

B. C. PIPERS' NEWSLETTER



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

DECEMBER, 1961

No. 21.

AN ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF BAGPIPE MUSIC

AND THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF PIPE PLAYING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

SEASONS GREETINGS



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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ANNUAL MEMBERS' BANQUET: January 6th, 1962.

Our Annual Members' Banquet will be held at the Stanley Park Sports Pavilion on Saturday, January 6th, 1962. The last Banquet was highly successful, and it is hoped that it will be an equal success this year.

Tickets will cost \$2.50 each (\$5.00 per couple), and will be distributed by the members of the Board of Directors. All members of the B.C. Pipers' Association, wherever possible, will be contacted personally by a Director in the near future. Kindly let him know how many tickets you will require.

We would extend an invitation to all of our readers to attend the Banquet. It would be appreciated if any interested non-members would contact the Secretary, Rod. MacVicar, RE 3-9053, before January 1st, 1962.

At the conclusion of the dinner, a programme of piping will be offered. A bar will be open. Everybody is welcome.

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ANNUAL GATHERING: March 24th, 1962.

Our Annual Gathering will be held on March 24th, 1962. We have invited a well-known judge to attend, and will let you know when further arrangements have been made.

OPEN PIOBAIREACHD:

In the Open Piobaireachd Competitions held at the Annual Gathering and at the Highland Games following the rules of the B.C. Pipers' Association, the same rules will govern in 1962, as did in 1961.

All competitors in the Open Piobaireachd Class must submit two piobaireachds to the judge, who will select the tune to be played. One tune will be of the competitors' choice, and one will be selected from the following list:

- 3 -

The Earl of Seaforth's Salute
MacKay's Banner
Donald MacKenzie's Lament for his Father
In Praise of Morag
I Got a Kiss of the King's Hand
The Vaunting

It would be pointed out that there have been two changes to the list of 1961. We would ask you to make these rules and tunes known to anyone not receiving the Newsletter, who might be competing in the Open Piobaireachd events.

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GENERAL MEETING:

At the November General Meeting held on November 24th, the members present got through a great deal of business, in preparation for our future activities. An enjoyable session of piping was held after the meeting at which selections were given by George Allan, Harry Mumford, Duncan Watson, Ian Walker, Seb, Nellies and Tom Binnie.

The next General Meeting will be held on December 15th, in the Band Room of the Seaforth Armoury. At this meeting will be played tapes recently presented to this association by Donald Sutherland, of Glide, Oregon.

These tapes include selections by the late Gordon Sinclair, Donald Sutherland, Neil Sutherland, and Bobby MacLeod, and are extremely interesting. A good attendance at this meeting is expected.

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THE HIGHLAND DANCER:

We would take this opportunity to remind our readers who are enthusiasts of Highland Dancing of the very interesting magazine being produced by Mrs. Heather Duncan Jolley entitled "The Highland Dancer".

This bi-monthly publication is becoming increasingly important to Highland Dancers everywhere, and is highly recommended. Subscription rates are \$2.00 for six issues. Address subscriptions and correspondence to: Mrs. Heather Jolley, Suite 206, 2250 York Avenue, Vancouver 9, B.C.

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SCOTLAND

A SALUTE TO CALUM PIOBAIR'S CAIRN: Donald Sutherland.

We take great pleasure this month in printing "A Salute to Calum Piobair's Cairn", by Donald Sutherland, of Glide, Oregon. This Piobaireachd is written in commemoration of the cairn erected to honour Malcolm Macpherson, father of Angus Macpherson, of Inveran. We invite your comments concerning this interesting piece.

For your information we reproduce a clipping taken from the Oban Times, printed shortly after the end of the 1st World War.

"Malcolm Macpherson (Calum Piobair), piper to Cluny Macpherson, Badenoch, was born in Skye and received his tuition in the art of piping at the MacCrimmon school. He won all the leading prizes at the principal Highland Gatherings and secured the Championship of Scotland out of the greatest class of pipers at the Edinburgh Exhibition in 1886. He was awarded two gold medals and large money prizes at this Competition, which was the largest of its kind ever held in Scotland.

He settled down in a small cottage on the estate of Cluny Macpherson, at Badenoch, and on his retirement gave tuition to such outstanding pipers as Angus MacRae, Callander, Pipe Major John MacDonald, Inverness, Pipe Major W. MacLean, (late of Lochiel's Camerons), Pipe Major John Cowan, and Pipe Major Robert Meldrum, in addition to five of his own sons, who were noted prize-winners.

In the making of bagpipes he was thoroughly expert, and was a believer in using instruments constructed by himself. He was as well an expert angler, and it was due to an accident in fishing in 1898 that he passed away to the regret of many.

One of the most unassuming of men, he was never known to have worn any of his numerous decorations and he had always the greatest regard for and was kindly desposed even to his keenest rival.

As a composer he made a great name for himself, among his best compositions being "Lament for His Master, Cluny Macpherson. It is fitting that his grandson and namesake, Malcolm Macpherson, Invershin, should be carrying on the tradition of a famous piping family."

URLAR A SALUTE TO CALUM PIOBAIR'S CAIRN.

The main musical score consists of ten staves of music. The first staff begins with the word 'URLAR' written above it. The second staff has 'VAR' written above it. The third staff has 'VAR' written above it. The fourth staff has 'VAR' written above it. The fifth staff has 'VAR' written above it. The sixth staff has 'DOUBLING OF VAR' written above it. The seventh staff has 'DOUBLING OF VAR' written above it. The eighth staff has 'DOUBLING OF VAR' written above it. The ninth staff has 'DOUBLING OF VAR' written above it. The tenth staff has 'DOUBLING OF VAR' written above it. The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 6/8 time signature. It features a variety of note values including eighth and sixteenth notes, as well as rests and dynamic markings.

TORLUATH, (T) CRUNLUATH, (C) CRUNLUATH A' MACH (M)

This section contains three staves of music, each representing a different variation. The first staff is labeled 'TORLUATH, (T)', the second 'CRUNLUATH, (C)', and the third 'CRUNLUATH A' MACH (M)'. Each staff includes a series of rhythmic patterns and notes, with some measures containing the letters 'S' and 'D' above the notes. The notation is consistent with the main score, using treble clef and a key signature of one flat.

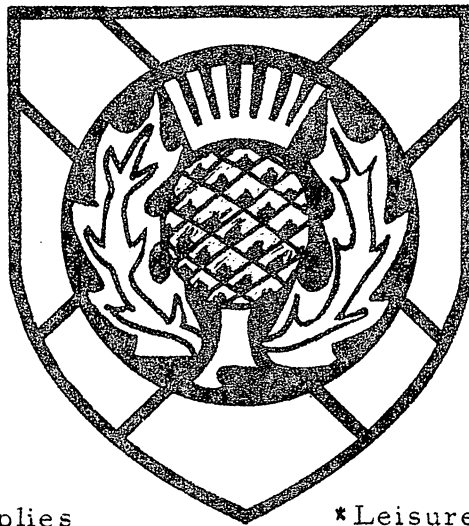
PLAY

A short musical phrase consisting of a few notes on a single staff, with the word 'FOR' written above it. The staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat.

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COMPOSITION CONTEST

The response to date in the Composition Contest has been good. However, we hope to receive many more entries before the Contest closes. We would urge all of you to take part in this contest. Who knows, you may have hidden talents!

The winning tunes will be announced at the Indoor Gathering in March. These tunes will then appear in the Newsletter.

The competition will consist of three classes:

1. Marches
2. Strathspeys or Reels or Jigs (one only)
3. Slow Marches or Retreats

The prizes will be \$10.00 for the winning tune in each class, and an additional \$10.00 for the top tune in the contest.

CONTEST RULES:

1. Each tune will be submitted in duplicate.
2. The composer's name, the name of the tune, and the year of its composition will be stated in an accompanying letter, but will not be written on the music.
3. An entry fee of one dollar will accompany each tune.
4. A competitor may enter as many tunes as he wishes in each class.
5. All entries must be sent to 3726 Blenheim Street, before March 1st, 1962.
6. The Association may reprint any of the entries at a future date.
7. The names of the judges will be announced only at the conclusion of the contest.
8. Prizes in any class may be withheld in the event of insufficient entries.

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ARMY PIPING STORIES (CONTD)

It was in the same engagement that a piper in the exertion of playing, and using his sword, burst the fastening of his kilt and it dropped off and couldn't be found again. The bugle "went" for the regiment to re-form, and the poor piper, in his scanty attire of tunic and waist belt, tried to "fall in" in the rear rank, but his comrades kept pushing him up to the front rank, much to their own amusement. Finally someone gave him a pair of pants which were taken from a wounded Hottentot, and when the poor piper was told where they came from, he said: "Ach! inteet, it's his turn to be red now, I was never so red in all my life". And that can be true, as it is said that it was below zero the morning this happened.

In 1873 when the 72nd Regiment was in Peshawar, Alex Calder was Pipe-Major. The pipers practiced in a dilapidated bungalow. On one occasion "Pipie" got a wooden peg, stood it on end, and told the men they'd look on it as Mess President, and play the mess tunes around it. They played the March in Indian file round the peg, and then, in circle, the Strathspey and Reel. The Pipe-Major was well pleased, and said that they would go through it again. They started, but this time one of the pipers gave a lick to the peg that sent it spinning to the other end of the room. "Halt!", shouted the irate Pipe-Major, and called out: "Who kicked the President?". There was no response. "Tell me", he said, "who kicked the President, and I'll have him kicked". At last one of the pipers asked him. "What President?", and then looking him in the eye, very solemnly stated: "Thou shalt not make into thyself any graven image, or any likeness of any President or anything else". That was sufficient, they all laughed heartily and practice went on without the President.

The 72nd's got good pipers at the competitions held in Edinburgh Gatherings. Lieut.-Gen. Alex Duff, Colonel of the 72nd's, decided to enlist one for his Corps, with the promise that perhaps it would not be necessary to send him overseas. The piper shrewdly demanded: "Whether the General would give him that in writing?"

The Duke of Wellington and Don Miguel of Portugal reviewed the 72nd's in 1828. Pipe-Major Donald MacDonald, a native of Sutherland, was sent for and complimented on his playing. Asked if he found the bagpipes a difficult instrument to play, he replied to the potentate from Portugal: "Inteet, and no', Your Royal Highness, it comes to me the same as ruling a lot of people comes to yourself, we're shust porn to it". (Another MacCrimmon)

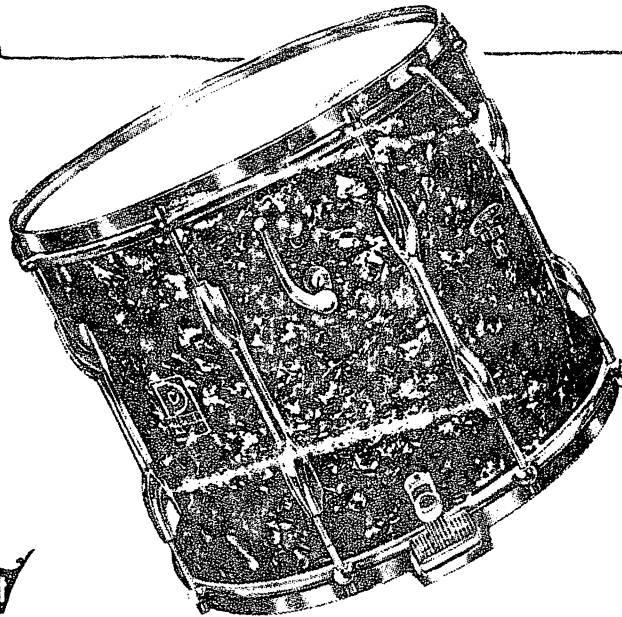
Colonel G. W. Anderson of the 72nd had a piper named Kemp who played well and composed tunes. The Colonel was friendly and teased Kemp occasionally. One time he said to him: "You are a grand musician Kemp, with the soul of a bard, it's a pity that it's not the fiddle that you play". "The feedil, the feedil", said Kemp, with contempt, "What is the feedil to the Piob Mor. Can the feedil speak to you like the pipes will, my pretty man, when the ball cartridge will be loose in your pooch, and your snider block hot? Will your feedils or your tin brass bands be able to give you one blaw when the paignet (bayonet) is on ta snider, and it is "Cabar Feidh gu brach", or death? No, No, inteet, Ta pipes is the best whatever!" (A man after my own heart)

An elderly man named Colin Campbell - a born piper, but with little English, was with the Seaforths in 1854. In India he kept a box with thread and rosat (rosin) for making drone bridles. The young pipers used to tease Colin, and one day they caught a mouse, and taking the rosat out of Colin's box put the live mouse in it. When Colin came in, one of the pipers asked him to put a bridle on a reed. He agreed, and got the box. When he opened it, out jumped the mouse, and ran into the nearest hole. "Och! Och!", said Colin. "Min rosat, min rosat is went down in the hole". He continued to mourn till told of the trick played on him, and was given his "rosat". We understand that even with his little English, he told the young sparks something they remembered for a long time.

In 1842 Colonel Lindsay of the 91st closed the Officers' Mess, and did away with the pipers. The 74th were sent to the same station as the 91st, and expected to be escorted to the camp by 91st pipers. No pipers were seen or heard, but as the orderlies prepared a meal for the new arrivals, there was a terrible clattering of camp kettles and other utensils. "Oh, that must be your band that is playing now", said a wag of the 74th to the 91st pipers, and from then on the pleasantries were bandied about, to the intense disgust of the injured 91st.

Before the Battle of Assaye, an order was issued for all musicians to go to the rear to act as stretcher bearers. The bandsmen went, and a piper, deeming himself a "musician", went too. After the battle he was taunted by officers and his comrades, who said it was disgraceful for a piper who should be in the fore-front to have been in the rear. He pleaded that the order was for "musicians" to go. The officers said that was for tin-canners, flute players, and other whistlers, but that a piper was above that! The insult had to be swallowed.

At the next battle - Angaam - the piper took good care he was not at the rear. He was seen and heard of up front, in the thick of the fight, playing "charges", "advances", "lights out" and "reveilles", amid musketry and artillery fire, deaf to all but his own fierce tunes. So insistent was he that officers had difficulty even with drawn swords, to keep the men of the battalion from charging. The officers however admitted this piper's honour had been vindicated.



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THE NORTHERN MEETING , INVERNESS:

Although this news is somewhat belated, we are certain that you will be interested to see the results of the Open Piping Competitions at Inverness, held on September 20th and 21st.

Piobaireachd: (Highland Society of London's Gold Medal)

1. Donald Morrison, Aberdeen.
2. H. MacFadyen, Gartcosh, near Glasgow.
3. Finlay MacNeill, Port Glasgow.
4. James McColl, Los Angeles, Calif.
5. Kenneth MacDonald, Glasgow.

Piobaireachd: (Gold Clasp - open to former winners of Highland Society of London's Gold Medal)

1. P.-M. Donald MacLeod, The Queen's Own Highlanders, Fort George.
2. Donald Macpherson, Glasgow.
3. William MacDonald, Inverness.
4. P.-M. John MacLellan, Queen's Own Highlanders, Edinburgh Castle.
5. Duncan J. MacFadyen, Glasgow.

Marches:

1. James Young, Perth.
2. William MacDonald, Inverness.
3. Ronald Lawrie, Glasgow.

Strathspeys and Reels:

1. William MacDonald, Inverness.
2. Kenneth MacDonald, Glasgow.
3. P.-M. I. MacLeod, Leith.

Jigs:

1. Sgt. C.A. Campbell, Fort George.
2. P.-M. Donald MacLeod, The Queen's Own Highlanders, Fort George.
3. William MacDonald, Inverness.

March, Strathspey and Reel: (Silver Star presented by Royal Scottish Pipers' Society)

1. Donald Morrison, Aberdeen.
2. Iain MacFadyen, Glasgow.
3. Donald Macpherson, Glasgow.

Our congratulations are extended to all winners, and especially to Pipe Major Donald MacLeod and Pipe Major Donald Morrison.

"BAGPIPES" BY ANTHONY BAINES:

We recently obtained a very interesting book which you may wish to add to your library. "Bagpipes", by Anthony Baines, printed by the University Press, Oxford, in 1960, is a comprehensive survey of bagpipes throughout the world - past and present. In all likelihood this book is the most complete of its kind ever written.

Anthony Baines, a member of the woodwind section of the London Philharmonic Orchestra, is Editor of the Galpin Society Journal, and is author of "Woodwind Instruments and their History".

He has approached his subject in a most scholarly and scientific manner. The many instruments are classified both geographically and functionally, and an unbelievable number of bagpipes are dealt with from various approaches: construction and size, composition, usage, history, tone, range and music. Many types of bags, chanter, reeds and drones are illustrated, and maps are used to depict the geographical distribution of the bagpipes.

"Bagpipes" is made especially attractive by the large number of excellent illustrations throughout. The book contains 78 very fine line drawings, sixteen pages of photographs, and fourteen musical examples. Many of the photographs are of the bagpipes contained in the Pitt River Museum, Oxford, and are highly informative. A good index and a complete bibliography also help to make this a well organized book.

We found it somewhat unusual and rather refreshing to read a book dealing with our instrument which was unfettered by patriotic or nationalistic sentiments. Mr. Baines treats the Piob Mhor and the Bulgarian "Gaida" equally, although he does admit, and we felt that this admission was somewhat reluctant, as to the universality of the Scottish Highland Bagpipe. However, the objective handling of the subject was greatly appreciated.

We would heartily recommend "Bagpipes" by Anthony Baines as informative and interesting reading.

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PIPE TUNES AND THEIR COMPOSERS:

There are a number of popular pipe tunes played at the present time, and some seldom heard today, whose likeable melodies make it interesting for us to know the persons who had the musical ability to compose them. What is contained in this article is taken from clippings from different papers - some from the "Oban Times" - collected during the last forty years.

Let us first consider Hugh MacKay, whose name appears as the composer of marches in Glen's Books. He is a man about whom not much is known. He was a competitor at the Northern Meetings in 1862, and was then Pipe-Major of the Stirlingshire Militia, having been before that Pipe-Major of the 71st Regiment, now the H.L.I. Hugh was contemporary with Angus MacKay, the Queen's Piper, but it is not known if they were related. Hugh MacKay composed "The Stirlingshire Militia", "The 71st Quickstep", "Charles Edward Hope de Vere", "The Craggs of Stirling", "Angus Campbells Farewell to Stirling", "Boturich Castle", and also some say "Donald Cameron".

"The Drunken Piper", which is shown in Ross's Book (Victoria's Piper) as "Highland Rory", is said to have been composed by Piper Alex MacLeod, 26th Cameronians. Piper James Mauchline of the 78th Highlanders composed "The Skye Crofters" and "The Barren Rocks of Aden", said to have been changed somewhat by Alex. MacKellar. "The Skye Crofters" is also credited to Ronald MacKenzie of the 78th, under the name of "Portree Men".

It is pretty well known by all that John MacLeod of the 93rd Highlanders composed "The Green Hills of Tyrol" during the Crimean War, after listening to a Sardinian band play the above air.

"Parker's Welcome to Perthshire" is generally ascribed to Piper Wm. Rose, who composed "The Atholl Highlanders March to Loch Katrine".

Piper D. Galbraith - an Islay pupil of Angus MacKay, composed "MacNeill's March" and "Capt. Campbell of Drum a Voisk". Someone, in one of the clippings, states that "King George VI's Welcome to Edinburgh, 1937" is severely orthodox in form, like all John MacColl's compositions, yet more intricate than "Argyleshire Gathering" and "Arthur Bignold of Loch-Rosque".

That good old tune "25th K.O.S.B.'s Farewell to Meerut" was composed by Piper John Balloch, who was in the 79th Highlanders at Tel-el-Kebir, and then Pipe-Major of the K.O.S.B. in 1886. He also composed "Auchmountains Bonnie Glen" and "Sunset in Flanders".

Piper John MacLellan, D.C.M., of the H.L.I. and Argyle and Sutherland's composed among many "Beaumont Hamel" and another famous tune that changed its name from "The Hills of Jura" to "The Burning Sands of Egypt" and is now known as "The Road to the Isles".

Piper Willie Laurie, a notable player and composer, has to his credit "John MacDonald of Glencoe", "The Paps of Glencoe", "Inverary Castle" and the tuneful "Battle of the Somme".

Piper Wm. Ferguson composed "The Atholl and Breadalbane Gathering", a tune played a lot some years ago. Piper D.A. Campbell composed "Dunvegan Castle" (I like to play it with "MacLeod's March"). In the clipping it is said to be a tune much admired, but thought, when it came out, to be a little difficult for competition. (That was many years ago).

"Colonel Davidson" is spoken of as a tune of character all its own, composed in Canada by Piper Robert Ireland.

I feel sure that others could give the names of composers of well known tunes.

- Roderick MacLeod -

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OOPS, DONALD, WHAUR'S YER TREWS, SIR? (From a Glasgow newspaper)

Memo to military Highland dancers in the event of losing their trews in mid-reel at the Edinburgh Tattoo:

"In the face of this catastrophe, all ranks will remain calm. The situation will be dealt with in a soldier-like manner.

The afflicted dancer will step out of the crumpled trews to the word of command: "Donald, whaur's yer troosers".

He will turn left, dismiss, report to the quartermaster, with the evidence, and make the usual application for elastic underpants, for the repair of."

Missing from last night's performance of the Tattoo was the kilted dancer whose pants DID give way in mid-reel, before an audience of 7,000 on Tuesday.

There was no code of military conduct, like the one suggested above, for such an event. Nevertheless, he coped.

And last night the Army drew a discreet blanket over the incident, refusing to reveal the name of the man who revealed more than a flair for Highland dancing.

But a Scottish Command spokesman said: "Of course, they don't normally wear shorts under their kilt. Only for dancing, you know".

Why was the red-faced performer missing last night?

"Nothing to do with this", said the spokesman. "They usually have reliefs".

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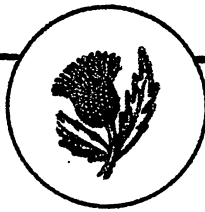
A Hielan' piper entertaining some friends complained that his pipes were not going well, and intimated that a little whisky would help put them in condition. A glass of the "rectifier" was brought, but disappeared down the piper's throat.

"Deil tak' ye, Donal!", someone remonstrated. "The whusky was for the pipes, and no for drinkin!".

"Och, yes, yes", quoth Donald. "But you must understand she is fery particular pipes, and likes to haf it plawn in".

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THE RED HACKLE: ITS ORIGIN: (Clipping from a Scottish newspaper)

"The Black Watch has long been regarded as one of this country's finest fighting regiments, and for the past few days a recruiting caravan for the Highland Brigade has been on show at the Bridge Street entrance to Pittencrieff Park. In a booklet about the Regiment is the story of how the famous Red Hackle came into being.

The Black Watch is the only regiment in the Army which does not wear a cap badge. Instead they wear the Red Hackle. About 1789, when they were serving in America, the Highlanders started wearing a plume of red vulture's feathers. This became the proudest of the Regiment's distinctions and was later officially recognised by the War Office, who ordered that it should be worn only by the Black Watch.

With the Indians of North America hunting for eagles' feathers for their bonnets, and kilted Scotsmen on the look-out for red vultures, the life of a bird of prey in America then must have been one of the hunted rather than the hunter.

MYSTERY BOOK:

While browsing through a Vancouver used book store recently, one of our members ran across a small book entitled: "Songs from Robert Burns". The two front pages of this little book contained the following autographs:

Piper Neil Innes, Melbourne, Australia
Piper Ron Ross, Adelaide, South Australia
Piper Robert W. Main, Freemantle, Western Australia
Noel W. Coady, Australia
Jean Darwin, Melbourne
W. Darwin, Melbourne, Australia
Piper M. B. Napier, Perth, Western Australia
Pipe Major Hugh Fraser, Australia
Piper Lindsay R. Hood, Bod Lagoon, South Australia
David W. Reden, Adelaide, South Australia
Piper Malcolm McInnes, Perth, Western Australia
Drum Major W. Darwin
L. Staton, West Australia
Jack Boland, Australia

The book also contained the inscription: "Glasgow, 13/8/51".

It would appear that an Australian pipe band visited Scotland in 1951, and while there autographed the book for someone.

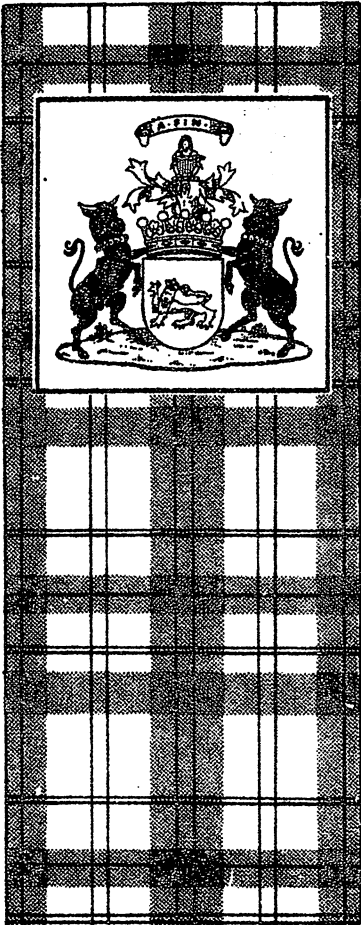
* Can any of our readers solve the mystery and answer the following questions: Which band signed this book, and what were they doing in Scotland? Whose book was this? How did the book get to Vancouver?

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NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS: CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

We are in the process of preparing a new set of address labels. We would ask each of you to examine the address on the envelope of this Newsletter. If this address is inaccurate in any way, please send us the correct address immediately.

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