

B. C. PIPERS' NEWSLETTER



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

JULY - AUGUST NO. 115
1971

B. C. PIPERS' NEWSLETTER

Published by the British Columbia Pipers' Association.

PRESIDENT	William Elder
VICE PRESIDENT	Bruce Topp
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B. C. Pipers' Newsletter

EDITORS:	Robert Gunn
	William Elder

The B. C. Pipers' Newsletter is published monthly at 1073 Doran Road, North Vancouver, B. C. by the British Columbia Pipers' Association and distributed to all members. Address all communications concerning the Newsletter to the above address. All other communications to the Secretary, B. C. Pipers' Association, 834 Burnaby Street, New Westminster, B. C.

<u>JULY - AUGUST</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>No. 115</u>
Archie Cairns' Opinion.....	Page 1
Pipes for Sale.....	Page 4
Results of B. C. Highland Dancing Association Games.....	Page 5
Honorary Vice-President in Hospital.....	Page 6
John MacFadyen's Recital.....	Page 7
Important Bi-Monthly Notice.....	Page 7
Burns' Anniversary 1844.....	Page 8
Knock-out Competition.....	Page 9
Burnaby Ladies Pipe Band.....	Page 10
Piping Judges Course.....	Page 11
Judge's Report on Annual Gathering.....	Page 12

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYSICS 309

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ARCHIE CAIRNS' OPINION

This is the second installment of comments and recommendations P.M. Archie Cairns made to the Piping Society of Ontario. Many of his points are applicable to our B.C. competitions and Mr. Cairns has given us permission to print his opinions.

1. Massed Bands at Games: A tremendous amount of time is lost (wasted really) by having two massed Band performances. Aside from anything else, it is not very good showmanship. Surely a great number of people come to see nothing else but the spectacle of the massed Bands? And what do we do? We give it away half-way through the day! So, what else is there for these people to "stay around" for? Did you ever notice how much the crowd has thinned by the time the last massed Band appearance is over and, what should be the highlight of the day - announcement of results - is not! At Cowal, the performance of the massed Bands at the end of the day is the Grande Finale! Did you ever go to a variety show or concert where the entire cast came out and performed the Finale BEFORE the show began??? We do! Not only is this a bind for the competing Bands (we are worrying about how many Bands to "let off" the 1st massed Bands) but when those people who have seen our Finale around 1 p.m. decide to leave not long thereafter, there must be a decided loss of revenue for the concessions and those Highland outfitters who have rented space at the field. So, for the above reasons, my suggestion is that the opening ceremonies at each Games be handled by any "Guest" or "Non-competing" Bands and leave the competing Bands to get on with the business of preparation!! In fact, I know of a great number of Games where the opening ceremony is heralded by ONE PIPER playing the VIPs and Games Executive onto the platform and off again!! The PA announcer could then keep a build-up running all day by reminding people Not to leave before they have seen that wondrous spectacle of the Massed Bands in the Grand Finale!! It would also mean that, if this scheme held more people until the results, the successful competitors/Bands who have toiled all day entertaining through competing (as well as the unsuccessful) could realize their "moment of victory" and that their efforts were appreciated by the ovation from the CROWD!

2. Solo Competitions - Music: I strongly recommend that ALL solo competitors be required to submit a copy of the music they are about to play. This could be handed to the Judge when reporting to compete, and returned to him by the Judge upon completion. My reasons for this are: (a) Piobaireachd competitors are required to do this (settings are to be from Piobaireachd Society Collection.... ..if alternate setting is to be played, the MSS must be provided to the Judge), and look at the length of the tunes they have to play!! The reason for this is that no one could be expected to know EVERY setting of EVERY tune from memory!!

(b) With the number of new tunes that have come on the scene in the past 25 years or so, I feel that the same can be said of the Judge of Ceol Beag contests - that is that it is impossible for him to have committed to memory EVERY pipe tune of a competitive standard and, in this day where it is quite acceptable to play any one of a multitude of settings for the same tune, he can NOT be expected to know all these settings. Therefore, he is handicapped if the tune or setting is unfamiliar. Not only does it make his adjudication difficult, but he leaves himself wide open to any amount of criticism if the tune or setting is unfamiliar to him but well-known by some of the spectators. For, the performer could well commit a

serious blunder in the melodic line of the tune (i.e. omit a 2nd time or some such thing) and the judge could be totally unaware. If the performance was otherwise very good, you can imagine the outcry if he awarded this Piper a prize!!

(c) With the Piobaireachd competitor required to play specific settings for which the Judge has the music, or produce the music for the Judge to follow, and quite rightly so, this competitor has in fact made a contract to play what he says he is going to play according to the music. Why then should the Ceol Beag competitor not have to make the same contract? If he were required to produce the music, not only would this commit him to the printed score, but it would commit the Judge to merely evaluating whether or not the performer fulfilled his contract and did indeed play what he said he was going to. In addition, performers would not be subjected (to the same degree) to trying to play tunes that will "please the Judge" and finding themselves out of the prize list because he did not like the tune or setting which was played. For, with this system of producing the music, Judges could be instructed that it does not matter what their personal likes or dislikes are and that, as much as possible, their decision is to be based upon the performer's fulfillment of his "contract".

(d) In this day of Multi-lift, Xerox, etc. there should be very little problem for the competitor to obtain a copy of the music he is going to play. (In days gone by, this would have been a hardship for it would have to be all handwritten.) He would only need one copy of each tune and protect it in a clear plastic envelope.

3. Judging - Adjudicating: With the great controversy that has gone on over the years via letters to the Editors, after-the-games-get-togethers, etc. on the subject of what a Judge should or should not do, or be required to do reference comments on Score Sheets, I would like the Society to make a clarification on the terminology. At Music Festivals throughout the land, an Adjudicator is hired to give a critique on each performer. Now, is this what the Society wants or is it someone to be a Judge and give his opinion of who played best on a given day with a view to deciding who played 1st best, 2nd best, 3rd and 4th best....PERIOD? If a man is hired as an Adjudicator, then pay him more money and require him to give a written critique on his opinions and reasons for arriving at a result. If he is hired as a Judge, then do NOT require him to substantiate his result or reasoning, in writing or any other way. Especially if he held a Certificate from the Society! All that need be required of a competent/qualified/certified Judge is to say that "In my opinion, these are the people who played best to-day". For the advocates of an adjudication, encourage them to hold a Recital of their pupils (and other pupils) and hire someone like John Wilson to give an Adjudication. In any event, I feel that a great deal could be settled by the Society clarifying their terminology and related responsibilities.

4. Judge's/Competitor's Guide: You have often heard people say, "Oh his playing was O.K. but he didn't have very good tone". Ask someone sometime to define for you what he means by "good tone" and listen to the variety of answers you will get!! (hence the need for Society-run Schools) Now, this can not be resolved in the blinking of an eye, but there is something the Society can do to assist the competitor AND the Judge. That is to produce a Guide to Competing

and Judging in Ontario. This Guide should be in perhaps two general sections or chapters:

1. Routine:
 - (a) What is expected of a competitor - right from taking out his solo membership, submitting entries, order of play, reporting in at Games routine for approaching Judge and competing, tuning time, don't tune up near a contest in progress, where and when point sheets available, method of results and prize-giving, etc. etc.
 - (b) What is expected of a Judge - stationery that will be available to him, method of score sheets, method of stewards, reporting in, what if anything he would be required to bring, what is expected of him, etc. etc.
2. Consequence of Error - or Demerit System: Every solo competitor will be
 - A. disqualified for ANY ONE of the following:
 - (a) Failing to appear as per the Order of Play
 - (b) Starting into a tune, stopping and re-starting - once you start the tune, the contest has begun and any stoppage will constitute a breakdown
 - (c) Failing to repeat a part as dictated by the music
 - (d) Playing parts in the wrong or a mixed-up order
 - (e) Omitting any of the melodic line of the written score; (This is referring to omission of music, not grace-notes or "chokes")
 - (f) Getting "lost" in the tune and going completely off the melody
 - (g) Breaking down anywhere in the tune before it is completed
 - (h) Bass Drone stopping - the reason for this is that the Bagpipe produces 11 DIFFERENT notes (Bass, Tenor, plus 9 from the Chanter) and, if the Bass Drone stops, you have reduced the number of notes to 10, thus having an incomplete instrument. If one Tenor Drone only stops, the overall tone will be affected but you will still have the complete 11 notes and so this should not result in disqualification
 - (i) Both Tenor Drones stopping - for the reasons listed in (h)

NOTE - The above could be relaxed somewhat for the Novice Class so that the penalty for some of the list could be point demerit.

- B. The following is a list of errors, in the order of seriousness as determined by the Society, for which points will be deducted:
 - (a) Untuned or poorly tuned instruments (for surely not even a concert pianist could produce good music on an untuned piano?)
 - (b) Poor, little or no tone
 - (c) One Tenor Drone Stopping
 - (d) Poor control of the "Steadiness" of the instrument (resulting in undulating pitch of the reeds, squeals, chokes which mean that portions of the tune are missing as they are not heard)
 - (e) Unmusical performance - with regard to the interpretation allowing the tune to "flow" and not be too slow and jerky,

or stilted or too fast and just a jumble, or over/under pointed

- (f) Finger Technique - with regard to false fingering, sounding "catch/crossing" notes, indistinct melody notes from lazy or inaccurate fingering, omission of Grace-notes, poor technical ability in producing the correct sound of the musical ornaments (i.e. Doublings, Taorluaths, etc. not fingered correctly or are not clean, clear, crisp in sound)

My reasons for listing the order of seriousness as outlined in B are that, in my opinion, five things are required in order to produce the best possible music on the Great Highland Bagpipe, and, in order of priority, they are:

1. Tone and Tonal Balance
2. Tuning
3. Control of the Instrument
4. Musical Interpretation
5. Finger Technique (or Execution)

Each one is a contributing factor to the presentation of a "good tune". And for those who would advocate the Execution should be of prime importance, let me ask a few questions. What good is it if you can make the fastest and best Birls, Taorluaths, Leumliaths, Doublings, etc. in the world if you can NOT bring the MUSIC out of a tune because your interpretation is poor? Who hasn't heard the expression "he's a mechanical player" or his interpretation is "wooden"?? And what good is having excellent finger technique and musical interpretation if you can not control the instrument you are playing with the result that all of your fabulous execution and interpretation are over-shadowed by the horrible sound emitting from your instrument, or are lost in a myriad of chokes?? And what good are 5, 4, and 3 without a tuned instrument? And what good is fine tuning if it will not enhance and increase the tone of the instrument?? One more question for the "Execution advocates" - Angus MacPherson of Invershin is over 90 years of age and his ability as an exponent is unquestioned. If he were to play a tune for you on his pipes today, there would be an obvious lacking in his finger technique. But would you have me believe that there would be no MUSIC in what he played?

At any rate, however it was put together, I feel that a publication of this sort would be an invaluable assist to competing. It could also be expanded to include Bands, Quartettes, Mini-Maxi Bands, Drummers, etc.

PIPES FOR SALE

One set of <u>HARDIE PIPES</u> -	Bagpipes with case
- 2½ years old	- PHONE 922 - 7332
- imitation ivory	
- case included	
- \$75.00	
- PHONE 988 - 2400	

RESULTS OF B. C. HIGHLAND DANCING ASSOCIATION GAMES

The B. C. Highland Dancing Association held their annual games on July 3rd, 1971 at Brockton Oval and the results were as follows:

Novice Marches Under 14 Years

1st - Gordon Lyle
2nd - Rob MacNeil
3rd - Jill Laurie
4th - Bob Cross
5th - Blake Keen

Novice Marches 14 Years & Over

1st - Heather Graham
2nd - Graham Davidson
3rd - Jean Laurie
4th - Wade Calder
5th - Shelley MacLean
Laurie Robson) tied

Juvenile Marches

1st - Stewart Reid
2nd - Gordon Munroe
3rd - Brian Carse
4th - Allison Palmer
5th - Patricia Dawson
6th - Duncan Fraser

Juvenile Strathspey & Reel

1st - Douglas Somerville
2nd - Robert Heggie
3rd - Elouise Roane
4th - Patricia Dawson

Juvenile Old Highland Airs

1st - Patricia Dawson
2nd - Stewart Reid
3rd - Linda Flynn
4th - Aileen Arnott
5th - Gordon Munroe
6th - Duncan Fraser

Juvenile Aggregate

- Stewart Reid

Junior Marches

1st - John MacKay
2nd - Robyn Palmer
3rd - David Rutherford
4th - Ian Keith

Junior Strathspey & Reel

1st - Cindy Chambers
2nd - Darrell Peterson
3rd - Barry Baylis

Junior Hornpipe

1st - Cindy Chambers
2nd - Allan MacDougall
3rd - John MacKay

Junior Aggregate

- Cindy Chambers

Amateur Marches

1st - Jack Lee
2nd - Rene Cusson
3rd - Janice Taylor
4th - Angus MacPherson
5th - Heather MacInnes

Amateur Strathspey & Reel

1st - Terry Lee
2nd - Jack Lee
3rd - Heather MacInnes
4th - Robert Menzies

Amateur Piobaireachd

1st - Byron Barnard
2nd - Robert Menzies
3rd - Heather Upton

Amateur Aggregate

- Jack Lee

Professional Marches

- 1st - John A. MacLeod
- 2nd - James Troy
- 3rd - Harold Senyk

Professional Piobaireachd

- 1st - John A. MacLeod
- 2nd - Harold Senyk
- 3rd - James Troy

Professional Aggregate: James Troy

Novice Drumming

- 1st - Dale Purdy
- 2nd - Lorna MacDougall
- 3rd - Thomasine Rowell
- 4th - Gary Miller
- 5th - Alan Tait

Senior Amateur Drumming

- 1st - Katie Forsyth
- 2nd - Susan Burgess
- 3rd - Jack Gallaher
- 4th - David Dickins
- 5th - Sue Manifold

Drum Corps

- 1st - Vancouver Ladies A
- 2nd - Seaforth Cadets
- 3rd - Burnaby Ladies A

"B" Class Pipe Bands

- 1st - Anavets
- 2nd - Vancouver Ladies

Professional Strathspey & Reel

- 1st - Therese McErlean
- 2nd - James Troy
- 3rd - John A. MacLeod

Professional Jigs

- 1st - James Troy
- 2nd - Harold Senyk
- 3rd - David Wilson

Amateur Drumming

- 1st - Ian Hunter
- 2nd - Sheila Roane
- 3rd - Shannon McGranaghan
- 4th - Bruce Roane
- 5th - Jamie Mack

Professional Drumming

- 1st - Richard Rich
- 2nd - Keith Manifold) tied
- Willie McErlean)

"C" Class Pipe Bands

- 1st - Vancouver Kiwanis
- 2nd - Burnaby Ladies # 1

"A" Class Pipe Bands

- 1st - Seaforth Highlanders
- 2nd - City of Port Moody

HONORARY VICE-PRESIDENT IN HOSPITAL

Pipe Major John Robertson, our honorary Vice-President for many years, is in the Veteran's Hospital on Cook Street in Victoria. Mr. Robertson will be 91 years old on August 23rd and has been one of our most consistant attendants of the Annual Gathering and Annual Dinner even though he must make the trip to Vancouver from Shawnigan Lake, Vancouver Island.

Many of our members know the old gentleman with the two canes and he would be very pleased if anyone would pay him a visit while in Victoria.

JOHN MACFADYEN'S RECITAL

With not much more than a week's notice the Association informed its members that John MacFadyen would be in Vancouver to give a recital. On such short notice and since we are in the middle of vacation season we had a most encouraging turn-out on Tuesday July 27th to hear this excellent musician.

Without a doubt John MacFadyen gave the membership the best night of piping Vancouver has heard in the last five years. Mr. MacFadyen played for forty minutes during the first half of the evening before taking a well deserved half hour rest and then returned to play for another hour. One well known piper commented that John MacFadyen played more tunes in one evening than he had ever learned during his 50 years of piping.

The heat was almost unbearable at times during the evening but this didn't seem to bother this gold medal and clasp winner. His pipes, in fact, with minor touching up, stayed in tune beautifully throughout his entire performance.

Just over 100 people attended this tremendous evening of piping and it will be a long time before they stop praising the ability of John MacFadyen. It was impossible to sit through his many strathspey and reels without tapping your foot and the flawless playing of the "Massacre of Glencoe", his second piobaireachd of the evening, was the highlight for many.

An interesting section of his performance, about 5 minutes, was devoted to the old standard, simple tunes such as "Highland Laddie" and the "79th Farewell to Gibraltar". As well as giving a nice contrast to his more complicated competition tunes, which he played all evening, it was a perfect example of how these tunes should be played. Even the smallest of tunes captured the audience's attention when played on John MacFadyen's pipe.

IMPORTANT BI-MONTHLY NOTICE

During the last few years there have been suggestions that pipers submit the music they intend to play to the judge just prior to competing. The idea of this was to inform the judge of the particular setting the piper intends to play and in some cases introduce the judge to a tune he may not be familiar with at all.

Many judges have their own piobaireachd books with them when judging but it would be impossible for them to have a copy of all the "little" music.

As an experimental measure the B. C. Pipers' Association is instituting a rule for the 1971-1972 Bi-Monthly competitions:
ALL COMPETITORS IN ALL CLASSES MUST SUBMIT A COPY OF THE SETTING OF THE TUNE HE INTENDS TO PLAY. The music must be presented to the judge just prior to competing. COMPETITORS NOT COMPLYING WITH THIS RULE WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO COMPETE

This rule is intended to aid the judge in determining the winner and should be to the advantage of the competitors.

BURNS' ANNIVERSARY 1844

It is interesting to note that Burns' Night was being celebrated as early as 1844 - only 48 years after the poet's death. This account was written by Mr. James Taylor (1814-1857), a handloom weaver in the Ayrshire village of Fenwick, Scotland.

January 25th: Burns' Anniversary. About forty-three individuals of both sexes again met in the house of Mr. Hugh Thomson, inn-keeper, for the purpose of commemorating the anniversary of the Scottish bard. Mr. Andrew Gemmill, Aikenhead, was in the chair, with John Kirkland as croupier.

After partaking of an excellent supper furnished in the landlord's best style, the chairman rose and gave "The Sovereignty of the People", which was received with great enthusiasm. He next gave the toast of the evening, "The Memory of Robert Burns", and in a beautiful address, delineated on the worth of his poetry, and the independence of his character as a man. The meeting was also addressed on other interesting topics by individuals present. Mr. James Taylor (writer of the "Annals") gave, "Success to Every Cause whose Aim is the Improvement of Mankind". Mr. John Gemmill, "The Memory of those Master Spirits in every Age, who by their writings have adorned our English Literature". Mr. John Fulton, Junior, Kirkton, "The Elevation of Genius and Moral Worth to its proper Station in Society". Mr. Peter Gemmill, "The Memory of Sir Walter Scott". Mr. William Fulton, Junior, Kirkton, "The Press, its Purity and Freedom". Mr. Alexander Murdoch, "Our Native Land". The chairman, "The Health of Alexander Roger". Mr. John Kirkland, "The early Song Writers of Scotland". Alexander Murdoch, "The Health of Thomas Campbell". Mr. John Kirkland, "The Ladies, more especially those present".

The whole of the speeches on these subjects were distinguished by vigour of thought and elegance of diction, exhibiting a complete acquaintance with British literature, and giving a clear proof of the rapid advances that the working classes are making in knowledge. In a short notice like this, no proper idea of the speeches can be given. Suffice it to say that the chairman was powerful and sarcastic, John Fulton argumentative and disquisitional, Peter Gemmill easy flowing, Alexander Murdoch flowery and eloquent, William Fulton solid without being tedious, and John Kirkland witty, brilliant and poetical.

A number of the Fenwick Glee Club were also in attendance, and sang of their most beautiful pieces, which showed their mastery of the science, and delighted the audience with their harmonious notes. The songs were appropriate to the occasion, and contributed greatly to the hilarity of the meeting. One of the songs was original, composed by Mr. Andrew Gemmill, and sung by William Fulton, Senior, which showed that the author had no mean power of versification, and that he had also been kneeling at the shrine of Apollo.

After enjoying both a mental and moral feast, the meeting separated, resolving that when the 25th again came round they would have another meeting, as it was a memento to them that immortality had been ushered into the world in the genius of Robert Burns, on that day. We cannot but think that meetings of this kind should occasionally take place, relieving as they do the dull monotony of life, softening its rough asperities, and what is of more consequence, prompting intelligence and virtue, raising the mind above the grovelling pleasure of earth, and fixing it on the grand, the beautiful and sublime. There were present at the meeting, thirty men and thirteen women.

Reprinted from: "Journal of Local Events,
Or, Annals of Fenwick."

KNOCK-OUT COMPETITION

We are no sooner entering the Summer Games schedule than it becomes necessary to begin plans for the upcoming Winter events. As most of our readers are aware, the professional knock-out competitions are a piping highlight in the Vancouver area.

→ The 1971 - 1972 knock-out season will begin in November and continue on into the spring of 1972.

A new feature will be added this year in that an Amateur Knock-Out will be held on the same evening just prior to the Professional event. We have had several requests for this event and the Association feels it is a worthwhile competition.

NOTE THE NEW TIME: 7:30 p.m. - FIRST FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH.

The rules for the Professional class will remain the same as last year:

1. Each competitor will be required to play the tune or tunes of his choice.
2. Each competitor's performance must not be less than 10 minutes and no more than 15 minutes.
3. Three judges are to hold up a card to show the winner's name after both competitors have played.
4. In the case of a tie a competitor should be prepared to give a five minute tie-breaking performance. These must be different tunes from those already played.
5. First prize - \$100.00, second prize - \$50.00.

The rules for the Amateur class will be the same except the time limit will be a maximum 5 minutes. There will be no minimum time period. The entry fee will be \$1.00.

All those interested in competing this year should send their

application with entry fee (Professionals \$3.00) to:

MRS. D. ROSS
834 Burnaby Street
New Westminster, B. C.

NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 1st, 1971.

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BURNABY LADIES PIPE BAND

The following letter was sent to the Burnaby Post Office and returned by them to Minnesota. Mr. and Mrs. Campbell in Minnesota re-addressed the letter to the Mayor of Burnaby who then sent it to Mrs. Malcolm Nicholson. We are sure this letter will be of interest to our readers.

P. O. Box 211
Hallock, Minnesota 56728
U. S. A.
June 21, 1971

Mr. Mayor
Burnaby, B. C.
Canada

Your Honour,

We are at a loss to know just why the Burnaby Girls Pipe Band is not known in Burnaby by the post office staff.

The Girls Pipe Band of Burnaby, British Columbia attending the Highland Games at Santa Rosa, California 1969 and many persons never having heard of Burnaby, B. C. became aware of its existence because of the pipe band and the dancers, who attended the Santa Rosa Games sponsored by the Caledonia Club of San Francisco.

We attended the games in our campaign to "Save the Argylls" a Highland Regiment, The Argyll and Sutherland Highland Regiment, which the Labour Government in England was trying to disband.

Your Girls Pipe Band and dancers of Highland Dances gave us much of their time and talent and assisted us in many other ways in acquainting those in attendance with the situation between the Labour Government and the Scots of Canada and U. S. A. Throughout our campaign some 250,000 pledges to boycott British-made goods, if the "Argylls" were disbanded, merged into other units, or lost their identity as a Regiment were acquired, in the form of air-mailed cards vowing the boycott, mailed directly to EX-Prime Minister Wilson.

General Sir Gordon MacMillan who fathered the campaign in Scotland to "Save the Argylls", the Honourable George Younger, who presented the petition carrying 1,286,000 signatures to Parliament, Lieutenant Colonel T. B. G. Slessor, executive officer of the Regiment have advised us the campaign was successful, and we in turn wish to pass their appreciation to all who lent their time and effort to the campaign and to all who pledged to back the boycott.

Your girls did this and words alone cannot express our gratitude to the Girls Pipe Band of Burnaby, British Columbia. Through your good office, we are hoping that we may reach out to let everyone know what we feel for these girls and all who backed our campaign.

We are enclosing herewith the letter which was returned to us in hopes that you may pass it along to the Band.

By publication of this letter through your news media, we may be able to extend our thanks to others who supported us.

We are also enclosing a similar letter that is addressed, in the envelope, to the Pipe Band. Hoping you may extend our message and give the Girls Pipe Band a boost as well.

We remain

Yours, truly,

John Campbell
Vicky Campbell
Campbell of Argyll

PIPING JUDGES' COURSE

Two years ago the Association sponsored a judges course instructed by P. M. Archie Cairns. In general, the Board of Directors was somewhat disappointed in the interest shown in this excellent course. There were no more than 10 regular attendants and only 5 individuals passed the final examination.

One of the reasons offered as an excuse for non attendance was the "poor" schedule of lectures. Mr. Cairns, and a good representation from Victoria, made the effort to travel to Vancouver every second Sunday for the all day session.

Since Sunday, or any other day, may be inconvenient for many of our interested pipers the suggestion has been made to offer a course, such as the one given by Archie Cairns, by correspondence. The course would be set up as a series of lectures or assignments and a final examination would be given at the end of the course.

This would be instituted only if there proved to be significant interest. If you would like to see a standard established for our piping judges and would like the opportunity to enroll in a piping judges' course send a letter to our Secretary -

Mrs. Ishabel Ross
834 Burnaby Street
New Westminster, B. C.

REMEMBER: SEATTLE HIGHLAND GAMES

AUGUST 7th, 1971

JUDGE'S REPORT ON ANNUAL GATHERING

3 Altair Avenue
Ottawa, Ont.
K1K 0M2
7th July, 1971

Mrs. I. Ross,
Secretary,
B. C. Pipers' Association
834 Burnaby Street
New Westminster, B. C.

Dear Mrs. Ross,

Please accept my sincere apologies for not writing before now but, as I wanted to send more than just a "note", I decided to wait until I could give it my undivided attention. As you are probably aware, I am conducting the Pipe Band School for Reserve Forces here at Rockcliffe for the whole of the month of July and the administration, planning and preparation has been most time consuming. However, we are now under way and so here is my belated report.

First, I wish to express my gratitude to the President and his Executive for asking me to come out to adjudicate and for the wonderful reception I had whilst I was there. Unfortunately, Service commitments forced an alteration to my original plan of arrival and the duration of my stay. Nevertheless, everyone was most kind and made me feel so very welcome, and it was wonderful to renew well remembered friendships.

I arrived back in "Beautiful British Columbia" on Tuesday where I was met by my old friends Donald and Ishabel Ross. On Wednesday I made a quick trip to Victoria where I was the guest of Pipe Major and Mrs. Frank Knight who also arranged a very pleasant get-together with some of my Victoria friends at the Bay Street Armouries. I returned to Vancouver on Thursday to prepare for my Recital, at which I was once again made to feel so welcome.

On Friday the Competition was to commence at 3:30 p.m. and we got under way with the Junior Piobaireachd. I will not attempt to comment on every competitor but I would like to generalize if I may. This first contest was very good, however, I was somewhat perplexed as I sat concentrating on the tune and not viewing the player. For, much to my surprise, the sound was getting fainter and less distinct! When I looked up to discover the reason, there disappearing down the gymnasium was the competitor! I found it quite amusing! I must say that in all of the 6 contests I judged on Friday, I heard some very good tunes and some excellent fingers. There were many performances that showed outstanding promise and, if this is any indication, the more senior

competitions will abound with first-class players. Finishing around 11:20 p.m. the day concluded with a pleasant rehash of the day's activities. I would like to state here that I think your idea of running the short leet, or play-off, is an excellent one and certainly contributed to the success of your Gathering.

On Saturday we were off to a good start and once again I heard some very good tunes. Some performances were marred by the sound, tone, and especially tuning of the instrument, but I think that in the Non-Professional Class the fine tone and tuning of Hazel Ramsay's pipes were a standout. In the Pipers over 60 years, I quite enjoyed the performance of Seb Nellies who gave a most musical rendition.

It is nice to note the increase in the number of professional competitors as compared with the entry in the last contest I judged in Vancouver in 1969. Certainly, the playing is of a very high standard and there were some excellent performances. In practically all of the solo competitions, the decisions were very close which, in my opinion, is a good sign.

In the Senior Quartettes, whilst there were many fine groups, the Vancouver Police, I felt, were a clear first.

In the Miniature Bands, the acoustics made evaluation much more difficult and in many cases it seemed the drums were overpowering. However, I thoroughly enjoyed this contest. In addition, I was greatly impressed with the drill of all the bands, which was exemplary. At about 11:45 p.m. my duties came to a close and although somewhat tired, I was quite content for I had had a feast of some excellent piping.

I cannot begin to mention all of the people with whom I exchanged pleasantries in those two days but I must mention at least Pipe Major Ed Esson, Jim MacMillan, John McHardy, Bill Lamont, Rod McVicar, Ruairidh Macdonald, your Executive, and I must make special mention of how delighted I was to see and speak with Pipe Major John Robertson, now over 90, who sat throughout the whole of Saturday.

In closing I wish to say again how much I enjoyed my visit and appreciated the wonderful hospitality.

My Wife and I send our kindest regards to all our West Coast friends.

Yours aye,

Archie
(Pipe Major A. M. Cairns)

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