



DECEMBER, 1960. No. 9.

A Bi-Monthly Competition was held in the lecture room at the Seaforth Armoury, on Friday, December 9th. The results of the competitions, judged by Hugh Aird, of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, are as follows:

Novice 6/8 Marches:

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

Juvenile Marches:

1. Douglas Graham 2. Bruce Topp 3. Raymond Irvine
4. John MacLeod.

Junior Old Highland Airs:

1. Bobby MacDonald 2. Larry Gillott.

Amateur Strathspey and Reel:

1. Bill Elder.

Senior Amateur Piobaireachd:

1. William Paterson 2. Harry Mumford.

Because of the increasing entries in the Bi-Monthly Competitions, it has been decided to increase the number of prizes awarded in the larger classes. Commencing with the December Competitions, prizes will be awarded at all Bi-Monthlies, as follows:

1 - 2	Competitors	1	prize
3	"	2	prizes
4 - 9	"	3	"
10 - 14	"	4	"
15 - 19	"	5	"
20 & more	"	6	"

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We would like to remind you again of the Members' Banquet, to be held on Saturday, January 14th, 1961, at the Stanley Park Sports Pavilion. We hope to see all of the members and wives at this banquet, and we would also welcome any visitors who are interested in our activities. Tickets will cost \$2.50 per person, and will be distributed by the members of the Board of Directors. You will be contacted by a member of the Board, and we would ask you to let him know how many tickets you will require. If there are any questions about the banquet, contact the Secretary, Rod MacVicar at RE 3-9053.

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There was a gratifying response to our request for a sporran for a patient at George Derby Veterans' Home, contained in the November Newsletter. We would like to thank the several members who responded, and especially James Thompson, whose sporran has completed the costume of a very grateful veteran.

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JOHN SUTHERLAND:

In 1943, while the attention of all Canadians was focused on the progress of the Second World War, their interest was caught and the seriousness of the world situation was at least momentarily forgotten as a result of the activities of one John Sutherland of Vancouver.

John Sutherland was born in Glasgow in 1889. The exact details of his earlier life are somewhat obscure. He is said to have served as a piper in the Highland Light Infantry, the Argyle & Sutherland Highlanders, and the Black Watch. During an interview, he once stated that he had been a piper in the Argyle & Sutherland Highlanders, but his guardhouse record became too impressive, and he was compelled to leave this unit and join the Black Watch at the commencement of the First World War. He further stated that in Scotland he had been a blacksmith, by trade, but that since 1929, when he migrated to Canada, he didn't work at this trade. Apparently work and John Sutherland were not too compatible, and since he would be subject to deportation if he accepted relief, he was forced to earn his livelihood by piping.

John would play on Vancouver streets, where he would be given either money or abuse (or perhaps both). He had several altercations with the police, who frequently answered complaints from citizens to the effect that he was driving them crazy with his performances. However, his utter disregard of these complaints was brought to a head in April, 1944, when Sutherland was playing in the Dunbar district, leading a group of children along the street in a Pied Piper fashion. The inevitable occurred; the police were called and they asked Sutherland to move along into another district. Sutherland said that he could not move along since he would get lost, not knowing these particular streets very well. He was thereupon arrested, and was charged with obstructing a police officer.

Sutherland appeared before the late Magistrate Mackenzie Matheson, also a Scot, and admitted to the court that he earned his living by playing the pipes. The following exchange took place between the irascible Sutherland and the learned magistrate:

"But I don't ask for money. People give it to me".

"Do they give it to you for playing or for stopping?"

"For playing."

"Well this has got to stop. Six months hard labor."

"You can't stop me."

"But I'll stop you for six months."

Needless to say, many were outraged by what was considered to be an excessive sentence, and the hue and cry was heard far and wide. The B.C. Pipers' Association now took an interest in the matter, and although Sutherland had not been a member of the Association, they agreed to assist the musical martyr in whatever manner they could. A public fund was organized, a lawyer was engaged, and it was decided to appeal the decision of the Magistrate. The case attracted the attention of newspapers across Canada, and for weeks the pros and cons of the unfortunate Sutherland were debated by columnists and readers alike. Although the majority sympathized with the piper, some supported Magistrate Matheson. It might be interesting to examine some of the letters which were written to the papers, in order to get an idea of what a controversy had been provoked.

"If a man plays the bagpipes on the street he gets six months hard labor, but if he owns and operates a still he gets off with a fine of \$100.00 or three months without hard labor. My advice to the bagpipe player is to get into the bootleg business, which seems to have been flourishing in the country for some time and nothing much done about it."

"Where is justice? What do the Scotch people think of the nerve of some people to think the bagpipes are just noise. The music is the sweetest of all, not like a lot of trash we hear now. I would advise you to take it to the highest court in the world if necessary. I will donate to the good cause to see the piper gets justice. Scotch people, wake up!"

"Piper Jock"

"I also ask where is justice. The piper piped in our block for two hours. We nearly went crazy. We gave him money to go away. Only a Scotchman could say the bagpipes are the sweetest music in the world. Yes, Scotch people, wake up! Take up a subscription and send the piper back to Scotland."

"A Canadian"

"In regard to the sentence recently given to the "player of the piper", might I say that I do not consider this a logical sentence - as this may only mean a temporary silencing of this invention. What I would suggest is that the Attorney General free the man, and send the "Pipes" to the penitentiary for life. Please omit my name as I value my life, and I live next door to a Scotchman."

"Lover of music"

"What are we fighting for?- the Atlantic Charter, the four freedoms, five freedoms, six, eight, ten or thirteen freedoms? Or freedom abroad for other people and jail for ourselves? Why put a homeless old man in jail for playing the bagpipes? A sound is a tune and a tune is music although it does sound foreign to some people. Why not give the old man a job; better still, help him in some way to live and let live. Now, how about getting a little bit of freedom from want, freedom from fear, and freedom from the Fascists for our good old homeless piper."

"I for one commend our magistrate for his decision against this bagpipe player at large. We all know that bagpipes play a large part on the battlefield, but how can anyone be so dumb and stupid as to compare the Plains of Lucknow or the hills of Scotland to our busy streets of Vancouver? And streets are no place for continuous bagpipe blowing as they then become a nuisance. If this gentleman is so proud of his instrument, why doesn't he take it out to Stanley Park or to the top of Grouse Mountain, instead of piling agony on his neighbours."

"Also a Sufferer"

Powell River.

(Could it be that the Powell River Band had made such an impression by 1943?)

To be continued.

We were recently given the following article by one of our friends in the Vancouver Island Pipers' Society. The occasion, described in the Victoria "The Daily Colonist" on August 30th, 1891, was most probably the first Highland Gathering held on Vancouver Island.

"The first Grand Gathering and Games of the Sir William Wallace Society:

The B.C. Scottish Association Turn Out in Great Strength and Style:

One of the big events of the season was that of yesterday, when the Sir William Wallace Society and Scottish Pipers' Association made their first public appearance, and entertained their friends to a splendid athletic programme.

The gathering took place on the Caledonian grounds, and a couple of thousand enthusiastic admirers witnessed the sports, which embraced every item known to the athlete. The Pipers, dressed in the most approved Scottish costume, left their hall shortly after one o'clock, and to the strains of the bagpipes, marched to the grounds, where they were received with quite an ovation. Shortly after the arrival of the Highlanders, the band of H.M.S. Warspite appeared on the scene, and took up their positions on a well shaded elevation. Their music was much appreciated, and deservedly so, while their appearance was really attractive. The grounds were gay and brilliant. The youth and beauty of Victoria turned out in strength, nor were the sterner sex behind in style or number. Among the gathering several blue jackets from the Warspite were conspicuous, as were also the red coats, but the Highland costume in the ring, was that which predominated. There was plenty of piping during the day. Among those who proudly walked round the grounds decked in his native kilts, was Donald Weir, who has seen active service with the old 78th Highlanders, and has been a former Pipe-Major of the Royal Scottish Fusiliers.

The arrangements were good, but there was, of course, the usual amount of grumbling. The programme was not gone through according to order laid down, and many "kicks" were the result. Those who wished to be objectionable even went into technicalities, and objected because all races were not called up by the sound of the bellman and started by the firing of the pistol, as laid down on the card. On the whole, the sports were carried on in the best of good humor, and the weather being as delightful as if it had been especially ordered for the occasion, a most enjoyable day was spent.

The turn-out was altogether creditable to the two young organizations. The Sir William Wallace, which is a benefit society, was established only two years ago, and now has on its roll nearly 200 members. The Pipers' Association, which was started last April with the object of encouraging Scottish music, has an equal number of members. The activity of the officers and the popularity of the organizations were testified to yesterday by the large gathering and the favorable comments heard on every hand."

It would appear that the grumblers, who are in abundance at all of our gatherings, have not changed a great deal in the past seventy years. It would be interesting to learn more about the "Scottish Pipers' Association" and we would be pleased to receive any information available concerning this Society, or any other early piping society in British Columbia.

DON'T FORGET:

MEMBERS' BANQUET: JANUARY 14th.