



NOVEMBER, 1960. No. 8.

A significant innovation will be introduced in 1961 in the Open Piobaireachd competitions at the Indoor Meet and at the Highland Games following the rules of this Association. There has been a tendency in past years for some competitors in this class to play the same piobaireachd year after year. Many members have expressed the opinion that this situation should be remedied. With the intention of increasing the variety of tunes played, and of improving the level of piobaireachd competitions, each competitor will be required to submit two tunes; one of his own choice, and the second from the following list of six tunes:

The Earl of Seaforth's Salute.  
 The MacKay's Banner.  
 MacCrimmon's Sweetheart.  
 MacFarlane's Gathering.  
 In Praise of Morag (Marion).  
 Donald MacKenzie's Lament for his Father.

The judge will choose which of the two tunes will be played, just before each competitor steps onto the platform.

If this change proves to be successful, it is intended to extend it in the following year, and perhaps require the competitor to submit three tunes. The list of pieces will be partially varied from year to year.

We would ask you to make these changes known as soon as possible to any prospective competitors in the Open Piobaireachd class who do not receive the Newsletter.

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The Coldstream - Cameron Show: at the Forum, October 20th, 1960.

Quite apart from the obvious truth that a large contingent of Scotsmen and Englishmen, to say nothing of others of Scottish or English extraction, or related to or connected somehow with those who are completely or partially Scottish or English, would automatically gird every nerve and sinew to be present to witness a spectacle of this type, in order to renew their worship of, and their acquaintance with their beloved Highlanders, pipers and dancers and/or a component of the world-renowned Brigade of Guards, respectively, such an audience might well be divided into two major groups. (This discounts a possible third group whose members attend such events either out of sheer curiosity or because the rather costly price of admission has been donated).

First of all, there is that person who goes simply because he is an admirer of pomp and pageantry, but lacks the qualifications to assess the musicianship or the perfection of the military precision of the performers. And, secondly, there is the person who is quite familiar with musical standards of execution and can readily differentiate between mediocrity and outstanding, truly professional achievement. Additionally, and notwithstanding that comparisons

are said to be odious, anyone who has a profound interest in such concerts is bound to compare the Coldstream-Cameron combinations of 1960 with that of the Grenadiers-Scots Guards of 1959, the All-Black Watch ensemble of 1958, and that mighty array of musical talent gathered at Empire Stadium in the summer of the latter year for the Centennial Searchlight Tattoo.

As a military band, the Coldstreams are good, but they are by no means the best. Musically speaking, they are considerably better than were the Black Watch, and this the writer must admit albeit he is a Scot and joined in the applause for the Regimental Band of the Royal Highland Regiment when they played so many tunes with a distinctive Scottish flavour. But they are not nearly so good as the Grenadiers nor the Royal Marines. The Coldstream's Director of Music, one Colonel Pope, and their Drum-Major Carter (who leads the band when it is on the march) are superb, however. In fact, Colonel Pope is a first-class entertainer in his own right and is most awe-inspiring in his scarlet tunic, silk crimson sash and bearskin, the latter headgear, incidentally, undoubtedly being the largest, tallest, smoothest and shiniest in the world. Drum-Major Carter's drill, handsome and lavish gold braid and soldierly bearing are both imposing and noble. These two leaders possess that union of dignity and showmanship which is so typical of the Britisher and which the American, for instance, tries so unsuccessfully to duplicate.

The Coldstreamers have a vast repertoire, extending through "Colonel Bogey", "The March of the King's Men", "Scipio" and "The Thin Red Line" at the one end, to "Light Cavalry" and "Finlandia" in the middle, and such gems as "Star Dust", "Home on the Range" and "76 Trombones" at the other. Their masterful rendition of "God Save the Queen" was the most moving musical tribute to the sovereign heard in this part of the world for a long, long time. Their military manoeuvres leave nothing to be desired.

The Pipes and Drums of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders did not give exactly what might be termed a "dazzling" performance, but they did play well-tuned pipes. They did not tackle anything out of the ordinary but "Loch Maree", "Echo Bank", "Lady Dorothea", "Pibroch o' Donal' Dhu" and the rest were certainly acceptable. Their drum section is not comprised of champions and would easily be overshadowed by at least three of the pipe band drum corps in British Columbia, but it could just be that a changeover from the old-fashioned Guards' Pattern rope-tension drums to the newer, crisper and better separate rod-tension models would lead to a marked improvement.

Drill-wise, the Camerons cannot be compared with the pipers of the Scots Guards, and those who half-expected that they might, as a special feature, surprise the audience with "Lord Alexander" or "Highland Wedding" or "Stirlingshire" or one of the numerous John MacColl masterpieces came away disappointed.

Considered with the dash and glitter of the Black Watch and the real torch ceremonies of the Scots Guards, the Highland dancers of the Camerons fell short. The three pipers were woefully inadequate in so large an arena (remember the Black Watch with their full complement of pipers and drummers and how wonderful an accompaniment it was?) and there appeared to be too much gloom in the lighting and the performance was listless.

It would be foolish indeed to compare the bugling of the Camerons with the masterful touch of the Royal Marines on the battlements of Old Fort Langley at Empire Stadium. The Cameron pipers were well turned out in Royal Stewart kilts and plaids but they should have been in white spats and the whole Pipes and Drums could have done with a smarter appearance.

To the admirer of pomp and pageantry and to the uninitiated, the whole show was spectacular and thrilling. The more experienced, keen observer could have picked out many flaws but would still have agreed it was well worth while.

- Ian MacLeod -

A record number of 39 competitors were entered in the first Bi-Monthly Competition of the season, held on October 28th, at the Scottish Auditorium. Donald Murray, the judge, had the difficult task of choosing the following winners:

Novice Marches:

1. Laurie McIlvena
2. Dorothy MacArthur
3. William McMichael
4. Wayne Penner.

Juvenile Old Highland Airs:

1. Raymond Irvine
2. Teresa MacInnes
3. Bruce Topp
4. Gordon Hardy

Junior Strathspeys and Reels:

1. Bobby MacDonald
2. David MacKenzie
3. Larry Gillott
4. Karen Ruddick

Amateur Piobaireachd:

1. Bill Elder

Senior Amateur Jigs:

1. William Paterson
2. Harry Mumford
3. David Ireland

It was extremely gratifying to see such a large entry in the Novice and Juvenile classes. However, it is hoped that in the future there will be more entries in the Amateur and Senior Amateur classes.

The next Bi-Monthly Competitions will be held on Friday, December 9th, in the Lecture Room at the Seaforth Armoury, commencing at 8:00 p.m. We would ask you to pay special heed to this change of location and inform anyone, who might be interested, of this change. You will recall that the lecture room, which is on the 2nd floor directly above the gymnasium, is where we held our elimination competitions in certain events at the 1960 Indoor Gathering.

A General Meeting will be held on Thursday, November 24th, in Band Room at the Seaforth Armoury. After the business portion of the meeting, Roderick MacRae, a past president of this association, will present an exhibition of colour slides taken at various Highland Gatherings during the past several years. These slides will undoubtedly be extremely interesting to everyone, and the evening should be most enjoyable. We also plan to play as background music some of the tapes from our collection. The meeting will commence at 8:00 p.m., and we would ask you to be prompt, in order that we might complete the business part of the meeting as early as possible.

PIPE MAJOR WILLIAM CAMPBELL, M.V.O.

A long distinguished life came to a close on Tuesday, the first of November, with the passing of Pipe Major Campbell in his eighty-eighth year, at Haney, B.C.

For some years, Pipe Major Campbell had been Honorary President of our Association. This was the greatest acknowledgment of respect and admiration which the Association could bestow upon a man who all his life was not only a most distinguished exponent of the piping art, but also one who contributed in every way to the fostering of the instrument we all hold so dearly.

A pupil of Ronald MacKenzie, as a young man in 1897 Pipe Major Campbell won the coveted Gold Medal at Inverness, playing "The Blue Ribbon". This Inverness award, as all pipers know, is the highest recognition which a competitive player can win. At this time, Pipe Major Campbell was a member of the Royal Household as piper to H.M. Queen Victoria, an appointment he held for the last ten years of that illustrious Sovereign's reign. Within a few years of the Queen's passing in 1901, Pipe Major Campbell came to Canada. On the outbreak of war in 1914 he joined the newly formed Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, with whom he served in France and in Flanders as Pipe Major.

In the years following the Great War Pipe Major Campbell was always in top piping form and was a most formidable contender in open competition. Whenever and wherever he was "on the boards" the entire colony of piping enthusiasts was certain to be close at hand, for he excelled in every facet of competitive playing. In 1928, at the International Highland Gathering in Banff, Alberta, where the cream of Canadian piping was in attendance, he was declared Canadian Champion Piper. As a memento of that honour, he was presented with an oil painting of himself by the Canadian Pacific Railway, sponsor of those meets in the famous mountain resort.

When the time came that William Campbell considered that he should no longer take part in competitive playing, his services were always available as an adjudicator, and such was his recognized ability in this field, that no one was ever heard to question his decisions. In his later years he continued to support the cause of piping. Impeccably turned out in a Campbell kilt and tweed jacket, he was a familiar and beloved figure at most of the gatherings held on the Coast. Even at the late stages of his life, his counsel was often sought by younger players as to just how such and such a ground should go. As recently as a week before his passing, he went over "Chisholm's Salute" for a friend who was passing him.

With the passing of this great piper and gentleman, an era has closed. His presence will be much missed by all who knew and respected him.

- Pipe Major Edmund Esson, M.B.E. -

Vancouver Ladies' Pipe Band's trip to San Francisco:

The Vancouver Ladies' Pipe Band had a very enjoyable trip on their recent visit to San Francisco. Although time was short, the Ladies managed to take in many places of interest as well as causing quite a sensation in their kilts as guests at a Y.M.C.A. dance.

The weather was ideal for the competitions which were held at nearby Petaluma on Sunday, September 4th. The American Legion Pipe Band, under Pipe-Major James MacColl was the "A" Class winner, while the Vancouver Ladies' Pipe Band was awarded first prize in the "B" division.

Individual members of the Ladies' Band were also successful in solo piping and dancing. Pipe-Sergeant Catherine McDonald won the Women's Professional Class and Pipe-Corporal Rae Marie MacInnes won the W.M. McGregor Trophy for Open Amateur Competition. Piper Peggy Gillies and Drummer Vi-Ann Treasurer won places in the dancing competitions.

There was a good showing of individual competitors and six bands participated in the massed band display. A capacity audience was very enthusiastic in their appreciation of all performances.

- Pipe-Major Norma Nicholson-

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We have just heard of a seventy-five year old veteran, who has been a patient at George Derby Veterans' Home for several years, and who goes visiting on weekends dressed proudly in his kilt. However, unfortunately, he does not own a proper sporran, and has been trying to make one for some time. We were wondering if any of our members might have an old sporran no longer of any use which could be given to this gentleman to complete his attire. If you have such a surplus sporran, contact us, and we will see that this patient receives it.

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We would like to announce that this Association will hold a banquet on Saturday, January 14th, 1961, at the Stanley Park Sports Pavilion. This banquet is intended for all members, wives and friends of the association. The highlight of the evening's activities will be the presentation of Life Memberships to charter members of the B.C. Pipers' Association. We hope, naturally, to have a large turn-out, and would ask you to keep this date open. Further details will be announced at a later date.

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DON'T FORGET:

GENERAL MEETING: NOVEMBER 24th.

BI-MONTHLY COMPETITION: DECEMBER 9th. (SEAFORTH ARMOURY)

MEMBERS' BANQUET: JANUARY 14th.

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