



Queensland Highland Pipers' Society

NEWSLETTER

Editor: A J McConnell
Phone: 07 3397 4512

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Next Meeting **Monday 24th August**

Souths Leagues Club, Jane Street, West End.
at 7.45 pm

**The Meeting Will be the Annual Meeting (which is
usually quite short),
followed by a 6/8 competition (see below)**

Entries to the Secretary phone 3397 4512 after hours or by post by 21/8/98

Please remember the rule that smoking will not be permitted during the meeting.

6/8 March Competition - JUNE MEETING

Test piece: Two four-parted 6/8 Marches.

If there is a large enough entry we will hold two divisions: Senior (Open & Intermediate) and Junior (Sub-Intermediate & Elementary)

Prizes: 1st: \$40, 2nd: \$25, 3rd: \$15

All comments made in this newsletter reflect the views of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policy or views of the Queensland Highland Pipers' Society or of any officer or member of the Society.

CONTACT YOUR SOCIETY ELECTRONCALLY

Society Secretary Alex McConnell can be contacted by electronic mail. The Internet address is: alexm@ozemail.com.au

THE PIPER'S DIARY

AUGUST

- 24th **Society Annual Meeting & 6/8 Contest**
- 26th NSW Pipers Society – Uniting Church Hall, Holterman St, Crows Nest

- 26th-27th Argyllshire Gathering, Oban

- 29th Ipswich Thistle Solo and Band Contest – See notice later in newsletter

- 29th Cowal Pipe Band Championships – Dunoon

- 30th NSW Combined Scottish Solo Contest – Ryde – enquiries 02 9869 1499

SEPTEMBER

- 17th-19th Celtic Celebration, Penrith – Penrith Stadium
- 19, 20th Newcastle Gathering, solos Saturday, bands Sunday
- 23rd NSW Pipers Society – Uniting Church Hall, Holterman St, Crows Nest

- 26th NSW Pipers Society Silver Chalice Piobaireachd Contest

- 26th Wynnum Highland Gathering – Solo and Band Contest – Kitchener Park, Wynnum
- 28th **Society Meeting**

OCTOBER

- 3rd Celtic Celebration Day, Zillmere – Contact Rab Lawrie
- 4th Queensland Pipe Band Championships, Laidley
- 11th NSW State Solo Championships – Birron School, enquiries 02 9743 9294

- 26th **Society Meeting**

If you need more details about any of the above events and a contact is not mentioned, ring the Society Secretary (3397 4512 after hours) and we will see what we can dig up for you.

Scottish Radio **SBS Radio** – Brisbane FM 93.3 - Thursday nights 10-11pm
Programs **4EB** - AM 1053 – Thursday afternoons 3-4pm

FROM THE EDITOR: Many thanks for the number of contributions we have recently received for the newsletter. It's given me a problem as to what to include, an excellent situation for an editor! This month we publish the first instalment of a contribution by Dave

Sinclair, following on his previous work on Alastair MacSween of Maclean. Next month we will have the other documents his article refers to, plus some other items.

JULY MEETING

Our July meeting was another well-attended one with between 45 and 50 keen supporters of the Highland Bagpipe present.

There was an apology for the night from Bob Payne, our President, who had been laid low by the flu. Bill Sharp and Rosie McLelland had also sent apologies on account of illness. Your scribe took over the announcing job for the evening, with one of the first duties being to introduce our judge for the evening, Pipe Major David Barnes of the Queensland Police Pipe Band. This was David's first visit to the Society and we thank him very much for agreeing to be our judge. David has an excellent reputation in the piping world, and was Pipe Major of Polkemmet when they came second in the World Pipe Band Championships in 1991. He is also a versatile musician, playing a number of instruments, and has reportedly already got the Police Band "firing" - we look forward to seeing them on the competition circuit later in the year.

The Jimmy Durham Memorial Trophy for junior players (Elementary and Sub-Intermediate) was originally given in 1976 by the Warwick Caledonian Society and is a handsome silver plate which we had on display throughout the evening. For quite a number of years now, Bill Durham, Jimmy's brother and the well-known reedmaker from NSW, has donated each year four handsome medals, appropriately inscribed, to go to the four placegetters. These were also on display and we once again express our thanks to Bill for his kind donation.

The list of winners of this contest over the years in an interesting one, and almost a who's who of up and coming players over the years. The only sad thing about it is that many of them are no longer actively involved in the piping scene. For the record, the past winners are:

1976	PETER MORROW
1977	MARGARET BAKER
1978	ANDREW HALL
1979	MARY HODDER
1980	GEOFF SMITH
1981	JOHN PASCOE
1982	ANDREW TAYLOR
1983	SHELDON BECKER
1984	VICTOR TANG
1985	CRAIG TWEEDIE
1986	GREGORY GOWLETT
1987	GRANT AITKEN
1988	DOUG HAYNE
1989	CALLUM MCGINN
1990	PETER LEWIS
1991	CAEL WRIGHT
1992	ALLEN GRACE
1993	JEFF GOWARD
1994	RUSSELL GRIFFITHS
1995	ANDREW CRICHTON
1996	JOHN-PAUL BELLAMY
1997	PHILLIP SCOTT COWAN

This year there was a strong entry of six competitors. In playing order (with tunes) they were:

- Matthew Supranowicz - *Bob Browns' Farewell to the Ballochbuie*
- Airlie Noy - *Glenfinnan Highland Gathering*
- Nathan Bedford - *Duncan McInnes*
- Carly Franklin - *Leaving Glenurquhart*
- Lea Ahokava - *Donald McLelland of Rothesay*
- Steve Taylor - *P/M William Gray's Farewell to the Glasgow Police*

There was a good standard of playing and instruments throughout and at the end of the day, the result was

1. Lea Ahokava
2. Nathan Bedford
3. Steve Taylor

4. Matthew Supranowicz

David said a few words about the competition and standard of playing before the results were announced.

Maurie DeHayr had kindly agreed to present the trophies but first he gave us the benefit of some of his reminiscences of the late Jimmy Durham, ranking him as one of the best players we had had the privilege of having as part of our Brisbane piping community.

We then finished off the evening by hearing from some of the prizewinners again. First to play was the winner, Lea Ahokava who gave us an interesting bracket of tunes including *The Eastern Townships*, *Donald Willie and his Dog*, *The Gypsy's Dance*, *The Tenpenny Bit*, *Paddy O'Rafferty* and *Mr Drones*. Lea's repertoire is obviously expanding well as his playing improves.

Nathan Bedford was next to play. He only gave us a short selection, but it was of the same high standard he displayed in the

competition. The tunes included *Colin's Cattle*, *Snug in the Blanket* and *The Panda*.

Matthew Supranowicz then played a few tunes, displaying his ability well once again with *Old Adam*, *Angus McKinnon* and *Alan MacPherson of Mossspark*.

To finish off the evening, Matthew Rigby was persuaded to play. He was in good form for his imminent trip to Brittany and then to the UK. His bagpipe was immaculate and the tunes displayed a bit of a bias towards the music he would have to play overseas. Tunes included *John Bartley*, *John MacFadyen of Melfort*, *Tricia's Song*, *The Swallow's Tail*, *Humours of Tulla*, *O'Rourke's* and *Johnny the Tree Lopper*.

The night by then being well on, we had the drawing of the raffle by Betty DeHayr, with Travis Thomson being the lucky winner. All then retired for the supper and much animated conversation.

Don't forget that our August Meeting will be the Annual Meeting (as well as a 6/8 contest). Can you offer to do something for your society as a committee member? If we haven't got a position for you, we can create one! More hands are always welcome to help the best Pipers' Society in Australia get even better.

1998/99 SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE (\$20)

Instead of sending out notices to everyone this year, I'm going to restrict that to those who don't pay early (and those who haven't paid for last year yet!) Please fill in this slip and return with your money.

Name _____

New Address (if any) _____

Proposed Society Meeting Program for 1998

The following list shows a proposed program for the year. It's not quite final, so if you would like to have some input, we would welcome it. There are two nights listed as **Special Program**. A couple of suggestions for these are a lecture on some aspect of piping, perhaps a discussion about either the instrument or current trends in pipe music, or even a Video or CD night - there are starting to be quite a few resources of this type available.

August	Annual Meeting and 6/8 Contest – two 4-parted 6/8s	October	<i>Special Program</i>
September	<i>Special Program</i>	November	Pair of Pipers (Medley) and Christmas Party

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7.30PM AT THE QPBA ROOMS

RESULTS

The Northern Hemisphere season is in full swing - so we have a good selection of results this month - look on the last page to see if we managed to sneak the World Pipe Band Championships in as a Stop Press

INVERARY GAMES - 21 JULY

Piobaireachd

1. Brian Donaldson
2. Angus MacColl
3. Ian Hurst
4. Brian Mulhearn
5. Roddy MacLeod
6. Lewis Barclay

Judges Iain MacFadyen, Ronnie Lawrie

March

1. Brian Donaldson
2. John Patrick
3. William Morrison
4. Angus MacColl
5. Roddy MacLeod
6. Ian Hurst

Judges Walter Cowan, Jim Henderson

Strathspey & Reel

1. William Morrison
2. Angus MacColl
3. Roddy MacLeod
4. Brian Donaldson
5. Niall Stewart
6. John Patrick

Judges Sandy MacPherson, Ian Clowe

ARISAIG GAMES - WEDNESDAY 29 JULY

Piobaireachd

1. Allan MacColl
2. Niall Stewart
3. Frank Nicholas
4. John Don MacKenzie
5. Colin Melville

Judges John D. Burgess, John MacDougall

March

1. Allan MacColl
2. Graham Roy
3. Pamela Smith

4. Brendan Eades

Strathspey & Reel

1. Niall Stewart
2. Graham Roy
3. Donald MacLeod
4. Allan MacColl

Jig

1. Niall Stewart
2. John Don MacKenzie
3. Colin Melville
4. Allan MacColl

Judges Ian MacLeod, John MacAskill

HALKIRK GAMES - SATURDAY 1 AUGUST

Piobaireachd

1. Niall Mathieson
2. Lewis Barclay
3. Carol Ann Mackay
4. James Stewart

March

1. Niall Mathieson
2. Niall Stewart
3. Carol Ann MacKay
4. Lewis Barclay

Strathspey & Reel

1. Niall Mathieson
2. Carol Ann MacKay
3. Lewis Barclay
4. Yvonne MacKenzie

Jig

1. Niall Mathieson
2. Niall Stewart
3. Yvonne MacKenzie
4. Les Hutt

Judge John D. Burgess

NORTH AMERICAN PIPE BAND**CHAMPIONSHIPS – Maxville,****Ontario – 1st August****Grade 1 (5 bands):**

1. 78th Fraser Highlanders
2. Peel Regional Police
3. Toronto Police
4. Halifax Police
5. Alberta Caledonia

Grade 2 (10 bands):

1. Dofasco
2. City of Washington
3. Niagara Regional Police
4. Canadian Forces Composite
5. City of Regina

Bill Livingstone was Open piper of the day.

BRIDGE OF ALLAN, SCOTLAND -**Sunday 2 August****Grade 1**

- 1st Strathclyde Police
- 2nd Vale of Atholl
- 3rd David Urquhart
- 4th Boghall & Bathgate Grade 2

Grade 2

- 1st Royal Scots Dragoon Guards
- 2nd Tayside Police
- 3rd Boghall & Bathgate
- 4th Dunoon Argyll

NORTH BERWICK - Saturday 8**August****Grade 1**

- 1st - Victoria Police
- 2nd - Boghall
- 3rd - L&B Police
- 4th - Polkemmet
- 5th - Dysart

Drumming - Victoria Police

Grade 2

- 1st - Western Australia Police
- 2nd - Boghall
- 3rd - Hamilton (USA)
- 4th - Dumbarton

Drumming - Drambuie Kirkliston

PERTH, SCOTLAND - Sunday 9**August****Grade 1**

- 1st Vale of Atholl
- 2nd Strathclyde Police
- 3rd New Zealand Police

Grade 2

- 1st Western Australia Police
- 2nd Deeside Caledonia
- 3rd Dumbarton
- 4th 1st Batt Black Watch

Dave Sinclair has contributed this interesting (and to some extent provocative! Piece)

Alastair MacSween – 1888-1955

By David Sinclair

When I wrote the first installment of this series I made a statement to the effect that Alastair's mother, Christine Bruce, was a sister of John and Peter Bruce of Glenelg (near Skye). I should have done more research. As will be seen, Alastair was indeed kin of these famous Pipers who came to Australia and settled in Victoria in the 1850's, the same period that Christine Bruce arrived, but they were related in a different way.

The connection is through the family of Angus MacPherson of Inveran, a place name which should be well known to M, S and R players. As will be seen (if our intelligent, hardworking, generous and all round fine Editor and Piper will grant the space), Angus MacPherson and his brother Malcolm were proud to claim their kinship with Alastair MacSween (***Copies of letters will be published next month - Editor***). Angus, on account of Alastair's deep understanding of Ceol Mor, and Malcolm for Alastair's playing ability, of which Malcolm had much experience when he dwelt in the Northern Rivers District of NSW.. He was likewise deeply impressed with Alastair's composing ability. These Macpherson brothers were sons of Malcolm Macpherson (Calum Piobaire) who lived about 1833-1898 (according to "Notices of Pipers" in the magazine "Piping Times" of Glasgow). Malcolm senior was a son of Angus Macpherson (1807-1885) of Dunvegan, Skye. It is said that this Angus was originally Angus Bruce. As his skill as a piper grew, he found employment with the chief of the Macpherson of Cluny, as the Clan Piper, and thus founded a dynasty, albeit a short one. He took the name of Macpherson. It is obvious that he did so with the full encouragement of his Chief. And why not? As Christina Bruce, Alastair MacSween's mother, was born less than five miles away and Glendale about 1847, all Bruces in the vicinity would appear to be connected. I think that is a reasonable assumption.

Angus (Bruce) MacPherson is said to have been taught by a relative, John Bruce, and by John Mackay of Raasay, who lived about 1767-1848.

Angus (Bruce) Macpherson was with Cluny MacPherson for 21 years. His son Malcolm (Calum Piobaire) succeeded as Cluny's piper. Malcolm spent his retirement days in Catlodge Cottage on the Cluny Estate and taught many pupils who became famous, among them being John MacDonald of Inverness (1866-1953), famous player of Piobaireachd, who in turn taught the late Pipe Major Donald Macleod amongst many others. This brings us up to the present era.

In Alastair's day so far as Ceol Mor was concerned, the buzz word was ""MacCrimmon"" to such an extent that no other family or school of Pipers got much of a mention. It is understandable, as the MacCrimmons were hereditary pipers to the MacLeods of Dunvegan. Dunvegan is still in the ownership of the MacLeods. The castle is, I believe, the oldest castle in Britain to be continuously lived in. The Macleods have been there for 700 years and with a bit of luck will do another 700.. the Macleods survived the aftermath of the 1745 rising, as the Clan as a whole took no part in supporting prince Charlie. In 1651 the MacLeods lost 700 men fighting at Worcester for King Charles II. Sixty-four years later they were excused duty in the 1715 Rising as they were still suffering the blow of 1651.. By 1745 they did not wish to risk what they had left. So, as the castle and clan remained intact, patronage of the musical arts, Clarsach, Bagpipe and song, continued unabated and family records kept to this day mention the musicians by name in contemporary records of the old days and ways. In the excellent book by Keith Sanger and Alison Kinnaird by the title of "Crann nan Teid" or "Tree of Strings", there is a description of the great Castle of Dunvegan and a new day dawning. Rory Dall Morrison, MacLeods Harper, tells of Patrick Og MacCrimmon's bagpipe awakening the household. "At the time of rising early, in a household incapable of gloom or low spirits, the roar of the drones could be heard, and

their partner (chanter) astir from sleep. When it (the chanter) had taken its fill, it would not fail to proclaim all it had got, aided by a caressing finger, dancing, deft and nimble." Then "When it (the bagpipe) was relieved and laid to rest in its own quarters, I could readily relate how beguiling was the sound of harp-strings, impressing all with their sweetness, under the play of two hands. Ah me! How fluent was the quick measure played close to my ear by swiftly moving fingers."

A further description of dancing to fiddle music follows. The authors, in passing, remark that the association of all these various musicians, has resulted in tunes, and fragments of tunes being found in old collections. A harp tune could survive in Pipe Music, commemorating a Battle or a Birth. The Harp almost disappeared after 1792. As the music was taught by Canntaireachd very little written harp music survives. The reason why Pipe Music survives in the form of the written score is solely due to what was left of the Highland Gentry, who "put their money where their mouths (and their hearts to give them full credit) were", and made strenuous efforts to record Piping Canntaireachd in a permanent form.

Thanks to those people who used their influence to have proscriptions and restrictions which had been placed upon the Highland Clans removed, something in the way of music and song, and traditional gatherings of a social nature, were saved from oblivion.

Before the Repealing Act became law, however, and only fifteen years after the '45, Joseph MacDonald drafted his "A Compleat Theory of the Scots Highland Bagpipe". Joseph did not live long enough to put his book into a finished state. It was not until 1991 that R.D.Cannon produced an excellent book which contains Joseph's original work, with a clear and lucid text and illustrations to cover every aspect, page by page, of the Compleat Theory. The original publication of Joseph's book in 1803 did not have the impact one would expect, as the publisher and printer made many mistakes, they were not Bagpipe players. It was the first attempt to produce a book with the music examples written on a staff.

Anyway it is now available to all pipers and they should make full use of it, particularly players of Ceol Mor. I am sure Alastair MacSween would have been absolutely enthralled with this book. Likewise I am sure he would regard Dr Barrie MacLachlan Orme's book "The Piobaireachd of Simon Fraser with Canntaireachd" with equal delight. Simon Fraser's link to the MacCrimmons goes straight back to Glenelg, the home of the MacCrimmon from whom the true Ceol Mor is said to descend. Simon's link is via his tutor Peter Bruce to Alexander Bruce (Peter's father) who was a direct pupil of John Dubh MacCrimmon. This is fact. Barrie Orme's book is now making some headway overseas where previously any mention of Simon Fraser in Piping circles was met with skepticism.

I believe that we are about to see some genius who will bring about a great surge of interest in Ceol Mor. Such a person will use the works of Joseph MacDonald and Fraser-Orme to augment the present form of Ceol Mor.

Are Australian pipers going to leave it to the rest of the world to bring about this resurgence, or are they going to realise this grate treasure at their finger tips? We have three sources on which to draw. How about taking a tune that is "not popular"? Try using some of Simon Fraser's embellishments plus some of Joseph Macdonald's plus a few ideas from other authorities mentioned in the notes in the Piobaireachd Society books. Be venturesome. Try putting this material on tape recordings and see what can be done to get away from the rather pedestrian treatment of some tunes.

I won't be doing it. I have a good excuse. I am too old and I also have arthritis. There are many good players in Australia and Brisbane today who I am sure would make a great job of these old tunes if they do a bit of research. I am not suggesting that tunes be changed. The original theme must be adhered to, of course. However, I feel

the variations have become too stereotyped in many tunes, and tapes of overseas players bear this out, I think.

Included with these pages (**see next month's newsletter - Editor**) is a copy of "The Prince's Salute" from Angus Macpherson of Inveran. Alastair MacSween was very interested in this tune.

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direct correspondence to PO Box 689, Booval 4304.*

STOP PRESS 1998 WORLD PIPE BAND CHAMPIONSHIPS GLASGOW GREEN – 15 AUGUST

Grade 1

1. Victoria Police (Australia)
2. Shotts and Dykehead
3. Field Marshall Montgomery (Northern Ireland)
4. 78th Fraser Highlanders (Canada)
5. Strathclyde Police
6. Simon Fraser University (Canada)

Drumming: Shotts

Also in final: Peel Regional Police (Canada), ScottishPower, Vale of Atholl, Urquhart Travel, New Zealand Police, Boghall & Bathgate.

Grade Two

1. West Australian Police (Australia)
2. City of Washington (USA)
3. Upper Crossgare (Northern Ireland)
4. Clan Sutherland
5. Dumbarton

6. Dragoon Guards
Drumming: Boghall

Juvenile:

1st St. Thomas School (USA) (Mike Cusack's Band)

Grade 3A:

Hamilton

Grade 3B:

1st Dr. Wright Memorial

Grade 4A

Strathclyde Fire Brigade

Grade 4B

City of Brechin.

We extend our **congratulations** to **Geoff Smith**, former Society President and well known Brisbane piping identity, and **Mary Ann Ross**, who **were married at Stuartholme Chapel on Saturday 16 August**. For those who haven't met Mary Anne, we can report that she is also a piper (and a very nice person!), and that she and Geoff were introduced by the late Alan Dodd when he handed over her piping tuition to Geoff.