

B. C. PIPERS' NEWSLETTER



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

JANUARY, 1962.

No. 22.

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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ANNUAL GATHERING - MARCH 24th.

We are pleased to announce that the judge at this year's Annual Gathering will be John Wilson, of Toronto, Ontario. Mr. Wilson is a champion piper, a prominent judge and composer, and an outstanding authority on the instrument. We are very pleased that he will be with us, and are confident that the high standard of judging at our Annual Gatherings will be even higher with the assistance of John Wilson.

We were recently looking through some old programmes of the Annual Gatherings. A list of judges employed over the past ten years looks like a Who's Who in the piping world. You might enjoy recalling our visitors in recent years.

- 1952 - William Ross, M.B.E., Edinburgh Castle,
John Burgess, Edinburgh
- 1953 - Seumas MacNeill, College of Piping, Glasgow
John MacLellan, 1st Bn. (Imperial) Seaforth Highlanders
- 1954 - Donald MacLean of Lewis
- 1955 - Donald MacLeod, Fort George
- 1956 - Donald MacLeod, Fort George
- 1957 - Robert Brown, Balmoral
- 1958 - Angus MacDonald, Calgary Highlanders
- 1959 - Donald S. Ramsay, San Francisco, Calif.
- 1960 - Neil Sutherland, Winnipeg, Man.
- 1961 - George Duncan, Detroit, Mich.

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UNITED SCOTTISH SOCIETIES - SCOTTISH FLIGHT:

The United Scottish Societies Auditorium Ltd., are again sponsoring a plane flight to Scotland. The dates are July 22nd, 1962 to September 3rd, 1962, - six weeks and one day.

The fare is \$390.00 return, payable in two instalments, January 1962 and May 1962.

Prospective passengers must be members of one of the shareholding societies in the United Scottish Societies Auditorium Ltd., and must have been a member of their organization for six months prior to the flight. Credentials attesting to their paid up membership will be required.

Any further information can be obtained from Mr. N. Finlayson, Trinity 6-5879.

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BI-MONTHLY COMPETITION - DECEMBER 8th.

In the Bi-Monthly Competition, held on Friday, December 8th, in the Gymnasium of the Seaforth Armoury, a record forty competitors were entered. The Judge, George Allan, had a difficult time selecting the various winners.

It was gratifying to see the large entry in the Novice and Juvenile classes, and it is hoped that the increase in the small Amateur class will continue at each Bi-Monthly competition of the season.

The winners of the evening were as follows:

Novice 6/8 Marches:

1. Gary McBride
2. Laurie McIlvena
3. Kelly Hagan
4. John Mager
5. Bill McMichael

Juvenile Marches:

1. John MacLeod
2. Glen Snow
3. Raymond Irvine
4. David Irvine

Junior Old Highland Airs:

1. Bruce Topp

Amateur Strath speys and Reels:

1. Bill Elder
2. Peggy Gillies

Senior Amateur Piobaireachd:

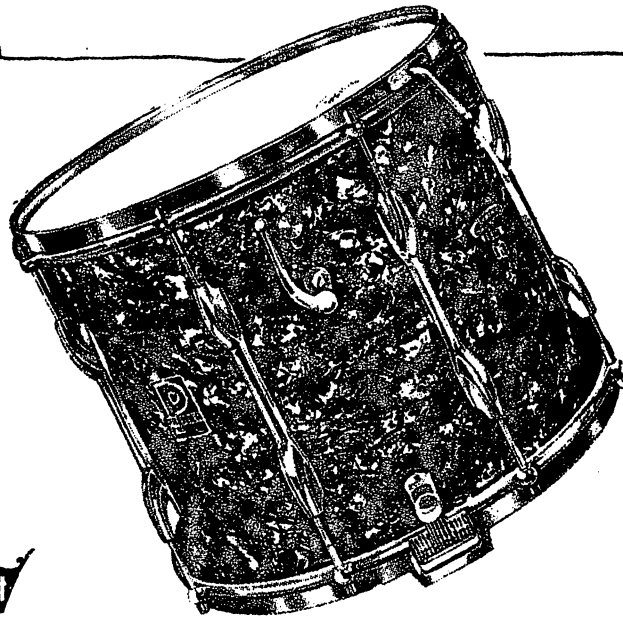
1. Harry Mumford.

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GENERAL MEETING - DECEMBER 15th.

Those at the General Meeting held on December 15th enjoyed a pleasant session of tapes. The selections were from three tapes kindly sent by Donald Sutherland, of Glide, Oregon, and from the Association's collection, gathered over the years. Among others were heard numbers by Donald MacLeod, Seumas MacNeill, John MacLellan, the late Gordon Sinclair, Neil Sutherland, Robert Brown and John Burgess. If there is sufficient interest, another session of tapes will be held later in the spring.

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PIPES AND DRUMS IN ORKNEY:

When I was in Kirkwall, in the Orkney Islands, in the far north of Scotland, last summer, I was asked by the solicitor for my uncle's estate to inspect a collection of very old books dealing with Orkney and Scotland, a library which had belonged to my grandfather, and to suggest what should be done with them. I sent the books on Scotland to the Edinburgh Library, and the books on Orkney to the Kirkwall Library, except two, which had to do with life in Kirkwall between 1600 and 1800. These I kept for myself on the biblical basis of not muzzling the ox that treadeth out the corn. In fact, these two books are full of "corn" in our slang sense of the word, and, as there are some curious references to the pipers and drummers of that little city, it might be of interest to winnow a few kernels about them from the records of these olden days.

Orkney was a Norse earldom for centuries, and its language, laws, money and songs were of Norse origin. It was only when Mary, Queen of Scots, gave the earldom of Orkney to her natural half-brother Patrick Stewart, that Scottish money, speech, laws, music and mode of life were forced on the islanders. Forced is the word for it, for Earl Patrick, or Black Pate, built himself a castle and a manor house in Orkney by forced labour and changed the land laws, the money and the weights and measures. His exactions were so cruel, even for those times, that he was eventually tried, convicted and beheaded in Edinburgh.

In these circumstances, it is obvious that the introduction of the bagpipe and its tunes to Orkney to take the place of the harp and the saga, was not accompanied by the love and respect accorded to them on the nearby mainland of Scotland. It also seems clear that Orcadian bagpipes and drums existed for utilitarian purposes only, and any piper who leant a fond ear upon the drones and tuned up, did so not for his own pleasure, but only as thw town piper.

There are three references in these records to the Kirkwall pipers:

"William Henderson, one of the town's pipers, was interred at Kirkwall on April 12th, 1725. The cost of the funeral was $\text{£}6-15\text{s}$ and was made up as follows: For five deals (boards) for a Kist (coffin) at 8s each - $\text{£}2$; nails - 5s, glue - 4s, and lamb's black - 6s; two pounds of candles - 10s; money to buy ale - $\text{£}1, 10\text{s}$; four ells of linen for a sheet - $\text{£}2$."

"William Corner, who died on 8th December, 1726, was what might be called a gentleman piper. When he was appointed in 1721, he got power from the magistrates to prevent other musicians

playing, unless with his permission. His funeral was conducted on a more expensive scale than Henderson's. In addition to the items charged in the latter's funeral, the Magistrates gave £3 for a second "mortcloth" (coffin cover), £ for a great bell, (tolling the cathedral great bell), 13s 4d for two hand bells, (just that) and for making the grave 10s. The whole expenditure on this funeral amounted to £9 16s 10d Scots"

A Scots shilling was an English penny, so, in sterling it cost a little over 16 shillings, (say \$2.25) to lay piper Corner away.

Coming nearer to our own times, and leaving the dead past to bury its dead, we find another entry:

"On 22nd September, 1802, Peter Wick, the town's piper, petitioned the Town Council for an annual salary. The Petitioner said he had "served" in the capacity of town piper faithfully and honestly for these many years without any salary for his trouble, excepting the charity of well-disposed and merry light-heeled gentry".

He asked for an annual salary and in return pledged himself to parade the street morning and evening. As there was no "finding" (decision) inscribed on the back of the Petition as was usually done, when the prayer was granted, it must be concluded that Piper Wick's musical abilities were not very much appreciated by the Town Council.

As the years passed, it seems that relations between the Provost and his Town Council and their piper became worse and worse, for the other town officers (staff employees) of the Burgh petitioned the Town Council along these lines:

"One Sunday, Jammie Wallace, the town piper, got drunk and in the Magistrates' loft (enclosure) at St. Magnus Cathedral, insulted one of the other town officers, during divine worship, declaring that he, Jammie, was going to claim all fees for announcements in the town. The officer threatened to report Jammie to the Magistrates. Jammie treated this threat with scorn"

The ensuing petition runs, in part:

"i, John Munro, in time of Public Worship in the Church was Most Grosely insulted by James Wallace, He being Very Much Intoxacated with liquor Discharged Us from the loft (chased us out of the pew) ---- he being resolved to have all Emoulaments or None, and when i told him that i would Report his Conduct to the Magistrates, He told me that he did not care a ----- of his ----- for them, as he had More friends in Kirkwall than We Was Aware of."

As there was no "finding" inscribed on this petition also, and as Jammie was town piper for many years after that incident, we must infer that he "got away with it", and we are left to wonder just what Jammie said.

So much for old-time Kirkwall pipers, but, keeping in mind the idea that Orkney pipers were for blow, not show, I recall seeing in a very old record, which gave the population and general vital statistics of the Orkneys some time in the late 1600's, the item that on the island of South Ronaldshay, (home of my father's family), there were "twa fiddlers; and ane puper for the keeping doune of the rattes". As the island is 8 miles long and 5 miles wide, one piper to 40 square miles must have been strong medicine.

There were also town drummers in Kirkwall, but their duties, while interesting, were rather different in the musical world of those days from those of the pipers. Manners and morals of the day, particularly morals, were a bit frayed at the edges, and, after the Reformation, the Magistrates combined with the Presbyterian Church to punish those who erred.

In August, 1720, a soldier, as soldiers will, took his girl friend up "to have dinner with him". Somebody "clyped" (informed) on them and they were "indicted". The Magistrates found the lassie guilty of "Maist scandalous behaviour" and ordered her to be taken from the prison next day about one o'clock, and taken to the bottom of the town by the hangman, and there by him to have her head uncovered, and to go so uncovered through the town at the hangman's side, the drums beating, and two "officers" (city employees) attending, and to be put out of the head of the town by the hand of the common hangman, never to return. The Court did not deal with the soldier. Sometimes the unlucky wench, in addition to this publicity by drum, had the particulars of her affair inscribed on a placard and this was pinned across her bosom.

No wonder then, that Orkneymen, and even their overseas descendants jump when they hear a drum beat. One summer night when I was in Kirkwall, I too heard the drums beating and the pipes sounding. At that time, I hadn't even seen these old records, but there must be something in heredity for I was up and on the qui vive. What was coming down the main street of Kirkwall in the Orkneys was the British Legion Pipe Band, and there followed decorated floats with the various "Beauty Queens" of the district in their finer, but the placards just said where they came from.

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

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MEMBERSHIP DUES:

We would like to remind you that the 1962 membership fees are now due. These dues, which are \$2.00 per year, should be sent to the Treasurer, Wm. McAdie, 3288 East 27th Avenue, or should be paid to him at the next meeting. We would urge you to look after this matter as soon as possible.

We would also ask all members to make an effort to bring a new member into the B.C. Pipers' Association. Application forms are available from the Secretary, Roderick MacVicar, 2078 York Street, (RE 3-9053). All persons interested in piping are welcome.

All members are sent the Newsletter without further charge.

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LETTER FROM VICTORIA:

"A Guid New Year tae yin an' A"

In the December edition of the Newsletter, you ask if any reader can solve the mystery, and answer the questions regarding an Australian Pipe Band being in Scotland during 1951. Well, I can't solve the mystery, but I can answer some of the questions.

In 1951 a group of pipers and drummers with a few others from Australia, arrived in Britain to tour the concert halls, and presumably some of the Highland Games. They were purely a commercial or money making outfit, out to exploit pipes and drums, and the regalia that goes with it for their own benefit.

Calling themselves Australian Highland Pipe Band they proceeded with great pomp and ballyhoo to relieve the Scots of their heavy bawbees, their education was brief, as they soon learned the wisdom of "Ye canna draw bleed oot o a' stane".

Their tour could not be considered a representative or goodwill tour. As they were not representatives of any Pipe Band or Pipe Band Association in Australia, therefore the Scottish Pipe Band Association did not recognise them. They were not allowed to take part in any of the competitions held under the jurisdiction of the Scottish Pipe Band Association, nor were they allowed to take part in the World's Pipe Band Championship contest. They were certainly no credit to the Australian Pipe Bands.

If my memory serves me correctly their reception was so lacking in Pound Shillings and Pence that they cut their tour short, and hightailed across the "waater" to continental Europe to the great relief of all "hielantmen".

"May your bottle never go teem".

- Peter George -
President
Vancouver Island Pipers' Society

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"LEWIS ISN'T BIG ENOUGH FOR IAIN!" (This article was taken from the Nov. 2nd issue of the Weekly Scotsman. Only time will determine whether the prediction concerning Iain Morrison's great career is a correct one.)

"Lewis is a big island. It contains over 20,000 people, but it is too small for 16-year old Iain Morrison of Back.

He is a piper, an exceptionally good one. And that's the trouble. There is no one left in the island who can give Iain any more help in furthering his piping career.

Recently, Iain won the junior championship in the piping competitions at Inverness. Yet it was only three years ago that he began his training with Pipe Major Donald MacLeod of the Lewis Pipe Band.

On the death of the Pipe Major, Iain's tuition was taken over by Pipe Major Kenneth MacLeod of Fort George.

It is obvious that young Iain has a big career in the piping world. So it has been decided that next year he will seek a job in Inverness where he will be able to receive advanced tuition from Pipe Major MacLeod who trains the Highland Brigade pipers and is one of the greatest pipers in history."

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BI-MONTHLY COMPETITION - February 9th.

The first Bi-Monthly Competition of 1962 will be held on February 9th, in the Lecture Room, at the Seaforth Armoury. The competitions will begin at 8:00 sharp.

The following events will be held:

Novice Old Highland Airs
Juvenile Strathspeys and Reels
Junior Piobaireachd
Amateur Jigs
Senior Amateur Marches

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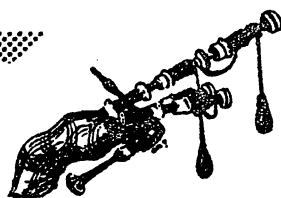
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SCOTLAND

JAMES YOUNG, PERTH.

You will recall that in the October issue of the Newsletter, we reprinted an advertisement from the Weekly Scotsman, seeking a red-haired and bearded Scottish piper to publicize the Imperial "400" Motel Chain.

We recently had an unexpected visit by the person who was engaged to fill this position, James Young, of Perth. Mr. Young, who will spend one year travelling around the United States in publicity work for the motel chain, delighted the local piping community by spending the last week of 1961 in Vancouver and Victoria.

James Young, born in Carstairs, learned piping from his father, John Young, and his uncle, Pipe Major William Young (35 years with the Cameron Highlanders). He served with the Royal Scots from 1947 to 1949, and was a member of the Edinburgh Police Pipe Band from 1955 to 1957. James first entered into active competition only five years ago, but in this short time he has enjoyed considerable success. In the 1961 games season he won no fewer than 22 first prizes in the professional classes. He has won numerous trophies, including the coveted Dunvegan Gold Medal for Piobaireachd at Skye, best all-round piper at Comrie, and best all-round piper at South Uist.

At a hastily organized but remarkably well attended Ceilidh held in the Seaforth band room on December 29th, many had the opportunity to hear and meet James Young. His performance was extremely enjoyable, and those present were greatly impressed by James' skill and artistry. He played a wide selection of all forms of the music, all equally well. For those who were unable to attend, tapes were made, which will be played at a subsequent meeting.

On December 28th, James visited Vancouver Island, and met the Victoria piping crowd at a party held at the home of John Low. He was very much impressed by the friendly reception in Victoria, and was especially grateful to Jock for his kind hospitality.

It is hoped that James Young will be able to visit us again before he departs for the eastern states. He has promised to do all he can to attend the Annual Gathering on March 24th.

We are confident that James Young will be a good apostle of piping during his year in the United States. As well as publicizing his employers' products, he will give countless people for the first time the opportunity to hear piping as played by a first rate performer.

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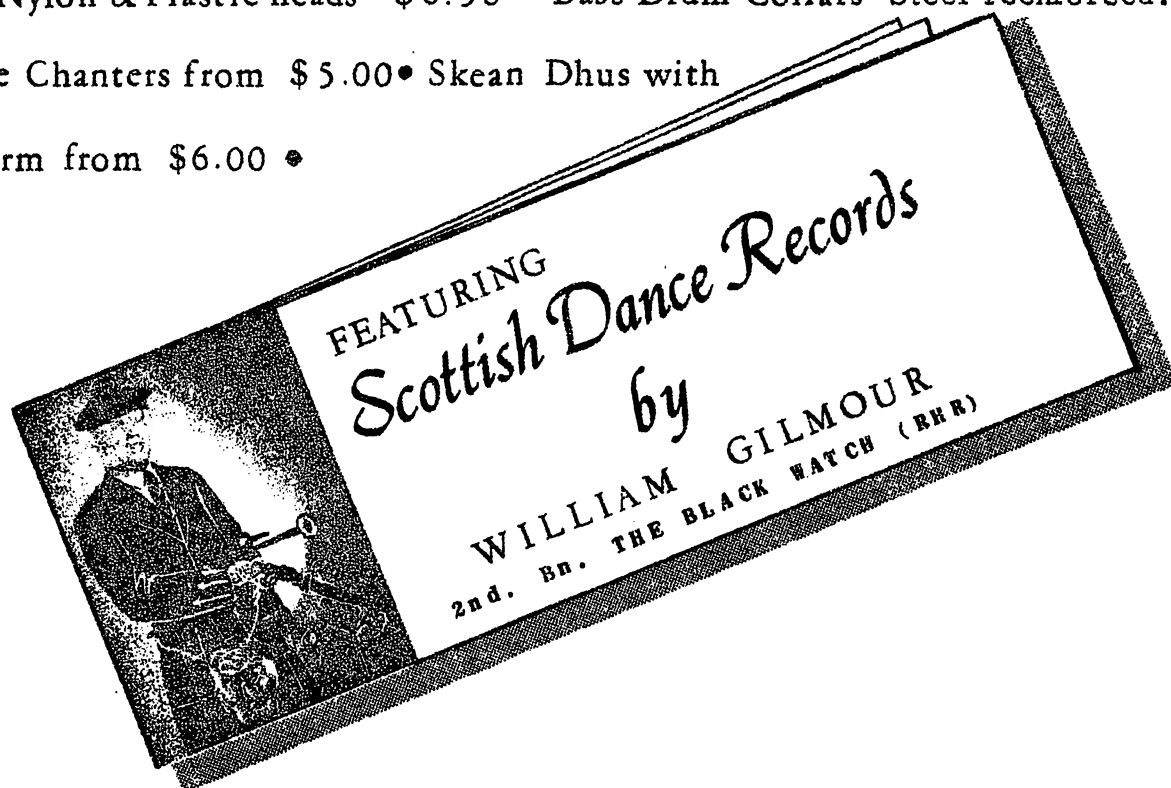
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COMPOSITION CONTEST:

Time is growing short, and we would ask all of you who intend to participate in the Composition Contest to get your tunes ready without further delay. It is hoped that some good tunes will be received in this contest.

All readers will have the opportunity to see and learn the winning tunes, which will appear in the Newsletter. Prizes will be announced at the Indoor Gathering on March 24th.

The competition will consist of three classes:

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

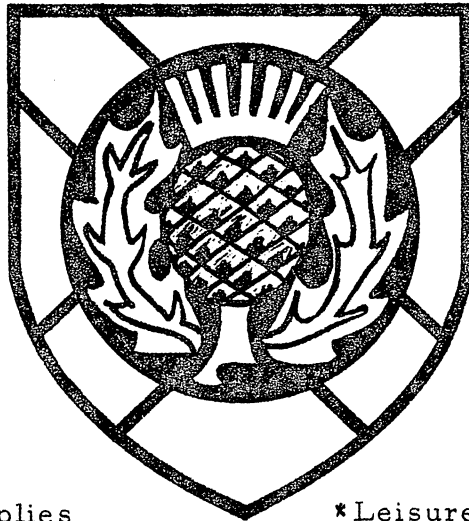
The prizes will be \$10.00 for the winning tune in each class, and an additional \$10.00 for the top tune in the contest.

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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ANNUAL MEMBERS' BANQUET, January 6th.

The Annual Members' Banquet was held on January 6th at the Stanley Park Sports Pavilion. Although the night was extremely wet (which appears to be an annual occurrence) a near capacity crowd of over ninety persons attended, and apparently thoroughly enjoyed the evening. Albert Duncan piped into the banquet room the head table guests, who included Lt. Col. D. Fairweather and Mrs. Fairweather, Pipe Major John Robertson, D.C.M., Mr. Charles MacKenzie, Mr. and Mrs. Roderick MacVicar, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Donaldson, and Pipe Major Edmund Esson, M.B.E.

At the conclusion of the dinner and after introducing the head table guests, the President, Ian Walker, welcomed as Honourary Vice President of the B.C. Pipers' Association Lt. Col. Fairweather, who was attending with the Association for the first time since assuming command of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada.

A Life Membership was presented to Charles MacKenzie, as a recognition of his many years of faithful and loyal service to the Association. A summary of the President's remarks dealing with this presentation are as follows:

"Charles MacKenzie was born in Ross-shire, Scotland, and came out to Canada in 1907. He first settled in Calgary, Alberta, and played for several years with the Calgary Pipe Band. During World War I, he went overseas with the 25th Regiment from Halifax, Nova Scotia. Charles came to Vancouver in 1922 and a few years later became Pipe Major of the MacLellan Pipe Band. During the Second World War he served as a piper with the 2nd Battalion Seaforths, under Pipe Major McHardy.

Charles MacKenzie has always been actively interested in piping, and has been a member of this Association since 1933, a year after its formation. He has served as a member of the Board of Directors for many years, and presently is Vice President of the Association. From 1947 to 1949 Charles served as President. It was during his term of office as President, that his executive pioneered the first White Heather Concert, by bringing out from Scotland Robert Wilson and his concert party, which appeared at the Exhibition Garden in April, 1949. For many years Charles has had an unexcelled record for attendance at meetings, and is a familiar figure at the door of our numerous functions. His cheerful disposition has endeared him to all of the members and friends of the Association, and his frequent Gaelic comments are always connected with great merriment.

Charles' second love is yachting, and he is a Life Member of the Kitsilano Yacht Club and the Star Association, another yachting club.

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It is with a great deal of pleasure that this Life Membership is presented to Charles MacKenzie."

Following the formal portion of the banquet, the tables were cleared away, and a very enjoyable concert of piping was given by James MacMillan, Albert Duncan, Ronald Forman, Rae Marie MacInnes, Alastair Gordon, Alex Young and Seb Nellies.

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VANCOUVER LADIES PIPE BAND BURNS DINNER - JANUARY 20th.

The Vancouver Ladies Pipe Band is holding their Annual Burns' Supper Concert and Dance at the Moose Hall, 1129 Howe Street, on Saturday, January 20th, at 6:30 p.m. The Toast to the Immortal Memory will be given by Dr. W.G. Black.

The band, which was formed in 1927 by Mrs. Allan MacNab (Miss Mary Isdale) and the late Pipe Major James Begg, will be wearing their new distinctive uniforms of the MacNab tartan, honoring their president, Mrs. MacNab, who has held that office for 35 years.

The members will assist with the entertainment and serve at the table. Gilbert Liddell and his orchestra will be in attendance.

Tickets can be obtained by phoning Mrs. D.J. Gillies, CY 8-8589.

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I was thinking about a time in France, in 1917, when an Italian came to the Seaforth's, and his heart must have been in the Pipe Band.

As he returned with a squad from firing practice an officer was asking the different men as to the scores they had made.

One said he made a "bull" and two "magpies".

Another said he made an "inside" and two "magpies".

On being asked what score he made, the Italian replied: "I maka-a da two "bulls", and da two "bagpipes"."

- Roderick MacLeod -

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GENERAL MEETING: JANUARY 26th.

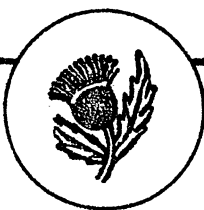
A General Meeting will be held on Friday, January 26th, in the Band Room of the Seaforth Armoury.

The main business will deal with the forthcoming Annual Gathering on March 24th. Put on your thinking-caps, and come out to the meeting with some useful ideas.

Following the business meeting will be the usual session of piping.

Support the B.C. Pipers' Association with your attendance.

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GENERAL MEETING - JANUARY 26th

BI-MONTHLY COMPETITION - FEBRUARY 9th

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