



OCTOBER, 1960. No. 7.

The months of September and October are busy for those on the White Heather Committee, but now that the shows are over for the year, it can be said that this year's White Heather Concerts were tremendously successful. A sell-out at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre on October 7th and 8th, and a near sell-out on October 6th at the Vincent Massey High School Auditorium in New Westminster indicate the huge popularity of these shows. We can consider ourselves extremely fortunate when we look at the large number of shows of an international calibre which come here, and which fail to get a capacity audience for even one performance. At the present time there is a great deal of competition in the entertainment field, and we are therefore very pleased when the White Heather Concerts prove to be successful.

The White Heather Show, which has been presented annually in Vancouver since 1949, when this Association brought out Robert Wilson, is sponsored jointly by the B.C. Pipers' Association and the St. Andrews & Caledonian Society. The committee looks after bookings, ticket sales and publicity, and a great deal of work is required in preparation for the concerts. This year, the White Heather Committee consisted of the following persons from both associations: Rod MacVicar (Chairman), Betty Crossen (Secretary), James Thompson (Treasurer), Ed Esson (Chairman of Publicity Committee), Al Baillie, Anne Duncan, George Hay, Robert Gill, Bill McAdie, Georgina MacPhail, Ian Milne and Ian Walker.

The cast of the White Heather Show, which is managed by Mr. Neil Kirk, of New York, visit many of the larger cities in Canada and in the United States over a period of ten weeks. The star of this year's show was Scotland's foremost tenor and leading recording artist Kenneth McKellar, here for his ~~third~~ series of concerts. Kenneth entertained us with such old favourites as "March of the Cameron Men", "The Auld Hoose", "Wi' a Hundred Pipers", "Mary of Argyle", "Afton Water", "Song of the Clyde", "My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose", "Scotland the Brave", and "The Star of Robbie Burns". Kenneth McKellar also introduced a new song "The Tartan", whose music he composed, and which will likely prove to be very popular. The female vocalist of the 1960 concerts was Lucille Graham, a petite soprano, who sang such popular numbers as "Ye Banks and Braes of Bonnie Doon", "Whistle and I'll Come Tae You, My Lad", "Eriskay Love Lilt", "I Left My Darling Lying There", and Mozart's "Alleluia". Kenneth McKellar and Lucille Graham also joined forces in the ever popular duet "The Crooked Bawbee".

A welcome addition to the show this year was the appearance of the well known Scottish character actor Duncan Macrae. He appeared in two amusing monologues. Firstly, Duncan portrayed Willie McGonigle, Scotland's worst poet, reciting some rather drastic poetry and singing "Wee Cock Sparrow". Secondly, he appeared as an undertaker of Edinburgh, and sang "I'll Walk Behind You". Macrae's subtle characterizations ably displayed his skillful artistry. The Master of Ceremonies this year was the familiar humourist Jimmy Neil. Jimmy did more than an adequate job in uniting the entire show, and appeared in several comedy sketches. His poignant piece "Ho, Ma, Gie us a Piece" was

especially enjoyable. Ronnie McCulloch, who has entertained Vancouver audiences with his accordion on several occasions, presented his popular renditions of Scottish songs, toe-tapping marches and dances. He was not playing for long before the audience were singing along with him, and he was brought back for several encores. Dennis Woolford, the pianist and another familiar face, provided excellent accompaniment throughout the show and displayed his talent in his medley "A Scottish Rhapsody". This year's cast are to be congratulated for their very fine performances.

We are pleased to announce that arrangements are already being made for next year's White Heather Show. We can assure you that this show will be as enjoyable as those of the past.

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We would urge all members to make an effort to enlist pipers and piping enthusiasts into our association. We know that there are many around who state that they have been intending to join for a long time but just haven't got around to it. If you know of any of these, write or phone the Secretary, Rod MacVicar (2078 York Street, Vancouver, B.C., RE 3-9053), and he will forward the necessary application form.

The following person was recently elected to membership:

Alex J. McLeod - Vancouver, B.C.

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Did you know that five lucky members of this association have visited Scotland this summer? These were Alex Finlayson, Harry Mumford, George Gibson, John McHardy and Malcolm Nicholson.

The record trip as far as speed is concerned was made by John McHardy, who spent only seven days in Scotland. In this week John visited the leading bagpipe manufacturers, such as Hardie's, Lawrie's and Robertson's, as well as many of the larger Highland outfitting houses. He assures us that he managed to squeeze a great into his week.

Harry Mumford, who made his trip with his father, said that he didn't seem to have enough time to do all that he wanted. However, he managed to visit the College of Piping, and had high praise for its work.

George Gibson made his trip to Scotland, by conducting a tour through the old land. George perhaps established a unique record in British Columbia, in that he was a candidate in the recent provincial election, but spent the entire time between the announcement of the election and the election itself outside of the country. In spite of his absence George stood very high on the long list of candidates.

Malcolm Nicholson and Mrs. Nicholson are to be envied for their two month trip to Scotland. They visited many Highland Games, which would undoubtedly remain in their minds for many years.

Perhaps next year will be your year!

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A Ceilidh was held at the Scottish Auditorium on Friday, September 23rd. The enthusiastic audience were entertained by the aggregate winners of last year's Bi-Monthly competitions, as well as by several supporting artists.

Gordon Handy, last year's Novice winner, played "The Green Hills of Tyrol", "Lads wi' the Plaids" and "De'il among the Tailors". The Juvenile winner, Bobby MacDonald, ably gave us "South Hall", "Donald MacLean", "Roddy Campbell" and "The Hen's March". Peter MacNeil was the Junior winner and played "Skye Boat Song" and "Cork Hill". "The Highland Love Song" and "The Meeting of the Waters" were played by the Amateur winner Peggy Gillies, and Bill Paterson, of Bellingham, played "Bonnie Wee Mary", "Lady Loudon", and "The Smith of Chillychassie". The program was closed when these pipers joined forces and played "The 79'ths Farewell to Gibraltar".

Vocal selections were given by Miss Anne Duncan and Miss Glenda Jones, accompanied by Mrs. Alex Finlayson. A quartette of dancers from the Mary Isdale School consisting of Donna Allan, Julie Rhydderch, Kathie Gillott and Marjorie, presented the Jacobite Swords, the Reel of Tulloch and the Irish Jig. They were accompanied by Bobby MacDonald. Donald Collins of the Seaforth's Pipe Band played several accordion numbers, and Ian MacLeod, also of the Seaforth's, led the audience in a most enjoyable sing-song. We are grateful to these artists for their assistance in our concert.

Mr. Roderick MacLeod, our first President, presented the prizes, as he has done since the commencement of the Bi-Monthly competitions, and had an encouraging word to say to every performer. At the conclusion of the Ceilidh refreshments were served in the banquet room.

It is hoped that the winners, as well as all others who are interested in competing, will be performing again at this year's Bi-Monthly Competitions. These contests are intended to give pipers an opportunity of performing in competition in front of a relatively small audience. Although the gatherings are informal, the standard of playing has always been quite high. This association feels that by means of the Bi-Monthlies a considerable experience is gained on the part of the competitors. This experience is an invaluable preparation for larger competitions. It is a fact that the standard of playing has noticeably improved in the past few years amongst younger pipers, and it is felt that some of the credit for this improvement can be given to the Bi-Monthly Competitions.

We would especially like to see larger entries in the Amateur and Senior Amateur classes, and we would urge all interested to come out and participate.

The first Bi-Monthly will be held on October 28th, at the Scottish Auditorium. The competitions will commence at 8:00 p.m., and we would ask all competitors to contact the Secretary, Rod MacVicar (RE 3-9053) at least one day before the competition. The list of classes will be found in the September Newsletter.

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It was stated in error in the September Newsletter that the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada Pipe Band were the winners of the Pacific International "B" Class Band Competition. This should have read "Seaforth Highlanders of Canada Cadet Pipe Band".

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A general meeting will be held on Thursday, October 27th, in the band room of the Seaforth Armoury, commencing at 8:00 p.m. If you have any suggestions this is the time and place to make them. Piping selections will be given after the meeting.

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The following letter was sent to us, and we are certain that you will enjoy its contents:

Dear Sirs:

I appreciate very much receiving the B.C. Pipers' Newsletter. It is always interesting and valuable.

Perhaps it is not of any great interest, but I may mention that the first time I heard a pipe band was in August, 1899. The Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders which had made the famous charge at Dargai was marching through Aberdeenshire on a recruiting campaign, and I was taken to a crossroads to see the "sodgers" go by. Some parts of the tune the pipers played stuck in my memory, but it was not until years later when I become interested in the pipes that I learned it was "Portree Men". I never hear or play that march without thinking back to the men who stepped past that day sixty one years ago. They went to South Africa shortly afterwards, and many never came back.

My first pipes were by Center of Edinburgh. As you probably remember he emigrated to Australia, and died at a fairly young age. I suppose very few of the sets he made are to be seen now.

Victoria, B.C.

James A. Berry,  
Secretary-Treasurer,  
Vancouver Island Pipers' Society.

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(We would ask any of our readers who might have interesting memories or observations concerning piping, to note them down, in order that we might pass them on. Many feel that the "letters to the editor" section of a newspaper or magazine is the most interesting portion. We would also welcome any suggestions or criticisms which you might have.)

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DON'T FORGET:

GENERAL MEETING: OCTOBER 27th.

BI-MONTHLY COMPETITIONS: OCTOBER 28th.

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