B.C. PIPERS'

NEWSLETTER

The official monthly publication of

the British Columbia Pipers' Association

JULY, 1976 NO. 152

B. C. PIPERS' NEWSLETTER

Published by the British Columbia Pipers' Association.

PRESIDENT	James MacDonald
VICE-PRESIDENT	Alex Young
SECRETARY/TREASURER	Richard Herring
Association Pipe Major	Seb Nellies

The B. C. Pipers' Newsletter is published monthly at 6286 Empress Avenue, Burnaby, B. C. V5E 2S5, by the British Columbia Pipers' Association and distributed to all members. Address all communications concerning the Newsletter to the above address. All other communications should be sent to Mr. R. Herring, #1402-750 Jervis, Vancouver, V6E 2A9

EDITOR:	Angus Macpherson
STAFF:	Janice MacDonald Jim MacDonald Judi Macpherson

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

John Wilson is perfectly correct in saying that the College of Piping did in 1957 launch an appeal for funds, part of which was intended "to restore the MacCrimmon School at Boreraig, Isle of Skye, and to erect a piping museum." We were hoping for fifty thousand pounds, of which ten thousand pounds was to be for Boreraig.

The response to the appeal was disappointing. So far as I remember (and I was not personally involved in the appeal), the total sum raised was about two thousand pounds. Of this we spent about four hundred pounds on Boreraig, which was reasonable.

John Wilson, however, must be at the slippered pantaloon and spectacles on nose stage, because his eyesight seems not what it used to be. He is wrong in thinking that there has been another appeal made for funds to do anything at Boreraig. All that appeared at the end of the article he mentioned was a question for opinions as to whether or not such an appeal should be made.

We were indeed grateful for John's donation of five pounds, which no doubt represented a great deal of money in those days. However, his "once bitten, twice shy" reminds us of the story of the Aberdonian who when asked for a penny for a poppy on Armistice Day replied, "But I gave one last year!"

The position is that if most people feel like John, then it will be a waste of time for us to try to restore and preserve the MacCrimmon College at Boreraig. If, on the other hand, the giving potential of the piping world has increased appreciably in the past nineteen years, then it will be our great joy to restore at least the appearance of the former glories in Skye.

While in a writing mood, may I make another point? Like John Wilson, I am a good Scot and would like to take full advantage of this expensive stamp. A communication has arrived here from the "United States Academy of Piping and Dancing". This comes from Malcolm Benedict of Denver, Colorado, and the letter heading claims that one of the supporting societies of this Academy is the Institute of Piping.

Malcolm is being very naughty once again, and telling fibs. The Institute is not and never has been a supporting society of the "Academy" - and the way Malcolm continues to take its name in vain, it is never likely to be.

The Institute pointed out this error over a year ago, but Denver seems to be a place of deaf ears. Whatever this Academy achieves or fails to achieve is not to the credit or blame of the Institute of Piping.

Seumas McNeil

Dear Sir,

It seems quite strange that the B. C. Pipers' Mini Gatherings and Knock-out competitions have three judges, but when it comes to the "Open" playing at the Annual Gathering with the large number of talented players, it is left to the opinion of one judge. To put it in the words of the last judge - an "enormous task".

In the last few editions of the Newsletter, some of the pipers are not too happy with the local judging and have even suggested a form of certificate. It has been my experience and opinion that most of these people who are anxious to give teaching, judging and piping certificates are a little too opinionated and I doubt if it would work out satisfactorily.

I do not think one should complain about our local judges as they do a pretty fair job. After all they can only give their opinion. However, the Games' Committees could do a great deal to help solve the problem. At most of the local games they have two or three piping platforms going at the same time with one judge at each platform - a very poor effort from a spectator's point of view, running from one platform to the other, trying to catch his or her favourite player. What are they trying to do - get the piping over with and out of the road as soon as possible? If that is the case, they might as well forget about open piping.

Why not have all three judges at the one platform especially for the "open" playing? Having talked with pipers who have done quite a bit of judging, all thought it was the fairest method. At least the player was getting the benefit of three judges.

I am all in favour of bringing out talent from Scotland. As a matter of fact, I would like to see the return of John Burgess and Donald MacLeod. But, when it comes to the judging of the Indoor Meet, I think that two locals should also sit in.

I always thought playing a reel at a good clip with all the work executed and an outstanding tone was a credit to a piper, and not seeing James MacColl's name on the prize list at the last Indoor Games was rather perplexing.

Now, that is my opinion.

Robert Leslie.

Dear Sir,

The Vancouver Ladies' Pipe Band is making preparations to celebrate its 50th Anniversary during the Spring of 1977.

A list of band members is presently being compiled. Anyone knowing the names and/or addresses of former members, please contact:

Georgina Macdonald - 984-0951
Rae-Marie Macaulay - 434-5592

Peggy Askew.

LAST MONTH IN AND AROUND THE ASSOCIATION

New Westminster Highland Games

The New Westminster Highland Games were held on June 12 and the results were as follows:

Novice March

1. Pamela Wilkie
2. Rod Bellamy
3. Christine Reid
4. Wesley Eaton

Juvenile March

1. Jack Eckersley
2. David H. Winter
3. Owen Reid
4. Jerry Smith

Juvenile Strathspey & Reel

1. Owen Reid
2. David H. Winter
3. Jack Eckersley
4. Carolyn Paterson

Junior March

1. Judy Carl
2. Val Pederson
3. Linda Williams

Junior Strathspey & Reel

1. Jim Stewart
2. Linda Williams
3. Christine Waddell & Val Pederson

Junior Piobaireachd

1. Val Pederson
2. Jim Stewart
3. Christine Waddell

Amateur March

1. Jill Laurie
2. Grant Wilkie
3. Allan Wilson

Amateur Strathspey & Reel

1. Graham Davidson
2. Grant Wilkie
3. James Wright & Gordon Lyle

Amateur Jigs

1. Alan Wilson
2. James Wright
3. Grant Wilkie

Professional March, Strathspey & Reel

1. Jim Troy
2. Hal Senyk
3. Jack Lee

Professional Piobaireachd

1. Jack Lee
2. Ian Whitelaw
3. Jim Troy

Junior Amateur Drumming

1. K. Cranswick
2. C. Smith
3. A. Bell

Professional Drumming

1. Willie McErlean
2. Keith Manifold

Amateur Piobaireachd

1. Alan Wilson
2. Jill Laurie
3. Graham Davidson

Professional Jigs

1. Hal Senyk
2. Jim Troy
3. John A. MacLeod

Novice Drumming

1. D. Redmond

Senior Amateur Drumming

1. Terry Dalziel
2. Keith Clark
3. Danny McKillop

Victoria Highland Games

The results of the Victoria Highland Games held on May 22, 1976 were as follows:

Juvenile March

1. Owen Reid
2. Terri Smith
3. Maureen Lee

Junior March

1. Christine Waddell
2. Jim Stewart
3. Valerie Pederson

Amateur March

1. Robbie MacNeil
2. Jill Laurie
3. Graham Davidson
4. Grant Wilkie

Juvenile Strathspey & Reel

1. Owen Reid
2. Peter Aumonier
3. Terri Smith
4. Maureen Lee

Junior Strathspey & Reel

1. Judy Carl
2. Jim Stewart

Amateur Strathspey & Reel

1. James Wright
2. Alison Palmer
3. Graham Davidson
4. Grant Wilkie

Amateur Piobaireachd

1. Graham Davidson
2. James Wright
3. Rob Cross

Professional Strathspey & Reel

1. Jack Lee
2. Steve Geddes
3. Ian Whitelaw
4. Jim Troy

Amateur Drumming

1. Kennedy Cranswick
2. Craig Smith

Professional Drumming

1. Jack Gallaher
2. Willie McErlean
3. David Watling

Grade I Pipe Bands

1. Triumph Street
2. City of Victoria

Juvenile Novice Pipe Bands

1. City of Victoria

Professional March

1. Hal Senyk
2. Steve Geddes
3. Jim Troy

Professional Piobaireachd

1. Hal Senyk
2. Jack Lee
3. Jim Troy

Senior Amateur Drumming

1. Danny McKillop

Tenor Drumming

1. Amy McKendrick

Bass Drumming

1. Amy McKendrick

Grade II Pipe Bands

1. Richmond C.P. Air
2. Portland Ladies

NEXT MONTH

Bi-Monthlies

The upcoming edition of winter competitions is actually a cross between bi-monthlies and mini-gatherings. As was the case for the past two seasons, the competitions will be held on Saturday mornings but with four separate dates. Pipers will be required to play one event at each competition.

The Bi-monthlies will be held in the headquarters of the Association, the Scottish Auditorium, on the Saturday following the Knock-outs. This was done to accommodate our out-of-town competitors who have supported the mini-gatherings so well.

Hopefully, this revised format will inject some enthusiasm into this year's competitions.

Format and entry form on back page.

Knock-Outs

The General Meetings and Knock-out competitions for the 1976/77 season get underway on the tentative date of Friday, October 8, 1976 at the Scottish Auditorium. The Knock-outs will follow the same successful format as we have had during the last few years. Competing trios are requested to have their entries in by September 10 to enable the committee to make the draw on September 15.

Entry forms are available on the back page of this issue.

White Heather Show

WHITE HEATHER SHOW

One night only - Friday, October 1, 1976

featuring THE ALEXANDER BROTHERS

with Neil Owen
and an all-star supporting cast

TICKETS: $6, $5, and $4

$1 off $4.00 seats for O.A.P.

Ticket Sales open Saturday, August 14,
at the Vancouver Ticket Centre.

COMMENT ON PIOBAIREACHD

It was as always a pleasure to visit the "Indoor Meet", and to talk to so many friends from the Vancouver area. I am amazed at so many fine players and bands, all concentrated in one city.

No doubt my rendering of the "Red Speckled Bull" would cause many to wonder what I was up to. I played it as a march and marched in time to it, firstly; because there are three different stories concerning the time and each one tells us that the time is a march - one version calls it a rattling march, and secondly; to cause some, particularly your best pipers to wonder whether or not the Ceol Mor has come down to us as it was played before the "45". Why do pipers learn tunes that are described in their titles as marches, salutes, gatherings, and often in the notes as satires and sprees, and when they play them, render all of these categories as dirges?

The social evolution of Highland music has been shaped mostly by events political and historical, not by the individuals involved in harping and piping - they were just incidental to the various master plans as historical events precipitated them. The history and tragedy of the Ceol Mor can be briefly summed up in three or four events. The Battle of Harlaw 1411 was the landmark event that made the piobaireachd and broke the harp. When gunpowder made the battlefields too noisy for the harp, piping began to evolve from the fantasias to the more sophisticated form of piobaireachd. The piobaireachd, more or less, is what was taken from the harp and added to, and merged with the fantasias. Any of the fantasias that exist unadulterated will be found among the G.D.E.-type gatherings. Just how much of the harp's music was "borrowed" is difficult to say, but I would conjecture that those who adapted it to the pipes took all they could get feasibly into the pipe scale. The strong characteristics of the harp are evident in the taorluadh and crunluadh movements. Those are representations of the harps arpeggios - the strumming. Thus was the piobaireachd formed and the harp replaced by the pipes as Scotland's national music. The pipes began taking from the harp when it had peaked with its medieval music, and consequently the piobaireachd is characteristically medieval music. Although it was born and raised in the baroque period, this didn't apply much to the Highlands, and any relationship it may have to the great music that was being composed on the continent at that time is purely coincidental. Iain MacCadrum, the bard of North Uist (1710-1796), typifies the attitude, the understandable attitude of most harpers to the pipes in a couple of lines from one of his satires:

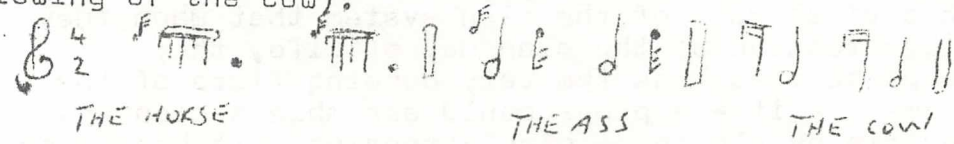
"It withered with yelping
The seven Fenian battalions."

The English ruined the piobaireachd on two occasions. The music was such a vital part of the clan system that when they undertook the destruction of the clan way of life, they recognized the piobaireachd as the very bonding fibre of the system. Just imagine it - a piper could assemble a clan and ready it for battle by playing a clan gathering. It had to go, so it got the first blow with the Act of Proscription 1746.

This banned the playing of pipes to the ordinary clansfolk. It carried on to some extent in the Highland regiments of that time, and for the occasional chief who wanted a piper. But, the stopping of it under the penalty of death among the clansfolk put it into a state of dilapidation. The next blow reduced what was left of it to what it is at the present day, and it was dealt it by the British Army of the 1840's, and the old way of playing it (marching to it) was almost gone after the Crimean War but for a few individuals who clung to the old way up into the 1870's. The Army literally put a stop to pipers marching to it and started the weary-Willie way of playing it that is still with us. In this case again the plitical motivation for this move is evident: The Highlanders of the 1840's were the same type of people as their ancestors had been for generations before them, and had they got a steady diet of the true piobaireachd, it would have directed their thoughts, sentiments and sense of loyalty toward clan and chief as it did in the past, and left the British Army with a powerful contingent of brave warriors who spoke another language and had a questionable sense of loyalty; and to prevent this from happening, replaced his ancient martial music with marching music of another sort, thus diverting the Highlanders' sense of loyalty toward Queen and country. Again the famous pipers of that period, most of them in the Army, were incidental to the master plan.

Of the few individuals who clung to the old way of playing the piobaireachd, G.S. MacLennan's father, Ian MacLennan, must surely have been one of them, because he taught G.S. how to march to the piobaireachd, and he competed with it and marched to it in competition. I believe G.S. won two Gold Medals and three Clasps, so he must have been marching to some fine music. Ian MacLennan was the author of a very interesting book, mostly on the piobaireachd. He wrote most of it in 4/2 time, and in my opinion it is the best way of writing it, as it fills a bar with 8 crotchets, eliminating a lot of cutting and dotting, and giving actual value to notes where he intends the light and shades to fall. For the benefit of those who don't have this book, and who are curious about marching to the piobaireachd, I will quote the following paragraphs from his Preface:

"The Piobaireachd is now, and has been for many years, in a dilapidated condition, mainly through the introduction of 'Sitirichean an Eich-Raoichden an Asail, agus geumnaich a Mhairt' (the neighing of the horse, the braying of the ass, and the lowing of the cow).



Together with unqualified men writing music they knew little or nothing about, thereby making bagpipe playing a variety of wild and meaningless notes, as if the god of mockery was trying his best to show the piper as a full-grown clown.

Piobaireachds would have been played to time and tune long ago but for the fact that certain prizes are given for playing written tunes, or rather, conglomorations of notes, which have neither time nor execution. This has been carried on a system when written pipe music was unknown to and despised by the piper. One great piper writes: "The only infallible guide to selecting what is right and correcting what is wrong is a perfect and thoroughly trained ear". The great Beethoven was totally deaf when he wrote his best works. He had however a thorough knowledge of the science of music. In defence of the irregularity of the piobaireachd this writer tells us: "There is evidence to show that the piobaireachd composers of former times did not insist on the regularity of metre; when the theme required it they could add to or omit". They were the first to practise the maxim, "Art must not be tied by rule." This writer forgot that art must always be subjected by science or it is no art.

Then Mr. MacLennan finishes off his Preface with the following classic paragraph:

"Most pipers are of the opinion that Ceol Mor cannot be timed and marched to". These are generally men who accepted the easiest and common system and never thought for themselves beyond, "Which is the system most likely to let me get a prize". The piobaireachd should be played in perfect time, singling, doubling, trebling, and quadrupling, and if this was attended to we would hear Ceol Mor being played to full grandstand benches instead of being played on the most remote corner of the field where the audience is absent.

Not only can the music be timed and marched to. Many of the tunes can be marched to with different musical effects, and made to sound plaintive or martial depending on the sense of timing applied, and can be converted completely and played as slow marches, thus giving a piper the choice in some cases of playing a tune three different ways.

This cannot be done by applying and conforming to the highly restricted techniques of piobaireachd playing of the present day. It involves techniques that are infinitely more advanced and diversified, most of them 180° opposed to what is being done. Once pipers are able to do it, however, they discover that their piobaireachd is perfectly comprehendible and enjoyable to anybody that is the least bit musically inclined, and they don't have to go to the bother of excusing it first before they begin to play.

If you're tired of creeping, try walking!

Jimmy McColl,
6820 Ossabow Court,
Cypress 90630,
California.

CLASSIFIED

WANTED: Accomplished piper to teach 12 year old boy; six months experience; preferably Horseshoe Bay, West Vancouver location as family is moving to Brunswick Beach in August.

Any persons interested may contact his present teacher - Bill Macaulay. Phone: 435-8043.

WANTED IN PENTICTON:

A drumming instructor for a proposed junior band. This will involve teaching a drum corp from scratch.

Must be willing to travel up twice a month, or better yet move up to Penticton.

At present, we have quite a number of good junior pipers all interested in competing, but no junior drummers.

Any assistance would be appreciated in this problem. Please contact N. Alakija at 492-7337, or J. Robb at 492-3710, or write to 120 Parham Pl., Penticton.

* * * *

Cont'd.

Belts, Boy's Montrose; Men's leather straps
Cross belts; white; black; also waist
Hose (plain, child's)
Hose, tartan, 3 pr.; Hose tops
Skean dhu mounts & dirk parts
Sporrans, Angora
Balmorals; Glengarries; Plain & diced, lovat balmorals also white, bl.velvet
Books: College Piping #2; Piper's Delight; McCulloughs, Piob. sheet music; Coll. Piping bagpipe sheet music
Chevrons; Lace cuffs; Epaulets; Feathers
Hackles, small (green, blue and yellow)
Hackle; 1 red & blue for Feather bonnet
Belted plaids
Shoe laces, 54"
Buttons; Gilt,S.M.L. (thistle)
Gilt, Round, S & M
Staghorn, jacket
Arm badges; cloth, bagpipes, silver & white

Drummers' Equipment:

Arm badges, cloth or metal
Belts; Gauntlets;
Seton's drum tutor
DRUM tutor & record D/M Young
Practice pads; drum brackets
Drumheads; keys; knee rests, knee lugs
Rod plates; bushes; claws; collars; covers
Drumsticks; slings - web, plastic, leather
Lapping tool

Clan Items:

Blazer badges, wooden plaques; tiles; decals; door knocker; clancrest brooches; charms; spoons; ties; door name plats in McLain and one J. Steele.

Tartan Items:

Balmorals; glengarries; yardage (yellow McLeod & Campbell of Argyle) 54" all wool; ribbon 1"; Ladies sashes; ties (narrow); Nova Scotia lined wide tie; Boy's tartan ties.

MISCELLANEOUS:

St. Andrews Flag 12'; 2 girls S.O.B. Jackets, Girl's Lace front; Dancing slippers; Hullachan 10-13 Childs; Keltic, sizes 7-12 child's; heel plates; child's garter flashes; Children's Highland bucklet shoes; W/O sash, red; Shoe tongues; Mailing boxes for chanters and reeds.

TERMS: Cash with order (or C.O.D. in Canada).

BAND CHATTER

Watch the Olympics? Did you happen to notice No. 10 on Canada's field hockey team? The speedy right winger was none other than Kelvin Wood, former member of the Kiwanis & Anavets Pipe Bands and top player for many years.

* * * *

On behalf of the B. C. Pipers' Association and the countless pipers who spent many hours in their basement, we wish to extend our congratulations and best wishes to Malcolm and Elsie Nicholson on the occasion of their Golden Wedding Anniversary. The Nicholsons, without doubt, have contributed greatly to the piping community in Vancouver and we wish them many more years of happiness.

* * * *

Congratulations to Bob Gallaher and Debra Glover on their upcoming wedding. Bob, an active individual and band piper in this area for many years, is currently teaching a pipe band in Kamloops.

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KNOCK-OUTS

The Open competition following the October trio event will be a Jig and Hornpipe. As was the case last year, there will be a cash prize for the winner. (Amount still under negotiation).

* * * *

This will be the last Newsletter before the end of September as the staff will be doubling as "Roving Reporters" in Scotland.

Hopefully, there will be lots to report on our return.

BI-MONTHLY COMPETITION SCHEDULE

1976 - 1977

DATE	NOVICE	JUVENILE	JUNIOR	SR.AMATEUR
Oct. 8	Slow Airs	2/4 March	Jig	March, Strathspey & Reel
Nov. 5	6/8 March	Strathspey & Reel	Piobaireachd	Hornpipe
Jan. 7	2-part Strathspey & Reel	Jig	March, Strathspey & Reel	Piobaireachd
Feb. 3	2/4 March	6/8 March	Hornpipe	Jig

Competitions will be held in the Scottish Auditorium and will commence at 11:00 a.m. SHARP!

Pipers in line for promotion to a higher class will be contacted by the Bi-Monthly Secretary.

BI-MONTHLY ENTRY FORM

Name.....

Address.....

Telephone No.....

Teacher's Name.....

Please mail entry forms to The Secretary, Bi-Monthlies, 8363 Shaughnessy St., Vancouver.

Entries must be in the hands of the Secretary by Sept. 10, 1976.

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Entries for the Trio Knock-Out Competitions must be in the hands of the Secretary by September 10, 1976. Please mail entries to The Secretary, #1402-750 Jervis Street, Vancouver, V6E 2A9.