

# B. C. PIPERS' NEWSLETTER



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

MAY 1970 NO. 102



B.C. PIPERS' NEWSLETTER

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B.C. Pipers' Newsletter

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The B.C. Pipers' Newsletter is published monthly at 1073 Doran Road, North Vancouver, B.C. by the British Columbia Pipers' Association and is 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.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

2523 Haywood Avenue  
West Vancouver, B.C.  
May 6, 1970

B.C. Pipers' Newsletter  
1073 Doran Road  
North Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Editors:

I would like to express my admiration of our thoughtful Society. In the B.C. Pipers' Association we look after our own. The official appointment of our veteran Piper Seb Nellies as the Association Pipe Major was just such an expression of thought and respect, honouring a member, graciously.

But unhappily Seb had no Pipes, due to his own set having been stolen, and now it is good to see him happy again, thanks to the kind generosity of John McHardy, who donated a set to the Association for the use of the Pipe Major, presented to Seb at the meeting on May 1. This was a commendable gesture of kindness and thought. It was a splendid thing to do, John. The sight of Seb going home joyfully with those Pipes was well worth it. As I said--We look after our own.

And now I would like to answer a letter in the March issue of the Newsletter from Hector Turnbull concerning the plight of the apartment dwelling Pipers, with a thought that might help someone.

Once a Piper, always a Piper, and once an apartment dweller, a frustrated Piper. We badly need a Piper's Club centre, the very good dream of Rod MacVicar. But in the meantime what about the school buildings we pay taxes for? Adults should have the use of them too. Many janitors work in the evenings, and while they are there why could not a Piper or two have the use of one of the many rooms for practise, or the gym when not in use, until they are closed for the holidays of course, and then there are the school grounds also. And Stanley Park for West Enders close by, as well as small Parks in other districts.

Many a Band has the use of a school -- why not a harmless Piper? It might be worth a talk with the school janitor in his district (who might even welcome him), or consult the school board personally for permission. A thought worth a try, for the growing clan of homeless Pipers.

Sympathetically,

Cathrine Paterson

\*

3838 Saul Street  
Victoria, B.C.

B.C. Pipers' Newsletter  
Vancouver, B.C.

On April 19th last John MacDonald of Victoria died in St. Josephs Hospital exactly one month short of his 92nd birthday.

John was Piping's most enthusiastic non-piper, he joined the Piping Society in 1922 and remained an active supporter of all Piping groups since that time, he was also a member of the present Vancouver Island Pipers Club.

He loved the Bagpipes and knew and was known by practically every Piper on the Pacific Coast, for many years he was in charge of the Highland Dancing at the Victoria Highland Games and Saanich Fair.

Although he was not a member of the B.C. Pipers' Association he was a subscriber to the Newsletter since its inception.

His funeral was held at Royal Oak Cemetery on April 24th, 1970.

Sincerely yours,

Peter George

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ANYONE FOR GOLF??

For some time now the editors have been considering a B.C. Pipers' Golf Tournament. Surely many of our members are Golf enthusiasts and would enjoy a day on the links. It would be appreciated if we could get an indication of those interested. If we were to get an adequate number of golfers we could arrange a day. Please phone either Bill Elder at 325-9940 or Bob Gunn at 987-3592.

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BI-MONTHLY COMPETITION

Remember the upcoming May Bi-Monthly Competition on the 22nd at the Seaforth Armoury. The Juvenile Class will play 6/8 Marches and the Open Amateurs' will play Strathspeys and Reels. The attendance for these events has been pathetic and it would be most encouraging to have a large turnout at the last bi-monthly competition of the season.

Please keep in mind the Bi-Monthly Ceilidh on June 19th at the Steelworkers Hall at 33rd East Broadway. This is the night the prizes for the year are presented. More on this event will be in the next issue.

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REMEMBER the date - June 5th, 1970

the time - 8:00 P.M.

the place - Steelworkers Hall  
33rd East Broadway

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Longford Villa  
5 Kenneth Street  
Inverness  
April 19, 1970

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

Dear Mrs. Ross:

I wish to thank the British Columbia Pipers' Association for the great kindness and consideration extended to me while adjudicating at the Piping Competitions.

I also wish to congratulate the members of committee on the excellent and efficient manner in which the Competition was run. The smoothly working stewarding and prompt timing of events made my duty as adjudicator a pleasurable one.

Your Association is indeed fortunate in having at its head Mr. Lamont under whose executive skill no detail was overlooked. Mr. Elder not only put each competitor at ease with kindly words of encouragement but in the midst of other demanding duties sportingly gave a very creditable contribution to the Professional Piping events. I admire his spirit and devotion to the cause of Piping. I can picture Mr. Gunn in his capacity as Treasurer, charmingly relieving the Piping enthusiasts of dollar notes. He had a ready smile of welcome for everybody and set the proper atmosphere for a piping audience at the very portals. There was a young lady whose name unpardonably I have forgotten but whom I can see now quite clearly making light of her handicap of an injured ankle in order to give of her best in the cause of Piping.

In any organisation, it is the Secretary who breathes force and cohesion into the work. The British Columbia Pipers' Association are fortunate in having you with your enthusiasm, good sense and tireless energy to look after their affairs.

My wife and I feel very honoured to have been your guests at the delightful ceilidh which you arranged. To me, it is a great honour to be adopted as one of your members. I have your Totem pole, presentation gift on display as a memento of a memorable and most enjoyable visit to Vancouver.

Yours sincerely,

N.A. Macdonald

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April 3rd and 4th of this year will be memorable dates to me as marking the days of my adjudicating of the Piping Competitions of the British Columbia Pipers' Association. It was an inspiring experience from Event 1 on Friday morning with six competitors playing in the Junior Piobaireachd to Event 20 when ten miniature Pipe Bands competed. I am impressed by the enthusiasm, keenness and fingering skill of the young competitors. The teachers of Piping out there are doing valuable work and the results of careful and assiduous teaching are very evident.

In many instances the performance was very close in quality and demanded all my concentration. The standard of the players in the Amateur events was very high. In Piobaireachd there were 16 entries with a good spread in choice of tunes. I can remember a very musical Sir James Macdonald of the Isles from Bill Russell and a beautifully fingered Lament for the Children by Donald MacMillan. I pointed out to Donald that his timing of the ground was too fast and this marred an otherwise splendid rendering. I wrote comments for each individual player. I hope they can decipher my hieroglyphics as I had meant to rewrite a more legible version. Owing to the numbers involved, I later found this was not possible. However, their teachers will keep the youngsters right but such is your tremendous interest that I would be glad to give advice on any points that cause difficulty.

In general there was a tendency to rush over the grounds of Piobaireachd, to the detriment of the song. This, however, is a characteristic of all young players. The Crunluath movement should not be hurried as it tends to become a jumbled torrent of notes. The theme notes should emerge clear and liquid ornamented and enriched by the intricate movements of the Crunluath itself. The entries in the Professional Piobaireachd were disappointing but the tunes I heard were worthy of any Professional platform. John A. MacLeod was a worthy winner of the magnificent Borreraig Cairn Trophy with an excellent Lament for MacSwan of Roaig. Jamie Troy played a beautifully fingered Old Men of the Shells on a melodious pipe but I had to fault him on rushing his final movement. I shall not use up more space in detailed remarks but shall confine myself to general impressions in retrospect. The large entry in the Novice Section is encouraging for Piping. Fingering here is deft and accurate. May I suggest easier tunes in this section. It is indeed gratifying to hear tunes like the Lochaber Gathering bravely tackled by the youngsters but the difficulties encountered at this stage gives the overall effect a laboured flavour. What about trying 6/8 tunes here - the timing and rhythm would present fewer difficulties. A practice chanter competition for beginners would not be out of place. We have this at our Music Festival Competition over here. On the whole, the March competitions were better than the Strathspeys and Reels. In the latter, although I heard some very good tunes, the dancing rhythm was lacking. Here again, there was a tendency to play the reel too fast at the expense of musical lilt.

There was very good pointing and expression in the March, Strathspey and Reel of the Professional Class. The Jigs, however, did not please me so well. The cult may have spread from this side of the Atlantic that Jigs are merely an opportunity of displaying dexterity of fingering. When a Jig is speeded up too much it loses its meaning. The prize winners in this event were those who adopted a sensible pace and brought out the melody of the tune.

Any remarks I have made are designed to be helpful to the young players and in no way meant to be over-critical. I have nothing but admiration and wonder at what I heard.

May I compliment the Committee of the B.C. Pipers' Association on the efficient and smooth manner in which the Competition with a record entry was run by them. The performance given by the Quartettes and Miniature Pipe Bands was a final triumphant climax to a feast of piping.



What a delight it was to meet pioneers of piping in Canada like Pipe Major John Robertson who will soon be celebrating his 90th Birthday and did not miss a grace note during the whole of the competition. It must be extremely gratifying for him to see such a surge of piping in Canada and hear such promising young players.

My wife and I are most appreciative of the honour given to us by being the guests at your delightful Ceilidh. Your presentation gift, the Totem Pole holds pride of place in our home. I feel it is a great honour to be adopted as a member of the British Columbia Pipers' Association.

It has been a wonderful experience to share your friendship, enjoy your piping and visit your beautiful country.

"The Man From Scotland"

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#### GENERAL MEETING

#### KNOCKOUT COMPETITION

John A. MacLeod or Ruairidh Macdonald will be the winner of our series of Knockout Competitions. At the May General Meeting John A. edged out Jamie Troy from Victoria to win his heat in the semi-final event while Ruairidh defeated Albert Duncan. Both Ruairidh and John A. gave excellent performances and the June 5th General Meeting will see one of them our grand winner.

The knockout competition was once again an enjoyable social event and one more proved this new General Meeting format to be the answer to our once poorly attended meetings. The length of the formal meeting is kept to a minimum with the atmosphere quickly changing to that of a party. In previous years we were fortunate to entice ten members other than the Board of Directors to our meetings in the Seaforth Armoury Band Room. During the last few months we have been getting upwards of 75 members to these events.

Those of our members who have not attended any of these events should mark June 5th on their calendar when our Association Pipe Major Mr. Seb Nellies will most assuredly be adding his piping ability to the evening. Seb now has a set of pipes. Several years ago Seb had his pipes stolen and since then our most senior Board of Directors' member has been without an instrument. At the May General Meeting our president Bill Lamont presented Seb with a set of pipes and pipe box compliments of Mr. J. T. McHardy. These pipes will be the property of our Association Pipe Major whoever he may be during the years to come. This was a most generous gift to the B. C. Pipers' Association and Seb Nellies by John McHardy. On behalf of the Association we take this opportunity to thank Mr. McHardy.

In March of this year the B. C. Pipers' were the guests of the Vancouver Island Pipers in Victoria at their monthly meeting. At that time we invited our Victoria friends to be our guests at our June meeting to enjoy our final knockout competition. We are looking forward to their participation and wish all our Vancouver Island Pipers a hearty welcome.

STILL MORE ON THE MACCRIMMONS

In the November, 1969 issue of the B.C. Pipers' Newsletter there was a contribution from Lt. Col. John McEwing of Spokane, Washington, an excerpt which he had made from a collection of piping literature written by a clergyman in Rosshire in about 1840. This details in the pulpit language of that day, the MacCrimmon story to that date.

By now there is another chapter to be added, not from the misty Isle of Skye this time, but from the sunny slopes of North Vancouver, with a Canadian accent. The writer lived there and one night, about 1930, on his way home from his office in Vancouver saw a notice in the window of the Vancouver Drum Company to "Buy a chanter and improve your wind". I had a chanter from long ago days in Scotland, and having had years of typewriting I got a reed, and found that the fingering was still there, and now as a lawyer, I had an adequate supply of wind. Shortly after that, my wife and I were at a dance in the old O'Brian Hall in Vancouver, and I saw on its notice board that "Pipe Major William Campbell, piper to her late Majesty Queen Victoria, is looking for pupils for piping or violin". I got in touch with Mr. Campbell, and told him in 1905 a cadet corps had been started at George Watson College in Edinburgh, at which I was a pupil and the assorted Colonials had all wanted to become pipers. We had the pipe-sergeant of the garrison battalion of the Seaforths, then in the Castle, to instruct us once a week. Now, I had had piano lessons in Victoria before going to Scotland, and knew the theory. I asked the sergeant how long it took to become a piper, and he told me that in my case it would take seven years and seven generations. I quit. Mr. Campbell had a much more favourable prognosis, so on Saturday afternoons for two years I was his attentive pupil. All this time I was a member of the North Vancouver St. Andrews and Caledonian Society. When it became known to these thrifty folk that I was receiving this instruction on the Saturdays, it somehow got round to me retailing on Sunday mornings what I had absorbed the afternoon before to about a dozen of the sons of the membership, partnered in that adventure by the late Dan MacLean, who on week-days rounded off the flat wheels of the B.C. Electric North Vancouver street cars. Dan called for me with a very old Ford, held together with hay wire, and as this relic ground its way to the old Agricultural Hall up Lonsdale Avenue, Dan picked up incipient pipers until one couldn't see the car. At the Hall, another Thomson, who was caretaker, provided accommodation and heating, and it now seems clear to me that these Caledonians got all this, everything, for free. Dan and I got nothing from this but real pleasure and the acquaintance and friendship in most unusual places, high and low, that has stood the test of years. While we had no Borreraig, we started quite a number of competent pipers on their way, the cream of whom are two Pipe Majors, one in the person of our President, Willie Lamont, and the other was Jimmie Watt, and I remember Professor Woodward at the University of B.C., Peter Finlayson, now Commissar of the Langdale Ferry Terminal, and Dan MacLean's son Ian, now of Roberts Creek. When on my occasional visits to the B.C. Pipers' Association I see Mr. Lamont, grave and dignified, handling a meeting, it pains me to remember how I lit into him for being a little mischievous monkey, and exiled him to a corner. As for Jimmie Watt, I early told his mother that he could take it away as fast as Dan and I could hand it to him, and was worthy of the best instruction, which he got in Vancouver. Not long after that, I was on my way down to the ferry and I heard a piper playing a rollicking march, new to me. I located the piper, who, turned out to be our Jimmie, who had just composed a march dedicated to Col. Tom Leslie, Commandant of the Vancouver Seaforths. That brings me to our MacCrimmons.

One afternoon, I was in Dan's garden at the top of the Grand Boulevard in North Vancouver, and he was playing his pipes. They were, and are, rather an unusual set being made of Brazil wood and of a resonance suited for solo playing on a remote Island, and now in the possession of Dan's son Ian, who, to my surprise and delight, played my wife and myself ashore with them on a visit we made to Savary Island away up the B.C. Coast last summer. While Dan was playing, the top half of a small boy appeared over the back fence. Dan stopped playing and asked the boy what he wanted, and the boy said that he wanted to play the pipes. I asked the boy his name, and he answered "Malcolm MacCrimmon" and I told him that with that name he was half-way there already. So, we took him into our little college of piping, and as I recall it, he was a good average, but did not at that time show any spark of the ancestral fire. And here let me make the observation based on the careers of Messrs. Lamont, Watt and MacCrimmon that while "Repetitio Mater Studiorum" is a good recipe for learning the pipes, a hard-driving Scots mother gets the same result. Years passed, these boys went their various ways and our school quit. Then came the war.

The rest of this story is circumstantial, and from various sources, but holds together. Also, I had a letter from Malcolm, rather a wonderful letter, quite a long time ago. He had got my address from the Pipers' Newsletter, and he had told me his story. I put the letter carefully away, to answer it, and have mislaid it, but if Malcolm sees this he will know that my information has percolated through various channels.

When the second world war came on, Malcolm was back in Alberta, and went overseas with the Calgary Highlanders as a piper, and on getting to Scotland, looked up his family tree and found the MacCrimmon who mourned that he would never return, was a lineal forebear. Dame Flora MacLeod heard about this, confirmed the information from her end and appointed Malcolm as her personal piper at Dunvegan. Malcolm was placed in the elite school for pipe majors at Edinburgh Castle, and thence to the Scots Guards, and with them came through safely.

One day, after the war, I had just arrived at my office when the telephone rang. On answering it, I was surprised to hear the voice of a Mr. Jim Rutherford. I had been at college with him in Edinburgh. His story was unusual. He was a son of one of the big Hawick manufacturers of woolen goods, and was out here to drum up business. He had been grounded in Lethbridge the previous night, and a later plane got him to Vancouver in the morning. He had in his hours of waiting remembered that my home town was Vancouver. I shut up shop at once and met him at the Hotel Vancouver, and we had lunch with the president of the Watsonian Club, and after that I suggested that we take a taxi run while we talked. I had never had the opportunity of showing off my city before, and it was one of those green and gold days when Vancouver looked her best. I got one of Dan McClure's taxis, and I told Dan what it was for. The driver wanted to give us the conventional run-around, but I demurred. I took Mr. Rutherford round the Park and ended at Brockton Point Rugby ground. My guest had been in his day an outstanding forward of the Hawick "Teris" and he was loud in his praise for our rugby ground, which has one of the most beautiful settings in the world. Then we took the Upper Levels Highway to Horseshoe Bay, where we looked down at the numerous sports fishing boats pattering round. I explained to Mr. Rutherford that was salmon fishing and how it was done. As he lived on Tweed, he had an encyclopedic knowledge of catching salmon legally and otherwise. As we rode slowly along I told him about our Malcolm. Mr. Rutherford surprised me by saying that he knew him. At Stobs, near Hawick, there is an Army

Summer Training Camp, and one day, when the Scots Guards were there, Jim Rutherford went out to see them. Canada came into the conversation, for Jim had spent several years in Galt, Ontario, in his line of business. One of the officers said that they had a Canadian piper, so they took Jim and introduced him to Malcolm who played for him. Jim noticed that Malcolm played left-handed. I couldn't get him to do otherwise.

During those post-war years I used to go up on the Union Steamships to Hopkins Landing on a Friday night and come home on the Sunday night. Another Thompson, Captain Thompson, who brought the C.P.R. Princess Patricia home from Nanaimo on Sunday nights was usually my fellow passenger on the Lynn Valley street car. One night he was sounding off about not being able to get canned milk for his coffee, as there was none in Nanaimo or Vancouver. My stop was ahead of his, and as I got up from my seat I handed him a tall can of Pacific Milk, and left him staring at it. Next Sunday night I did the same, for there was lots of canned milk up-coast, and he responded with a bottle of Tequila, a potent Mexican distillation which reached Vancouver by way of the C.P.R. boats from Seattle, and he told me a story. He was from Liverpool, England, and had never been further east in Canada than New Westminster (14 miles) as he had come to Vancouver the long way round, by sea from England, until the previous fall, when he had visited former North Vancouver neighbours of the name of MacCrimmon at Fort Saskatchewan, near Edmonton, Alberta. Malcolm's father then owned a large and prosperous farm there and Malcolm managed it. Years later, from a neighbour at Hopkins Landing, who has television, I got the report that he had seen on the C.B.C. an interview between Dame Flora MacLeod and Malcolm MacCrimmon, taken, not in the setting of Dunvegan Castle but in Malcolm's trim sitting room at his farm.

In Malcolm's letter to me he said that he too, had more or less retired, but was still on the executive of the Northern Alberta Fair Board, and that one of his two sons had become a piper of pipers in the MacCrimmon tradition. Which crowns this tale. It has given me great satisfaction to have had a hand in this discovery and from a personal angle this story is good for a drink at a Highland gathering, - and maybe for a page in the Newsletter.

Eric Thomson,  
April 19, 1970

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### CABER TOSSING COMPETITION

This year, Senior Olympics are being held in the Los Angeles Coliseum June 18-19-20-21.

Mr. Bill Bangert of Hazelwood, Mo., a well known champion caber tosser has issued a challenge to any person over 40 years to a caber tossing competition, and has offered to donate a gold bar relief plaque as a prize. So far several contestants from San Francisco and Los Angeles have entered.

Further information and entry forms may be obtained from:

Senior Olympics, Helms Athletic Foundation  
8760 Venice Blvd.  
Los Angeles, 90034, California

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REMEMBER the date - June 5th, 1970  
the time - 8:00 p.m.  
the place - Steelworkers Hall  
33 East Broadway

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ERA OF THE HEREDITARY PIPERS AND OLD MASTERS

In another world the Hereditary Piper held a gentleman's position with his Clan Chief, a position of honour and dignity that he could rightly be proud of. Respected and wanted for all important occasions, he would serve his Chief faithfully through the years.

For almost three centuries (1500 - 1795), the famous MacCrimmons of Skye were hereditary Pipers to the Clan MacLeod. A family of MacArthurs were Pipers to the MacDonalds in Skye, and held the lands of Hunglader and Peingown, near Duntulm Castle, in Trotternish. They held a Piping school near the small hill Cnoc Phail. One of the family, Charles, seeking more knowledge and training, became a pupil of Padruig Og MacCrimmon, who held him in such esteem that when Charles discovered a new tune of his own composition and yearned to have it, he eventually gave it to him with the words -- "Seeing you have got this tune, you shall be the best Piper in the world after me. Wherever you play this tune, victory will be on your side". The tune was called -- "A Bhuaidh Laraich" - The Victory. The Pipers of my own Clan, the ancient Clan Macintyre, holding lands of Glenoe, Loch Etive 500 to 600 years prior to 1806 were hereditary Pipers to MacDonald of Clan Ranald, and Macintyres of Rannoch to the Chief of Clan Menzies. These are but some of the historical Pipers.

In a quiet and timeless environment unknown since then, where a man could step out into a forest, by a quiet stream, or the shore of a Loch, foot of a Ben or into the heather, and compose to his heart's content, great music was created. And by the fire-side in the quiet hours I am sure many a Piobaireachd was born, and played to the hills when completed, undisturbed by time and care. How the old Masters must have enjoyed their art, and love of the instrument that could give their music soul - music of emotion, feeling and beauty, the ancient Piobaireachd classics we enjoy today, and old Highland airs that make you feel good inside. Nestle in the Highlands with the two-drone Pipe they set about to improve it, adding the rich organ tone of the bass drone, and gave us Scotland's own Great Highland Bagpipe. In 1781 the first Piping competitions were held at Falkirk, for the purpose of preserving the repertoire, and for maintaining the quality and standard of good Piping.

Cathrine Paterson

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"BE SMARTER - GO CHARTER"

-10-  
"MISS CRAIG"

A musical score for the piece "MISS CRAIG". The score is written on ten staves, each consisting of a treble clef and a bass clef. The music is in a common time signature and features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, as well as triplets. The notation includes stems, beams, and various rests. The piece concludes with a double bar line on the tenth staff.

Strathspey

by Wm. Gray

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THE MACRAES' MARCH

The MacRaes' March is the oldest known pipe tune. The Lord of the Isles invaded Ross-shire about 1477 with a numerous army, and laid waste the country of the MacKenzies, burning a chapel at Contin. The MacKenzies took the field to protect their lands and property, and in an endeavour to recover the booty from the MacDonalds they asked the assistance of the MacRaes. The MacRaes joined them, and the MacDonalds were defeated with great slaughter. In the ranks of the MacRaes there fought Duncan MacRae, an orphan, familiarly known by the name of "Suarachan", a term of contempt. His prowess on this occasion was remarkable, and fully entitled him to higher consideration. He slew a notable man in the MacDonald ranks, and then calmly sat down on the body, as if no more was required of him. MacKenzie was astonished at the action of this ally of his, and exclaimed:--

"Why sit you so, when your help is so much needed?"

"If paid like a man, I will fight like a man," replied MacRae. "If everyone does as much as I have done the day is yours."

"Kill your two and you shall have the wages of two," said the chief.

Suarachan obeyed, and again sat down on the corpse.

"Kill your three," shouted the MacKenzie; "nay, fight on, and I will reckon with you for the dead."

Suarachan thereupon got up, and dealt fearful destruction among the MacDonalds, killing sixteen with his own hand, and thus proved his worth. He was ever afterwards held in high esteem, and became a leading man in the clan, acquiring the honourable name of "Duncan of the Axe". It was an axe he wielded with such dread purpose on the field of battle. The pibroch was composed in his honour and in memory of the conflict, and has always been the march of the clan.

The resemblance between the story and that of Hal o' the Wynd in Scott's Fair Maid of Perth is too striking to pass unnoticed. Hal, at the battle on the North Inch of Perth, acted exactly as Suarachan did at Contin. Which is the original story, or whether the two are different stories it is hard to determine. It would be interesting to know where Sir Walter got the legend on which he based the Hal o' the Wynd incident.

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WHITE HACKLE SUMMER DANCE

At the 6th Field Armoury - 15th and Forbes, North Vancouver

Saturday, June 13th, 1970 - 8 P.M. - 1:00 A.M.

\$3.00 per person - Bar facilities available

Music by the Big Band Sound

For tickets phone 985-7524

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PIPER OF THE MONTH

As mentioned earlier in this edition the final round of the B.C. Pipers' Knock-out Competition will take place June 5th at the Steelworkers Hall. One of the competitors is relatively new to the British Columbia scene and is our Piper of the Month; Ruairidh Macdonald. The first we heard of Ruairidh, as far as competitive piping was concerned, was at the Knock-out Competition and our members were most impressed with his abilities.

He was born on the Isle of Barra, Scotland, into a most active piping family. Ruairidh's Grandfather, Ruairidh Macdonald, Sr. was a Pipe Sergeant in the Camerons and the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders and was a most talented composer of pipe music and even had a Strathspey; "Roderick Macdonald" named in his honour. Ruairidh Sr. spent his entire life deeply involved in piping and after retiring from the army, became a reed maker. Ruairidh's father, Neil Angus Macdonald is still an active piper and was our judge at this year's B.C. Pipers' Annual Gathering. Neil Angus competed in many competitions from 1947 to 1960 and was a regular member of the prize lists. In 1969 he played for the first time at the Northern Meeting. Ruairidh's father was taught Piobaireachd by the renowned John MacDonald of Inverness.

At the age of five Ruairidh's father gave him a practice chanter but Ruairidh unfortunately never got past mastering the scale until he was thirteen years old. He consistently resisted his father's attempts to teach him the basic rudiments of the art of piping mainly due to his Scottish stubbornness. It seems wee Ruairidh felt he was expected to play the pipes and he, therefore, decided he wouldn't.

His father, however, outsmarted the youngster by tutoring another laddie in the neighbourhood and expounding on how well his new pupil was progressing. Instinctively Ruairidh decided he couldn't abide this situation and earnestly tackled his piping lessons much to his father's delight. By the time he was fifteen Ruairidh entered the Junior competition at the Northern Meeting and the Inverness Musical Festival. He won first prize at both these competitions and repeated these victories when he was sixteen and seventeen. Three years in a row he won a practice chanter with a mounted engraved silver shield for his efforts.

Many of our readers saw the television production of "Culloden" several years ago. Ruairidh made his T.V. debut as one of the three pipers who helped develop the authentic atmosphere of the production.

At age seventeen Ruairidh seemed to lose interest in his musical ability and concentrated on cricket and bridge. He became discouraged at the seemingly great gulf between himself and the Scottish professional pipers, and almost stopped piping completely. In 1957, however, on entering the University of Glasgow he became the piper for the Ossianic Society. This society proved to be most active and Ruairidh's piping engagements were many in number.

On graduating from University he became a mathematics teacher and also began a piping teacher career. He taught pipes after school hours for two years but was never overly enthralled with the rewards of teaching Scotlands National Instrument.



In 1968 Ruairidh and his charming wife Catherine were married and came to Canada two weeks later where both resumed their teaching careers.

Shortly after his arrival he joined our Association. Entering the B.C. Pipers' Knock-out Competition was Ruairidh's first attempt at professional competition and by the results to date he has proved to be a worthy contestant. The piping and Scottish social communities have greatly appreciated the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Ruairidh Macdonald and the Editors are anticipating their continued Canadian residence.

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"Taken for a long ride"

