbell
2. Glen McEachran
3. Gordon Redmond

##### Juvenile Strathspey & Reel

1. Maureen Lee & Owen Reid
2. Bruce Gibson

##### Junior Jigs

1. Ruth Tremaine
2. Grant Wilkie
3. Aileen Arnott
4. Alan Wilson

Amateur Hornpipe

1. James Wright
2. Allan MacDougall
3. Gordon MacDonald

Amateur March, Strathspey & Reel

1. Alison Palmer
2. Jill Laurie
3. Gordon MacDonald

Vancouver Island Pipers Club

It was very nice to see over 50 people attending our last meeting. Among our members present was Piper Kenny MacDonald who made his way over from Washington to be with us and enjoy the excellent piping.

After our stalwart group ushered in the evening, the programme got underway with young Jill Laurie of Vancouver (a pupil of Hal Senyk) playing a nice selection.

Jamie Troy's tapes of the championship bands were very much enjoyed by all. We noticed how many of the good old tunes are still being played by the majority of the bands. Tunes such as Highland Wedding, Alexander Kennedy (played by at least 3 of the 9 bands) and Blair Drummond were very much in evidence.

Hal Senyk came through in fine form again with his rendition of Lament for the Union.

Ian Whitlaw, breezing in late from Vancouver having missed the ferry, gave us fine selection, and pleased us with an encore. Impromptu piping rounded out another great evening.

Knock-Out & General Meeting

The October meeting was held in the Scottish Auditorium on November 1, 1974. Vice-President Jimmy MacDonald opened the meeting with the minutes being read by Secretary Dick Herring.

The first trio competition saw David Wilson's North Shore fall to Port Moody #1. However, David's boys put up a fine fight and we hope to see them back next year.

The second contest had Victoria outplaying the Vancouver Ladies. Jamie, Steve and Colin who formed the nucleus for the powerful City of Victoria treated us to their new musical selection.

The remainder of the evening was devoted to impromptu piping and general chin-wagging.

Old Country Pipe Band Results

Meadowbank

1. Shotts & Dykehead Caledonia
2. Guelph (Canada)
3. Clan McFarlane (Canada)
4. Bilston Glen

European Championships - Shotts

1. Dysart & Dundonald
2. Shotts & Dykehead
3. British Caledonian Airways

World Championships - Stirling

1. Shotts & Dykehead Caledonia
2. Dysart & Dundonald
3. Red Hackle

NEXT MONTH

Trio Knock-Out

The next knock-out will take place on Friday, Dec. 6 at 8:00 p.m. in the Scottish Auditorium.

The combatants will be Triumph Street #2 and Port Moody #2 in event A while Richmond Jr. & Richmond Sr. #2 will play off in event B.

Those in attendance should be in for a very entertaining evening.

One sure way of avoiding the \$1.00 admission is to become a member. (If you aren't, you shouldn't be reading this.)

\* \* \* \* \*

Just a little note to remind you that it isn't too late to obtain tickets for the Triumph Street Dance. Tickets for the ceilidh will be available on Friday evening at the knock-out and on Saturday afternoon at the Contest.

Remember, St. Francis de Sales, Sperling & Balmoral, 1:00 p.m. SHARP! Ample free parking, refreshments.

Annual Gathering

The 1975 edition of the B. C. Pipers' Annual Gathering will take place on March 28 & 29th in the North Vancouver Community Centre.

We are pleased to have the services of Mr. Angus MacLellan as our chief adjudicator. Angus was the Gold Medalist at Oban in 1973 and is a member of the Glasgow City Police Pipe Band. He also found time to attend the Thousand Islands' Piping School as an instructor last summer.

Plans are getting underway now for the Indoor Meet so if you have any ideas or suggestions you think could be incorporated into the programme, talk to a director. That's what he's there for.

City of Ottawa Highland Games - 1975

The City of Ottawa will present the second Annual National Highland Games as a two-day event on Friday, June 27 and Saturday, June 28, 1975.

Once again, the Canadian-Inter-Provincial and Open Championships will be conducted and it is anticipated that the following 1974 winners will be back to defend their titles:

Inter-Provincial Champion

Open Champion

Pipe Bands - Grade 1

Clan MacFarlane

Clan MacFarlane

Pipe Bands - Grade 2

Antigonish Legion "A"

Erskine

Pipe Bands - Grade 3

Toronto Gaidhlig

Toronto Gaidhlig

Pipe Bands - Grade 4

N.B. Kiwanis

Brockville

Solo Piping - Professional

Ed Neigh

W. Livingstone

Solo Piping - Amateur

S. MacAuley

G. Neel

<u>Inter-Provincial Champion</u>	<u>Open Champion</u>
<u>Solo Drumming - Professional</u>	
D. Constant	J. Fisher
<u>Solo Drumming - Amateur</u>	
H. Fraser Jr.	M. Munro
<u>Drum Major</u>	
N. MacKenzie	N. MacKenzie
<u>Athletics - Tug-O-War</u>	
Cameron Highlanders	Cameron Highlanders
<u>Athletics - Caber Toss</u>	
Waine Thompson	Waine Thompson

Because of the number of contests, the large entry and the inherent problems experienced at the 1974 City of Ottawa Highland Games, it is planned to hold the solo contests on Friday and the pipe band contests on Saturday with a "Scottish Spectacular" Saturday night to conclude the two-day event. More details will be forthcoming.

The Inter-Provincial Championship is a contest confined to one entry per province, representing that province, in each of the following categories:

- a) Bands  
Grade 1 - one band  
Grade 2 - one band  
Grade 3 - one band  
Grade 4 - one band
- b) Solo Piping  
Professional - one piper for all events  
Amateur
- c) Solo Drumming  
Professional - one  
Amateur - one
- d) Drum Major - one
- e) Highland Dancing - four
- f) Athletics:  
Tug-O-War - one team  
Caber Toss - one contestant

The Open Championship is open to anyone and all Inter-Provincial contestants are eligible for their related events in the open contests.

Early indications are that some provinces are already in the throes of selecting their Provincial Representatives either by arranging their own provincial contests or by mutual provincial consent. In any event, the City of Ottawa Highland Games Committee is in the process of enlisting the aid of a volunteer Committee for each province to be comprised essentially of:

- One person as a Music Co-ordinator
- One person as a Dancing Co-ordinator
- One person as an Athletic Events Co-ordinator

The names and addresses of these Co-ordinators will be provided when known.

The Piobaireachd Society has set the tunes for the "Piobaireachd Society Gold Medal", which can only be awarded at the City of Ottawa Highland Games, and is the only such medal in the world. The following excerpt details:

"Competitors for the Piobaireachd Society's Gold Medal at the City of Ottawa Highland Games will select and submit THREE from the following list of six (6) tunes:

- |   |                   |          |
|---|-------------------|----------|
| 1. Weighing From Land                       | Book 2, page 75   | K No.30  |
| 2. The Young Laird of<br>Dungallon's Salute | Book 10, page 290 |          |
| 3. Glengarry's March                        | Book 2, page 57   | K No. 25 |
| 4. Lament for Donald<br>of Laggan           | Book 8, page 219  | K No. 19 |
| 5. MacKinnon's Lament                       | Book 12, page 366 |          |
| 6. The Bicker                               | Book 4, page 107  | K No. 66 |

All these tunes are published with Editorial notes in the Piobaireachd Society books as indicated and as well where marked "K" in the Kilberry book of Ceol Mor, but competitors will not be restricted to these settings and any other setting may be played, although the judges may take into consideration the merits of such settings as well as the authenticity and the authority quoted for them.

Altogether different tunes known by the same or similar names will not be accepted as alternative settings.

J. A. MacLellan,  
Hon. Secy. Music Committee"

For further information regarding the Games, please write to Mrs. Renee Perron, Highland Games Secretary, City Hall, 111 Sussex Drive, Ottawa K1N 5A1, Ontario.

Mini-Gatherings

The second competition will take place on February 1, 1975 at the Scottish Auditorium.

As in the first competition there will be no late entries accepted. Entries must be postmarked no later than January 10, 1975. Pipers will be required to adhere to the order of play posted throughout the building. Those not doing so will be liable to disqualification. We remind the teachers that it is their responsibility to make entry forms available to their pupils as many of them do not get the Newsletter. (See entry form on back page.)

February 1, 1975

Novice:	Strathspey & Reel	(2 part strathspey and 2 part reel)
Juvenile:	Jig	6/8 March
Junior:	Hornpipe	March, Strathspey & Reel
Amateur:	Piobaireachd	Jig

\* \* \* \* \*

On January 25th, 1975, the Vancouver Ladies' Pipe Band will be having their 24th Annual Burns Supper and Dance, to be held at St. Mary's Hall, 5251 Joyce, in Vancouver.

Dinner at 6:40 and tickets may be obtained by phoning 936-7189.

\* \* \* \* \*

New Westminster Highland Games

So that we may keep our mailing list for entry forms up to date, will all piping and drumming teachers and band secretaries please send their name, address, and number of entry forms required to Mr. Donald Ross, 834 Burnaby Street, New Westminster, B.C. or phone 526-7905 after 5:00 p.m.

### DAMP DRONES

Whether Scottish piping is a great art or a crude assault on the eardrums depends largely on which side of Hadrian's Wall you were raised, but on Saturday, the uncommitted had an opportunity to pass judgment in the Great Hall of Blair Castle. Here at the Perthshire seat of the tenth Duke of Atholl, 11 of the finest bagpipers in the land gathered for a new event - the Grant's Piping Championship.

Now the music of the pipes - or doodlesack as the Germans have it - comes in two strengths: the heavy classical brew of the ceol mor or piobroch "music for love, music for sorrow; music for war; and music for meat", and the lighter blend of the ceol beag - the marches, strathspeys, and reels. Messrs. Grant, sensibly recognizing the musical limitations of the English press, determined to let them in gently - just in time to catch the final cadences of the pibroch before breaking off for high tea and the first of the drams.

On the stage, pipers are a splendid sight from the tilt of their glengarry to the laces on their gillie brogues, but off stage they are not all built on the scale of shot-putters at the Highland Games. The winner, James MacIntosh, turned out to be a mild-mannered man of medium height, normally to be found testing electronic equipment at National Cash Registers in Dundee.

Bagpipes require a lot of tender loving care - honey to season the bag, pheasant feathers to dry out the drones - as Angus MacDonald discovered to his cost. Pipe Major to the Scots Guards, veteran of Buckingham Palace banquets and royal weddings, he travelled the 500-odd miles from Pirbright Camp, walked into the spotlight magnificently attired in Royal Stuart kilt and regimental insignia, blew in the bag, and found his drones were damp (which translated means that nothing happened).

"It's my own fault, I should have known better", he shrugged philosophically, adding that the pipes had clearly become so accustomed to the luxury of southern central heating that a blast of damp Highland air had been their undoing.

Reprinted from the  
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