

B. C. PIPERS' NEWSLETTER



SEPTEMBER, 1967.

No. 83.

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

I N S T R U C T I O N A L T A P E R E C O R D I N G S

by

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At a recent meeting of the B.C. Pipers' Association Board of Directors a new Secretary was appointed replacing Ken McIlvena. Mrs. Ishabel Ross has taken over the duties of Secretary. Her address is:

Mrs. Ishabel Ross,
834 Burnaby Street,
New Westminster, B.C.
Tel. - LA 6-7905

BI-MONTHLY COMPETITION CEILIDH - OCTOBER 13th, 1967.

The Ceilidh for Bi-Monthly Competition aggregate winners will be held on Friday, October 13th in the Stry Hall, 125 East 8th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. at 8:00 p.m. Winners are requested to bring their pipes and play a tune.

Bars and pins will be presented, as well as prizes. There will be varied entertainment, and all are welcome.

1966/67 Season Aggregate Winners:

Novice:

1. Tim Noot 2. Linda Freshwater 3. Ian Hall 4. Ian Cameron

Juvenile:

1. Jim Leonard 2. Sandy Marshall 3. David Anderson
4. Douglas Bernon

Junior:

1. Sandy Shatford 2. Bill MacAulay 3. John MacLeod

Amateur:

1. Dal Jessiman 2. Donald MacMillan 3. Kelly Hagen

Department:

Ken Ringham & Donald Taylor (tie)

Trophies:

B.C. Pipers' Novice Trophy - Tim Noot
Nicholson Trophy, Juvenile - Jim Leonard
MacRae Shield, Junior - Sandy Shatford
Douglas Shield, Amateur - Dal Jessiman
B.C. Pipers' Department - Ken Ringham & Donald Taylor (tie)

Attendance awards have been earned by the following persons,
for perfect attendance at the past season's competitions:

Winners of pins (1st award)

Glen Creamer	John McMath
Ian Cameron	Jim McNeil
David Don	Drew Noot
Glen Esdale	Tim Noot
Linda Freshwater	Daryll Paterson
Drew Heggie	Gordon Paterson
Russell Lawrie	Linda Popp
Jim Leonard	Richard Prinn
Terry Leonard	Dwaine Roadhouse
Leonard Lyon	Wayne Rodgers
April MacDonald	Judy Taylor
Sandra MacDonald	Sandy Taylor
Bruce McMahan	

1st Bar (2 years)

David Anderson
Mitchell Bain
Ian Hall
Glen McKinley
Sandy Marshall
Sandy Shatford
Margaret Swanson

2nd Bar (3 years)

Bill MacAulay
Donald MacMillan

3rd Bar (4 years)

Bob Barker
Doug Bernon
John MacLeod
Donald Taylor
Kelvin Wood
John Wright

4th Bar (5 years)

Colin Abel
Dal Jessiman

The following persons have been promoted as a result of the
1967 competition results:

Novice to Juvenile:

Drew Noot	Robert Menzies	Alan Weeks
Tim Noot	Daryl McNeil	Dan Diessner
Linda Freshwater	Tim Karr	Jeff Brewer
Ian Hall		Robert A. Moore

Juvenile to Junior:

Jim Leonard	Heather McInnes	Lindsay Maddock
Bill Russell	Stuart Thompson	Terry Leonard
Sandy Marshall	Heather Upton	Margaret Swanson
Marjorie Forsyth	Margie Rogers	Sanora Campbell
David Anderson	Doug Bernon	A. McEvan
Glen McKinley	Bernie Rudsit	D Guthrie
	Heather Abel	

Junior to Amateur:

Ron Skipsey	Alex MacInnes	Donald Taylor
Stewart Crawford	Kelvin Wood	Dennis Collister
Mary Swift	Bill MacAulay	Neil Hunter
Sandy Shatford	John Wright	Bob Gallagher
Jean Jarvis		Andrew Youd

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GENERAL MEETING - OCTOBER 27th, 1967.

A General Meeting is planned for Friday, October 27th, 1967.

Entertainment after the meeting is the Port Moody Pipe Band, who will supply a Quartette.

Plan to attend. All welcome!

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ARGYLL CORPORAL KILLED IN ADEN: (from The Oban Times, August 10th, 1967)

A corporal in the pipe band of the 1st Bn. Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders was killed last Friday in Aden by terrorists. He was Corporal J. Scott, who comes from Hythe in the south of England.

He was on guard duty on the top of the Charter Bank Building the headquarters of the battalion in the Crater district when it was mortared by the terrorists. Six two-inch mortar bombs were fired at the building, one exploding on the roof killing Corporal Scott and wounding another Argyll.

A second mortar which landed on the roof did not explode and was destroyed by the Argylls. Four others exploded nearby without causing any damage.

Earlier in the day five mortar bombs fell around Argylls occupying a school building near the armed Arab police barracks in Crater, but there were no casualties or damage.

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BI-MONTHLY COMPETITION SCHEDULE:

1967/68

DATE	NOVICE	JUVENILE	JUNIOR	OPEN AMATEUR
OCT 20	Marches		Strathspeys & Reels	
NOV 17		Old Highland Airs		Jigs
DEC 15	6/8 Marches		Piobaireachd.	
JAN 19		Marches		Strathspeys & Reels
FEB 16	Old Highland Airs		Jigs	
MAR 15		Strathspeys & Reels		Marches
MAY 24	Strathspeys & Reels		Marches	
JUNE 21		6/8 Marches		Piobaireachd

All dates are subject to change.

Competitors are asked to submit their name, and class they wish to enter, at least one day before their first competition, to the Secretary:

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THE SPOKANE CENTER FOR BAGPIPE STUDIES:

In the State of Washington, U.S.A., in the City of Spokane, on August 10th, a class of twenty student pipers were graduated in the first year phase of a four-year program of bagpipe instruction.

Students enrolled in the study center came from as far away as Sacramento, Calif., Salt Lake City, Utah, Seattle, Wash., and Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. These places are from five hundred to one thousand miles from Spokane. Other enrollees came from Vernon, Nelson, Kimberly, B.C., and Kellogg, Idaho.

Classrooms and outside training areas were made available by the United States Naval Reserve and Marine Corp. The entire training program was under the direction of Pipe-Major John MacLellan, M.B.E., from Edinburgh Castle. He was supported in his efforts by Lt. Col. John McEwing, U.S.A.F. (ret.) who is responsible for establishing this Center and persuading one of the world's leading authorities and players of the great Highland bagpipe to forego his annual leave with his family in the lovely Scottish Highlands of Sutherland and fly seven thousand miles from home and direct the project.

In view of numerous other commitments in Canada and the United States, e.g., adjudicating at Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, Seattle, Wash., recitals in Vancouver, Regina, Vernon, Winnipeg, New York, etc., P.M. MacLellan was forced to limit the Spokane program to ten days. However, it is hoped to slightly extend the 1968 program which will include the Phase One and Phase Two groups.

Included in this year's Phase One was the study of the fundamental principals in technique, writing music from memory, lectures on the historical aspects of the great instrument and the proper maintenance of it including the selection of reeds and the elimination of their temperamental idiosyncrasy. A period that will not be soon forgotten by all present was when the school director, from raw cane fabricated a complete set of reeds, placed them in an ancient set of MacDonald pipes and in a few moments had them sounding like the pipes heard at Glenfinnan or Oban.

The playing skill of the attending students was found to be unusually high. This was not unexpected as each applicant was required to have a substantial piping background before he or she was accepted for training as they are expected to return to their respective groups and pass on to them the guidance they received from a master piper and craftsman. This training principle was reminiscent of the MacCrimmons centuries ago.

Included in the student body was 15 year old Iain MacCrimmon from Edmonton, Canada. Iain is a direct descendant of the MacCrimmons of Skye. His great, great, great, great grandfather was Donald Ruadh MacCrimmon, a professor of piping at the College at Boreraig.

At the opening of the graduating ceremony, the students thought it only fitting that a MacCrimmon should receive the high honour of playing first, and Iain chose that fine composition by his ancestor Donald Mor MacCrimmon, "The MacLeod's Salute" which he played with great skill on a beautiful sounding pipe.

As artistically designed certificates of course completion were being presented, with the press and television covering every detail, the students and large gallery of spectators which included a number of civic leaders were delightfully entertained by selections from Andrew Youd, Sacramento, Calif., David Hogg, Nelson, B.C. and a quintet for the Boys' Pipe Band, Seattle.

In his remarks at the close of the graduating ceremony, Lt. Col. McEwing touched on the future plans for the "Spokane Center for Bagpipe Studies." He stated that he was pleased to announce that Pipe-Major John MacLellan had agreed to remain as the Center Director for the next three years. This information was loudly applauded by the students and guests. He pointed out that facilities could and would be expanded next year so that the many who were denied the opportunity of attending the "Historic first class" could enroll next year. However, in order to properly plan for next year, it would be necessary for all students who wished to attend Phases (1) and (2) to have their applications submitted and accepted by the school director on or before January 1st, 1968. Col. McEwing went on to state that this was a strictly non-profit project and was conceived for the sole purpose of raising the standard of piping in the Northwest area of the "New World". He envisioned a continuing surge in interest in Ceol Mor, not only amongst the piping fraternity but amongst those who have an understanding of other forms of good music.

Col. McEwing made reference to the recital presented in the Naval Reserve auditorium by Pipe-Major MacLellan at the end of the first week of training. Its objective was as a teaching aid for the students and an opportunity for those who had never heard the pipes played by a "Master" on an ideal instrument. In a two hour program, which was recorded, the school director played selections of many aspects of bagpipe music including two Ceol Mor classics, the "Lament for Donald of Laggan" and the Pipe-Major's particularly descriptive interpretation of "The Desperate Battle of the Birds", for which he received a prolonged standing ovation. Tape recorded copies of his recital will be made available to the students in order that they may study the techniques and interpretations of Pipe-Major MacLellan's masterly playing.

At ten o'clock in the morning under a brilliant August sun, the graduating ceremony ended with a student "March Past", all dressed in their appropriate Tartans playing that fine old air "Happy We've Been A' To Gither" which reflected in depth the spirit and the mood of the students and their Director during this intensive and illuminating ten-day period.

JOHN WILSON'S BOOK 3.

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ROUND THE GAMES WITH JOHN WILSON:

BRANTFORD - JULY 8th, 1967:

I arrived at the Games Park at exactly 9:00 a.m., a little later than I had intended, and the first competitor in the Open Piobaireachd (Chris Anderson) presented himself to me at 10:00 o'clock exactly. It was a lovely cool morning; the underfoot conditions were nice and dry, and beautiful Mohawk Park was looking its very best for the Games. I chose the same spot for the Piobaireachd as I did last year; a slightly elevated ridge of ground with tall trees well spaced apart, and with just a nice amount of shade. Squirrels and chipmunks were running about or looking with interest at the goings on, and a red headed woodpecker was examining a tree trunk about fifty paces away from my table. The whole park, I was told, had been sprayed for mosquitoes, and I didn't get a single bite, but I took the added precaution of spraying my legs and ankles.

Chris Anderson played "MacLeod of Raasay's Salute" on an excellent pipe. I thought his ground and Var. 1 a little on the slow side, and his Taorluath singling could have been a little snappier. His Taorluath doubling could have been snappier and faster. This would have improved it. He had one or two little misses in the Crunluath. A nice performance on a perfectly tuned Pipe from start to finish.

Jas. Fryer made a good job of "The Little Spree" on a very good Pipe. Missed grips or made them very indistinctly at end of Urlar and end of its doubling.

Garry Hall was making a very good job of "The Bells of Perth" on an excellent Pipe, when a large flying beetle startled him and caused him to stop. Pure bad luck. Robert Brown of Balmoral was competing at Inverness one year when a wasp alighted on his blowstick. Bob kept on playing and watched, squint-eyed, as the insect slowly towards him. When it was so close to his mouth as to be out of his range of vision, he gave up and chased it away. This sort of thing doesn't happen very often, thank goodness.

Ken Eller played the "Massacre of Glencoe" and if the MacDonalds had only had the same amount of "go-go", they would easily have escaped from the Campbells.

Reay MacKay played "I got a Kiss of the King's Hand" on a beautiful Pipe which went slightly out of tune towards the end. He played a D gracenote on the first B of the last bar in the Urlar for which there is no authority as far as I know. Reay made an excellent job of this fine tune.

John Goodenow played the "Massacre of Glencoe" on an excellent Pipe which remained in perfect tune all through. He played with authority and expressed it well. I thought the Crunluath singling slightly hurried and he had one or two small misses.

Ronald Kean played "MacDonald of Kinlochmoidart's Lament", No. 1. His drones went slightly out by the doubling of Var. 1 and remained that way. The chanter was excellent. He had four chokes and a small miss. Very good otherwise.

R.B. Henderson played "Struan Robertson's Salute" and made quite a good job of it. His drones went out slightly half way through.

The Open Jig competition brought forward seven entrants who gave a nice variety of tunes on excellent instruments. Reay MacKay played "Marjory Lowe" in practically flawless manner for first prize. Chris Anderson played "Center's Bonnet" equally well except for a slight fluff in, I think, the third part, for second prize, and Sandy Dewar played the "Braes o' Mellenish" in splendid style except that I thought he played the last two bars of each part very plain, for 3rd prize. (I confirmed this by looking up Seumas MacNeill's book when I got home).

I will refrain from commenting on the Pipe Band contests or on the guest Pipe Band. Least said, soonest mended. The massed Pipe Bands were very good and so were the Drum Majors. As I stood watching the individual Pipe Bands marching into the centre field for the Grand Finale, I noticed something I seem to have overlooked before. I refer to the large number of "droopy drawer" kilts. Boys and men with kilts away down to the calves of their legs. What a horrible sight. Come on now, ~~men~~ and boys, take a lesson from the girls and get those kilts away up ---- by take it easy now --- not too far up; just to the middle of the knee cap. A kilt worn properly looks very smart indeed, but a kilt worn in "droopy-drawer" fashion looks ridiculous.

Amateur Grade 1 March: (Judge - Sandy Keith)

1. R. Worrall
2. G. Hall
3. S. Sutherland

Amateur Grade 1 Strathspeys & Reels: (Judge - Sandy Keith)

1. J. Sutherland
2. G. Hall
3. T. Campbell

Amateur Grade 2 March: (Judge - George Henderson)

1. S. Blashill
2. L. Sloan
3. L. Jones

Amateur Grade 2 Strathspeys & Reels: (Judge - George Henderson)

1. D. Stewart
2. S. Blashill
3. Gail Brown

Amateur Grade 3 March: (Judge - George Henderson)

1. M. Wilson
2. D. Campbell
3. I. MacCrimmon

Drum Major's Contest:

1. Norm MacKenzie & Colin Stewart (tie)

Grade 3 March: Pipe Band:

1. Kitchener Legion $78\frac{1}{2}$
2. Hespeler $75\frac{1}{2}$

Grade 2 March, Strathspey & Reel: Pipe Band:

1. Highland House 88
2. 400 Squadron, R.C.A.F. $84\frac{3}{4}$
3. Guelph $80\frac{1}{2}$

Grade 1 March, Strathspey & Reel: Pipe Band:

1. St. Thomas Legion $95\frac{3}{4}$
2. City of Toronto 95
3. Clan MacFarlane $94\frac{1}{2}$

Open Piobaireachd: (Judge - John Wilson)

1. John Goodenow (94)
2. Reay MacKay (92)
3. Chris Anderson (90)

Open Jig: (Judge - John Wilson)

1. Reay MacKay (97)
2. Chris Anderson (96)
3. Sandy Dewar (95)

Open March, Strathspey & Reel: (Judge - Sandy Keith)

1. Chris Anderson (93 $\frac{1}{2}$)
2. J. Fryer & Gord. Tuck (91)

DUNDAS, ONTARIO, JULY 15th, 1967:

Dundas Driving Park is a beautiful and ideal location for Highland Games. The only quibble I have is that the solo Piping competition areas (at least where I was) were not fenced or roped off to keep the public a respectable distance away. In the Open March, Strathspey & Reel event, Chris Anderson had just started the second part of "The Edinburgh Volunteers" when three or four young lads came walking along banging those large rattling balloons and making a heck of a din. They were going to pass right between me and the competitor but I waved them back. Unfortunately the damage was done; Chris was put completely off and broke down. I asked him if the noise had upset him (a rather stupid question) but he just said to forget it. I thought for a few seconds, then went after him and told him that he could play again. He did, and played well too, which was quite an achievement after such a disturbance. Sandy Dewar won first prize in this competition, although, when he was tuning his pipe, a gentleman walked up to him and asked him to stop as he couldn't hear the pipe bands. Now, competitors and judges should not have to put up with interference of any kind. It upsets them and puts them off the very important tasks they have to concentrate on, namely, performing and judging.

The prizewinners in this event all played excellently on beautiful instruments, the full beauty of which was not properly heard because of the incessant chattering on the P.A. system.

The attendance seemed to be very good despite the cool forenoon and showery afternoon. The old fashioned Pipe and Drum Band from the Centennial Tattoo was especially good, and the Country Dancing teams were very popular.

Amateur Grade 3 March: (Judge - Reay Mackay)

1. J. Stewart
2. M. Cawthorn
3. M. Wilson

Amateur Grade 2 March: (Judge - John Wilson)

1. Scott Blashill
2. Stan Mills
3. Gail Brown

Amateur Grade 2 Strathspey & Reel: (Judge - John Wilson)

1. Lars Sloan
2. Scott Blashill
3. Gail Brown

Amateur Grade 1 March: (Judge - Reay Mackay)

1. J. Sutherland
2. Trudy Campbell
3. J. Miller

Amateur Grade 1 Strathspey & Reel: (Judge - Reay Mackay)

1. Trudy Campbell
2. R. Worrall
3. J. Noble

Open Piobaireachd: (Judge - John McFadyen, Glasgow)
1. John Goodenow 2. Chris Anderson 3. Jas Fryer

Open March, Strathspey & Reel: (Judge - John Wilson)
1. Sandy Dewar 2. Chris Anderson 3. Gordon Tuck

Open Jig: (Judge - John McFadyen - Glasgow)
1. Chris Anderson 2. Sandy Dewar 3. Ed Neigh

Drum Majors' Contest:
1. Norm MacKenzie 2. Colin Stewart

Grade 3 March: Pipe Band:
1. Toronto Girls 82 $\frac{1}{2}$
2. Golden Mile 77 $\frac{1}{2}$

Grade 2, March, Strathspey & Reel: Pipe Band:
1. Highland House 88
2. Ingersoll 85 $\frac{1}{2}$

Grade 1, March Strathspey & Reel: Pipe Band:
1. Clan McFarlane 94 $\frac{1}{2}$
2. City of Toronto 94
3. St. Thomas 92 $\frac{1}{2}$

SYRACUSE, NEW YORK - AUGUST 12th, 1967.

This year, Port Credit Highland Games, (a new venture) clashed with Syracuse, so not one Canadian Band was present at the latter gathering. Despite this unusual happening, the excellent attendance was not much below last year's, and an interesting programme was carried through in warm sunny weather. The absence of Canadian Bands reduced the entries in the Solo Piping events, so Alex McNeill and I had a much easier day than we had last year when we barely had time to drink a cup of coffee between the Solos and the Bands. On this occasion, as I was a bit behind Alex., with my last Solo event, I wandered over to the marquee by myself and really enjoyed a couple of hot pies and two cups of tea, and then talked to Tom, Dick & Harry and their wives or girl friends.

In the under 14 piping event I was pleased to see and hear some very promising youngsters.

In the 16 & under Strathspey & Reel, Robt. Mitchell played well on an excellent pipe to gain 1st prize.

In the open Strathspey & Reel, Roddie MacDonald was a worthy winner, with Duncan McCaskill Jr., second, and W. Drennan third.

As there were only two Grade 1 Bands present, an open competition was instituted, embracing both Grade 1 bands, and Grade 2 Bands, with the highest prizes from each of the separate competitions. The Worcester & the Kenmuir Bands played far better than they did at Maxville and were very close, both in the March, Strathspey & Reel, and in the Slow March. The local Balmoral

Highlanders Band delighted its supporters by playing very well and placing third in the March Strathspey & Reel.

An item on the programme which I watched with great interest was the Shetland Collie dog demonstration, which I hadn't seen before. To the accompaniment of a small Pipe Band, twelve girls dressed in green tartan kilts and yellow jackets, and each having a dog on a lead paraded up and down and round about. The leads were from time to time detached from the dogs' collars and the animals had to stay put, sitting or standing or lying down while the girls marched without them. It was an interesting exhibition of basic training and the small type Collies were very attractive.

The Pipe Bands played very well en masse and then the results were announced. After that the bandsmen adjourned to the beer tent for a welcome refreshment and a jawing session. I enjoyed this as usual and talked to a lot of people on different subjects.

I haven't received the full results but here are the ones I know.

Under 14 March:

1. Malcolm Macleod 2. Thomas Leiper 3. Ronald Peers

Under 18 Strathspey & Reel:

1. Robt. Mitchell 2. Geo. Beasley 3. Allen MacRobbie

Open Strathspey & Reel:

1. Rod MacDonald 2. D. McCaskill 3. W. Drennan

LIGONIER, PENN. - AUGUST 27th, 1967.

The weather was practically a repetition on the 1962 Games day, except that this year it rained harder and didn't clear up until 4:00 p.m. Fortunately there was a number a large pavillions where all the Highland Dancing and Solo Piping competitions were held, and then, when it showed no signs of letting up, the Grade 1 Pipe Band Contest was also held inside. Of course, no sooner had the first band played, then the clouds rolled away and the sun shone through.

Despite the rain, the playing I heard was very good indeed, with the exception of some youngsters who had very obviously not been properly taught.

In the 14 & under Strathspey and Reel, Angus MacLeod of Buffalo, N.Y. made a good job of his tunes, but what particularly impressed me was the fine job he made of tuning the drones and without taking too long about it. In the 18 and under March, Rd. Eller of St. Catherines, played the best March I have every heard him play, and he also made an excellent job of tuning.

In the Open Strathspey and Reel, Ken Eller of St. Catharines gave a first class rendition of his tunes on a beautiful toned instrument perfectly tunes. Gord. Tuck played excellently too on an even better balanced pipe, but speeded up in the 3rd part of his Strathspey. John Goodenow gave an excellent performance too and so did several others.

In the Grade 1 Pipe Band Contest all three bands gave splendid performances both in the March, Strathspey & Reel event and in the Slow March. I though the results were just right.

An expression which I hear quite often at the Games is "Well, it's only a matter of opinion after all". Sure it's only a matter of opinion, and everyone is perfectly entitled to his, or her own opinion, but, as far as judging is concerned, the opinion has got to be informed opinion, which can be, and very often is, quite a bit different from the opinion of non players, or even the opinion of ordinary run of the mill players.

I haven't received the full results but here are the ones I know.

14 & Under Strathspey & Reel:

1. Angus Macleod 2. J. Stewart 3. L. Jones 4. Lars Sloan

18 & Under March:

1. Rod Eller 2. Howard Robinson 3. T. Carey 4. Robt. Mitchell

Open Strathspeys & Reels:

1. Ken Eller 2. Gord. Tuck 3. John Goodenow

Grade 1 - March Strathspey & Reel: Pipe Band: (also Slow March results)

1. Clan MacFarlane, St. Catharines
2. St. Thomas, St. Thomas
3. St. Andrews, Detroit

SCHENECTADY, SEPTEMBER 2nd, 1967.

After the wet Sunday at Ligonier, I really thought we were due for a fine day at Schenectady. The morning was bright and sunny with not a cloud to be seen, and although it was chilly, it gave promise of warming up as the sun climbed the sky.

The Games park is picturesquely situated at the foot of tree covered hills and looked spic and span in the bright sunshine. The juvenile piping got started about 10:30 a.m., and the wind, which had increased in strength and seemed much colder, proved so troublesome with my papers that I was glad to use some stones which my helper very kindly collected for me.

Despite the cold, some of the boys gave good performances, but they were so slow to come forward that we had to cut off the juvenile to start the B class, and then cut off the B to start the Open class which commenced after 12:00 noon.

Meanwhile Alex. McNeill and I were steadily freezing away and I even put on a plastic raincoat which helped a little. The players in the Open March played very well indeed. The whole secret of playing well on a cold day lies in keeping the circulation going by exercise and movement and never to standing about doing nothing. When the Solo Piping finished about 1:45 p.m. Alex McNeill and I were glad to have a hot cup of coffee to warm us up.

The sun had disappeared by the time Pipe Band Contests started, and the effects of the cold wind were noticed in sloppy fingering and loss of tone. Strangely enough, the Worcester Band didn't seem to suffer at all, and gave its best performance of the season to win the Class "A" competition.

I met so many warm hearted and friendly people that I soon forgot all about the cold. When I got back to the Motel in Schenectady I changed and washed and walked down the hill to the Scottish Hall for supper. I haven't had such a heaped plate of roast beef and potatoes for a long time, and I enjoyed the helpful ministrations of the two very young waitresses who looked after Mrs. Walsh and me. I stayed in the bar until 10:00 p.m. and the place was really humming when I left. I believe the party kept going until after 3:00 a.m., and everyone had a gay old time. I have to forego those late nights now, but I like others to enjoy themselves.

Class "A" March: (Judge - John Wilson)

1. Rod Macdonald 2. Noel Slagle 3. James Fryer

Class "A" Strathspey & Reel: (Judge - Alex McNeill)

1. Rod Macdonald 2. Ken Eller 3. J. Thompson & J. Fryer (tie)

Class "B" March: (Judge - Alex McNeill)

1. Bob Mitchell 2. Martin Fernick 3. Geo. Beesley

Class "B" Strathspey & Reel: (Judge - John Wilson)

1. Geo. Beesley 2. Bob Mitchell 3. Rob Waters

Juvenile March: (Judge John Wilson)

1. Angus Macleod 2. Joe Miller 3. Burt Mitchell

Juvenile Strathspey & Reel: (Judge - Alex McNeill)

1. Angus Macleod 2. Joe Miller 3. Duncan D. Bell

Individual Piping Class "A" & "B" - Rod Macdonald

Individual Piping Juvenile - Angus Macleod

Individual Drumming:

1. Jimmy Agnew 2. Ernest Rookard 3. David Hains

Pipe Band, Class "B":

1. Balmoral Pipe Band, Syracuse	89 $\frac{3}{4}$
2. City of Manchester	88
3. City of Wilmington	82 $\frac{1}{2}$
4. Ulster Scottish	82 $\frac{1}{2}$
5. Farleigh Dickinson	77 $\frac{1}{2}$
6. Stuart Highlanders	74 $\frac{1}{2}$

Class "A" Pipe Band:

1. Worcester Kiltie	97 $\frac{1}{2}$
2. Clan MacFarlane	95 $\frac{3}{4}$
3. Kenmure	92 $\frac{1}{2}$

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3rd ANNUAL LEGION HIGHLAND GATHERING - SEPTEMBER 2nd, 1967.

Here are the results of the 3rd Annual Legion Highland Gathering, held at Confederation Park, Willingdon Avenue, North Burnaby, B.C. on Sept. 2nd. Next year's gathering is planned for June, in Abbotsford.

Novice March:

1. Joanne Elford (Branch # 256, Nanaimo)
2. Dan Manifold (Branch # 88, Haney)
3. John McMath (Branch #15, M.S.A.)

Novice Strathspey & Reel:

1. Dan Manifold
2. John McMath

Junior 17 Years & Under - March:

1. Norman McAulay (Branch #256, Nanaimo)
2. Stuart Prescott, (Branch #256, Nanaimo)
3. Wayne Rogers (Branch #15, M.S.A.)

Junior 17 Years & Under - Strathspey & Reel:

1. Stuart Prescott
2. Wayne Rogers
3. Daryl McNeill (Branch # 88, Haney)

Amateur March:

1. Sandy Shatford (Branch #15, M.S.A.)
2. J.G. Miller (Branch #83, Burnaby),
3. William Dow (Branch #83, Burnaby)

Amateur Strathspey & Reel:

1. Sandy Shatford

Men's Old Highland Airs:

1. Robert Leslie (Branch #179, Grandview)
2. David Wilson (Branch 179, Grandview)
3. Sandy Shatford

Open Piobaireachd:

1. David Wilson
2. Robert Leslie
3. Ian MacDougall (Branch #15, M.S.A.)

Pipe Band Quartettes:

1. Branch #179, Grandview - P.M. Angus MacAulay, South Burnaby, B.C.

Open March, Strathspey & Reel:

1. David Wilson
2. Robert Leslie
3. Ian MacDougall

Drumming - March, Strathspey & Reel:

1. George Young (Branch #88, Haney)

Drumming - Under 17, March only:

1. Kerry Polner, (Branch #256, Nanaimo)
2. Blair Patterson (Branch #256, Nanaimo)
3. Patty Anne Haukes (Branch # 256, Nanaimo)

Drumming - Open March, Strathspey & Reel:

1. Roy Findlay (Branch #15, M.S.A.)
2. Charles Alexander (Branch #83, Burnaby)
3. Harry Wilson (Branch #83, Burnaby)

Pipe Bands Class "B":

1. Branch #179, Grandview - P.M. Angus MacAulay

"B" Class Drum Section:

1. Branch #179, Grandview - P.M. Angus MacAulay

Parade Results:

Best Drum Major	Branch #179 - Grandview
Best Parade Band	Branch # 179 - Grandview
Best Tenor Section	Branch # 83 - Burnaby
Best Bass Drummer	Branch #179 - Grandview

FRENCH PIPER WINS GLENFINNAN PIOBAIREACHD COMPETITION by JOHN WILSON

I read in a local newspaper dated 21st Aug. 1967 that a Frenchman from Brittany, one Francois Allain, had won 1st prize in the Open Piobaireachd Competition at Glenfinnan Highland Games, Scotland, defeating the seven Scottish professionals who also competed. His tune was "Lament for Donald of Laggan" which commemorates the battle of Inverlochy in 1645. The article also stated that it was a sad day for the Scots.

It may be believed that this is another instance of de Gaulle's interference in other peoples' business, but I prefer to think that it shows that the "Auld Alliance" is still strong. After all, Scottish pipe bands have been visiting Brittany for years, and it should be remembered that during World War 2, free Frenchmen were taught the espionage business at Lochailort, Aris-aig, etc. and could quite easily have developed a fondness for the Piob Mor.

When I was Piper to General Fortune of the 51st Highland Division in 1940, I was making my way one evening to the General's headquarters in Loos. My companion was a Seaforth Highlander who was batman to one of his officers. We felt thirsty, so we went into an estaminet and ordered drinks. I wore the Cameron kilt and I carried my pipe in a wooden case. Some of the patrons asked what I had in the case, so to satisfy their curiosity I opened the case and showed them. Then they demanded a tune, so, acting on a sudden inspiration, I played the French National Anthem, "The Marsillaise". The whole crowd in the bar came to attention, hats were doffed, and the expression of astonishment on each face was comical to see. After that everyone wanted to give us drinks and we had great difficulty getting away from our delighted French friends. A few days later, Gen. Fortune told me with a twinkle in his eye, that he didn't want the Bagpipe played any more in estaminets.

I consider it gratifying that a member of another nationality should have attained the high proficiency required to win a 1st prize in Ceol Mor at a major Scottish Highland Gathering. If the Scottish nationalists are responsible for this, then good luck to them. The camaraderie engendered among people all over the world by participation in playing the Scottish bagpipe, probably does more for the cause of world peace than all the lip service of politicians.

SOUTH AFRICAN GAMES, JULY, 1967.

In our part of the world, competitions, even at great distances from one's home, provide a great incentive to practise hard; and this year it so happened that two events on the South African calendar fell with a week of one another and within the university winter vacation, these being the Natal Scottish Gathering and the annual competitions of the Piping Society of Rhodesia. This year my brother Chris and I decided to make a round trip and compete at both meetings, and I hope the following comments on our holiday may be of interest to some.

We left Grahamstown on the 7th of July on the first leg of the trip - the 450 mile journey to Pietermaritzburg, Natal. This was the first time I had been through the Transkei - the land set aside for the Xhosa peoples - and very picturesque it is too, with rolling hills and the traditional thatched huts very much in evidence. We arrived in Pietermaritzburg late in the afternoon to find that there had been a slight mix-up over our accommodation; however Mr. and Mrs. Murray-Rogers, parents of one of the champion Highland dancers in South Africa - I believe Jennifer has also competed very successfully in Scotland too - very kindly put us up for the night, and we also had the privilege of meeting two of the premier dancing judges. Highland dancing being something we just don't see at home ever, it was interesting to meet people who speak with authority on the subject.

Although the piping competitions were not scheduled to begin until 1:00 p.m. on the Saturday afternoon, we arrived at the Jan Smuts Stadium early in the morning for some last minute practising and a look around. We were pleased to meet and chat to Jimmy Robertson, who does so much for tuition in the Durban area, and whose young pupil Gould did so well in the junior events. Jimmy helped us tune our pipes and gave us a bit of useful criticism which was very welcome.

It did not take long to find other pipers whom we had met before, and we managed to raise a quartet team at the very last minute, which came third in a field of 8. Considering we had not played together until after the competition had officially begun and that by this time there was an icy wind blowing, we didn't think this was too bad an effort. This wind had a detrimental effect on the younger pipers whose competitions were in the late afternoon, which I thought was a pity, as there seemed to be a lot of promising fingering. In fact the standard seemed to be higher than down in the Cape all round.

The weather on the Monday was however all that could be hoped for. The Piobaireachd event, which we had both been looking forward to for months as being our first chance of criticism of our efforts, attracted a field of about ten competitors, not all of whom finished. It was judged by the genial Pipe-Major Allan Watters of Pretoria, who, along with Maurice Forsyth was responsible for nearly all the piping judging. We were both thrilled when Chris won the competition playing "The Wee Spree", a tune we are trying to learn from one of Donald MacLeod's excellent taped lessons, but more important than winning the event was the opportunity of chatting to Mr. Watters about

the performances and listening to his advice. Second in this event was John Farmer with "Glengarry's Lament" and third was Allan Leyde with "The Wee Spree".

For the record I enclose the results of the other solo competitions. I regret not being able to furnish the names of the prize winning tunes, but the old favourites seemed to be doing the trick. The champion Pipe Band was, as expected that of the Natal Mounted Rifles, but all the bands seemed to me to be giving of their best.

Novice March:

1. M.G. Greer 2. R. MacKenna

Novice Strathspey & Reel:

1. M.G. Greer 2. R. MacKenna

Under 16 Slow March:

1. H.R. Gould 2. R. Rudge 3. M.G. Greer

Under 16 March:

1. R. Rudge 2. G. MacMaster 3. K. Mustard

Under 16 Strathspey & Reel:

1. H.R. Gould 2. R. Rudge 3. G. MacMaster

Under 21 Slow March:

1. R.K. Daniel 2. C.I. Terry & F. Frescura

Under 21 March:

1. C.I. Terry 2. B.G. Jeffrey 3. F. Frescura

Under 21 Strathspey & Reel:

1. C.I. Terry 2. B.G. Jeffrey 3. P. Diener

Open Slow March:

1. J.D. Farmer 2. H.W. Villiers 3. P.D. Terry

Open March:

1. H.W. Villiers 2. J.D. Farmer 3. G.H. Turnbull & P.D. Terry

Open Strathspey & Reel:

1. H.W. Villiers 2. J.D. Farmer 3. G.H. Turnbull

Open March, Strathspey & Reel:

1. P.D. Terry 2. J.D. Farmer 3. K.V. Steyn

Open Jig:

1. G.H. Turnbull 2. A.J. Carser 3. H.W. Villiers

Open Piobaireachd:

1. C.I. Terry (The Wee Spree) 2. J.D. Farmer (Glengarry's Lament)
3. A. Leyde (The Wee Spree)

Junior Champion C.I. Terry
Open Champion G.H. Turnbull

To sum it up, the 1967 Natal Gathering was to my mind a most enjoyable and well organized function. We were sorry when it came to an end, but at the same time felt we had learned a lot, and met a lot of fine people.

The next day we started out for Johannesburg on the first leg of a two day trip to Salisbury, Rhodesia - 1100 miles away. The country in the Orange Free State, Transvaal, and Rhodesia is for the most part open and flat with long straight roads - up to 13 miles in some places without turning. So that although the distance travelled was great the trip was quite easy, even in our tiny Morris 1000.

We spent four days in Salisbury, which gave us plenty of chance to adjust to the altitude, but not nearly enough to do all we wanted to do. Grahamstown being rather small, being in a large city is interesting, and Salisbury is about the best large town I have been to. Added to which the Rhodesians are really great people, and whatever meagre effects Uncle Harold may have achieved, it was a relief to find that the piping community is large and flourishing. This was only the third time that the Piping Society of Rhodesia had held competitions, but they ran a lot more smoothly than some of the meetings I have attended closer home. The competitions were spread over the 15th and 16th, which meant there was plenty of time and everything was kept pretty well on time too. As last year, the venue was the main sports field of Churchill School. Premier judges were Allan Watters and John Davidson from South Africa, ably assisted in the junior events by Messrs J.W. Deans, T.A. Osler and Hugh MacMillan, the last named having only just recovered from a serious illness. We had the pleasure of meeting this fine gentleman and discussing odd topics. We met many other new and interesting people whose names I have seen from time to time in the "Times", in particular Mr. Sandemann whose letters I have often noted, and who was playing on a chanter of his own construction. We also met Mr. Kit Kennedy, who had invited us in the first place, and Mr. Bill Sheppard, President of the Piping Society, who invited us to come and listen to some of his large collection of taped Piobaireachd. This was an offer I longed to accept, unfortunately there was no time to fit it into an already overcrowded schedule; still I hope the offer still holds next time we get to Salisbury.

The weather was for the most part all that could be hoped for, and there seemed to be a lot of high class piping. I must say that I thought there were too many break downs though, in all classes, and I was not the only one who felt that the younger competitors were trying tunes above their powers of appreciation. A pity, because the fingering seemed to be good. One young lad seemed to be fitting three steps to every bar of a very heavy competition march, for example. However I was very impressed by young Barry Platt who played very well for a lad of ten; so I thought did young Thain. These two lads, among others, handled their tunes well and should go far.

Again we were not long in getting up a quartet team with some old friends, Chris Everett, the master in charge of the Northlea Band, who incidentally learned to pipe while at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, and Ray

Langmead, an ex Pipe-Major of the Northlea Band and a very fine player. This time we succeeded in winning, playing "Morag of Dunvegan", a tune which I think is ideally suited to this event, and which secured us the same competition in Cape Town. I have never seen it in print actually, but it seems very well known.

Principal prize winner in the open field of about 16 competitors was John Gibson of Salisbury, as last, year, a worthy winner with clear fingering and good tunes. He did not, however, compete in the Piobaireachd event, which was won by Ayton Shappard playing "Catherine's Lament" on a lovely pipe. This was a tune which I had not heard before, and which I was fortunate to hear right through. I believe Ayton has been lucky enough to have instruction from Donald MacLeod in person, and this clearly paid off. Chris was runner up with "The Wee Spree", and I was surprised to find myself in third place with "Duncan MacRae of Kintail" which I have been trying to learn by listening to a tape of R.U. Brown. I say I was surprised because my pipe went badly out, and because I don't feel that I yet understand this magnificent tune well enough. I had hoped originally to have played "Battle of the Pass of Crieff" which I am also working on, but had to give up that idea as my crunluaths have a habit of freezing up now and again. This is perhaps the wrong approach to a competition, but then learning from records is not satisfactory either. It is the only approach I can adopt at this stage and I feel that at least I am memorizing the tunes in preparation for the instruction I hope to get one day soon. And the Crunluaths are getting better all the time. I was sorry not to hear Mr. Sandemann play "Alasdair Dearg MacDonell" and I missed hearing the other two competitors; Don Bale and Pat Harvey of Northlea, as the March, Strathspey and Reel was on at the same time.

The band events were won by Northlea Pipe Band from Bulawayo, trained by Mr. Charlie Stuart. Although the average age of this band must be around the 15 year mark, they play together very well. Interest in this band in Bulawayo is high, with the result that there is plenty of incentive to play, and plenty of recruits to choose from.

A prominent personality at the games was Charlie Stuart's young son Robby. Although still too small to be able to play himself, his small kilted figure took a keen interest in all the events. His mother tells me that they hope he will be able to start soon, and with a father as dedicated as he has, we wish Robby everything of the best.

Again I present the results of the competitions, as before apologizing for not being able to supply the names of the tunes played.

Under 13 Chanter Competition:

1. B. Platt 2. P. Platt 3. M. Harvey

Novice March:

1. C. Rix 2. B. Platt 3. I. Solomon

Novice Strathspey & Reel:

1. B. Platt 2. I. Solomon 3. P. Platt

Novice Slow March:

1. B. Matthews 2. I. Solomon 3. B. Platt

Under 15 March:

1. N. Thain 2. K. Coetzee 3. B. Platt

Under 15 Strathspey & Reel:

1. N. Thain 2. I. Solomon 3. K. Coetzee

Under 15 Slow March:

1. P. Platt 2. N. Thain 3. B. Platt

Under 17 March:

1. D. Bale 2. D. Woods 3. J. Whitlow

Under 17 Strathspey & Reel:

1. P. Harvey 2. K. Young 3. D. Woods

Under 17 Slow March:

1. D. Bale 2. P. Harvey 3. I. Munro

Under 21 March:

1. C. Hall 2. C. Terry 3. A. Morton

Under 21 Strathspey & Reel:

1. C. Terry 2. D. Stebbing 3. Simpson

Under 21 Slow March:

1. C. Terry 2. C. Hall 3. P. Wakefield

Open March:

1. J. Gibson 2. F. Noble 3. P.D. Terry

Open Strathspey & Reel:

1. J. Gibson 2. R.H. Langmead 3. P.D. Terry

Open March, Strathspey & Reel:

1. R.G. Langmead 2. J. Gibson 3. P.D. Terry

Open Hornpipe:

1. J. Gibson 2. R.G. Langmead 3. P.D. Terry

Open Jig:

1. J. Gibson 2. C.I. Terry 3. A.C. Sheppard

Open Piobaireachd:

1. A.C. Sheppard (Catherine's Lament) 2. C.I. Terry (The Wee Spree)
3. P.D. Terry (Duncan MacRae of Kintail)

It was very reluctantly that we left Salisbury on Monday the 17th of July to get back to Grahamstown in time for the new term. However, we both feel that the trip, long as it was, was very worthwhile.

- Patrick Terry -
Grahamstown
South Africa

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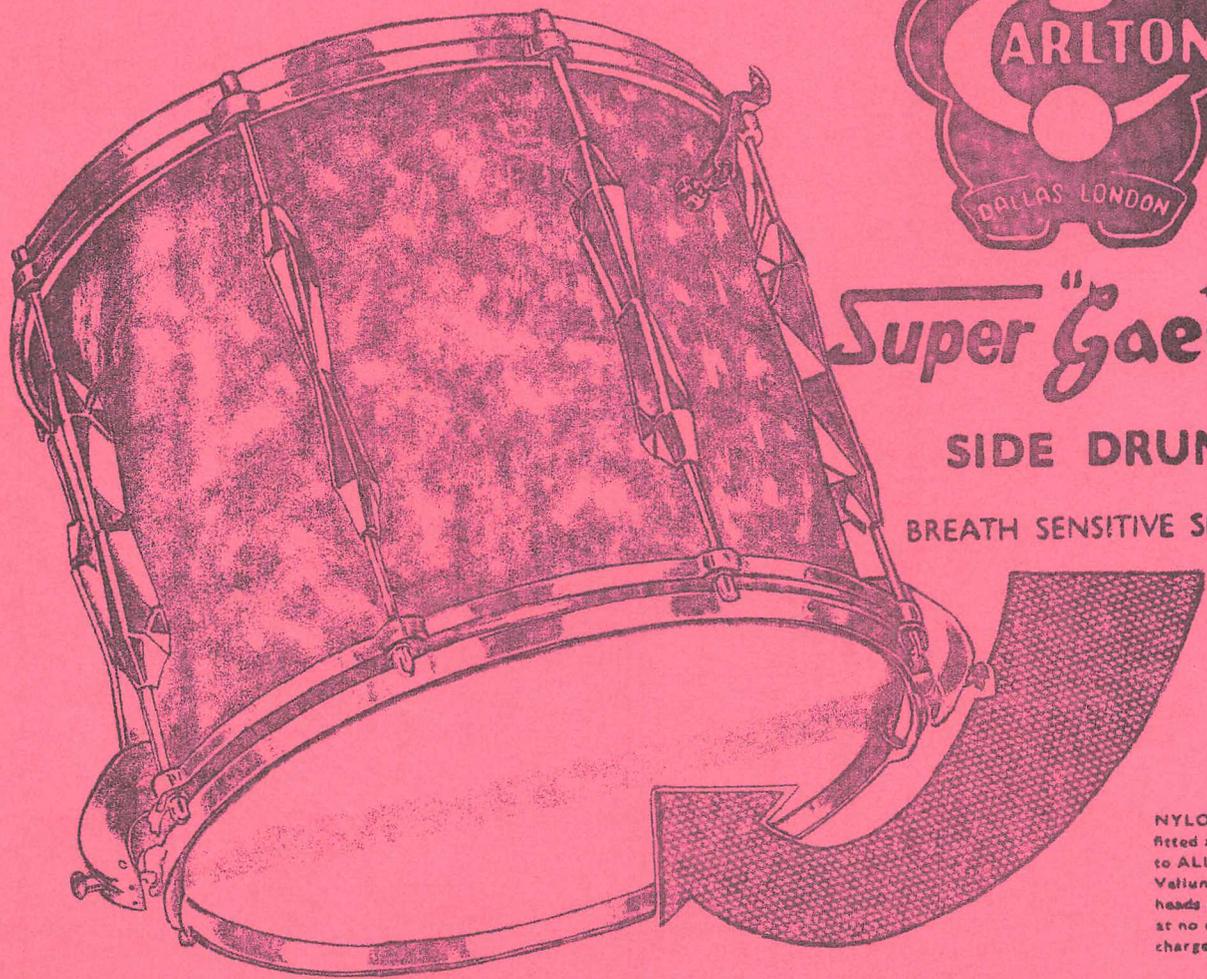
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LETTER FROM HOPKINS LANDING, B.C.

In a recent issue of the Newsletter you requested readers who might have material suitable for your publication to send it along.

The enclosed part of the "Scotsman" of August 21, 1967 has in it a well-written article by Mr. Magnus Magnusson, on a super-pipers' gathering at Dunvegan to compete for a silver chanter, the original having been wrested from the MacCrimmon of the day by the fairy who gave it to him, since when, as Mr. Magnusson observes, there has never been a great MacCrimmon piper.

That may be, but there is a MacCrimmon piper, Malcolm, of that ilk, now of Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta, the great, great grandson of that MacCrimmon who left Scotland for Upper Canada, the last of the hereditary pipers to the MacLeods. I found Malcolm in a North Vancouver back yard over 20 years ago taught him, and later, he returned to Alberta, went overseas with the Calgary Highlanders, made enquiries as to his ancestry and Flora MacLeod, at the other end of the ladder, did the same, and he was found to be the genuine MacCrimmon and was appointed by Flora as her personal piper.

- Eric R. Thomson -
Hopkins Landing, B.C.

THE WORLD'S GREATEST PIPERS IN SKYE TOURNEY, BY MAGNUS MAGNUSSON
(from The Scotsman, August 21, 1967)

After an unpardonable lapse of nearly five idle centuries, the fairies of Dunvegan, in the Isle of Skye, have roused themselves from their torpor; and on Thursday evening in the Great Hall of Dunvegan Castle they are sponsoring a Festival of such epic, heroic flavour that it makes Edinburgh's little international jamboree pale into insignificance. It is a Festival of the True Art - the only true art, as any unbiased Highlander will tell you: a Festival of Piping. Only the greatest pipers alive today are eligible to compete; and the prize is the Silver Chanter that the fairies of Dunvegan gave to the great MacCrimmons long, long ago.

The precise circumstances of that original presentation are difficult to establish with any certainty. But it appears that late in the fifteenth century Alasdair Crotach, the eighth Chief of Clan MacLeod (d. 1527), organised a great international piping competition which was attended by all the finest pipers in the world (the world then consisted mainly of the semi-sovereign islands of the Hebrides and the upstart mainland of Scotland.

By one of those unhappy accidents of stage-fright to which Highlanders are no less prone than lesser mortals, the MacLeod piper of the day became so monumentally drunk that it was apparent that he would be unable to take part in the competition and uphold the honour of the MacLeods. So it fell to his young apprentice, a boy called John MacCrimmon to take his place.

The boy rushed out in despair and threw himself down on the grass, inviting inspiration from the less mundane spirits of the place. His entreaties were answered by a fairy who came to him and offered him a choice of three

blessings - untold wealth, the gift of invisibility or a silver chanter that would make him and his kin the greatest pipers ever. Unhesitatingly, the boy chose the silver chanter, and marched into the Great Hall of Dunvegan to win the competition with playing of such skill and sweetness as had never been heard before.

Thus was founded the awesome dynasty of the MacCrimmons of Boreraig whose piping genius is still legendary. But the fairy who gave the first MacCrimmon that silver chanter also warned him that if he or his descendants ever regretted the gift, it would be lost for ever. And sure enough, one day when a MacCrimmon, piper to the Chief of MacLeod, was crossing the Minch on a stormy voyage to Harris and the wind and the sea were playing havoc with his piping, that rash MacCrimmon cursed the chanter in his hand - and hardly were the words out of his mouth before a wave came roaring over the said and washed that magic chanter away. Since then - and there's nothing mythical about this, there has never been a great MacCrimmon piper.

Such is the richly romantic setting for Thursday's duel of the champions in Dunvegan Castle, the brainchild of the fertile brain of that formidable old lady, Dame Flora MacLeod, twenty-eighth Chief of Clan MacLeod, now incredibly in her 90th year and newly returned from yet another flag-showing visit to clan fastnesses in North America.

The idea was born this winter. Dame Flora was concerned at the fact that the remoter Highland Games gatherings, like the one at Portree in Skye this week, were no longer attracting pipers of quality. Nowadays, the best pipers save their holidays to attend the two premier competitions - the Argyllshire Gathering at Oban next week, and the Northern Meeting at Inverness next month; in the pre-war days, a piper could leave his work and make a living touring all the Highland Games, like a heavy-weight athlete, earning up to 300 pounds in prize-money a summer, but that's no longer possible, and at the South Uist games this year there was not a single mainland piper, where before there were always eight or ten.

Dame Flora's problem was how to upgrade the Skye games to the stature and prestige of Oban and Inverness; and once again the fairies of Dunvegan came to the aid of the MacLeod, as they have done on so many epic occasions. In concert with John MacFadyen, a primary school headmaster, who is President of the Scottish Pipers' Association, and Seamus MacNeill, physics teacher at Glasgow University and co-principal of the College of Piping in Glasgow, she thought up this scheme to attract pipers to Skye this week.

Only those pipers who have won the Gold Medal at Oban or Inverness or the London Gold Medal are eligible - there are some 50 survivors, I believe. In the event, ten of these top class pipers have accepted the invitation - and they will, of course, also be competing at the Portree Games on Wednesday and Thursday.

It will be a veritable feast of piping. There are extant some 300 piobaireachd pieces, the classical bagpipe work consisting of a basic theme with a number of variations, each more complicated and difficult than the last, and taking all of 15 minutes to play. Of these 300, only 21 are authenticated as having been composed by one of the MacCrimmons. Each cont-

estant on Thursday must offer six of these pieces, and will be called upon to play any one.

The Thursday Ten sound like a roll-call from the hall of piping fame; John MacFadyen and his piping brothers, Duncan and Ian; John Burgess, a pupil of the late Pipe-Major Willie Ross, and now playing with the Invergordon Distillery Band that won the Scottish Championships in Edinburgh recently; Hector MacFadyen; Ronnie MacCallum, piper to the Duke of Argyll; Hugh C.R. MacRae from Edinburgh, the oldest competitor, who won the Inverness Gold in 1937; John MacDougall, of Invergordon; Willie M. Macdonald of Inverness; and Willie Macdonald of Benbecula.

Naturally, there are some great names missing; John MacLellan, Willie Ross's successor as instructor at the Army School of Piping at Edinburgh Castle, who doesn't compete now; Ronnie Lawrie, pipe-major of Glasgow Police Pipe Band; Robert U. Brown, the Queen's piper at Balmoral, who is ill; Donald MacLeod of Glasgow, reckoned by many to be the greatest living composer of bagpipe music; Seumas MacNeill himself, who is on a visit to Canada at present; and the brilliant young piper Donald MacPherson, who now lives in England, and who has won the Open piobaireachd competition at Oban 12 times since the war, equalling the existing record - and with many years in hand to break it.

These are the names that crop up whenever Highlanders discuss who is the greatest piper alive. But one man will be present in Dunvegan Castle on Thursday who has become a legend in his own lifetime - 90-year old Angus Macpherson, from Invershin in Sutherland, the oldest surviving Gold Medallist, who only two years ago won the B.B.C. competition for piobaireachd composition.

He comes of a great piping family; his father, Malcolm Macpherson, piper to the Chief of the Clan Chattan, was known simply as Calum Piobaire - Calum the Piper - and seems to have taught everyone who has taught anyone who is any good today. His three brothers were pipers. His son, Malcolm, who died last winter, was also a great piper. And his grandfather, Angus Macpherson, was a pupil of the last of the great MacCrimmons of Dunvegan - John Dhu MacCrimmon.

Always we come back to that extraordinary dynasty of MacCrimmon pipers. Story has it that after any big event, the MacCrimmon pipers were under a hereditary vow not to eat or sleep until they had composed a tune to celebrate it. They would sit in Slochd nam Piobairean (The Piper's Hollow) and play their music to the silent judgment of the surrounding rocks. But one MacCrimmon failed, and rather than starve to death he broke his fast before the piobaireachd was completed; and to this day it remains a fragment as splendid as Schubert's "Unfinished Symphony," and is known as "The Half-finished Piobaireachd".

But it was not often that inspiration failed the MacCrimmons; and there are few piping masterpieces more magnificent than the "Lament for the Children" composed by Patrick Mor MacCrimmon, father of the great Patrick Og MacCrimmon, on the death of his six other sons destroyed by smallpox.

They were all full-time piping professionals, these MacCrimmons; and at Boreraig, the croft that lies across the loch from Dunvegan Castle (a memorial cairn was unveiled there in 1933), they ran a college of piping where aspirant pipers spent years and years studying - there is extant an indenture dated March, 1743, in which Lord Lovat indentured a Fraser piper to the MacCrimmons for several years.

"To the making of a piper goes seven years of his own learning, and seven generations before," wrote Neil Munro in "The Lost Pibroch," and there are many pipers who nod their heads sagely in assent. Certainly, it takes a full five years before a piper can play his part in a good pipe band. But no MacCrimmon would have dreamed of playing in a pipe band. The bands and their "Little Music" (snatches of piobaireachd themes or marches borrowed from the reels and strathspeys of the violin) were the invention of the British Army who wanted to encourage recruiting into the Scottish regiments. (During the eighteenth century, after the 1745 Rising, the bagpipe had been proscribed as fiercely as the kilt and the claymore; indeed, a Highlander was executed in York in 1747 for being in possession of an "offensive weapon" - the bagpipe.

No, the MacCrimmons were individualists every one, heroic soloists playing some of the most technically difficult music ever composed. The intent, concentrated intricacy of the piobaireachd is a whole world away from the brash ranting of a pipe band; an enclosed solitary, deeply esoteric world in which when the piper, one feels, is totally alone with his soul and the soul of a haunted people.

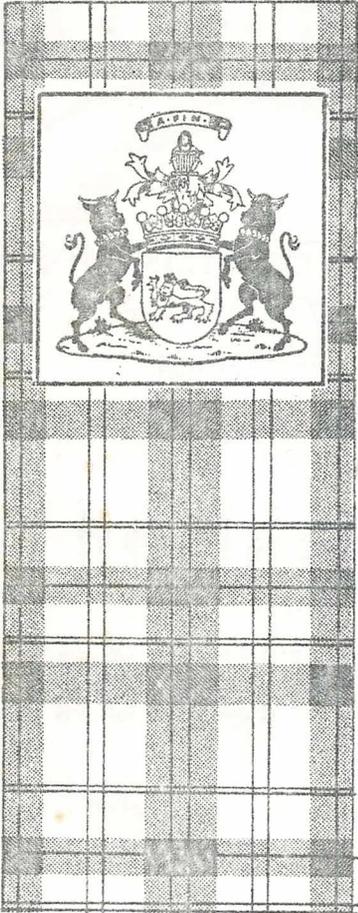
It is a world beyond the understanding and appreciation of most outsiders; an intent world that easily creates associations with the other world of legend and fairies. And although the Silver Chanter that will be presented on Thursday evening in Dunvegan Castle is not of fairy make (it's a replica made in Glasgow, alas), something of the magic of the MacCrimmons will surely echo in the silences that greet the last, dying note of the Duel of the Champions in the hall the MacCrimmons once made their own.

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Due to a most welcomed deluge of material for this issue, we will not continue the account of the hereditary pipers contained in "A Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd or Highland Pipe Music", by Angus MacKay, this issue. We hope to continue with the article in the succeeding copy of the Newsletter.

We also will be printing some of John Wilson interesting games reports, which, although they will be a little out of date, are always fascinating reading. We have been unable to include the reports of the Glengarry Highland Games at Maxville, Dutton Highland Games, and the Coburg Games this month, but will include them next month.

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Robert C. Gilchrist

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