

B. C. PIPERS' NEWSLETTER



The official monthly publication of
the British Columbia Pipers' Association

OCTOBER, 1974

NO. 140

B. C. PIPERS' NEWSLETTER

Published by the British Columbia Pipers' Association.

PRESIDENT	David Wilson
VICE-PRESIDENT	James MacDonald
SECRETARY	Richard Herring
TREASURER	William Lockie
Association Pipe Major	Seb Nellies

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

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

OCTOBER, 1974

NO. 140

Table of Contents

Letters to the Editor.....	Page 1
Last Month In and Around the Association	
Knock-Out.....	4
Argyllshire Gathering.....	5
Cowal Gathering.....	5
Next Month	
Trio Knock-Out.....	6
Mini Gathering.....	6
Triumph Street Contest.....	6
Historical Notes of Piobaireachd.....	7
Ads - Band Chatter.....	8

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

I was saddened and shocked when I read the article in the September issue of the Newsletter entitled "Top Pipers Slam Tape Scandal."

I am sure the Northern Meeting committee along with the Scottish Piobaireachd Society have a nauseous feeling of being "let down" by an individual or individuals who covertly brought a tape recorder into a well publicized, prohibited area and hid it in such a way, under the table, that one of the most respected men in the world of piping stated that he was completely unaware of this hidden device.

We all agree that flashing cameras are unfair to piping competitors who are attempting to turn in the best performance of their lives. The utilization of recorders could be a debatable subject; however, this is not the issue. The use of tape recorders was prohibited by the committee who had the entire responsibility to ensure that this century and one-half old Gold Medal competition was administered honestly and effectively.

Obviously, a member or members of the judging panel felt they were "above the law". They demonstrated a complete disregard for the welfare of the thirty-nine competitors and the public of the entire piping world.

Now, we ask ourselves, why was this heinous act committed? And I believe we can all answer that by acknowledging a close parallel on the part of citizen Richard M. Nixon who covertly ordered tapes installed in the White House so that at a later date they could be used and converted presumably into "money", perhaps a million.

Inasmuch as only one single tape of the playing of the 1974 prize winner would be available, it is difficult to put a price on its monetary value. One individual has already offered one hundred pounds sterling for this single tape by the winner, the distinguished James MacGregor, with the provision that MacGregor would be the total beneficiary. This offer, of course, is "peanuts" when compared with the sale of copies of this tape segment in the world-wide, lucrative tape market place.

Pipers and piping enthusiasts throughout the world look upon the playing for the Gold Medal at the Northern Meeting as the epitome of the season's competitions, and this is quite accurate, and now most of these people are disturbed, confused, disillusioned and angry.

Pipers throughout the world are made up of court judges, lawyers, ministers, educators, businessmen and just common people like you and I. Many expend their resources and their time in upgrading the standard of piping by donating prizes, establishing summer schools and enabling men and women to travel to Bonny Scotland to compete at many of these historic games. Their interest in the judging at these piping competitions is profound, and understandably so.

In order to restore credibility to the judging of these renowned competitions, I submit the following:

- (1) The judges at the 1974 Northern Meeting tragedy should voluntarily disqualify themselves permanently from ever judging piping again in any part of the world.
- (2) As an alternative, the senior members of the Scottish Piobaireachd Society should carefully examine the fitness of all the personnel whom they designate to occupy these high positions of responsibility and trust.

I congratulate the free press of Scotland who first "broke" this tragic story, and I hope they will continue to "flush out" these contemptible individuals who disobey the simple rules laid down by these honest and able committee men, men of good will who work tirelessly, year after year, to provide an honorable and honest competition for the benefit of "all the people".

John McEwing,
President,
The Spokane Piobaireachd Society.

Copy to:
The Northern Meeting Committee
The Piobaireachd Society of Scotland

Dear Sir:

As the so-called "tape scandal" at the Northern Meeting will undoubtedly be given more publicity, and because I have just read an hysterical outburst by a vociferous figure in Western U.S.A. piping circles, I feel that as one who was highly involved, it is right that the facts be presented without the highly-coloured and emotive language of the media, or as presented by those who appear to have a personal axe to grind. So let us examine more closely the facts of this "Scandal".

(cont'd)

1. A tape recorder was used - mine, with the full knowledge of the presiding judge who is the Convenor of the Northern Meeting Piping Committee. So, despite what the report says, its use was approved, and although there was a restriction on the public using recorders, mainly done for later pleasure and entertainment, this one was being used for an entirely different purpose.
2. Why was it being used? Entirely as an aid to judging! The competition for the Gold Medal at Inverness this year had a projected time element of 13 hours of playing and 51 performances. Although in fact all did not turn up, the competition did have 11 hours of playing. It is nearly impossible to keep the standard of the earlier performances in mind with paper and pencil alone, and thus the recorder was used to pin-point earlier standards and, if necessary, enabling the judges to re-hear any doubtful performances, or in which the panel had a disagreement.
3. Why, in the opinion of the press was it being used "secretly"? It is well known that the sight of recording equipment can have an inhibiting effect on many performers, hence the reason it was placed out of sight, plus the fact, that under the table appeared to be the obvious place for it to be. When I placed it there the early audience was already assembling, and it was done in their full view, and indeed I removed it in full view of those who were there when the competition ended. So much then for the "Secret" recording.
4. The so-called "bugging" was not broken to the public by an eagle eyed vigilant reporter as has been so irresponsibly suggested in one report. General Frank Richardson, the presiding judge, made a public announcement rescinding one of the prizes before the competitions began on the second day, and explained the reasons for the switch in the prize list. True, this was correctly stated in the report, but it was highly coloured, as it said "that the judges listened to the recording in 'secret'." Of course we did! Did anyone expect us to do otherwise, say at the ceilidh at Cummings. But then the words "in private" would have been much less emotive!! So I fail to see anything underhand or scandalous about that - indeed, may I say that we took a difficult, but courageous decision to change the original list. Had we let it stand, aware of such a serious error, we would certainly deserve to be condemned as dishonest as well as incompetent.

5. Finally, how did the whole bench as well as other experienced judges, some of whom were in the audience come to miss Mr. Livingstone's error? I suppose as it came at the end of a well-played tune one could say that we had been lulled into a state of euphoria; we certainly cannot plead tiredness as the tune was an early one but miss it we did, all three of us. That is an irrefutable fact. But then it is not the first time that a major prize has been awarded to a performance with serious errors, although to my knowledge it is the first time that such a prize has been withdrawn after evidence of mistakes has been discovered. I do not at all mind the charge of incompetence. After all no one is infallible, but I refute utterly the scurrilous suggestion that has been made in some quarters that the recording was made for financial gain, such suggestion being utterly reprehensible and certainly scandalous.

So may I make it clear that the recorder was used in the best interests of piping, and I submit that because it was used, an error of judgement, had it remained uncorrected, would have been a gross injustice to the piper involved as well as to the other competitors, and then the Gold Medal would have been well and truly tarnished.

John MacLellan.

LAST MONTH IN AND AROUND THE ASSOCIATION

Knock-Out and General Meeting

The first knock-out of the 1974-75 season was held at the Scottish Auditorium on Friday, October 4.

In the first event the two Vancouver Ladies chose not to attend enabling the Seaforths to proceed into the next round. In event B the Vancouver Police overtook Triumph Street #1 to gain a berth in Round 2. The judges for the evening were Bill Lockie, Alec Young and John MacDonald.

Impromptu piping included Graham Davidson, Donald MacInnes and Ian Whitelaw, a professional from Ontario.

Although there was a fair crowd, attendance was rather disappointing for the first competition of the season.

Argyllshire Gathering Games at Oban

Marches

1. L/Sgt. J. Banks
2. James MacGillivray
3. John Wilson

Strathspey & Reel

1. John McDougall
2. E.D. Neigh
3. P/M James McGregor

March, Strathspey & Reel - (Former Winners)

1. John McDougall
2. Arthur G. Gillies
3. John D. Burgess

Oban Gold Medal - 32 entries

1. Kenneth McLean
2. Arthur Gillies
3. John Wilson, Campbeltown
4. Dugald McNeil
5. James MacIntosh

The judges were:

- Col. D.J.S. Murray
Mr. Seumas McNeill
Mr. John MacFadyen

Cowal Gathering

Open Piobaireachd

1. William Livingstone
2. Ian Larg
3. P/M James McGregor
4. George R. Stewart

Marches

1. Thomas Speirs
2. William Livingstone
3. Hugh McInnes
4. Robert S. Barnes

Strathspey & Reel

1. John L. Graham
2. Philip A. Taylor
3. Thomas Speirs
4. Duncan Ferguson

Drumming Championship

1. Shotts and Dykehead
2. Dysart and Dundonald

Bass Drumming

1. Red Hackle
2. Shotts and Dykehead

Pipe Bands

1. Dysart and Dundonald
2. Muirhead and Sons
3. Shotts and Dykehead
4. Polkemmet Colliery

Best Band on Parade

1. Edinburgh City Police
2. City of Glasgow
3. Shotts and Dykehead

NEXT MONTH

Trio Knock-Out

Next month's Knock-Out will be held on Friday, November 1, at the Scottish Auditorium. A large attendance is expected to listen to what promises to be a very entertaining evening. "Seasoned Campaigners" City of Victoria #1 and Port Moody #1 will be vying for positions in the next rounds. Newcomers to the competitions will be the North Shore Trio under the direction of the B.C. Pipers' President, Dave Wilson. Another point of interest - will the Vancouver Ladies grace the scene this month!?

Event A	North Shore Port Moody #1
Event B	City of Victoria #1 Vancouver Ladies #2

Mini-Gathering

The first Mini-Gathering will be held on November 2 at the Scottish Auditorium. Starting at 9:00 a.m. each class will be required to play in two events. Refreshments will be available.

(If you have trouble getting up on Saturday mornings, don't go home after the Knock-Out.)

Triumph Street Contest

The third annual Triumph Street Contest will be held on December 7 at St. Francis de Sales School at 1:00 p.m.

There are events scheduled for individual drumming, drum corps, trios and miniature bands. Gourmets of piping can feast themselves on top-notch trios and first grade miniature bands while their drumming counterparts can enjoy the professional drumming.

Bar service will be available for the "heavies" and kitchen facilities will again be in operation.

No entry is necessary for the department prize or the bass and tenor drum competitions. Both will be judged during the band competition.

Following the day's competitions a dance will be held in the same hall. Bar service only. Tickets are available from Angus Macpherson, 526-9006; or Hal Senyk, 872-0839; or Al Skalazub, or Willie McErlean, or Jack Gallaher, or Donald MacMillan, or Drew Noot, or..... All trophy holders please return them to Angus or Hal.

HISTORICAL AND TRADITIONAL NOTES
ON THE PIOBAIREACHDS

THE LAMENT FOR THE UNION

This Lament composed by MacCrimmon was for the Union of Scotland with England.

Donald MacDonald in his manuscript says briefly and boldly that the tune was composed by "MacCruimen", but an equally vague story has been heard that the old pipers always said The Lament for the Union was ascribed to "Donald Boyd, who was piper to King James VI." Captain Neil MacLeod of Gesto in his Piobaireachd Collection heads the tune as "The Union of Scotland with England composed by a Scottish piper, commonly called Molluch na Piberin". This heading for what it is worth, might corroborate the legend that the composer was a Lowlander, if it is not itself the origin of the legend. Gesto also left some rough manuscript notes, "on the pipe tunes published by him as far as he has been informed by the late John MacCrimmon, Piper, Dunvegan, Isle of Skye". His note on this tune runs: The Union of Scotland and England. Named in Gaelic (MULLUCH NA PIBERIN) in English (The Curse of the Pipers). They being against the Union as it prevented the warlike excursions of the Scots to England. The theorist might seek to build up something on the unlikelihood of the MacCrimmon of Skye being interested in habitual "excursions" into England and from the fact that John MacCrimmon did not specially claim the authorship of the tune for his own family. But there is little substantial to go on in searching for the origin of this tune, beyond its patent dissimilarity from any other piobaireachd that we have.

* * * * *

I like the story of the Highlander who marched up and down his hotel room playing bagpipes.

When the guests downstairs complained, he obligingly took off his boots!

FOR SALE:

Hunting Stewart Kilt, size 36
Kilt Hose, 1 pair
- both new and unused

Contact: Mrs. G. Turpin,
1945 W. 16th Ave.,
Vancouver Phone: 738-3463

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please note the following change of address for
The Scotch Shop: 2034 West 41st Ave., Vancouver, V6M 1Y8

BAND CHATTER

On behalf of the Association we would like to extend our congratulations to Davie & Ruby Bruce on the birth of their baby girl, Shara.

* * * * *

Congratulations to Elouise Roane and Barry Baylis on their recent engagement. Elouise is a member of the Burnaby Ladies while Barry plays with the Seaforths.

* * * * *

We'd like to welcome back Katie Forsyth. As you all know, Katie competed with Muirhead in the prize-winning drum corps. Hopefully we'll be able to corner Katie into writing an article for the next Newsletter.

* * * * *

One of the best ceilidhs of the year was the wedding of Robbie and Heather Collins on October 26. When you get the singing of Allan McNeil and Willie McErlean, the Port Moody and Vancouver Ladies Pipe Bands all in one night, what else can you expect?

Robbie and Heather made a beautiful couple and we're sure you'll join with us in wishing them all the best. (Too bad they won't be reading this - Robbie hasn't payed his dues!)

