

B. C. PIPERS' NEWSLETTER



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

APRIL, 1962.

No. 25

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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THIRTIETH ANNUAL GATHERING

The British Columbia Pipers' Association held its 30th Annual Gathering on Saturday, March 24th, at the Seaforth Armoury. Over 60 competitors were entered in solo competition, as well as those who played with the 8 quartettes and 5 miniature pipe bands.

The chief judge of the day was Pipe Major John Wilson, of Toronto, Ontario, and judge of the short leets was Pipe Major Donald MacKenzie, of Powell River.

We were honoured to have Pipe Major Wilson with us this year. He is universally regarded as a leading performer, composer, teacher, judge and authority, and it was a great privilege for us to meet with him. P. M. Wilson met with the members at a Ceilidh held on March 22nd, in the band room at the Seaforth Armoury. Here he gave a fine exhibition of his masterful skill, which was greatly appreciated by the enthusiastic audience. It is hoped that Pipe Major Wilson will be able to visit British Columbia again.

We were also pleased to see a few distant visitors at our gathering. James Young, of Perth, was able to attend, and gave a very enjoyable performance in the competitions. James by now is well known to our members, and it is hoped that he will be able to visit us again before returning to Scotland. James Thomson, from Los Angeles, attended, and was entered in the Open events. Mr. Hugh Macpherson, President of Hugh Macpherson Ltd., Highland Outfitters, was visiting the West Coast on business, and was able to attend. Mr. Macpherson, who is a Councillor of Edinburgh, is the President of the Scottish Pipe Band Association.

The prize winners were as follows:

Junior Amateur Piobaireachd:

1. Bobby MacDonald
2. Larry Gillott

Amateur Piobaireachd:

1. Rae Marie MacInnes
2. David Ireland (Bellingham)
3. Gordon Ross (Victoria)

Senior Amateur Old Highland Airs:

1. William Paterson (Bellingham)
2. James Coubrough

Novice Marches:

1. Laurie McIlvena
2. Garry MacBride
3. John Mager
4. Ross Lamont

Juvenile Marches:

1. Stephen Geddes (Victoria)
2. Michael MacInnes
3. Barbara MacArthur
4. Robert Heggie

Juvenile Strathspeys and Reels:

1. John MacLeod
2. Barbara MacArthur
3. Theresa MacInnes
4. Stephen Geddes

Junior Amateur Marches:

1. Bobby MacDonald
2. Larry Gillott
3. Gordon Whaley

Junior Amateur Strathspeys and Reels:

1. Bobby MacDonald
2. Larry Gillott
3. David MacKenzie

Junior Quartettes:

1. Kiwanis Boys Pipe Band (leader - Peter MacNeil)
2. Optimist Junior Boys Pipe Band
3. Kiwanis Boys Pipe Band (leader - L. Gillott)

Amateur Marches:

1. Rae Marie MacInnes
2. Billy Elder
3. Alex Young

Amateur Strathspeys and Reels:

1. Rae Marie MacInnes
2. Gordon Ross (Victoria)
3. Arnie Stone

Open Piobaireachd:

1. James Young (Perth)
2. Fred MacLeod (Powell River)

Old Highland Airs - Veterans 60 and over:

1. Seb. Nellies

Open Marches:

1. James Young (Perth)
2. Fred MacLeod (Powell River)
3. Dave Westie (Powell River)

Open Strathspeys and Reel; (Highland Dancing)

1. Marilyn Merry
2. Donna Fraser
3. Sharyn Miles

Senior Quartettes:

1. Seaforth Highlanders of Canada (P. Sgt. H. Aird)
2. MacMillan, Bloedel & Powell River (P.M. Dave Westie)
3. Vancouver City Police Pipe Band (P.M. Wm. Baird)

Open Strathspeys and Reels:

1. Fred MacLeod (Powell River)
2. James Young (Perth)
3. Dave Westie (Powell River)

Miniature Pipe Band Competition:

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

Open Jigs:

1. James Young (Perth)
2. Dave Westie (Powell River)
3. James Thomson (Los Angeles)

Trophy Winners:

MacIver Memorial Trophy: Bobby MacDonald & Rae Marie MacInnes (tie)

MacCrimmon Memorial Trophy: James Young

Laurie Trophy: James Young

Henderson Trophy: James Young

Walter Douglas Trophy: Seaforth Highlanders of Canada

Nicholson Trophy: Rae Marie MacInnes

Alex Lobban Trophy: Bobby MacDonald

Tait's Jewellers Trophy: MacMillan, Bloedel & Powell River

Cabar Feidh Trophy: Rae Marie MacInnes

Alan MacNab Memorial Trophy: Seb. Nellies

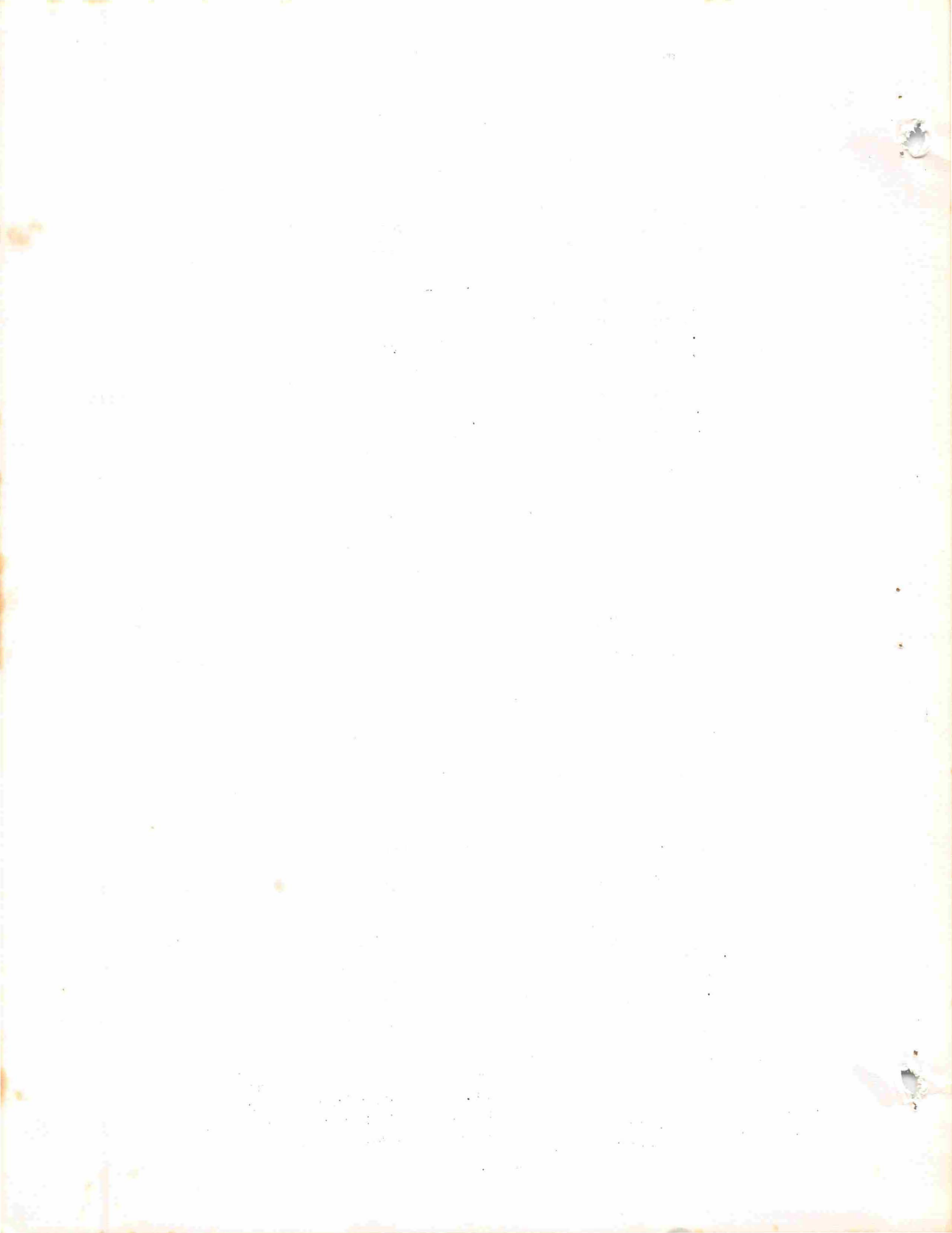
Gordon Sinclair Memorial Trophy: Bobby MacDonald

Mrs. C. M. Crawford Trophy: MacMillan, Bloedel & Powell River

K. Nicholson Willis Trophy: Stephen Geddes

Mrs. Walter Douglas Trophy: Kiwanis Boys' Band (P.M. P. MacNeil)

We are extremely grateful to all of those who helped make the Annual Gathering a success: the Donors, the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada and their Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. David Fairweather, the Sergeants' Mess, Jack MacGregor and his crew of caretakers, Al. Baillie and his Committee of Stewards, John Wilson, and of course, all competitors and spectators.



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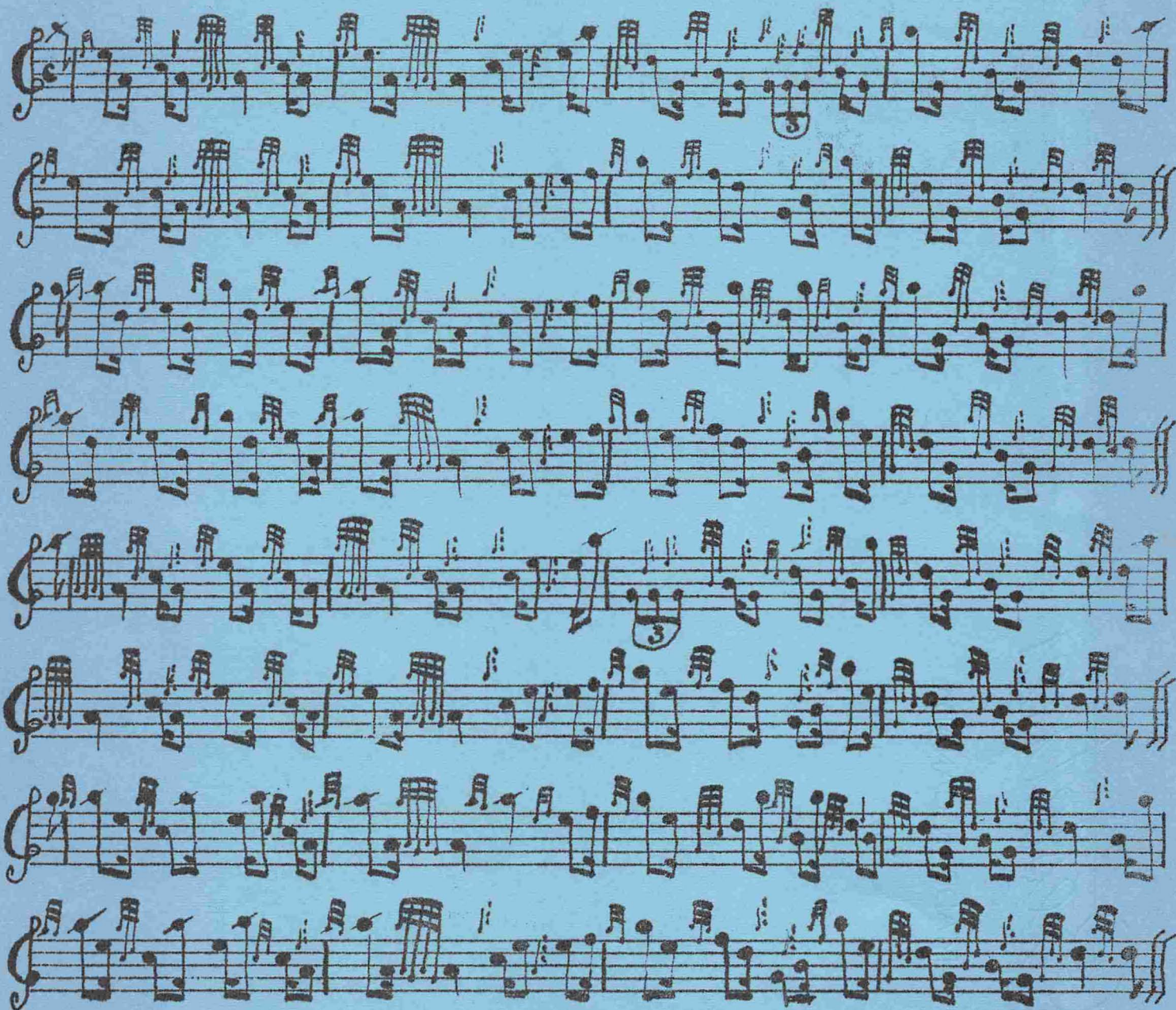
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THE HAPPY DAYS

Strathspey

Roderick MacKay
Glasgow





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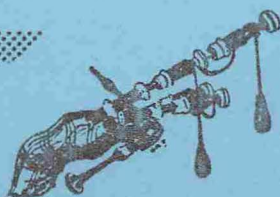
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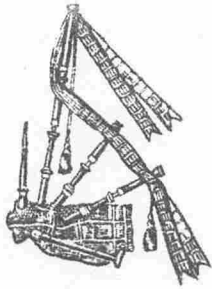
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39 CARDINAL'S WALK, LEICESTER

SIGURD AARLI

Slow March

Donald Sutherland
Glide Oregon



ROBERT THOMSON of LEICESTER



MARRIERS OF THE FRIENDS EAST LEADS, CHURCH OF LEICESTER
LETTERS INDIVIDUAL ATTACHED TO THE BOOKS

NOT SOMETHING AS YET HIS OLD THOMSON I BELIEVE HAS REPORTED
THAT THE BOOKS WERE IN THE HANDS OF THE FRIENDS
I DON'T BELIEVE (SHE) HAS BEEN TOLD OF THE FRIENDS EITHER

SOMETHING
NEW!!!

SPEEDY AIR WITH HYPOCRISY BY GARDNER OF OXFORD

SILVERSTONE (TYPE BY THE FRIENDS OF THOMSON) BY THE FRIENDS OF
LEICESTER LEICESTER - A FRIEND OF THE FRIENDS OF LEICESTER
LEICESTER - FRIENDS OF LEICESTER - A FRIEND OF LEICESTER

Saxophones - Reeds - Drums

Slow March
Double Subband
Glide Oregon

The image shows four staves of musical notation. Each staff contains a sequence of notes, primarily quarter and eighth notes, with stems pointing upwards. The notation is arranged in a standard musical format, likely for a marching band or similar ensemble. The paper is aged and shows some staining, particularly at the bottom left.

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*attached and balance from this
agent needs to close from*

ORUM HEADS

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PIPING IN BYGONE VICTORIA

Some time ago, Wm. H. Brown contributed to the Newsletter an excerpt from the records of the Sir William Wallace Society of Victoria, dealing with the Highland Games held on August 29th, 1891. Happily, further records have been brought together, and the present writer has been favoured with the loan of this very interesting historical material.

The Society very clearly fostered piping, selections on the pipes, along with Highland dancing and Scottish songs, frequently making up the evening's entertainment. Even the names of the tunes are sometimes noted.

It must have been a red-letter day for the society pipers when they gathered at the wharf to help welcome the Governor-General of Canada, Lord Aberdeen and his Lady, on November 3rd, 1894. Appropriately, they played "Cock o' the North". At the civic reception in the evening, the pipers again were in attendance.

A sad item in 1896 deals with the passing of Murdo MacLachlan, formerly a piper in the Ninety-third Highlanders. He was laid to rest to the strains of "The Land o' the Leal".

Pipers' names are given in these carefully written records: Geddes, Robertson, McDonald, Munro, Anderson, McKenzie, Weir, Taylor, Glenn. It is hardly possible that any of these men are alive today, but their names should be honoured for the part they played in keeping the pipes to the fore in Victoria towards the end of the century.

Unrelated to the above, but concerning piping in early Victoria, a few years ago a local paper featured an article about a piper, a Waterloo veteran, who held forth in the pioneer days. Unfortunately, the clipping was lost, and the date of the newspaper had not been noted. Anyhow, it appears that Victoria never has been without its pipers, though in the early days, what with the then remoteness of the area, and the slowness of communication, the replenishing of reeds and other accessories likely presented some difficulty.

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

YARN:

A couple of volatile American ladies, passengers on a bus in the Highlands, were enjoying themselves immensely.

"My, some scenery", enthused one to her companion. "This is Prince Charlie country, you know. Here's a village, and listen to the bagpipes. How romantic!"

A native in the seat ahead turned to face them. "That iss not the pipes at all, leddies", he admonished. "Och, no. What you will be hearing iss just Colin Cameron's sawmull!"

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COMPOSITION CONTEST:

We are pleased to announce that the Composition Contest recently concluded was considerably successful. Thirty-five tunes in all were submitted, which is gratifying, considering that the contest was somewhat of an experiment, being conducted for the first time.

The winners of the various classes are as follows:

March: Davie Westie, Powell River, B.C. - "Drum Major George Pryde"

Strathspey, Reel or Jig: Roderick MacKay, Glasgow, Scotland
"The Happy Days" (Strathspey)

Slow Marches or Retreats: Donald Sutherland, Glide, Oregon.
"Sigurd Aarli" (Slow March)

Top tune in contest: Roderick MacKay - "The Happy Days"

Honourable Mention:

Peter George, Victoria, B.C. - "Meg George" (March)

Davie West, Powell River, B.C. - "East Belfast Pipe Band"
(March)

We extend our congratulations to all of the winners, and especially to Roderick MacKay. We were pleased to see such a large entry from outside of British Columbia. The members were fortunate to hear Pipe Major Westie play his winning tune at the Annual Gathering, and it is hoped that the other winning tunes will be played at one of our functions in the near future.

You might be interested in seeing a breakdown of the types of tunes submitted in each class.

March: (17) 2/4's - 10, 6/8's - 7.

Strathspeys, Reels & Jigs: (8)

Strathspeys - 2

Reels - 1

Jigs - 5

Slow Marches and Retreats. (10)

Slow Marches - 8

Retreats - 2

- 14 -

We believe that these statistics are rather interesting, insofar as they reflect quite accurately the relative interest taken in the various forms of the small music of the pipes. Considering the great upsurge in the popularity of jig music in the last few years, it is not at all surprizing that five out of the eight dances entered were jigs.

We would like to thank the judges of the contest: Edmund Esson, James MacMillan and Donald Murray. These stalwarts had the extremely difficult task of sifting through quite a variety of styles of music transcription, and had to try to play the tunes as the composers intended them to be played.

The Strathspey "The Happy Days" and the Retreat "Sigurd Aarld" are reprinted in this issue, and the March "Drum Major George Pryde" will appear in next month's Newsletter.

- 0 -

BI-MONTHLY COMPETITION - April 13th.

The next Bi-Monthly Competition will be held on April 13th, in the Lecture Room, at the Seaforth Armoury.

We would ask all competitors and spectators to be prompt. The competitions will commence at 8:00 p.m.

The following events will be held:

Novice Strathspeys and Reels:
Juvenile 6/8 Marches
Junior Jigs
Amateur Marches
Senior Amateur Old Highland Airs.

- 0 -

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OUR HONORARY VICE PRESIDENT - JOHN M. ROBERTSON, D.C.M.

John MacIntosh Robertson was born in a small village in Perthshire called Logie Almond, near the town of Nethven. He was one of eleven children, eight of whom still survive, and are well up in years.

John embarked on his piping career at the age of fifteen. He was taught the rudiments by a piper Robert Kettles, and in his later years as a pupil took instruction from a retired Pipe Major Macdonald, of the Royal Highlanders. He claims much of his knowledge was acquired on his own, from Glen's Tutor and from those he associated with during the First War.

John Robertson came to Canada in 1905. He first worked at railway construction in Northern Ontario, during the time the Northern Ontario Railroad was developing the area known as Cobalt. He left Ontario, and came to Edmonton, Alberta in 1906. John was engaged in similar work in Alberta up until 1914, when he went to Ottawa and enlisted as a piper in the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. He explains that you had to go to Ottawa to join the army at this time.

The Battalion proceeded overseas that year, and during the bitter fighting at Vimy Ridge in 1915, Piper John Robertson was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. On May 8th, John and a regimental officer, Major Galt, rescued two stretcher bearers and a wounded soldier under fire. The stretcher bearers had been retrieving the wounded soldier, when they were struck down by heavy rifle and machine gun fire. For their valour in rescuing their three comrades, Major Galt was awarded the Distinguished Service Order, and John Robertson received the Distinguished Conduct Medal. Piper Robertson was also wounded during this incident.

After demobilization Piper Robertson returned to Edmonton in 1919, and worked for the Canadian Northern Railroad, which later amalgamated with the Grand Trunk Pacific, to form the Canadian National Railways. In 1920, he married Mary Jane Smith, a lass from Kirkenbrite, near Glasgow.

John began teaching in 1926 - the beginning of a teaching career that will be very hard to match in the Edmonton area. In 1928, the St. Andrews and Caledonian Society along with the Gaelic Society appointed a band committee to form a pipe band. This committee, headed by John Robertson, organized the Edmonton Boys Pipe Band, which is still in existence today. He was the Pipe Major and sole piping instructor of this band from 1928 to 1945.

John Robertson taught in his own home after working hours, and never once accepted payments for his teaching. A boy would come for a lesson (he had to be on time, and he had better have practised), and during the lesson, John was all teacher. Despite the fact that the boy may have had a particularly severe lesson, and there were plenty, John always had a kind word and an apple for the boy at the conclusion of the lesson. Personally I always felt I had learned something when I walked out of his house.

Friday was band night for the Edmonton Boys Pipe Band. The newest member of the band would always be careful to do things correctly, since he was placed in the front rank, next to Pipe Major Robertson. I clearly recall that on the first occasion when I practised with the band, the Pipe Major vigorously used the end of his shoe to indicate that I was out of step. The tremendous respect the boys had for John can be verified by any of his many former pupils.

In 1945, Pipe Major Robertson retired from the Canadian National Railways, and moved to Vancouver Island, where he now resides with his wife. He has a home at Shawnigan Lake, which he calls "Struan", after his clan headquarters.

Pipe Major Robertson has always had a very keen interest in our Association. Even before he moved to British Columbia, John was well acquainted with the local pipers, for his annual vacations were almost always spent at the Caledonian Games. In past years, pupils of his competed at these games, and in several instances enjoyed success. William Lockie, now of Victoria, was one of these pipers, and is still making himself heard on the Pacific Coast.

In 1958, John Robertson was appointed Honorary Vice President of the B.C. Pipers' Association, which positions he still holds. This appointment indicates what great respect John is held in amongst the local piping fraternity.

Despite the fact that rheumatism has crippled John, and he is forced to navigate with two canes, he is always present at piping functions, both on Vancouver Island and in Vancouver, a remarkable feat for a man who will be 82 years old in August.

John is quick to point out that longevity is a family trait, for he has five brothers and two sisters alive, whose ages range from 70 to 87.

In conclusion, I wish to say, as a former pupil, what a privilege it has been to have had the opportunity to learn from Pipe Major John Robertson, who in my opinion is the finest example of a dedicated piper and enthusiast.

- Albert J. Duncan -

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...the ...

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Op.

Quartet

The image displays a handwritten musical score for a piece titled "Butter Fingers". The score is arranged in ten horizontal staves. The first staff is the main melody. The subsequent staves are labeled as follows: 1st., 2nd., 1st., 2nd., 1st., 2nd., 1st., and 2nd. Each staff contains musical notation including notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as *f* and *mf*. The notation is written in a cursive, handwritten style. The paper is aged and shows some wear, including small holes and stains.

Quartet

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LETTER FROM PIPE MAJOR DONALD MacLEOD:

Please accept my thanks for the latest edition of the Newsletter - apparently fast becoming something more than just an institution.

I am enclosing this copy of one of my latest compositions, which has grown very popular since I included it in a broadcast last month. Please use it if you desire.

Jig composition, as we all know, is very much a "tongue in the cheek" business, and he is a fortunate composer, who produces a tune, especially a jig, which will please half the pipers half of the time. However, I find all my musical fun in jigs, and am very satisfied if I can pass a modicum of that fun on to others.

Please convey, through the Newsletter, my warmest regards to all B.C. Pipers, and the never failing enthusiasts.

- Donald MacLeod -

PIPE MAJOR ALICK JOHNSTON

The death, at 75 years of age, of Pipe Major Alick Johnston, which took place suddenly, owing to a heart attack, at his home at 8029 Osler Street, on March 30th, recalls a link with a few of the older generation of pipers who are still with us, and recalls to hundreds of citizens one who was a gifted musician in all classes of bagpipe music.

Alick was born in Aberfoyle, Scotland, the son of Alexander Johnston, a leading piper at that time. Alick received his tuition in the art of piping from the famous Johnnie MacColl, Oban. At the Highland Gatherings in Scotland, when a young man, Alick won many of the leading prizes, competing as an Amateur against the best class of pipers.

Arriving in Vancouver in 1910, he competed in "Open Competition", and was a regular competitor at the Caledonian Games, where for years he won many of the first prizes. As early as 1914, the MacLean Pipe Band, of which he was Pipe Major, won the General Stewart Trophy, a much sought after prize. He was also the first piper to have his name engraved on the MacCrimmon Memorial Trophy, competing in the Open Piobaireachd at the B.C. Pipers' Annual Meet, in 1933. In Western Canada he was conceded to be pre-eminent in "Ceol Mor", as well as the other classes of pipe music. His playing was unique in its tunefulness, perfect execution, and delicate touch. He had the opportunity in his youth to listen to such fine players as John MacColl, Oban, Angus MacRae, Callander, MacDougall Gillies, Glasgow, D.C. Mather, Lochcarron and other greats of that day, but many believe that his own natural genius was responsible for much of his extraordinary skill. Many also claim that in this part of the world, his playing has never been surpassed in his own day, or in later times.

Alick Johnston joined the Vancouver Police Department in 1917, having been a member of the Point Grey Municipality Fire Department for some years. On the retirement of Pipe Major Duncan MacTavish from the Police Pipe Band in 1936, Alick became Pipe Major, and was for many years successful in Pipe Band competitions.

After retiring from the Police Department, he never returned to the competitive platform, nor did he play, except on very few occasions - far too few, for the admirers of the playing of the Alick Johnston of former years.

Not only in piping did Alick excel. He could give a good account of himself as an athlete in sprints, jumps and shot put. For some years he made the best of them step lively in the "hundred years".

The funeral of Alick Johnston took place on Wednesday, April 4th, from the Simmons & McBride Funeral Chapel to the family plot in Forest Lawn Cemetery, Rev. H. Lennox, D.D. officiating. It was the largest seen here in some time, and was attended by many pipers and other old friends, who knew Alick when he devoted himself seriously to competitive piping.

His death leaves a blank in the world of old time pipers, but his name will be handed down as one of the greatest players of his generation. He is survived by a sister, Mrs. Wm. MacDonald, one niece, and two nephews, to whom our deepest sympathy is expressed. As was most fitting, the music he loved sounded his coronach. Pipe Major Wm. Baird and three pipers from the Vancouver Police Pipe Band, played at the funeral home and at the cemetery.

- Roderick MacLeod -

- 0 -

SUMMER. GAMES:

The dates of the various Highland Gatherings to be held this summer are as follows:

Bellingham:	June 9th
Portland:	July 7th
Nanaimo:	July 14th
Victoria:	July 28th
Seattle:	August 4th
Vancouver:	August 11th

More details concerning all games will be announced at a later date. All of the games mentioned, except those at Bellingham, are held under the auspices of the Pacific International Highland Games Association.

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SEATTLE PIPERS' and DRUMMERS' STAG:

The Eleventh Annual Pipers' and Drummers' Stag was held on March 17th, in the Windsor Room, New Washington Hotel, Seattle. After an excellent dinner, competitions were held, and the following persons were judged winners:

Novice Marches	-	Colin MacRae
Amateur Marches	-	Wm. Paterson
Seattle & Vicinity Competitions:		Fred Whyte
Junior Boys Quartets	-	Seaforth Cadets
Drumming Competition	-	Seaforth Highlanders of Canada
Professional Jigs	-	David Wilson
Professional Slow Airs	-	Albert Duncan
Senior Quartets	-	Vancouver City Police

- 0 -

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ANNUAL MEETING - APRIL 27th, 1962.

The Annual Meeting will be held on Friday, April 27th, in the band room at the Seaforth Armoury. This is the most important meeting of the year, and you are strongly urged to attend.

The order of business will be as follows:

- Report of President
- Report of Treasurer
- Report of Trustees
- Election of President
- Election of Vice President
- Election of Board of Directors
- Election of Auditors
- Motions

Remember - Friday, April 27th Annual Meeting



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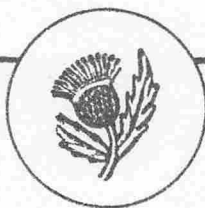
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