

B. C. PIPERS' NEWSLETTER



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

JANUARY, 1964.

No. 46.

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.

Officers of the B.C. Pipers' Association.

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ODDS & ENDS:

25th ANNIVERSARY FOR MR. & MRS. MICHAEL MacINNES:

A surprize party was held on January 4th, marking the occasion of the 25th Wedding Anniversary of Michael and Mary MacInnes, well known in the local piping community. Organized by their children, Duncan, Donald, Rae Marie, Theresa, and Heather (all pipers), about sixty friends and relatives gathered to honour the couple.

Gifts were given to Mr. and Mrs. MacInnes, including two tables and a lovely chair. It is interesting to note that the attendants at their wedding, the bride's sister, and the groom's brother, were also at the party.

The guests provided lots of entertainment, and the party continued to the early hours.

Congratulations Michael and Mary!

DONALD URQUHART RECOVERS FROM ILLNESS:

One of the stalwarts of the B.C. Pipers' Newsletter, a Trustee of the Association, and a former Secretary, Donald Urquhart is presently recovering, after undergoing an operation on January 2nd. He will be returning to work shortly, and says he is feeling much better.

It is interesting to note that Donald has never previously missed a day from work on account of illness, and has the vitality and strength of a man in his twenties. Perhaps his diet of Chinese food can be given the credit for his health.

Best wishes for recovery, Donald!

- 0 -

Cathrine Paterson sends the following lines, composed by her:

It takes a special kind of folk
With a special kind of love
For a special kind of music -
To keep the sun from setting
On the "hum-m" of the Highland drone.

- 0 -

ANNUAL MEMBERS' BANQUET: JANUARY 4th, 1964.

In spite of the fact that there was a lot of activity amongst pipers on Saturday January 4th, a successful Annual Members' Banquet was held on Saturday, January 4th, in the Stanley Park Sports Pavilion.

After the dinner a presentation was made to our President and his wife, Ian and Margaret McDougall, in honour of their marriage on July 26th, 1963. The present, a silver water jug, was given to Mr. and Mrs. McDougall by Ian Walker, on behalf of the association.

Following the dinner an enjoyable evening of piping kept the pipers busy, and the audience entertained and amused. Out of town guests included Bill and Isla Paterson and a contingent from Bellingham, Eric Thompson, and Mrs. Thompson from Hopkins Landing, and our Honorary Vice President P.M. John Robertson.

- 0 -

BI-MONTHLY COMPETITION: FEBRUARY 28th.

The Bi-Monthly competitions, scheduled for February 14th, will be held instead on February 28th, in the Gymnasium of the Seaforth Armoury. This re-scheduling was necessary due to the planned trip to Quebec of the Optimist Junior Pipe Band. We apologize for any inconvenience caused by the change.

The following events will be held:

Novice Old Highland Airs
Juvenile Strathspey & Reel
Junior Piobaireachd
Amateur Jigs
Senior Amateur Marches

In order to complete the heavy schedule of events, the competitions will commence at 7:00 p.m. sharp, with the Novice Old Highland Airs. Since there are so many competitors, we would ask all to be prompt, in order that we might complete the evening within a reasonable time.

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GENERAL MEETING: JANUARY 31st.

The General Meeting for January will be held on Friday, January 31st, in the band room of the Seaforth Armoury.

We would ask all members to be present, since it will be necessary to commence preparations for the Annual Gathering. The meeting will commence at 8:00 p.m.

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OPTIMIST JUNIOR PIPE BAND VISITS QUEBEC:

A few words may be of interest to you concerning the coming visit of the Optimist Junior Pipe Band to the Province of Quebec.

The story dates back to the Grey Cup parade, when some officials from the City of Quebec spotted our band on television, and felt that it would be an ideal attraction at their Winter Carnival, in February. They did not know the name of the band, but wrote to the City Hall, and we were eventually contacted, and engaged, after several long distance calls.

Departure date has been set for Sunday, February 2nd, via Canadian National Railways.

The band will be playing in Montreal and Ottawa on the return trip, as well as in Quebec. There is a strong possibility that we will be playing at the Toronto-Montreal hockey game, on Wednesday, February 12th. This game will be on the national television hook-up.

I might mention that the band also will be playing at the Edmonton and Winnipeg stations, during train stops, and since I have so many friends in both of these cities, I look forward to seeing them and renewing old acquaintances. On our return, it will be my pleasure to report to you the highlights of the trip.

- Albert Duncan -
Director
Optimist Junior Pipe Band

(Don't forget, Albert, B & B stands for "Bi-Culturalism" and "Bi-Lingualism", and not "Brandy" and "Benedictine")

- 0 -

We are grateful to the publishers of The Pipe Band (The Scottish Pipe Band Association) for their kind and unsolicited words of support concerning the Newsletter. From time to time extracts from the Newsletter appear in the "Pipe Band", and we are pleased to see that the source is always acknowledged.

Since a great deal of our material is borrowed from other publications, we certainly cannot complain about other magazines using our material, but would ask them to give the source. One publication in this continent has unfortunately lifted entire articles, without the slightest mention of where the article originated. This action we deplore.

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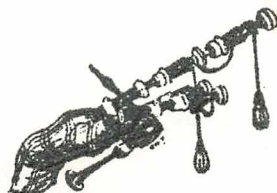
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SCOTLAND

THE STORY BEHIND BAGPIPE TUNES:

We are reprinting herewith a number of short articles recently appearing in the Sunday Post, Glasgow. The purpose of these articles is self-explanatory.

THE MACRAES MARCH:

This is the oldest knowpipe tune. About 1477, MacDonald, Lord of the Isles, raided the country of the MacKenzies with a large army. The MacKenzies asked the MacRaes to help them recover the booty and the MacDonalds were heavily defeated.

One of the MacRaes was an orphan called Duncan, who was contemptuously ignored as a bit of a "softie".

Duncan slew one of the MacDonald chieftains, and then calmly sat down as if nothing else was required of him. When asked what was wrong, Duncan replied, "If paid like a man I will fight like a man!"

MacKenzie agreed and Duncan got up to deal out fearful destruction to the raiding MacDonalds with his axe.

The pibroch was composed in his honour, and has always been the March of the clan.

I HAVE HAD A KISS OF THE KING'S HAND:

"I have had a Kiss of the King's Hand" was composed about 1660 by Patrick Mor MacCrimmon, the piper to Roderick MacLeod of MacLeod.

Pipers in olden times always had a "guid conceit o' themsleves" - and Patrick was no exception. He accompanied his master to London after the Restoration to pay homage to Charles II and received a very warm welcome.

The king and his court were very pleased with Patrick's fine appearance and the piper was asked to entertain them with some pipe music.

King Charles was delighted with Patrick's performance and allowed the piper to kiss his hand. Patrick was so elated over this that he composed the tune to commemorate the honour that had been paid to him.

"I have had a kiss, a kiss, a kiss,
I have had a kiss of the King's hand.
No one who blew in a sheep's skin
Has received such an honour as I have."

MACCRIMMON'S LAMENT:

"MacCrimmon's Lament" is one of the best known of all our pipe tunes. It was composed in 1746 by Donald Ban MacCrimmon, the piper to MacLeod of Dunvegan.

Donald was the finest piper of his day, and when the clan left Dunvegan Castle in Skye to join Prince Charlie's army, he had a premonition that he would never see the old castle again.

He composed his lament and played it as the clansmen said farewell to their wives and children and marched away from the castle. The clan later took part in a skirmish, in which Donald was shot close by the side of his chief.

His lament was to be played often in later years. It was the favourite air of Hgihlanders compelled to emigrate, as they embarked for America and Canada.

THE CAMERON'S GATHERING

In the 17th century a dispute arose between Cameron of Lochiel and the Earl of Atholl over grazing rights. The two chiefs agreed to meet and try to settle the dispute in a friendly way.

Lochiel and his piper were setting out to meet Atholl when they were warned of a trap. Cameron took 65 armed men with him, ordering them to hide in a hollow near the meeting place.

When the chiefs met, the Earl of Atholl, instead of trying to discuss the dispute amicably, started to threaten Cameron, and at a signal 50 Atholl men sprang from hiding nearby.

"Who are these, my Lord?" demanded Lochiel. "These are my Atholl hogs, come to grow fat on the rightful grazings!" replied the Earl. Meantime, Lochiel's own men had rushed into view.

"And who are these, Lochiel?" asked the startled Earl. "These are my Lochaber hounds, keen to taste the flesh of your Atholl hogs!" replied Cameron.

The Earl was forced to concede the grazing rights, and the scene inspired Lochiel's piper to compose "The Camerons" Gathering."

continued next month

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VICTORIA HIGHLAND GAMES ASSOCIATION 11th ANNUAL INDOOR MEET: FEB. 29th, 1964.

The Victoria Highland Games Association will hold their 11th Annual Meet on Saturday, February 29th, at the Club Sirocco, 1037 View Street, Victoria.

There will be a large slate of Highland Dancing events commencing at 9:30 a.m., and during the evening a Quadrille Competition will be held. Further details concerning the dancing events can be obtained from the Secretary.

The following piping events will be held:

Novice Marches
Girls Amateur Marches
Juvenile Marches
Juvenile Strathspeys & Reels
Junior Marches
Junior Strathspeys & Reels

These events will commence at 11:00 a.m. There will be aggregate awards for the Juvenile and Junior events.

During the evening, a dance will be held.

Entries must be in the hands of the Games Secretary, Ken Jackson, 632 Head Street, Victoria, B.C., not later than February 22nd, 1964.

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LETTER FROM ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS:

Enclosed is my remittance for next year's subscription to the B.C. Pipers' Newsletter.

I would also like to announce the formation of a new pipe band; "The Cameronian Pipe Band" of Rockford, Illinois. We have just cleared our first hurdle, that of chartering the band.

Our next hurdle will be the acquisition of uniforms. Our tartan will be the Cameron of Erracht, which also is the tartan of our Pipe Major, Donald Cameron of Motherwell. All but one of our pipers are former pupils of Donald. We all own our pipes, since we are an independent organization.

Our biggest asset is our love for the pipes and the music. Should any pipers or drummers move to the Rockford area, they would be most welcome in our organization.

- Bert F. Carlson -
Business Manager
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FROM PIPE MAJOR JOHN ROBERTSON'S SCRAPBOOK:

THE LOST PIBROCH by NEIL MUNRO (from "Piping and Dancing, September, 1940)

Then a quietness came on Half Town, for the piping stopped, and the people at their doors heard but their blood thumping and the night hags in the dark of the fir wood.

"A little longer and maybe there will be more," they said to each other, and they waited; but no more music came from the drones, so they went in to bed.

There was quiet over Half Town, for the three pipers talked about the Lost Tune. "A man my father knew," said Gilian, "heard a bit of it once in Moideart. A terrible fine tune he said it was, but sore on the mind."

"It would be the tripling," said Macnaghton, stroking a reed with a fond hand.

"Maybe. Tripling is ill enough, but what is tripling? There is more in piping than brisk fingers. Am I not right, Paruig?"

"Right, oh! right. The Lost Piobaireachd asks for skilly tripling, but Macruimen himself could not get at the core of it for all his art."

"You have heard it them! cried Gilian. The blind man stood up and filled out his breast.

"Heard it! he said; "I heard it, and I play it - on the feadan, but not on the full set. To play the tune I mention on the full set is what I have not done since I came to Half Town."

"I have ten round pieces in my sporran, and a bonnet brooch it would take much to part me from; but they're there for the man who'll play me the Lost Piobaireachd," said Gilian, with the words tripping each other to the tip of his tongue.

"And here's a Macnaghton's fortune on the top of the round pieces," cried Rory, emptying his purse on the table.

The old man's face got hot and angry. "I am not," he said, "a tinker's minstrel, to give my tuning for bawbees and a quaich of ale. The king himself could not buy the tune I ken if he had but a whim for it. But when pipers ask it they can have it, and it's yours without a fee. Still if you think to learn the tune by my piping once, poor's the delusion. It is not a port to be picked up like a cockle on the sand, for it takes the schooling of years and blindness forbye."

"Blindness?"

"Blindness indeed. The thought of it is only for the dark eye."

"If we could hear it on the full set!"

"Come out, then, on the grass, and you'll hear it, if Half Town should sleep no sleep this night."

They went out of the bothy to the wet short grass. Ragged mists shook o'er Cowal, and on Ben Ime sat a horned moon like a galley of Lorn.

"I heard this tune from the Moideart man - the last in Albainn who knew it then, and he's in the clods," said the blind fellow.

He had the mouthpiece at his lip, and his hand was coaxing the bag when a bairn's cry came from a house in the Half Town - a suckling's whimper, that, heard in the night, sets a man's mind busy on the sorrows that folks are born to. The drones clattered together on the piper's elbow and he stayed.

"I have a notion," he said to the two men. "I did not tell you that the Lost Piobaireachd in the piobaireachd of good byes. It is the tune of broken clans, that sets the men on the foray and makes cold hearth stones. It was played in Glenshira when Gilleasbuig Gruamach could stretch stout swordsmen from Boshang to Ben Bhuidhè, and where are the folks of Glenshira this day? I saw a cheery night in Carnus that's over Lochow, and song and story busy about the fire, and the Moideart man played it for a wager. In the morning the weans were without fathers, and Carnus men were scattered about the wide world."

"It must be the magic tune, sure enough," said Gilian.

"Magic indeed, laochain! It is the tune that puts men on the open road, that makes restless lads and seeking women. Here's a Half Town of dreamers and men fattening for want of men's work. They forget the world is wide and round about their fir trees, and I can make them crave for something they cannot name."

"Good or bad, out with it," said Rory, "if you know it at all."

"Maybe no', maybe no'. I am old and done. Perhaps I have lost the right skill of the tune, for it's long since I put it on the great pipe. There's in me the strong notion to try it whatever may come of it, and here's for it."

He put his pipe up again, filled the bag at a breath, brought the booming to the drones, and then the chanter reed cried sharp and high.

"He's on it," said Rory in Gilian's ear.

The groundwork of the tune was a drumming on the deep notes where the sorrows lie - "Come, come, come, my children, raid on the brae and the wind blowing."

"It is a salute," said Rory.

"It's the strange tune anyway," said Gilian; "listen to the time of yon!"

The tune searched through Half Town and into the gloomy pine wood; it put an end to the whoop of the night hag and rang to Ben Bhreac. Boatmen deep and far on the loch could hear it, and Half Town folks sat up to listen.

Its story was the story that's ill to tell - something of the heart's longing and the curious chances of life. It bound up all the tales of all the clans, and made one tale of the Gaels' past. Dirk nor sword against the tartan, but the tartan against all else, and the Gaels' target fending the hill land and the juicy straths from the pock pitted little black men. The winters and the summers, passing fast and furious, day and night roaring in the ears, and then again the clans at variance, and warders on every pass and on every parish.

Then the tune changed.

"Folks," said the reeds, coaxing. "Wide's the world and merry the road. Here's but the old story and the women we kissed before. Come, come to the flat lands rich and full, where the wonderful new things happen and the women's lips are still to try!"

"Tomorrow," said Gilian in his friend's ear "Tomorrow I will go jaunting to the North. It has been in my mind since Beltane."

"One might be doing worse," said Rory, "and I have the notion to try a trip with my cousin to the foreign wars." The blind piper put up his shoulder higher and rolled the air into the crunluadh breabach that comes prancing with variations. Pride stiffened him from heel to hip, and hip to head, and set his sinews like steel.

He was telling of the gold to get for the searching and the bucks that may be had for the hunting. "What," said the reeds, "are your poor crops, slashed by the constant rain and rotting, all for a scart in the bottom of a pot? What are your stots and heifers - black, dun, and yellow - to milch cows and horses? Here's but the same for ever - toil and sleep, sleep and toil even on, no feud nor foray nor castles to harry - only the starved field and the sleeping moss. Let us to a brisker place! Over yonder are the long straths and the deep rivers and townships strewn thick as your corn rigs; over yonder's the place of the packmen's tales and the packmen's wares: steep we the withies and go!"

The two men stood with heads full of bravery and dreaming - men in a carouse. "This," said they, "is the notion we had, but had no words for. It's a poor trade piping and eating and making amusement when one might be wandering up and down the world. We must be packing the haversacks."

Then the crunluadh mach came fast and furious on the chanter, and Half Town shook with it. It buzzed in the ear like the flowers in the Honey Croft, and made commotion among the birds rocking on their eggs in the wood.

"So! so!" barked the iolair on Craig-an-eas, "I have heard it before it was an ill thing to be satisfied; in the morning I'll try the kids on Maam-side, for the hares are wersh and tough." "Hearken, dear," said the londubh. "I know now why my beak is gold; it is because I once ate richer berries than the whortle, and in season I'll look for them on the braes of Glenfinne." "Honk-unk," said the fox, the cunning red fellow, "am not I the fool to be staying on this little brae when I know so many roads elsewhere?"

And the people sitting up in their beds in Half Town moaned for something new. "Paruig Dall is putting the strange tune on her there," said they. "What the meaning of it is we must ask in the morning, but ochanoch! it leaves one hungry at the heart." And theyn gusty winds came snell from the north, and where the dark crept first, the day made his first showing, so that Ben Ime rose black against a grey sky.

"That's the Lost Piobaireachd," said Paruig Dall when the bag sunk on his arm.

And the two men looked at him in a daze.

Sometimes in the spring of the year the winds from Lorn have it their own way with the Highlands. They will come tearing furious over the hundred hills, spurred the faster by the prongs of Cruahan and Dunchuach, and the large woods of home toss before them like corn before the hook. Up come the poor roots and over on their broken arms go the tall trees and in the morning the deer will trot through new lanes cut in the forest.

A wind of that sort came on the full of the day when the two pipers were leaving Half Town.

"Stay till the storm is over," said the kind folks; and "Your bed and board are here for the pipers forty days," said Paruig Dall. But "No" said the two; "we have business that your piobaireachd put us in mind of."

"I'm hoping that I did not play yon with too much skill," said the old man.

"Skill or no skill," said Gilian, "the like of yon I never heard. You played a port that makes poor enough all ports ever one listened to, and piping's no more for us wanderers."

"Blessings with thee!" said the folks all, and the two men went down into the black wood among the cracking trees. Six lads looked after them, and one said, "It is an ill day for a body to take the world for his pillow, but what say you to following the pipers?"

"It might," said one, "be the beginning of fortune. I am weary enough of this poor place, with nothing about it but wood and water and tufty grass. If we went now, there might be gold and girls at the other end."

They took crooks and bonnets and went after the two pipers. And when they were gone half a day, six women said to their men, "Where can the lads be?"

"We do not know that," said the men, with hot faces, "but we might be looking," They kissed their children and went, with cromags in their hands, and the road they took was the road the King of Errin rides, and that is the road to the end of days.

A weary season fell on Half Town, and the very bairns dwined at the breast for a change of fortune. The women lost their strength, and said, "Today my back is weak, tomorrow I will put things to right," and they looked slack mouthed and heedless eyed at the sun wheeling round the trees. Every week a man or two would go to seek something - a lost heifer or a wounded roe that was never brought back - and a new trade came to the place, the selling of herds. Far away in the low country where the winds are warm and the poorest have money, black cattle were wanted, so the men of Half Town made up long droves and took them round Glen Beag and the Rest.

Whenever they went they stayed, or the clans on the roadside put them to steel, for Half Town saw them no more. And a day came when all that was left in that fine place were but women and children and a blind piper.

"Am I the only man there?" asked Paruig Dall when it came to the bit, and they told him he was.

"Then here's another for fortune!" said he, and he went down through the woods with his pipes in his oxters.

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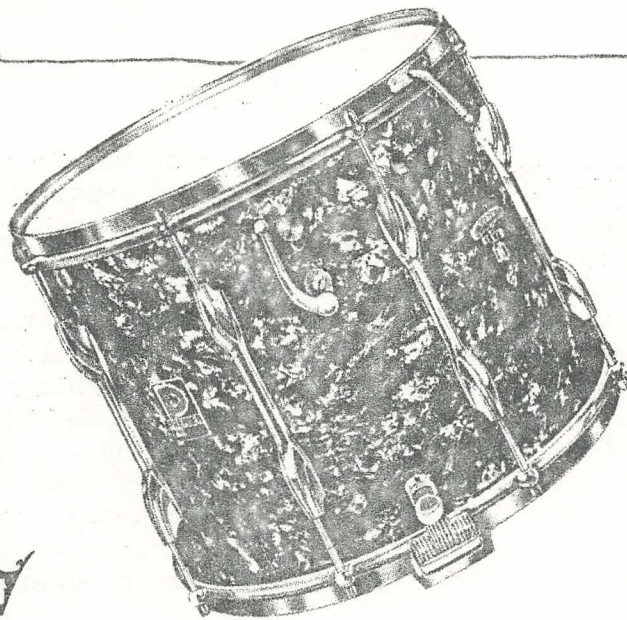
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AMERICAN WINS PIPING TEST: (from Oban Times, Nov. 28th, 1963)

An expatriate American, taught the finer arts of Piping by a Scotsman in New Britain, Connecticut, playing the piobaireachd "Kinlochmoidart's Lament," won the Arthur Wright cup at the last members' competition of the Piping Society of London.

And the winner was John Toye, who came over from the U.S.A. four years ago after receiving his initial tuition in the States from a native of Haddington, East Lothian, who was Pipe Major of a pipe band in the State.

John, according to critical observers, enhanced his playing in this country by his association with noted pipers in London, as well as from a course of instruction at the Glasgow College of Piping.

The cup incidentally, was presented in 1962 by Mr. Arthur Wright, an enthusiastic piper and committee member, who also learned his piping abroad in Dunedin, New Zealand.

Second and third places were taken by Iain MacLeod and George Robertson who rendered "Lament for Mary MacLeod" and "Desperate Battle," respectively.

In the march competition for the Robert Fisher Cup, first prize went to Donald Ross, R.A.M.C. Harrow, playing "Ardrishaig," while "Donald MacLean's Farewell to Oban" won second place for Sergeant Donald Murray, Harrow Castle. George Kennedy, pride of Murray Pipe Band, was third.

John Toye spoiled his rendering of "Renfrewshire Militia," by two errors.

The judges were Pipe Major William MacLeod, late Seaforth Highlanders, and Mr. Charles MacCall, Batley, who is a pupil of Pipe Major Robert Reid, a London business man who has been a member of the Piping Society since its inception, and a committee member for fifteen years. Mr. David Ross organized both competitions.

The last recital on November 15th was given by Pipe Major Alex MacDonald, The Royal Household, who gave an excellent rendering of "His Father's Lament for Donald MacKenzie."

Tomorrow Pipe Major MacLeod will play "MacCrimmon's Sweetheart". He is a noted piping authority with a distinguished army career, and is descended from a family of Skye pipers who were pupils of the MacCrimmons.

BIRTH OF THE BAGPIPES

(undated clipping from "Weekly Scotsman")

The mystery surrounding the origin of the bagpipes seems resolved. The latest account of Jason's long gold seeking voyage across the Black Sea, says: "The islanders of Ay-mari were a kindly simple lot, and woke us next morning by playing music on a sort of harp and on a strange hoarse flute, the wind for which was provided by a goatskin bag held under the arm and squeezed.

"It made a weird music, half between a groan and a snarl - but there was something appealing about it, especially after it had been going on for an hour or so.

It seemed to come inside the head and stay, as though it had always been there.

Orpheus was delighted with these bagpipes and bought one of them instead of swords and lances. It was he who introduced them into Hellas, and from there they spread farther and farther west.

But I want to put it on record that we found them, and no one else. They came from Ay-mari, and their pipe master was Machaon, whose name was pronounced in their curious dialect, something like "Mac Hard".

Dare one say that's where the Gaelic sprung from as well?

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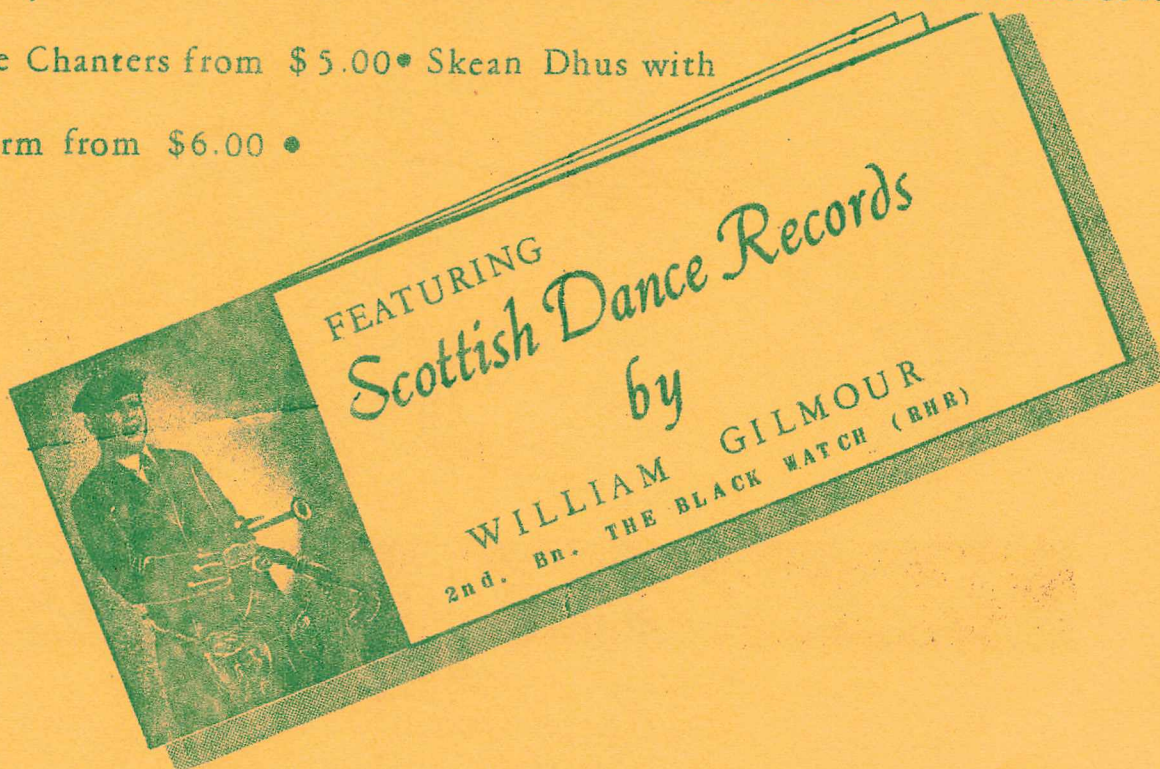
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VANCOUVER LADIES' PIPE BAND ANNUAL FESTIVAL: FEBRUARY 21st & 22nd:

The Vancouver Ladies' Pipe Band Annual Festival of piping and dancing and drumming will be held this year on February 21st & 22nd, at the Cambrian Hall, 215 East 17th Avenue (17th and Main). As well as a wide variety of piping events, there will be held this year two individual drumming events: - one for Class "C" and Novice, and one for Class "B" drummers. There will also be Pipe Band Quartette competition.

The piping and drumming sessions will commence on Saturday, February 22nd, at 1:30 p.m.

The following classes are planned:

Amateur Under 12 Marches
Amateur Under 12 Strathspeys & Reels
Novice Marches
Under 14, Non-Prize winners Strathspeys & Reels

Recess for supper
Re-commence at 6:00 p.m.

Individual Drumming, C Class & Novice
Individual Drumming, B Class
Amateur Under 16 Marches
Amateur Under 16 Strathspeys & Reels
Amateur Ladies Slow Airs (Open only to V.L.P.B. Members)
Amateur Over 16 Marches
Amateur Over 16 Strathspeys & Reels
Drum Corps
Pipe Band Quartette.

Entries may be obtained from the Secretary, Dorothy MacArthur, 725 Browning Place, North Vancouver - WA 9-3094. Entries must be in the hands of the Secretary not later than February 9, 1964. Entry fees are 50 cents per event or 3 for \$1.25. Drum Corps entry fee is \$1.50.

The Vancouver Ladies' are to be congratulated for their record Burns Supper, held on Saturday, January 18th, at the Stry Hall. The 13th Annual Burns Dinner was attended by over 300 guests, indeed the largest of its kind in Vancouver.

The Toast to the Queen was given by the President of the Vancouver Ladies, Mrs. A.C. McNab. The address to the "Immortal Memory" was presented by Mr. Erskine Blackburn, and an interesting programme of Scottish songs, dances, and accordion music was enjoyed by the large audience.

The girls, who are chartering a flight to enter the contests in August, put on a display of highland dancing and band music, received with great enthusiasm by the audience.

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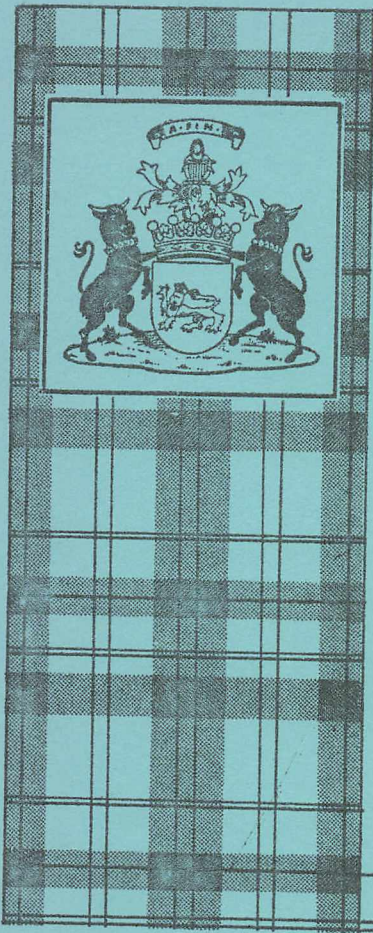
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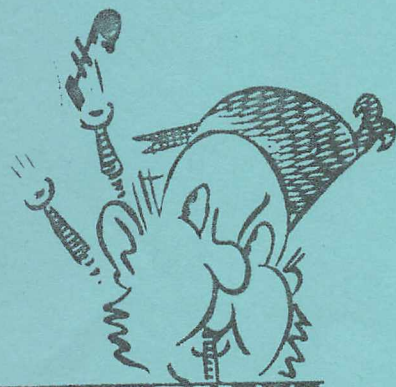
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GENERAL MEETING JANUARY 31st

BI-MONTHLY COMPETITION - FEBRUARY 26th.

