

# B. C. PIPERS' NEWSLETTER



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

JULY, 1962.

No. 28.

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

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JULY, 1962.

CONTENTS

No. 28.

From Pipe Major John Robertson's Scrapbook .....	Page 3
The Ghost Piper .....	Page 6
Letter from Pipe Major Donald MacLeod .....	Page 6
B.C. Highland Dancing Association: 29th Competition .....	Page 9
Grimsby Highland Games .....	Page 10
The Piper's Confrontation .....	Page 11
Portland Highland Games .....	Page 14
Letter from Vancouver, Washington .....	Page 15
Crook of Devon Highland Games Results .....	Page 16
The Ranting Highlandman or the Muckle Spree .....	Page 18
Embro Highland Games .....	Page 18
A Proper Hullabaloo at the Highland Games .....	Page 19
Nanaimo Highland Games .....	Page 22

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FROM PIPE MAJOR JOHN ROBERTSON'S SCRAPBOOK:

PIPE MAJOR WILLIAM ROSS, M.B.E.

(undated clipping - 1933)

Not only his personal friends, but all interested in pipe music will be sorry to learn that Pipe Major William Ross, of the Royal School of Piping, Edinburgh Castle, has had to undergo an operation for appendicitis and is presently confined to a nursing home. While in charge of a class, held in Mull under the auspices of the Piobaireachd Society, he turned unwell, and had to be rushed home for treatment. Though happily making progress, it will be a keen disappointment to devotees of piping to learn that he will be unable this season to take part as competitor at the Highland Gatherings, nor at the unveiling of the Memorial erected in Skye to the memory of the MacCrimmons, whose music he has done so much to revive and perpetuate.

Pipe Major Ross's record as a piper and soldier does not date entirely from the time when, in his early 'teens, he joined the Scots Guards. He had inherited a passion for pipe music from both his parents, and indeed it was from his mother (who one is glad to learn is still in good health) that he received, as a child, his first lesson on the chanter. Early success encouraged further study under a professional player of high repute, with the result that when he entered the Guards, his qualities as a piper soon attracted attention. His service as a soldier being equally satisfactory, he gained quick promotion, step by step, to the rank of Pipe Major of his battalion. His first experience of active service was in the South African War, for which he holds the Queen Victoria and King Edward VII medals - the former having six clasps and the latter two. In 1912 he received from the hand of His Majesty the King the medal of the Victorian Order.

In the Great War he served from the very commencement until June 1918, when after twenty-three years service with his battalion he was invalided with acute rheumatism. In 1919 he was once more in uniform, having been appointed Pipe Major of the Lovat Scouts, a post which he only relinquished a few months ago, after being awarded the Territorial Long Service Medal. At the same time he was presented with a handsome gold watch as a token of the esteem in which he was held in that corps. Probably he is now one of the first to hold two medals for long service to his King and Country in both the regular and territorial armies.

On the institution, some years ago, of the Royal School of Piping, he was chosen for the important post of Instructor, and it is believed that all the present day Pipe Majors of regular Highland regiments have passed through his hands as pupils. In this connection it should be stated

to the credit of the Piobaireachd Society that they were largely responsible for the founding of that useful school, which has done much to improve the standard of army piping, and but for the Society's support, financially and otherwise, it could not have been carried on so successfully. When the school is in vacation in summer, the Society also makes arrangements with Pipe Major Ross to conduct classes in various outlying Highland districts, which is of immense assistance to young pipers anxious to obtain good tuition.

Although now world famous as a player, Pipe Major Ross still retains his innate modesty - bordering on shyness - and any attempt to elicit information as to the many trophies and other honours won by him as a competitor at the leading Highland Gatherings is at once parried with a smile and the introduction of some other topic. The writer has had, therefore, to turn to other sources for information as to these honours, of which the following is a very brief summary.

In four successive years he has held the title of champion all-round piper of Scotland - a record which won for him the MacDonald Shield. He was nine times the winner of the Northern Meeting championship gold clasp for Piobaireachd, and eleven times the winner of the Lochaber Gold Medal with six clasps. There falls to be added the following much coveted distinctions: - Dunmore Gold Star, Scottish Pipers' Society Badge, the Crieff Gathering Gold Medal for all-round championship, to which no fewer than eleven bars have since been appended; the Gold Medal of the Highland Society of London, the Argyllshire Gathering Medal, Newcastle Championship Gold Medal, the Piobaireachd Society's Gold Medal, and Clasp, the Dunstaffnage Silver Cup, the Lindsay trophy, three times winner of the Lawrie trophy, the Culter trophy, and three times winner of the Braemar Gathering Championship. Notwithstanding the many calls on his time he has succeeded in publishing a most useful and interesting book of pipe tunes, while his broadcasts on the wireless and his gramophone records have inspired and cheered Scotsmen in all parts of the world.

His brother Alexander was Pipe Major of the 1st Battalion Scots Guards, and both of them served in France at the same time. It speaks volumes for their valour and mental abilities that they were recommended for commissions.

A few weeks before his present illness developed, Pipe Major Ross was playing with that characteristic touch, tone, and finish which never failed to thrill an audience, and it will be the earnest wish of all lovers of pipe music that he will soon be able to shoulder his pipes again and repeat his triumphs.

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THE GHOST PIPER

(From Sunday Pictorial, Apr. 8, 1962)  
An article together with a picture of  
a piper and a dog.

For the worried people of a new town, I have reassuring news  
this morning. THIS - above - is your GHOST.

He is Willie George whose midnight music has been making strong  
men feel uneasy, their wives turn pale and their dogs tremble. All except  
one dog - the one in the picture. That's "Blue," Willie's Labrador. And  
Blue is quite used to Willie and his bagpipes.

But transplanted Londoners living at Northbrooks, Harlow New  
Town, Essex, were far from happy as the strains of "Scotland the Brave",  
came eerily over the dark field behind their homes. Reg Baker, 43, who  
likes a bath around midnight, heard the pipes as he relaxed in the water.  
Faint strains of "Forty -Second Highlanders," were definitely coming up  
the overflow.

When I investigated, a neighbour, Mrs. Mildred Hayter, told me:  
"We're sure it is a ghost. Teenage girls in the streets are afraid to  
walk round the back of the houses at night, So are we!"

So I kept watch in a misty field and came face-to-face with the  
"Phantom Piper," - an embarrassed Willie George. Glasgow-born Willie,  
37 year old draughtsman, of Sharpecroft, Harlow, explained: "it's really  
quite simple. I've just joined the town's pipe band and I can't practice  
at home because the walls are too thin. So I come out here in the fields.

- 0 -

LETTER FROM PIPE MAJOR DONALD MACLEOD:

Please accept these few books of my third collection. There are  
the never absent printers' errors - all but one of which any average  
piper will recognize and correct.

The outstanding error is in the piobaireachd. - Var I - Line I -  
Bar III - for F, play E.

I was delighted to read of Roddy MacKay's success in your recent  
competition for composers. Roddy is a very old friend of mine and I have  
long known of his flair for composing.

My warmest regards to all piping friends.

- Donald MacLeod -





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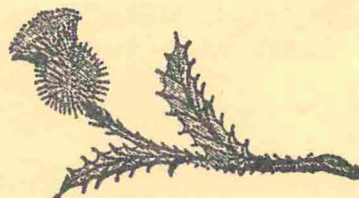
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SATURDAY, AUGUST, 11th.



B.C. HIGHLAND DANCING ASSOCIATION: 29th ANNUAL COMPETITION:

The B.C. Highland Dancing Association held its 29th Annual Competition on Monday, July 2nd, at Ambleside Park, West Vancouver. The gathering, which was officially opened by Reeve S.G. Collier, of West Vancouver, was held in commemoration of West Vancouver's Golden Jubilee. Ambleside Park is a fine location for games, and the association must be congratulated for the great improvement in their gathering. Entries were good, and the level of competition was very high.

As a special feature, a presentation was made to Miss Mary Isdale, the dean of Highland Dancers on the Pacific Coast. A group of dancers performed MacLaine of Lochbuie, in honour of Miss Isdale, who has now been teaching highland dancing for fifty years.

Judges of piping events were Ronald Forman and Ian MacKinnon, and Mel. Graham judged drumming events.

Juvenile March:

1. John MacLeod 2. Sherea Barwell 3. Theresa MacInnes

Juvenile Strathspey and Reel:

1. John MacLeod 2. Theresa MacInnes 3. Michael MacInnes

Junior March:

1. Bob MacDonald 2. Karen Ruddick 3. Gordon Whaley

Junior Strathspey and Reel:

1. Bob MacDonald 2. Larry Gillott 3. Gordon Whaley

Amateur March:

1. Rae Marie MacInnes 2. Bill Elder 3. Allan MacLeod

Amateur Strathspey and Reel:

1. Rae Marie MacInnes 2. Bill Elder 3. Allan MacLeod

Jig:

1. Bob MacDonald 2. Larry Gillott 3. Bill Elder

Old Highland Airs:

1. Rae Marie MacInnes 2. Bruce Topp 3. Bob MacDonald

Individual Drumming:

1. Barry Barnes 2. Keith Manifold 3. Steve Hollands

Drum Corps:

1. Seaforth Cadets

Pipe Bands (Class C):

1. Kiwanis Boys Pipe Band.
2. Optimist Junior Boys Pipe Band.

Trophies:

Ernie Topp Trophy - Juvenile:	John MacLeod
Wm. Miller Trophy - Junior:	Bob MacDonald
Scott Memorial Trophy - Amateur:	Rae Marie MacInnes
Ruddick Trophy - Jigs:	Bob MacDonald
Rod MacIsaac Trophy - Old Highland Airs:	Rae Marie MacInnes
Treasurer Trophy - Individual Drumming:	Barry Barnes
Yandle Trophy - Drum Corps:	Seaforth Cadets
Park Royal Trophy - Pipe Bands:	Kiwanis Boys Pipe Band

GRIMSBY HIGHLAND GAMES: JUNE 23rd, 1962.

March 18 & Under:

1. R. Kean
2. J. Terrence
3. J. Morrison & G. Killen (tie)

Strathspey and Reel 18 & Under:

1. R. Kean
2. G. Killen
3. J. Terrence
4. R. Smallman

March 16 & Under:

1. A. Oakes
2. J. Lyon
3. N. Frew & R. Cuthbert (tie)

Strathspey and Reel 16 & Under:

1. H. Hodgson
2. N. Frew
3. R. Nodwell
4. R. Stinson

Open March:

1. Chris Anderson
2. John Wilson
3. W. Grant
4. R. MacKay & D. Adamson (tie)

Open Strathspey and Reel:

1. Chris Anderon
2. John Wilson
3. R. MacKay
4. G. Henderson

"A" Class Band: March, Strathspey and Reel:

1. 48th Highlanders
2. 2nd Canadian Guards
3. Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders
4. St. Andrews Pipe Band

"B" Class Band: March, Strathspey and Reel:

1. MacFarlane Pipe Band, St. Catherines.
2. Balmoral Pipe Band, Syracuse,
3. St. Andrews "B" Pipe Band
4. Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders "B" Pipe Band

Open Pipe Band: Slow March:

1. Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders
2. 48th Highlanders
3. 2nd Canadian Guards
4. St. Andrews Pipe Band.

THE PIPER'S CONFRONTATION:

In a Scottish city which needn't be named, is a School for boys who haven't been heading in the right direction. Here they learn a trade, and are taught citizenship. Also, among other activities, the School had, and probably still has, a pipe band. On one occasion, just after a piper whose term was up had left, every pipe bag on the place was found to be knifed. Circumstantial evidence pointed clearly to the "graduate" as the culprit. Bad business - except for the local pipeshop!

A year or two later the Pipe Major resigned, and came to New York. At some Scottish doings he naturally was drawn to the pipe band, and saw with a start a "kent" face - none other than that of his ex-pupil, he of the knife. He tapped the piper on the shoulder. - "Aye, laddie; are ye slittin' ony bags this side o' the Atlantic?"

The fellow jumped, turned beet red, and finally managed to splutter. "It was me, a' richt. I'm sorry noo. Dinna speak aboot it. I never thocht the devilment wad be cast up tae me oot here".

"Weel", said the Pipe Major, "as they say, 'A chance shot will hit the De'il! I'll haud my tongue, though it's mair than ye deserve".

And "haud his tongue" he did, until years afterwards, when he was clear on the other side of the country.

Wm. A. Berry  
Secretary - Treasurer  
Vancouver Island Pipers' Society

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PORTLAND HIGHLAND GAMES: JULY 7th.

The 10th Annual Portland Highland Games were held on July 7th, at Timberline Lodge, Mount Hood, Oregon. The setting was an exceptionally splendid one, six thousand feet up Mount Hood, and although a great deal of snow was present, the bright sun was enjoyed by everybody.

The piping events were judged by Stewart McAlpine, Albert Whyte, Alastair MacRae and William Wallace, of Sacramento, California.

Novice Marches:

1. Bill Lamont
2. Paddy Swan
3. Colin MacKenzie
4. Warren McAlpine

Juvenile Marches:

1. Colin MacRae
2. Theresa MacInnes
3. Fred Whyte
4. Jack Ironside

Juvenile Strathspeys and Reels:

1. Theresa MacInnes
2. Fred Whyte
3. Sherea Barwell
4. Jack Ironside

Juvenile Old Highland Airs:

1. Fred Whyte
2. J. Reid
3. Sherea Barwell
4. Jack Ironside
5. Colin MacRae

Junior Marches:

1. Robert Stokes
2. Robert MacDonald
3. Bruce Topp

Junior Strathspeys and Reels:

1. Michael Armstrong
2. Bruce Topp
3. Robert Stokes

Junior Old Highland Airs:

1. Robert MacDonald
2. Robert Stokes
3. Bruce Topp

Amateur Marches:

1. Rae Marie MacInnes
2. Gordon Ross
3. Bill Thomas

Amateur Strathspeys and Reels:

1. Rae Marie MacInnes
2. Gordon Ross
3. Bill Thomas

Amateur Piobaireachd:

1. Gordon Ross
2. Rae Marie MacInnes

Open Marches:

1. Ronald Forman
2. David Wilson

Open Strathspeys and Reels:

1. Ronald Forman
2. David Wilson



Open Piobaireachd:

1. Ronald Forman
2. David Wilson

"B" Class Bands:

1. Seattle Pipe Band
2. Portland Scottish Pipe Band
3. Clan MacLeay Pipe Band
4. Seaforth Cadets Pipe Band.

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LETTER FROM VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON:

Here we are, just a day before the Portland Games, Pipe Major Wallace and I going over events of a few years ago.

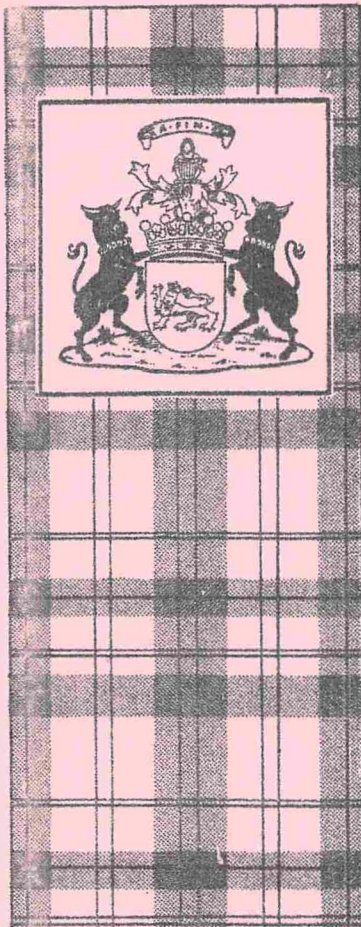
I want you to know that I enjoyed your June issue with P.M. Robertson's scrapbook, and to learn that some of these "big" pipers of today were amateurs once. I was a "pipe crazy" boy when I met, and heard them play - Alex Johnstone and A. MacIndewar. I hope you will have more of these old time records in the future. Alex Johnstone and Malcolm Nicholson had one thing in common - they were both left handed pipers - perhaps one or two other things in common too, grand pipers and fine gentlemen.

I regret to inform you of the death of Pipe Major William Purves, former Royal Scots piper, and Ex Pipe Major of the Portland Scottish Pipe Band. He served as Pipe Judge at Vancouver, B.C. a few years ago when Donald MacDonald was one of the outstanding amateur pipers. He had been asked to serve as Judge at this year's Portland Games, but said he would be unable to attend as Mrs. Purves needed his attention. Several years ago, when piping teachers were rather scarce around here, P.M. Purves took some of us boys under his wing, so to speak, and got us started on pipes. There was Alfred Ely and myself, and, I think, his outstanding pupil, Pipe Major Chester MacNeill.

He was a good teacher and a grand gentleman, and he and Mrs. Purves were most hospitable. I think it would be a nice gesture if some piper would play a Lament at each of the Highland Games this summer in memory of Willie Purves.

- S. R. McAlpine -  
Vancouver, Washington

- 0 -



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## CROOK OF DEVON HIGHLAND GAMES RESULTS:

### Piobaireachd:

1. Kenneth MacDonald
2. John MacFadyen
3. Hector MacFadyen
4. Seumas MacNeill

### Marches:

1. John MacLellan
2. John MacFadyen
3. John Burgess

### Strathspeys and Reels:

1. James Young
2. John MacFadyen
3. John Burgess

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THE RANTING HIGHLANDMAN OR THE MUCKLE SPREE:

The following clipping, recently sent to us, might be of some interest to you. For obvious reasons, we have omitted all names which might identify the hapless members of this melodramatic incident. We wonder how many pipers take the business so seriously.

"WIFE FLED IN HER NIGHTDRESS, COURT TOLD:

A Highland pipe major, who was annoyed because his wife left a ceilidh organised to raise money for his band, assaulted her when he got home, ..... Sheriff Court was told yesterday.

Piper X, of ..... pleaded guilty by letter to charges of assault and breach of the peace.

Mr. A., fiscal, said Piper X was pipe major of ..... Pipe Band. He was acting as M.C. at a ceilidh and dance in aid of the band at ..... on May 4th when his wife decided to go home.

"Shortly before 3 o'clock the next morning, she ran into a friend's house in her nightdress. Her husband had given her a beating," said Mr. A. A friend who tried to calm Piper X was knocked down and suffered two black eyes and a broken nose, said the fiscal.

Police who arrested X found articles of Highland dress scattered about the back garden of his home. Sheriff B. continued the case for two weeks for a probation report and order X to appear in court."

EMBRO HIGHLAND GAMES: JULY 2nd, 1962.

Open Piobaireachd:

1. Chris Anderson
2. John Wilson
3. W. Grant

Open March:

1. Gordon Tuck
2. John Wilson
3. Chris Anderson

Open Strathspey and Reel:

1. John Wilson
2. Reay MacKay & Chris Anderson (tie)

"A" Class Band: March, Strathspey and Reel:

1. 48th Highlanders
2. Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders
3. St. Thomas Pipe Band

"B" Class Band: March, Strathspey and Reel:

1. Clan McFarlane Pipe Band
2. St. Andrews Junior Pipe Band
3. 3 M (London)
4. General Motors Pipe Band

Open Pipe Band: Slow March:

1. 48th Highlanders
2. Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders
3. Clan McFarlane Pipe Band.

A PROPER HULLABALOO AT THE HIGHLAND GAMES: (From The Sunday Post, June 3rd)

It's amazing the things that go on at Highland games - and come off, too!

Two kilted heavy-weights I know decided to play a prank when they met in the wrestling final. They kidded on they couldn't get holds on each other. When this happens, someone usually stands between the wrestlers until they get to grips. One of the judges of the Highland dancing volunteered to do the job. He stood between the two brawny lads, blissfully unaware of the wink that passed between them. Next moment he was whisked into the air and whirled round like a peerie.

"Stop it! Stop it!", he gasped. "Ah've nae trews on!"

And neither he had!

At another meeting one young heavy-weight had been practising the high jump when he heard his name called for throwing the hammer. He dashed to pull on his kilt and change into his boots. Then he grabbed the hammer, dug himself in, and started to swing. Round and round flew the hammer. Down and down dropped his kilt. By the time he let the hammer fly, his kilt was round his ankles. Good job he had pants on!

But one practical joker was paid back in his own coin when he went to toss the caber. He got it up in his hands and was just beginning his run when he felt an uncontrollable desire to sneeze. All he could do was let the caber fall in front of him as his head exploded in a mighty a-tish-oo! No wonder he sneezed. An opponent had sprinkled sneezing powder round the base of the caber!

For sheer rivalry, there's nothing to beat Highland dancing. It's not so much the dancers themselves - it's some of the mothers who go with them. I once watched two tight-lipped, heavily-bemedalled ten-year olds battling it out for another medal. Halfway through the third dance one of the lassies fumbled her steps. When she came off the platform the first thing she did was look at the soles of her shoes. She found a big wad of chewing gum on one of them. Nobody knew how it got there - but somebody said the winner's mother was a great gum chewer. And she'd been standing suspiciously near the platform!

But if anybody deserves a prize at the games it's the pipe major, whether his band wins or not. He's got more worries than a Sunday School superintendant at the annual picnic.

Five minutes before a band was due to compete, one of the pipers became ill. They didn't have a reserve man - yet they had to have a full turn-out to qualify.

Suddenly, the pipe major's eye fell on Willie. He'd come with the band, but he couldn't play a note. He was the right size, though.

Before he knew what was happening, he was whipped into the changing tent. Helpers hurriedly changed him into a handsome kiltie and stuck bagpipes into his arms.

In the nick of time the band marched into the arena, with Willie well hidden in the middle. He blew for all his worth - but never made a sound. And the band won a prize after all!

Maybe you don't know it, but rounding up a pipe band can be a trying business.

Pipers scatter all round the field like lone wolves, to practise in solitude.

One old worthy who was a steward for the day, and whose job was to round up the pipers, said breathlessly. "It's no' a steward ye want here - it's a shepherd wi' a couple o' dugs."

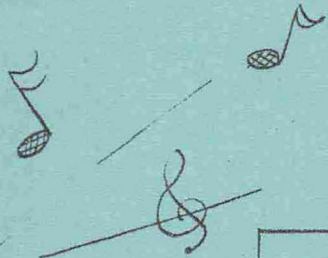
Och, ay, for the folk behind the scenes, there's plenty of fun at the games.

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NANAIMO HIGHLAND GATHERING: JULY 14th:

The 5th Annual Highland Gathering was held at Nanaimo on July 14th, at the Caledonian Grounds. These games were sponsored by the Upper Island Highland Games Association, an organization composed of Scottish Societies from Nanaimo, Ladysmith, Cumberland, Campbell River and Courtenay.

Piping events were judged by George Allan and Alex MacIndewar.

Juvenile Marches:

1. John MacLeod 2. T. MacInnes 3. S. Barwell 4. Colin Stuart

Juvenile Strathspeys and Reels:

1. T. MacInnes 2. R. Donaldson 3. S. Barwell 4. John MacLeod

Junior Marches:

1. Bob MacDonald 2. Bruce Topp 3. Karen Ruddick

Junior Strathspeys and Reels:

1. Bob MacDonald 2. Bruce Topp 3. Karen Ruddick



Amateur Marches:

1. Bill Elder
2. Rae Marie MacInnes
3. David Ross

Amateur Strathspeys and Reels:

1. Rae Marie MacInnes
2. Gordon Ross
3. Bill Elder
4. David Ross

Amateur Piobaireachd:

1. Gordon Ross
2. Rae Marie MacInnes
3. David Ross

Open Marches:

1. Ronald Forman
2. David Wilson

Open Strathspeys and Reels:

1. James Yardley
2. Ronald Forman
3. Dave Westie
4. John MacKenzie

Open Piobaireachd:

1. Ronald Forman.

"B" Class Bands:

1. Royal Canadian Engineers
2. Vancouver Ladies
3. Seaforth Cadets of Canada

"A" Class Bands:

1. MacMillan, Bloedel & Powell River
2. Royal Canadian Engineers

Trophies:

- |                                  |                    |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Nanaimo Realty - Juvenile:       | Theresa MacInnes   |
| Drs. Browne & Hamilton - Junior: | Bob MacDonald      |
| D.M. Greer - Amateur:            | Rae Marie MacInnes |
| P. Inkster Memorial - Open:      | Ronald Forman      |

The MacMillan, Bloedel and Powell River Pipe Band made their first appearance of the season at Nanaimo, and were obviously much appreciated by the audience at Caledonian Park. The band is now led on parade by Drum-Major John "Bud" Moon, formerly of the 1st Bn. Scots Guards, and Drum-Major in charge of the Massed Bands at the two Military Searchlight Tattoos in Vancouver. Drum-Major Moon has joined the Security Section at Powell River, where it would appear that the pipe band is well represented, with Wally Laird as 2i/c and George Pryde as a member of that section.

The Powell River Pipe Band now has quite a different appearance, in that the drummers are dressed in Hunting MacMillan with scarlet tunics, while the pipers have retained the MacGregor tartan with green tunics. The entire band have new uniforms, and make a very smart show. The MacMillan, Bloedel and Powell River band will play at the Vancouver Games, and the Seattle Games, following which they will perform at the Seattle World's Fair.

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