



Queensland
Highland
Pipers' Society

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April

2001

April Meeting
Monday 24th
Balmoral Bowls Club,
Jean Howie Drive,
Morningside
At 7.45 pm

**Featuring The Patron's Trophy --our premier
contest for the year.**

MSR for senior players (Open ≠ Intermediate)

Prizes: 1st \$50 and Trophy, 2nd, \$25, 3rd \$20.

Entries to the Secretary by 20 April would be appreciated (phone
07 3397 4512)

From the Editor:

Another successful meeting last month despite the lack of light! This month sees the Patron's Trophy contest and hopefully a strong entry. As this is written, we haven't got results from Maclean or from the Australian Pipe Band Championships at Ringwood as your intrepid reporter wasn't able to get to either this year. However, check the results at the back as we'll add them at the last minute if they become available. We have heard that Simon Fraser University won the Pipe Band Championships--see inside for our report of their concert at the Sydney Opera House. Our apologies if this month's newsletter arrives a little late--blame last minute computer problems.

Alex McConnell

Print Post Approved PP 445886/0003
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Price 60 Cents

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HOW TO GET TO THE BALMORAL BOWLS CLUB

For those who like to work out their own directions the UBD Reference is Map 160, Reference Q12.

From the Gateway Arterial--turn north at the Lytton Road intersection (just south of the bridge), travel along Route 24 and the Route 23 (Wynnum Road) till you see the Colmslie RSL on your left. Turn in as if going to the RSL but go right through their carpark and continue along Jean Howie Drive for about 350 metres. Turn left into the Bowls Club car park.

From the City--go across the Story Bridge, left into Shafston Avenue, then into Lytton Road and Wynnum Road (Route 23). Go along Wynnum Road until you see the Colmslie RSL on your right. Turn in as if going to the RSL but go right through their carpark and continue along Jean Howie Drive for about 350 metres. Turn left into the Bowls Club car park.

From the west (old Cleveland Road--Turn into Bennetts Road. Continue along Bennetts Road, across the railway line and a park will appear on your right. Jean Howie Drive goes through the park (the entrance to the drive is near the boundary of the Bulimba Cemetery). Go about 350 metres along the Drive and turn right into the Bowls Club car park.

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.

MARCH 2001 MEETING

It was a dark and stormy night! Really, it was! We arrived at Balmoral Bowls Club to find the place in darkness due to a blackout covering several suburbs. And then it started to rain and after a while there was thunder!

Kerry McDonald, wife of Don MacDonald from the Bowls Club came to the rescue with candles to supplement the single gas lamp in the clubhouse and the dim glow from the emergency exit lights.

However, a stalwart 22 or so members turned up, a good number considering the hot and oppressive conditions. Gordon Bingham, who we hadn't seen for several years was there and Iain Bruce brought his daughter Morag along.

We had apologies from Geoff Foote and Doug Thoresen, as well as Jack McCandlish.

Maurie DeHayr began by announcing himself. He had his usual musical sounding pipe and concentrated on some light and melodic music. His tunes included *Farewell to the Creeks*, *25 KOSB's*, *Isle of Mull*, *Rowan Tree*, *Teribus*, *Liberton Pipe Band Polka*, *Loch Ruan*, *Rose of Allendale* and *The Sesquicentenary Scotch College March* (Roy Gunn's winning entry in the competition to find a tune for the celebration).

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Iain Bruce was next to play. From a standing start his pipe was going well and he launched into one of those really good tunes that he seems to know but no one else does. That tune was the *72nds Farewell to Aberdeen*, a 6/8. It was followed by the 2/4s *The Clan MacColl* and *Duncan MacColl*, strathspey *Doreen Bruce* and reel *John MacDonald's Reel*. Next the air *Morag Bheag* and finally the hornpipes *The Boys of Bluehill* and *The Jolly Beggarman*. He mentioned that the slow air *Morag Bheag* was made by Ron Fleming for his daughter when she was about one month old, about 22 years ago! To continue with Dave Sinclair's project on Salutes, he played the ground of *The Munro's Salute* and then the whole of *Salute to Donald*.

Gordon Bingham couldn't be allowed to escape after such a long absence and hence was the next to play. He also brought the lights back on! After apologising for his lack of recent playing, he did pretty well. His pipe was nice and crisp sounding and he had a good selection of tunes, including the 3/4 *Heroes of Vittoria*, airs *The Fair Swan*, *The Oceans Cycle* and *The Boatman*. He finished up with the ground of *Corrienessan's Salute*.

Hugh Maclean was our next piper. After a bit of remedial work on the chanter he was away. His tunes included *Finlay MacRae*, *MacNeill of Ugadale*, *Highland Lassie Going to the Fair*, *Man from Uist*, *Pipers Controversy*, *Tam Bain's Lum*, *Alan MacPherson of Mossbank*, *Georgian Whaling Song* and *Ian Ruadh's Lament*.

Finally a few of our pipers from the evening played a couple of tunes together, a tradition from the early days of the Society but not heard often of late. They played *Scotland the Brave* and *Marie's Wedding* followed by *Cock of the North* and *Bonnie Dundee* marching around the room.

The raffle was drawn by Joan O'Neill and won by Morag Bruce and we all retired for supper. During supper a recording of this week's BBC Pipeline program was played, featuring Tom McAllister, who had died the previous weekend.

SFU at the Opera House

On 11 April the Simon Fraser University Band fulfilled a long-held dream of performing in concert at the Sydney Opera House. With fifteen pipers, twelve drummers and thirteen dancers together with Anna Schaad on electric viola and David McVittie on electric guitar, they certainly produced an impressive show (and not to forget Neil Dickie's entertaining MC-ing).

Perhaps the crown was a little disappointing but we ran into a few Queenslanders (and ex-Queenslanders) including Geoff and Mary-Anne Smith, Hugh and May Maclean and Sam Young. There were also quite a few other who had obviously traveled far.

Some people sitting in the stalls said the drums were rather overpowering at times but from

where we were in the circle the balance was pretty good throughout. The playing was very smooth and precise and the music extremely varied--from a traditional MSR to the expected comprehensive selection of Jigs and Hornpipes, a Piobaireachd (see later), some "tag team" solo piping from Alan Bevan, Jack Lee and Stuart Liddell, mixing it up with the viola and guitar and a seeming never-ending encore. Anna and David also had some pieces on their own.

The Piobaireachd played was Andrew MacNeill of Colonsay--the pipe corps became a choir and sang the ground (very well, too) and then struck up their pipes to play the rest of the tune.

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The dancers added to the visual spectacle.

The concert started at 8 pm and went on till nearly eleven, so we certainly got value for money.

An excellent program was available (we will have a copy at the next meeting) and the concert was recorded to be released as a CD.

The Band was going on to do the same concert in Melbourne on Friday and then compete in the Australian Pipe Band Championships at Ringwood.

Alex McConnell

What's On

A P R	23	Society Meeting—Patron's Trophy
M A Y	6	AOM Trophy National Final—Clayton RSL (Vic) at 1.00 pm. Enquiries to Rab Lawrie 07 3269 2892
	19	European Pipe Band Championships (Ayr)
	20	Bankstown (NSW) Mini Band Contest: Norm Vaughan 02 9570 2548
	26	Brisbane Clans Pipes and Drums Highland Debutante Ball—Kate Wyse 07 3369 2232
	28	Society Meeting

The NSW Pipers' Society meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 6 Holterman Street, Crows Nest. Contact Ron Clement - 02 9948 1914

The WA Pipers' Society meets on the 3rd Saturday at the Autumn Centre, Inglewood. Contact John McMurchie - 08 9401 9587

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

Society Program for 2001

April 23	Patron's Trophy (MSR for senior members)	August 27	Annual Meeting and a Contest
May 28		September 24	
June 25		October 22	
July 23	Jimmy Durham Memorial (2/4 March for junior members)	November 26	Veterans' Contest and Christmas Party

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Another in the series from Maclean, the Scottish Town in Australia

Murdo Kenneth MacKenzie

Murdo must surely rank with the most accomplished pipers ever to abide in Maclean, the Scottish town in Australia, though seemingly strangely disparaged like none before or since.

From early childhood I sporadically heard references to 'auld Murdo' variously voiced by pipers at ceilidhs, gatherings and the like, few overly complimentary of the man or his piping in mystifying contrast with the dazzling exaltation of Archie MacColl, Farquhar Finlayson or Malcolm ('The Monkey Piper') MacPherson, three of the best of his piping peers ever to pass among us. It would seem a fair consensus of contemporary comment that Murdo was a quiet, retiring man, something of a 'loner' and a 'good' or 'talented old piper', though not remembered with the awe and reverence of other top locals, Alastair MacSween, Donald Matheson and Donald MacSwan.

The late Drum Major Colin Gregor, a piper, drummer and marker with the band for nigh a half century, mused often on Murdo who he greatly admired and considered a very able man, immaculate of dress and an excellent piper. It was he above all others who perpetuated the (then) rumour that Murdo was a Gold Medallist, an award, Col said, he always wore when kilted.

A past Pipe Major, Colin MacPherson, recalls joining the then lately reformed Pipe Band in 1934, a band under the joint direction of Murdo and of Donald MacSween and playing with them for the first 6 of his 40 odd years service. Col remembers Murdo as a good piper, 'the best in the band', but was neither sure (nor surmised) to have it confirmed that the old chap was indeed a Gold Medallist. Though not tall he was an imposing man who said what he thought on all occasions and could be 'mule minded', as in his refusal to wear the band kilt, presenting at all times in his own (MacKenzie) tartan with accoutrements (medals, powder horn, 'the lot').

Jim MacSwan was Murdo's ablest piobaireachd pupil for several years and highly esteemed Murdo's piping skills though even he stopped short of giving credence to recurring rumours that he had won a Gold Medal back in Scotland; 'something he never mentioned or even hinted at', commented Jim, while locals generally discounted rumours of Gold Medals and the persuasive evidence of his fine silver and ivory (Jimmy Canter) pipes, 'Awarded to the Champion Piper of Australia' which were the result of a win over a mediocre set of Sydney pipers bereft of Farquhar Finlayson. In fact the title was won in New Zealand and the inscribed pipes presented to Murdo by Mr Dewar, head of the distilling family, at a Masonic Meeting at Lismore!

We now know that Murdo was born at Plockton, Invernessshire on the 21st September 1870 where his early ambition to study medicine was thwarted by fiscal restraints and denied his Ship Captain's Certificate only after being found to be colour blind. He won the London Piobaireachd Society's Gold Medal at Inverness in 1895, aged 24. About 15 years thereafter he sailed for Australia where he worked as a seaman for the Adelaide Steamship Company and later a shipwright in Balmain where he was a member of the local band.

While in Sydney he met his future wife, Christina MacKenzie, daughter of a Lower Clarence cane farmer, Angus

MacKenzie, also born at Plockton. They married in New Zealand (28/11/1910) and later returned to Balmain. About 1926 they moved to Maclean.

At Maclean Murdo gained permanent employment at the local (Ashby) dock, long served in the local band, tutored extensively and adjudicated at widespread competitions when requested - yet his undoubted expertise seemingly remained strangely underestimated. He seems to have retired from the local band when it recessed during the early years of the war which could explain why I never recall having met or seen him. Indeed, there are few remaining in our district today with any recollection of this undoubtedly great piper. But to digress.....

During the darkest days of WWII Murdo did attract some attention. An alarmed, patriotic soul reported to the local police that 'two enemy agents were conversing in German in a quiet corner of a local waterhole'. The ensuing posse, hastily organised, apprehended the suspects without great

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drama. Murdo and 'Old Donald' (MacSwan), whispering canntaireachd and the beloved Gaelic of their youth. Long unaware of much of the foregoing and in the face of recurring rumours of Gold Medals, (for now a second was sometimes mentioned), coupled with local reluctance to recognise or investigate the medals, moved me to enquire of Doug Thoresen, expatriate Kiwi, outstanding piper himself and repository of an encyclopedic fund of piping lore.

Doug knew Murdo MacKenzie the 1927 piping emigrant to New Zealand who had both Gold Medals but this was not the chap resident in Maclean as the great man was buried over there in 1948. And there this saga may have ended.

But Doug being Doug and ever attentive to detail, some years later he gave me a copy of the 1998 Inverness programme. The winner of the Gold Medal one hundred years earlier was 'Murdo MacKenzie, Inverness' who also won at Oban the following year, had emigrated to Kiwiland in 1927 and was personally known to Doug.

Also marked in the program in stark red ink, otherwise I would surely have missed it, was the winner in 1896, 'Murdo MacKenzie, piper to Mr A.H. Butter of Faskally, (our Maclean Murdo).

The infirmities of advancing age saw Murdo and his wife move to reside with a daughter in Castle Hill in 1950. His wife passed away in 1952 and Murdo on the 22nd September 1954.

Surely this great piper's memory should be honoured and revered, or at least known to our succeeding generations of pipers.

CONTEST RESULTS

Scottish Pipers Association solo piping competition - March 24, 2001 - Glasgow Academy in Hillhead.

Grade A Piobaireachd

1st Willie McCallum, "Lachlan MacNeill Campbell of Kintarbert's Fancy"

2nd Colin MacLellan, Glasgow

3rd Greg Wilson, Falkirk, Scotland

4th Roddy MacLeod, Glasgow

Judges: John Wilson, James Young

Grade B Piobaireachd

1st George Sharp
2nd Niall Stewart
3rd Brendan Eade
4th James MacPhee
Judges: Tom Speirs, James Hood

Grade C Piobaireachd

1st Q. Meunier
2nd Willie McIntyre
3rd Meleana Eade
Judges: Angus J. MacLellan, Donald MacPherson

Former Winners MSR

1st Gordon Walker, "Argyllshire Gathering," "Susan Macleod," "The Smith"
2nd Roddy MacLeod

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3rd Willie McCallum

Grade A March

1st Peter Hunt
2nd James MacPhee
3rd Niall Stewart

Grade A Strathspey & Reel

1st Niall Stewart
2nd Brendan Eade
3rd Robert Watt

Grade B March

1st Lisa Morrison
2nd Gordon MacCready
3rd William Geddes
4th James Beaumont

Grade B Strathspey & Reel

1st Gordon MacCready
2nd Lisa Morrison
3rd W. Geddes
4th James Beaumont

Tennents Donald Macleod Memorial contest in Stornoway (Friday 6th April)

Piobaireachd

1 Willie MacCallum
2 Angus MacColl
3 Gordon Walker
4 Bill Livingstone

March, Strathspey and Reel

1 Gordon Walker
2 Willie MacCallum
3 Greg Wilson
4 Roddy MacLeod

Hornpipe and Jig

1 Gordon Walker
2 Willie MacCallum
3 Angus MacColl
4 Roddy MacLeod

Overall

Willie MacCallum

Australian Pipe Band Championships--Ringwood, Vic 1-15 April

Grade 1

1. Simon Fraser University
2. Canterbury Caledonian (NZ)
3. City of Adelaide

Grade 2

- Clayton RSL (Vic)
Bankstown RSL
Christchurch Metro (NZ)

Grade 3

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Warrnambool
Canberra Burns Club
Golden City

Balance of results next month, along with Maclean results

BBC Pipeline

Having finally got myself organised to get the computer to record Pipeline for me every Sunday morning at 5.00 am, I can now report on some of the recent happenings. The program runs for an hour each time, so there's plenty of time for music and talking.

25 March was mainly given over to an interview from some years back with Tom MacAllister, who had just died the previous week. There was plenty of music played by Shotts & Dykehead. As well there was solo piping from Allan MacDonald, Finlay MacDonald and Alastair Gillies and some tunes from the 78th Fraser Highlanders CD Flame of Wrath.

1 April had a mixture of solo playing from John Don Mackenzie, Robert Matheson, Jim McGillivray and Niall Stewart and a track from the latest release in the "Masters of Piobaireachd series" with Bob Brown playing The Lament for Alastair Dearg McDonnell of Glengarry. As well, the Alberta Caledonia Pipe Band was featured and a track from one of the Victoria Police CDs.

8 April featured playing from the Donald Macleod Memorial contest in Stornoway the previous weekend. There was Gordon Walker's winning MSR and also MSRs from Greg Wilson from NZ, Willie McCallum and Roddy Macleod. The winning Piobaireachd from Willie McCallum (MacMurich's Salute) and Angus MacColl's tune (The Field of Gold) were also played. In this contest all the Piobaireachd played are Donald Macleod compositions and the MSRs must include one tune of each type composed by him. Finally we had Gordon Walker's tunes from the Jig and Hornpipe part of the contest.

15 April saw a continuation of music from the Donald Macleod Memorial, along with solo piping from Angus MacColl and Euan MacCrimmon and band tracks from the Royal Ulster Constabulary Band and Shotts and Dykehead. There was a snippet from an old BBC program made by Seumas MacNeill, including Angus John MacLellan playing a Strathspey and Reel. Finally the Galician (Spanish) piper Jose Manuel Budino was featured playing a tune called Falta Da Noite on a Uilleann Pipe!

As you can see there is quite a feast of piping to be had! Please contact the Editor if you would like to learn more about tapping into this "pipeline" to the centre of the piping world.