

B. C. PIPERS' NEWSLETTER



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

OCTOBER 1971 NO. 117

B.C. PIPERS' NEWSLETTER

Published by the British Columbia Pipers' Association.

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B.C. Pipers' Newsletter

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NEWSLETTER EDITORS RESIGN

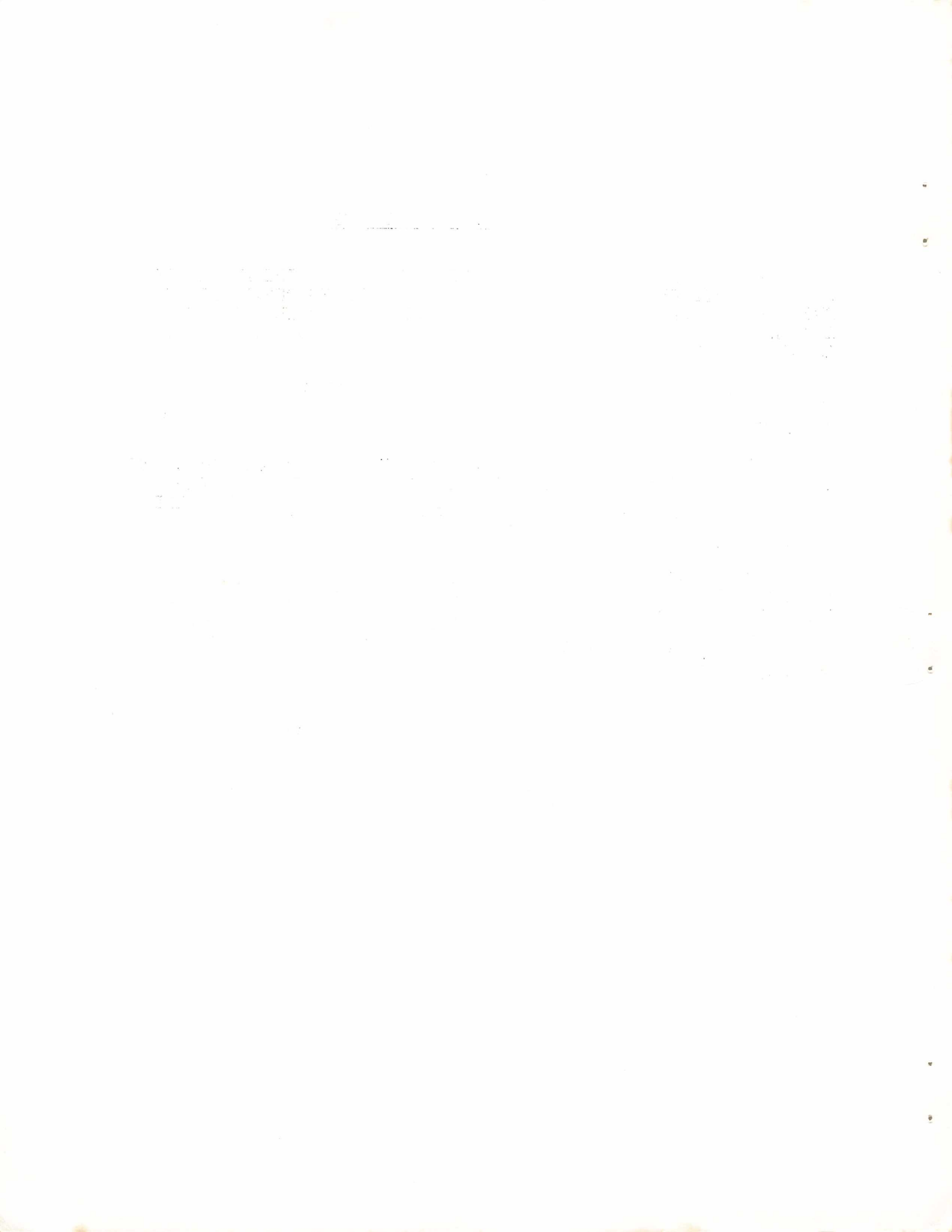
IN FEBRUARY OF 1969 THE PRESENT EDITORS OF THE NEWSLETTER, WITH THE HELP OF THEIR WIVES, UNDERTOOK THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PRODUCING A MONTHLY PUBLICATION. UNFORTUNATELY WE NOW MUST ANNOUNCE THAT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ACCEPTED OUR RESIGNATION AS OF DECEMBER 31, 1971.

DURING THE LAST 32 MONTHS WE HAVE ENJOYED PRODUCING THE NEWSLETTER. IT WAS A SATISFYING HOBBY AND A PLEASURE SERVING OUR ASSOCIATION IN THIS MANNER.

THE DECISION TO RESIGN AS EDITORS WAS NOT AN EASY ONE. WE ARE INDEED SORRY TO DISCONTINUE THIS SERVICE BUT DURING OUR TENURE WE HAVE BECOME FATHERS ON THREE OCCASIONS AND NOW FIND THAT FAMILY, SCHOOL AND BUSINESS COMMITMENTS MONOPOLIZE OUR SPARE TIME.

THE NEWSLETTER WAS DISCONTINUED FOR SIMILAR REASONS BY THE PREVIOUS EDITOR IN 1968 AND THE ASSOCIATION WAS WITHOUT A PUBLICATION FOR APPROXIMATELY ONE YEAR. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT AN ENERGETIC INDIVIDUAL WILL CONTINUE THIS WORTHWHILE PROJECT -- WE ONLY HOPE HE OR SHE VOLUNTEERS IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

Bob Gunn
Bill Elder



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Army School of Piping
Edinburgh Castle
Edinburgh
28th September 1971

The Editor
B.C. Pipers' Newsletter

Dear Sir,

As usual I find the Newsletter so interesting, particularly in these past two years when I have been unable to visit B.C. as I was able to do in previous years.

Reading the report on the Coeur d'Alene Games by Seumas MacNeill has prompted me to make the following comment on what he says about a very favourite tune of mine - "The Vaunting". He says, of John MacLeod's performance, that "his treatment was a shade polite for this braggart and boastful tune". In the historical notes on this tune, the source of which is Donald MacDonald's unpublished Manuscript it is clearly indicated that the tune was made as a lament. The note on it is as follows:

"An Bhoalich or an INTENDED LAMENT.

Ronald MacDonald, Esq. of Morair, was a first rate player on the bagpipe, and a number of fine pieces were composed by him, beside this one. He had a gentleman's son residing with him, to pass the winter at his house. This youth took a notion of learning to play upon the pipe, and, in a short time, acquired a thorough knowledge of the method of playing, which made him very happy. Some time after this, the young man fell sick and very little hopes were entertained of his recovery. When he thought himself near to death, he sent for Mr. MacDonald, to whom, when he arrived, he said "O, my dear friend and master, it would greatly gratify me (since I must die) if you would compose a Lament for me after I am dead", to which request the gentleman gave his consent. In the course of a week after this, the young gentleman again sent for Mr. Macdonald: and he accordingly came. The young gentleman addressed him as follows: "O sir, if you would have the goodness to let me hear the Lament before I die, it would make me quite happy". Ronald MacAilleanoig told him he was afraid his head could not bear the sound; to which the youth replied "O, but I think it will do me good". MacAilleanoig brought his pipes, and blew them up at the sick man's bedside: the air delighted him so much, that the fever took a turn, and in a few days he was quite well. Being now recovered, MacAilleanoig asked the young man what should now be the name of the Lament. "O, (said the young gentleman,) we'll make a Boalich of it", which word signifies Drollery. It is a fine air, and very ill to play....".

Thus one can see that the circumstances of the composition have much in common with "Patrick Og MacCrimmon's Lament" which was composed on a false report of his death. No one would think of playing Patrick Og as anything other than a lament, I believe that the "Vaunting" should also be played as a sad piece of music, for unless Ronald MacDonald radically changed the composition, and we have no evidence that points to such a course having been taken, the mood of the tune when composed was a lament and the changing of a name cannot alter that.

Of course I am not saying that one cannot interpret a score in various ways, but for me the variations of this tune reflect a great sadness, and despite it's name, which too can be interpreted in different ways, it will always be a lament.

There is no doubt that piping continues to flourish in B.C. and it is nice to read of the progression of so many young pipers through the various classes as they move to better grades. Unfortunately through being out of Edinburgh and in the country for the most part of the Games season I missed meeting many of the B.C. pipers who were over this year, although I did manage to have a word with Harold Senyk for a second at Oban and heard Byron Barnard play very nicely at Crieff games.

Might I through the medium of the Newsletter pass my regards to all my friends in the B.C. Pipers' Association.

Yours sincerely,

John MacLellan

The Association was saddened to hear of the passing of two members.

DANIEL R. MacDOUGALL - on September 14, 1971 of 614 East 21st Avenue, aged 81 years. Survived by his loving wife, Viola; several nieces and nephews. Served in First World War with Second Siege Battery and awarded the DCM. Served as Staff/Sgt with R.M.R.'s in Second World War. Late member of Mount Pleasant Branch No. 177 Royal Canadian Legion.

IAN DUNCAN - On October 8, 1971. Mr. Duncan was a most active member of the piping fraternity in the Victoria area. In recent years he had been called upon to judge at several competitions.

The members of the B.C. Pipers' Association extend their sympathy to the MacDougall and Duncan families.

Any correspondence for the Seaforth Pipes and Drums, please address to:

Pipe Major B. Topp
4563 West 11th Avenue or
Vancouver 8, B.C.

Pipe Major B. Topp
1650 Burrard Street
Vancouver, B.C.

BI-MONTHLY

The Bi-monthly Novice Class has once again been divided into two sections due to the numbers in the event.

SECTION I

David John Anderson
Gail Burnett
Ian Campbell
Kelly Campbell
Ian Cherry
Neil Dowie
Bonnie Lynn Gordon
Michael Guillemin
Thomas John Leathen
Scott Ian MacPherson
Tim Morris
Mary Munro
Jean Elizabeth Nicol

SECTION II

Carolyn Jane Paterson
Jimmy Paterson
Steve Ramsden
J. Owen C. Reid
Stephen Shipley
Kimberly Ann Smith
Howie Speer
Mark Steffich
Neil Sutherland
Killie Sutton
Ruth Tremaine
Grant Wilkie
Linda Williams
Ronald Tait
Ian Putz

All teachers are requested to inform their students as to which class they belong. Additional entries to the Novice events are to contact Mrs. R.B. Swanson, 166 East 46th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. New entries must include their phone number so they may be notified as being in either Section I or II.

ENTRY FEE FOR BI-MONTHLY COMPETITION

\$1.00 for Novice

\$2.00 for all other classes

Next competition: November 19, 1971 - Novice Section I
Old Highland Airs
- Junior Marches

THE COEUR d'ALENE SCOTTISH FESTIVAL AND TATTOO

The Thirteenth Annual Scottish Festival and Tattoo was held in the beautiful Coeur d'Alene City Parks, which are provided through the Department of Parks and Recreation which are under the supervision of Arnold "Red" Halpern, on Saturday, July 31, 1971.

This "Festival" again attracted over one hundred fifty contestants who were registered in either individual or group events. We are pleased to note that the quality of Piping and Drumming increases. This we attribute to the many proficient instructors, who devote their time and talents (many of them do this without compensation) to furthering the art of Piping and Drumming. The excellent schools provided during the summer months in the United States and Canada providing some of the world's finest instructors contributes largely to this rise in proficiency.

The Winners of the various prizes, medals and trophies are listed in the report of events, with the coveted trophy for Amateur Piobaireachd, presented by Lt. Col. John McEwing U.S.A.F. (Ret.), going to Allen Walters, Calgary, Alberta.

The culminating event for a very good day of piping was the competition held at the Stadium. This spectacular show was opened by the Royal Highlanders brass band which provided necessary protocol with the colors as well as added entertainment. The parade into the grounds started promptly at 7:30 P.M. and the bands formed enmasse on the field. There were eight bands entered which made for a colorful display. The Drum Majors were adjudicated as they came onto the field with Wally Clarke, Seattle Pipe Band, being named winner and taking command of the Massed Bands. The competition began at about 8:00 P.M. with each competing band being placed in Class I or Class II as they competed before a record crowd in excess of 3,000 people. With the final band competing, a mass band and awards ceremony brought to a close a very fine day of competition.

Alvin Halvorson & P/M Wm. Thomas

*

PROFESSIONAL PIPING by Seumas MacNeill

The games were held this year on Saturday, the 31st July, and in direct contrast to last year the weather was hot and sunny throughout the entire proceedings. The City Park was thronged from an early hour - 8:00 A.M. according to the program but 8:30 A.M. according to the pipers - by enthusiasts apparently from all over the West Coast of Canada and America, anxious to hear once again this annual feast of piping.

The Entries in the various classes of individual piping were so large that a total of four judges had to be used. These were Neil Sutherland from Winnipeg, Seumas MacNeill, Robert G. Hardie, and Dr. John MacAskill from Scotland. Solo piping competitions continued on three separate platforms from the early morning until about 5:00 P.M.

The professional events consisted of piobaireachd, march, and strathspey and reel. The first event to be held was the march, and this year the competitors had to submit two tunes one of which had to be a composition by John MacColl. The first competitor wanted to submit one tune only - The Argyllshire Gathering - and claimed that firstly he only knew one tune and secondly he did not know any tune composed by John MacColl. Eventually this confusing situation was sorted out and he played (to

his surprise) a John MacColl composition. Thereafter the competition went with considerable swing, eventually it must have become apparent to the competitors that they were all going to play John MacColl tunes, and so it turned out. On the whole a high standard of playing was maintained, although the usual errors of small high G grace notes and poor double C's at the ends of parts were evident.

The first prize winner was John MacLeod with a fine rendering of "Dugald MacColl's Farewell to France" followed by Patrick MacIntyre's ("Jeannie Carruthers") and Hal Senyk ("John MacFadyen of Melfort") in that order. Unplaced but high up in the batting order were Dave Wilson and Jamie Troy.

The professional strathspey and reel event attracted also 10 players, although strangely enough not the same 10. One dropped out and Theresa MacEarlin arrived (as usual it seems in Coeur d'Alene) late, but made up for it with a first class performance of "Neil Sutherland of Lairg" and "MacAllister's Dirk". Brilliant as these were, and I was tremendously interested to observe how she overcame the difficulty of doing a double tap on C (which nobody to my knowledge has ever successfully managed to play), there were, however, two performances which were slightly better. One of these was from Jamie Troy, who played a really fantastic "Susan MacLeod". This could well have been used as an example for all pipers, everywhere of first; how to play this tune and secondly how to play any strathspey. His reel (The Smith of Chilli-chassie) was not of the same high standard, but then it would have been impossible perhaps to have produced two great tunes in succession.

John MacLeod also gave a delightful performance, his tunes being "The Islay Ball" and "Dolly MacKay". As always his fingering was immaculate and only a little unsteadiness at the start of the reel prevented him from obtaining the premier award.

This was a really outstanding competition, and two other performances would normally have been placed in any average professional event. These were "John Roy Stewart" and "Peter MacFarquhar" played by Patrick MacIntyre, and "The Shepherd's Crook" and "Alick C. MacGregor" played by Reuben Santos. Both were unfortunate to find three such outstanding competitors on such splendid form all on the same day.

The open piobaireachd event, by contrast, was something on an anti-climax. Only six competitors appeared, and none of these was without fault. The prize eventually went to Hal Senyk for "The Earl of Antrim" and on the whole this was a very enjoyable tune, although not reaching the heights of his performance the previous day. John MacLeod was second with a steady performance of the "The Lament For Sir James MacDonald of the Isles", but he had some unsteadiness in the Ground and a change of mind in variation I. Third place was shared by Reuben Santos for a fine interpretation of "The Old Sword's Lament" although the version he played was unpublished, unknown, and always likely to debar a competitor from the prize list until reasonable justification is given for its use. The other person sharing the prize was Patrick MacIntyre who gave a vigorous interpretation of "Squinting Patrick's Flame of Wrath", although he went off in line I of the ground and badly off in the crunluath doubling.

The number of bands competing this year was down slightly on last year, but the enthusiasm and the overall standard of play had quite definitely increased. The organization, under M.C. Jack Bishop assisted

by an able band of experts, left nothing to be desired. Casual visitors, enthusiastic piping types, and the competitors themselves were all catered for with the utmost consideration.

As usual, the task of adjudicating was a two-fold one. The bands had to be graded for the evening, and also judged within their grade. The judging was "ensemble only" - the ideal which is being aimed at in Scotland, but is not expected to be achieved for a few years yet.

Seattle were the first to play and they set a very high standard, giving a polished performance in all respects. The tone of the pipes was a bit thin, but otherwise the instruments were well set and stayed in tune throughout. The fingering (of a difficult set) was most commendable. The drumming was also of a high standard but unfortunately was not designed to blend with the tunes.

Clan Gordon was a much less experienced combination but gave a commendable performance nevertheless. The drums section was on the whole better than the pipers, who obviously found the difficulties of execution too much for them at times.

Angus Scott Memorial is a young band of exceptional promise, with some splendid pipers in the ranks. Unfortunately they got off to a very bad start in the march and only recovered in time to make another very bad start in the strathspey and reel. I think nervousness of perhaps one player affected some of the others, but this is a band which can play much better and which can do very well if they stay together.

The West Dalke Highlanders were a new combination to enter the pipe band world, consisting of what must be the cream of the pipers in the west of the continent. So far as the piping of this group was concerned few bands in the world could compare with them, and these few are all in Scotland. The drumming however was very weak, the side drummers being hesitant and tentative, while the bass drummer was quite inaudible.

Kootenay on the other hand had the drummers leading the pipers most of the time. Some of the pipers played very well, but some played poorly and some did not play hardly at all. A good deal of work will have to be done to bring along the less experienced pipers before this band does itself full justice.

Seaforth Cadets. This was a bright bunch of lads, making a good attempt at some difficult tunes. They had an unsteady start and did not keep well together while marching, although once the circle was formed they blended well together. The drumming was splendid and helped along the piping a good deal.

Portland Boys also took some time to settle and again suffered from the common fault of not being able to keep well together while marching. The drumming in this band was much too elaborate for the piping and did little to help. This lack of cohesion carried over into the reel where not only were the pipers and drummers operating independently, but some of the pipers paid little attention to what the other pipers were doing. Nevertheless this is a band of considerable promise but it needs to practise more together with each individual listening to what the others are doing.

MacBain Scottish finished off the competition in splendid style. The playing of the pipers was good and the playing of the drummers was very good, but the drumming was much too loud for the piping, which spoiled the overall effect. The intonation could have been improved quite a bit, especially by the elimination of many flat C's. A bad slip by a piper in the reel spoilt what would have otherwise been a fine performance.

Three bands were graded as grade 1, and the result of that competition was, first West Dalke Highlanders 83 points, second MacBain Scottish 81 points, third Seattle 80 points. The remaining bands were classified as grade 2 and the result of that competition was, first Seaforth Cadets 76 points, second Portland Boys 73 points, third Angus Scott Memorial 70 points.

AMATEUR PIOBAIREACHD - Comments from Dr. John MacAskill

The overall standard of the competition, I thought, was very good. A few performances were marred by pipes that were out of tune...and also a few performances were marred by too many chokes. However, the first place in the amateur piobaireachd went to Alan Walters. He is a very fine player - very good fingers and a very steady pipe. He played "The Desperate Battle" at a very fast speed but his overall performance showed him to be undoubtedly the best.

Second place went to Terry Lee playing "MacKay's Banner". Parts of the ground were slightly fast but once again a good performance marred, somewhat, by a pipe slightly out of tune.

Third place went to Heather Upton playing a most beautiful rendering of "The Lament For The Children" with some excellent fingering though her performance was marred by a pipe that began to go out of tune and by some chokes, especially at the beginning of the ground (after she had finished the Cruinluath). What struck me most was her second variation which showed exceptional interpretation.

Fourth place went to Sherea Barwell playing "The Desperate Battle". Her ground and variations were exceptionally good spoiled as she neared the end by a crunluath which was beginning to get erratic. It was, overall, a good performance.

Fifth place went to LuAnn Alward (who also played "The Desperate Battle"). She had, undoubtedly, the best pipe of the whole competition...it was steady and her fingering was exceptionally good. The tune itself was perhaps a wee bit slow at times but overall - a good performance.

Now I should mention several other things in the competition that are pertinent: There were two breakdowns by competitors who were playing exceptionally well until they did break down. Jonathan Lossee (from Montana) was making a fine job of "Squinting Patrick" and what he played was exceptionally good...good timing and an excellent pipe and it is a shame that he was not able to finish. Also, Bill Stockler played a "Lament For Patrick Og" in great style, full of expression and with a steady pipe (it certainly had the winning streak about it) but unfortunately he did not finish either. Two disappointing breakdowns I would say.

Another exceptionally good performance, I thought, was Barry Rudsitt, who played "The Lament For Donald of Laggan" but spoiled his performance by his taorluath-breabach. He was hanging on too long to the first low "G" in the first and second bar...but a good performance.

Others which would really deserve mention in this competition: Jack Lee (brother of Terry, I understand) marred his performance by a mistake - going off the tune slightly in the taorluath and rushing his crunluath...but great fingers. He should have a good future. Byron Barnard played a most excellent tune ("The King's Taxes") but marred by three or four mistakes which put him off the prize list. Craig Hazelbaker also had a very good tune but was put off by drones which were failing throughout his tune. I must mention Marilyn Osborn whose fingering was really very good indeed. Although she has a way to go in piobaireachd, she is showing signs of being an exceptionally good piobaireachd player someday. She had a very steady tune. Candy Parker played an exceptionally good tune but missed too many crunluaths and had a few chokes. Jocelyn Lange also had a very good tune ("The Battle of The Pass of Crieff"). I must also mention Cindy Chambers who played "Caber Feidh" completely and totally marred by a poor pipe. It went right out of tune at the beginning and spoiled a technically excellent performance with good fingering and good timing.

AMATEUR PIPING, MARCH AND STRATHSPEY - REEL by P.M. Wm. Thomas

These events opened with a very large entry list. The adjudicator for these events was Neil Sutherland of Winnipeg. Although starting time was scheduled for 8:00 A.M. sharp, the March event didn't get underway until nearly 9:00 A.M. (due to competitors being late coming onto the field). It was a difficult start but after much persuasion and at least one forfeiture due to lateness, the competitors made themselves readily available and the competition proceeded very smoothly. This late start was not without its consequences, however, and it soon became apparent that Mr. Sutherland would not be able to complete both categories without going well into the evening. We were most fortunate that Mr. R.G. Hardie was available and he kindly accepted the position of adjudicator for the Strathspey Reel event. We are most indebted to Mr. Hardie as his acceptance of this position pulled all of us out of a bad spot where time and scheduling were concerned. As it turned out, all individual competition was completed by 5:00 P.M. As both adjudicators agreed, the playing standard was high.

The drumming competition, adjudicated by Sgt. John Bosworth of the U.S.A.F., got underway with no small credit due to the stewards who worked diligently in all competition categories to make the games run smoothly. The level of playing competence was very good. Instructors of the amateur and novice drummers are to be commended for the job they are doing. The professional class was outstanding and the entire procedure was culminated with a spectacular display of drum-section competition.

Winners in the 1971, individual and group Piping and Drumming events.

Amateur over 16 years March

- 1st - Iain MacCrimmon, Edmonton
- 2nd - Byron Barnard, Victoria
- 3rd - Allen Walters, Calgary
- 4th - Heather Upton
- 5th - Sherea Barwell

Amateur under 16 years March

- 1st - Robert Menzies
- 2nd - Cindy Chambers
- 3rd - Kelly Todd, Calgary
- 4th - Bernie Rudsit, Tacoma
- 5th - Mary Alward, Spokane

Novice March

- 1st - Jeffry Durnford
- 2nd - Paula Casteen
- 3rd - Rolf Kortebaard
- 4th - Jim Norton

Professional Drumming

- 1st - Wm. MacErlean
- 2nd - Alex Brown, Calgary
- 3rd - John Hamilton, Calgary

Drumming over 16 years

- 1st - Susan Burgess
- 2nd - Jack Gallaher
- 3rd - Katy Forsythe
- 4th - E.J. Hewitt, Portland

Strathspey and Reel

- 1st - Sherea Barwell
- 2nd - Iain MacCrimmon
- 3rd - Heather Upton
- 4th - Allen Walters
- 5th - Ian Cameron

Strathspey and Reel

- 1st - Jack Lee
- 2nd - Cindy Chambers
- 3rd - Terry Lee
- 4th - Judie Taylor
- 5th - Candy Parker, Kellogg

Novice March - Special

- Paula Casteen
- Rolf Kortebaard
- Jim Norton
- Gordon Gray

Drumming under 16 years

- 1st - Ian Hunter
- 2nd - Sam Henry, Milwaukee, Ore.
- 3rd - Bobby Walters, Calgary
- 4th - Bill McKee, Kansas
- 5th - Gwn-Ray McGreggor, Nelson

Novice Drumming

- 1st - Todd Mitchell, Portland
- 2nd - Evan Ranes, Portland
- 3rd - Scott Gray, Calgary

PIPING AT THE NORTHERN MEETING

by John MacFadyen

Donald MacPherson celebrated his homecoming to Scotland by winning the Gold Clasp at Inverness for the second year in succession and for the seventh time in all with an excellent rendering of "The Battle of Waterloo".

It was fitting that this supreme achievement should mark his return to his native county after so many years working and living in the south, years when his influence on piping in Scotland was missed and during which the will to practise and study the art at which he excels must have been put sorely to the test.

The competition attracted eight of the best competing pipers in Scotland -- and of course, that means the world in a piping sense -- and in almost ideal playing conditions, the audience were treated to a festival of piping from 9:30 a.m. until the competition concluded around 12:30 p.m.

First to play was Duncan MacFadyen and he was asked to play "MacKenzie of Gairloch's Lament" published by the Piobaireachd Society in Book 10 and possibly composed by the blind piper Iain Dall MacKay.

This is a great tune with a particularly musical thumb variation and Duncan played it well although some of the purists may have challenged his phrasing of the ground. The variations were played in typical steady style and altogether a commendable start was made to the competition.

Donald MacPherson was next to play and it was obvious from the moment he blew up that he had not wasted his time between Oban Games at Inverness, a period during which he has been appointed full-time manager of the College of Piping in Glasgow.

His pipe was impeccable from start to finish and if any criticism be made it is that he took a little time to settle in the Urlar, pushing slightly in the first two lines. The variations made up for this being played outstandingly well and at the end of the day, there was no doubt that another clasp was destined for the MacPherson side board.

A very close second was William MacDonald, Benbecula, who also played the same tune. Willie's Urlar was per excellence, phrased well and presented with unusual beauty and showing the end of his phrases with great sensitivity. Unfortunately his variations were rushed a little, detracting somewhat from the overall performance, but leaving one with the feeling that they were listening to a master piobaireachd player.

Third prizewinner was Hugh MacCallum playing "Abercairney's Salute". Again the pipe was the usual Hugh MacCallum bagpipe, well tuned mellow and a treat to listen to but one was left with the impression that the tune was just a little too careful and correct. A little "fire" was missing from an otherwise excellent performance.

Fourth prize went to Donald Morrison, Aberdeen, and South Uist and he too was asked to play "Abercairney's Salute". Unfortunately the whole performance was on the slow side and his pipe, which was going so beautifully the day before, went out of tune in the doubling of the taorluath.

The other competitors who played were John Wilson, Campbeltown "A Flame of Wrath for Patrick Gaogach", Iain MacFadyen "The Earl of Ross's March" and Andrew Wright "The Earl of Ross's March". The six set tunes for the competition from which four had to be submitted were the five abovementioned and "MacLean's March", and the judges were Doctor Robert Frater, Pipe Major Robert V. Brown and Doctor Francis Caird.

Reprinted from Oban Times
September 9, 1971

ARGYLLSHIRE GATHERING PIPING COMPETITIONS

To the strains of John MacColl's composition "The Argyllshire Gathering", the stewards and pipers rounded the corner to the Games Park to see the Union flag apparently at halfmast (this appearance being caused by the flag being wrapped around the halyards), but it reflected exactly the mood of the moment for without ceasing, all morning the rain came in sheets, and although it brightened in the afternoon the damage had already been done to pipes and competitors alike, and the results were shown in that some of the piping was the poorest heard at Oban for many a decade.

On the previous day there must also have been a feeling of foreboding as it is quite in order to comment that in the Open Piobaireachd for the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Cup one has seldom heard such a poor competition.

Only in the gold medal competition did things brighten up for there were some fine performances and it was heartening to see such a large entry from overseas from France, Canada and the United States of America, and although none of these competitors scored in any of the competitions, should the progress made by them continue, there can be no doubt that one day the gold medal will go outwith our shores.

Open Piobaireachd

This is one of the premier competitions in piping, and usually patronised by previous gold medal winners, with in addition a few of the gold medal "triers" who have been diligent enough to learn up the tunes. But was it the tunes that put the pipers off this year? there being only eleven entrants, and eight only competing.

Most of the tunes chosen by the Piobaireachd Society for this year's competition were strangers to the pipers, and required a considerable amount of musical skill to present them properly. One wonders, in these busy times in which we live, if intending competitors get enough time for study of the pieces to be played.

The competition was won by John Wilson from Campbeltown playing "The Battle of Waterloo". His bagpipe was in fine form, and the tune was well presented except for a rather unsteady crunluath-a-mach variation which was practically blotted out from hearing by the very loud tapping of his foot -- which sounded as if he had his own bass drum accompaniment.

Duncan MacFadyen was placed second for his playing of "The MacLean's March" which was rather a "heavy" performance all round. His brother Iain was placed third with "A Flame of Wrath for Squinting Patrick". The other competitors in the competition were Donald MacPherson, Wm. Morrison, John Burgess, Andrew Wright and George Robertson from Ottawa.

The judges for the competition were Pipe Major Ronald McCallum, Mr. John MacFadyen and Captain John MacLellan.

Gold Medal Competition

The competition for the Highland Society of London's gold medal

was judged by Dr. K.A. MacKay, P.M. Nicol MacCallum and P.M. R.U. Brown who last attended at Oban in 1935 when he won the open pìobaireachd. There was a very large entry, especially from overseas there being 12 from France, U.S.A. and Canada and the total number of actual competitors was 36.

Two tunes were outstanding and worthy of the medal. Finlay MacNeill had a strong performance on a pipe of great volume and good tone, playing "The Lament for John Garbh MacLeod of Raasay", while James MacIntosh had a most musical and tasteful performance on a quieter melodious instrument. The tune chosen for him from his list of six tunes was "Beloved Scotland". It was a pity that there is only one first prize, and Finlay MacNeill just edged his way into taking the coveted medal.

As one would expect with such a large entry here were many tunes that were well played but which were eliminated by the familiar mischances that the strain of competition brings with it. A missed couple of notes here, a small fumble there, and as so often can happen a fault appears in the sound of a pipe that at the beginning of a performance was perhaps faultless; this in itself upsets the player, for no one can successfully play a good tune on a faulty bagpipe.

This happened to Patrick Mollard from Brittany who played a creditable "King's Taxes" on a pipe that sounded well, but which developed a loud "bubble" in one the tenor drones.

James Young who is making a determined return to competitive piping, played an old favourite of his, "I got a Kiss of the King's Hand"....but had a mistake in the urlar of the tune. Another strong contender, Hugh MacCallum, had a slip in "The Lament for Donald Duaghal Mackay" a tune with which he is very familiar. In the other also-rans, the Suibhal and doubling of "The Big Spree" played by D.B. MacNeill was described by one judge as "just perfect" and Pipe Major Bert Barron kept "MacIntosh's Lament" going in fine form, keeping from this tune the monotony that can so easily beset it.

Cpl. Iain Morrison of the Queen's Own Highlanders failed again with "MacKay's Banner", going wrong as he has been heard to do before in the ground work of this tune; maybe he should have another look at the book!

Third place went to Jack Taylor at present at Aberdeen University, who played "In Praise of Morag" in a strong excellent manner. Kenneth MacLean was very good with "Mary's Praise" and was placed fourth and that up and coming young player from Pitlochry Ian Duncan, made an excellent job of "The Earl of Seaforth's Salute" to take the final prize of fifth place.

From Victoria, B.C. Harold Senyk played "Sir James MacDonald of the Isles Lament" very musically, but in a competition where competitors are able to select their own list of six tunes, it is very doubtful if such a small tune, beautiful though it is, will be a sufficient test of skill and musical ingenuity to take a major prize. Also from over the Atlantic was W.J. Livingstone who played the first line of "Lament for MacDonald of Kinlochmoidart" three times, and this being once too often he called it a day and stopped. He showed however that he is a player of class and there will be another day for him.

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There is one serious complaint to be made. Although the pipes generally reached a high standard, there was far too much tuning on the platform. No one wants a competitor to begin before he is really ready, but players who are of "Medal" standard should not have to spend so long adjusting their drones to the acoustical requirements of the platform, the bagpipe should be well played-in before hand, and in such a long competition as this one was, the best use of time becomes a major factor.

The March Competition

In the worst conditions imaginable it was the unhappy lot of Alistair MacPherson to begin the march competition. The rain was coming in torrents and with a fine sounding bagpipe he began to play in good style "Angus Campbell's Farewell to Stirling", but in the second part he went awry and that was that. Out of an entry of 36 only 26 competed, and there is no doubt that most performances were affected by the rain and cold, but one wonders however if one can really blame all the poor double "C" movements on the weather, so many players did not make this movement well, and as so many marches have it in the last bar, when defective it really shows up.

Talking of movements one of the French boys played a throw on D that was so heavy that it practically sounded like a grip to a melody note "C" followed by a "D".

First prize went to Willie Morrison from Bornish who played "Craigendarroch" on a very good instrument. His fingering was an object lesson, clear, distinct embellishments, and so neatly made that they in no way detracted from the melody, which the heavier variety so often does.

Pipe Major L. Ingram of the Scots Guards played "The Highland Wedding" in real good marching style, and this was the highlight of his performance; had his rhythm and style not been so good his double "C's" might well have placed him much lower. "Leaving Lunga" was the choice made for Arthur Gillies of Kilchrenan, and this was a well played tune on a good pipe, if anything, it could have been a little livelier, but it still got him the third prize.

Pipe Major Iain MacLeod can indeed be pleased with himself this year, his fine band goes from strength to strength collecting first prizes, while he himself keeps up his personal triumphs. He was placed fourth with a steady rendering of "The Royal Scottish Pipers Society".

Fifth prize went to a piper who has not competed much in recent years, Iain MacPherson. He played Willie Lawrie's fine tune "The Braes of Brecklet" in a strong manner on a nice sounding pipe. The only other performance that can perhaps come in for praiseworthy mention was that of D.B. MacNeill who played "Bonnie Ann" in fine style and spirited fashion.

The competition was judged by Pipe Major Nicol MacCallum and Captain John MacLellan.

Strathspey and Reel

The Strathspey and Reel competition began at the same time as the march competition and in consequence because of the weather the stand-

ards were marred from the very start, although the prizewinners acquitted themselves well. They were all experienced competitors, so no doubt time spent "on the boards" adds up to a very valuable asset.

The judges were Dr. K.A. MacKay, and Mr. John MacFadyen who was attending the Gathering for the first time in the capacity of an adjudicator.

Kenneth MacDonald was placed first for his playing of "The Shephard's Crook" and the "Smith of Chillechassie", this latter tune was well played and it helped him to have the edge on Donald B. MacNeill who was given the second prize for his rendering of "Arniston Castle" and the evergreen "A. C. MacGregor".

One always looks for a MacFadyen in the prize lists and Duncan came up trumps in this respect. On a very nice pipe he played "The Caledonian Canal" and "The Blackbird" in a steady fashion to get the third placing. Pipe Major Iain MacLeod added another fourth to his sporran with "Inveraray Castle" and "The Grey Bob" -- if anything, this performance could have had a deal more "bounce" in it. Young Hugh MacInnes, who has for some time now been showing that he is a potential prizewinner, played "John Roy Stewart" and "Ca' the Ewes" to get the last place in the competition.

Other performances of merit came from Ed Neigh, one of the "New World" competitors, who has very concise fingering, from Willie Connell who must now be considered one of the veterans of the competition field, although it seems not so many years ago that he was thought of as "Young Willie", but time does pass on, and from Iain MacPherson who all in all had a very good Oban for such an experienced piper who has done so little competitive work over the past two decades.

Former Winners

This is a competition that takes the best out of a piper, for no other competition demands the expertise, the know-how and the mastery of the bagpipe as does the playing of a march strathspey and reel twice through.

The competition can be, and is often won by the steady careful type of performance, but nothing can equal the playing of a well practised set with the piper allowing himself to set the "heather on fire" as did John Burgess in 1964 when he played the never to be forgotten set "Highland Wedding", "Atholl Cumers" and "Pretty Marion". That was piping supreme. By the time this competition got under way, the rain had fallen off and indeed one had begun to see blue skies again and just as the weather of the morning had an adverse effect so the warming sun had the desired effect on fingers and pipes alike, and it is a pity that those who are qualified as the experts had to march round a board of rather confining dimensions, while those who had played in the march competition in the morning had the advantage of the large board used for dancing.

If memory serves aright, at one time at Oban both boards were of adequate size.

For the second year in succession Hugh A. MacCallum won this coveted award. His tunes were "John MacFadyen of Melford", "Tulloch Castle" and "Alex C. MacGregor". As usual his bagpipe was in

immaculate form and his playing concise and well controlled. Arthur Gillies was placed second and he was perhaps the unfortunate one in this competition for he got the tail end of the rain.

Cpl. Morrison, Queen's Own Highlanders, on rather a quiet but very melodious bagpipe was given the third prize. Rather unlucky was veteran competitor Pipe Major Jimmy MacGregor who when he was playing very well indeed went into the wrong reel playing "Miss Proud" instead of his favourite "Pretty Marion", and he had to call it a day.

Oban in 1971 will be remembered by all who marched to the Games Park as "Water Year" but what of those who saved their breath and bagpipe and appeared later, perhaps the calling of the roll should be done again at the park and those who have absented themselves from the march be asked not to exercise their rather unfair advantage over their fellow competitors by refraining from competing.

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KNOCK-OUT COMPETITIONS

The schedule for this year's Knock-Out competition was decided at the last Board of Directors Meeting.

PROFESSIONAL

November 5, 1971	- Bill MacAulay	JOHN McLEOD] June
	- John McLeod		
December 3, 1971	- Bruce Topp	April	
	- David Wilson	DAVE	
January, 1972	- Therese McErlean	ALBERT] June
	- Albert Duncan		
March, 1972	- Jamie Troy	May	
	- Byron Barnard	JAMIE	

AMATEUR

November 5, 1971	- Cindy Chambers	CINDY] June
	- Robert Menzies		
	- Ian Cameron		
December 3, 1971	- Terry Lee	April	
	- Angus MacPherson	ANGUS	
	- Jack Lee		
January, 1972	- Allan MacDougall	ALLAN] June
	- Allan Skalazub		
March, 1972	- Hazel Ramsay	May	
	- Kelvin Wood	KELVIN	

A REMARKABLE FAMILY TREE CONTINUED

George's brother, Pipe Major D.R. MacLennan of the Seaforth Highlanders, also occupies a leading position in the piping world. In 1920 he won an open competition at the Northern Meeting at Inverness, but by the end of the second war felt that his competition days were over. His friends, however, persuaded him to return to the piping arena, and at Lochearnhead Games in 1955 he won the open piobaireachd competition and the bronze star of the Royal Scottish Pipers' Society. Thereafter he went from strength to strength, winning many prizes, and climaxing a brilliant career by winning the gold medal for piobaireachd at Oban and the similar trophy at the Northern Meeting, Inverness, within a week of each other in 1956.

Lieut. John MacLennan, also taught his nephew William, whom he took into his own family on the death of the boy's father. Another uncle, Murdo MacLennan, taught the young nephew dancing. After leaving school Willie became a newspaper reporter before turning to architecture, of which he became a fully qualified practitioner. During these pursuits he continued with his piping and dancing, and also studied ballet in Paris.

On his return to Scotland he made radical changes in the style of Highland dancing, which were acclaimed great improvements and quickly adopted by the leading dancers of that day. Forming his own concert party, which included Scott Skinner, the well-known violinist, he made three tours of the United States and Canada, teaching dancing in Montreal during several winters, where he also conducted art classes in painting and drawing. An impressive setting of his for reels was the deck of a ship, the dancers dipping torches in a paraffin drum and carrying these as they danced, the bright flames silhouetted against sky and water.

He won all the piping and dancing honours of his day, including the Highland Society of London Medal at the Argyllshire Gathering in 1875, and also at Inverness in 1879. An amusing story is told of him when competing at the Balmoral Gathering in 1887. He had won all the firsts in open dancing, and knowing himself to be the best piper present, was surprised to find himself placed second. He immediately asked the judges what mistake he had made. "Oh, nae mistake. You played capital." "Surely, then, I was entitled to first prize." "Maybe ye wis--but ye see, ye had a' the firsts for dancing." "But was I not the best dancer?" "Nae doot about that." "And was I not the best piper, too?" "We're no' sayin' but ye wis." "But I thought the best piper ought to get first prize." "Oh, nae doot, but we thought ye had gotten plenty already." "I wonder what they would have done if the competitor was a hammer-thrower or a jumper," Willie mused. "They could not say 30 ft. was less than 25 ft--or perhaps they could."

When Willie died in Montreal General Hospital, in October, 1892 at the early age of thirty-two, the newspapers carried the caption, "King of Dancers Dead."

Willie's brother, Donald G. MacLennan, Professor of Dancing, born at Minard Castle in 1869, where his father was estate manager, became a member of the Examining Committee of the Association of Operatic Dancing of Great Britain, and one of the examiners at the Royal Academy, London. His style expertly polished by Dame Adeline Gence and her uncle, the famous Danish maitre de ballet, Alexander

Genee, he edited Highland and Traditional Scottish Dances in 1950. He died in 1965 in his 96th year.

Another brother, Duncan, also born at Minard Castle, danced before royalty. Yet another brother, John, Major in the Gordon Highlanders, who was killed in 1916, was the father of Captain Hamish MacLennan who was first manager of Edinburgh Festival.

Every self-respecting family tree must have a black sheep hidden somewhere amongst its branches--and we find a very interesting member of this species in the MacLennan one. I refer to "Fearchair-a-Ghunna" "Farquhar of the Gun"--the Ross-shire Wanderer.

Farquhar, born in 1784 in Strathconon, of a family of smugglers, was the uncle of Lieutenant John MacLennan. His father was a well-to-do crofter, but Farquhar early in life proved himself to be, to say the least of it, rather difficult. In appearance he was smallish, but sturdily built with square shoulders and a remarkably erect gait. His head was covered with a profusion of long bristly hair--seldom if ever combed--his eyes small, restless, and piercing, while a fixed determination was stamped on his careworn countenance.

As a youth he had been engaged as a herd with a man named Gray, at Croftruny, in the parish of Redcastle. One warm summer day found him fast asleep--his cattle having strayed into a nearby cornfield. His master--furious with his herd, hit him a blow on the side of his head with a spade, which broke his collar-bone and severely gashed his face.

At this time the Excise officers were very specifically engaged in routing out the Strathconon smugglers, and had procured a cottage in the district from which to operate. One morning the cottage was found burnt to the ground, and everyone knew that Farquhar had had some hand in this. He was taken to Dingwall for examination, where one of the Excisemen, hoping to frighten him into a confession, threatened to cut his head off with his cutlass if he wouldn't give the desired information. Farquhar's answer was "You may get all the information from my head that you can, but you will get none from me."

After losing a favourite brother in an accident with the gaugers, and seeing his old father apprehended for smuggling, one fine day in 1809 Farquhar left his home, and began his nomadic existence. He set himself up as a gentleman-at-large, to entertain whom should be considered an honour.

His favourite haunt was the Black Isle, where, festooned by heavy chains, bits of rags, feathers, and wisps of paper, he soon became a well-kent figure. A large sack of his own peculiar treasures was carried on his back, whilst a brace of castaway pistols hung from his iron belt, which also anchored a Mexican powder-horn, several iron hoops, pieces of chain, a sword, and a bunch of keys.

His most treasured possession, however, was his gun, which was of most wonderful and unusual construction. It was made up of about half a dozen old gun barrels, tied together with a chain, and embedded in a stock which he himself had carved out of the thick end of a tree. This monster weapon was too heavy to use at the shoulder, so he made a rest for it, and carried also a pan with a burning peat within to ignite the powder. Before action he first got the gun adjusted on the rest to the requisite level, then he laid a train of powder to each of

the barrels, and lastly applied the peat. The six barrels went off simultaneously with a terrific report--but nothing aimed at was ever hit!

Farquhar was an old man when first he saw the railway--and did not realise that he needed a ticket for travel. Having been unceremoniously dragged from a carriage by a ticket-collector, he remarked amusedly--"This road reminds me of the Lord's Table--no one being permitted to take it, unless he is provided with a token or ticket."

Wandering about the countryside he lived on dead crows, frogs, and any dead game he happened to come across. To earn a penny to buy his gunpowder, he would repeat his own original prayer, which began--"O blessed Trinity, Thou art in America and Australia, and Thou art here just now. Thou art like the fish on the hook--the high tide will not let Thee off. O Thou art the Blessed Trinity. Thou art here just now, and Thou art in the Highlands, and in Inverness, and on the high steeples. Thou art here just now, and east at Tain. Thou art giving slated houses to the big folk, but Thou has only given a black sooty bothy to me, which won't keep out a raindrop--every drop falling into Farquhar's gruel."

Farquhar died in Inverness Infirmary in 1868, and was buried in Tomnahurich Cemetery.

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WHITE HEATHER SHOW

The door prize winners at the White Heather Shows were -

Jean MacIntosh
#309 - 145 East 20th Street
North Vancouver

and

Mr. B. Yelman
1894 East 38th Avenue
Vancouver 15, B.C.

"On Consignment"

