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Front: P/M Richard Parkes MBE celebrates after his band won their tenth World Pipe Band Championship title under his stewardship. For more on the Worlds turn to page 6.
**HEADQUARTERS NEWS**

**Learning Materials Free for the Pipe Band Community**

The RSPBA’s famed Structured Learning books have been made available as a free download on the Association’s website. Scanning of the hard copy books was completed at cost earlier this year and they went ‘live’ in August. As a body of work the Structured Learning books form a complete guide to piping and drumming.

Speaking of the initiative Chairman Gordon Hamill said: ‘It is important that the Association moves with the times and digitising these important books was something the Directors thought would give a boost to pipe band education among our members. We appreciate that they can be downloaded by non-member bands too, but in the interests of education worldwide we do not have a problem with that.’

There are three Structured Learning Books, Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced. They form the most comprehensive learning materials ever published for the pipe band. All aspects of piping and drumming are covered in minute detail, with large chapters on general music education. Anyone who completes a study of the books will have a thorough knowledge of their instrument and how it fits in to the wider musical sphere. In his original introduction to the books former President of the Association Ezekiel Sturgeon wrote: ‘A primary stated object of the Association is ‘to promote and encourage the culture and advancement of pipe band music internationally’ and this new imaginative and comprehensive learning aid has been compiled with this object to the fore. ‘The thoughtful, progressive fusion of traditional views and modern educational methods has produced a publication which will be gratefully received and widely used as an invaluable aid to practical and theoretical advancement.’

**Intensive Study Programme**

The RSPBA is offering an intensive study programme for individuals interested in becoming an approved RSPBA Instructor, SQA/PDQB Assessor or RSPBA adjudicator. The RSPBA is pleased to offer an intensive self-study route to enable those interested to take the next steps in their piping and drumming journey and to bridge the gap in educational qualification. A workshop will be held on the weekend of 11/12th October 2014 in RSPBA Headquarters, Glasgow. This workshop will:

- Ensure understanding of Levels SCQF 2-5 Piping and Drumming and PDQB 1-3 Bass/Tenor.
- Prepare candidates fully through supported Self Study for the theory and practical requirements of SCQF 6 Piping and SCQF 6 Snare and PDQB 4 Bass/Tenor.
- Direct candidates to the resource materials required.
- Ensure full awareness as to playing standards and expectations.
- Organise access to RSPBA Approved Instructors during Self Study.

Students will be formally assessed during the weekend of 29th/30th November 2014 in RSPBA Headquarters, Glasgow. Those interested should contact Pat Whelan, Education Officer for an application form at: pat.whelan@rspba.org
By the Right! cont...

Young (mostly) pipers and drummers gathered last July for a week of expert tuition

The Association held another highly successful summer school last July. The teaching week was held in Partick Burgh Halls in Glasgow and there were a total of 14 pipers and nine drummers attending.

They were under the expert guidance of Principal John Nevans and a teaching faculty comprising P/M Keith Bowes, his son and daughter Keith junior and Fiona, Allan Craig, Steven Nelson and Bill Fraser.

During the week the school was taken on a visit to a Greater Glasgow Police PB practice and also had the pleasure of a recital and talk from top soloists Andrew Bova and Blair Brown, both of Shotts & Dykehead Caledonia Pipe Band. Many of the students were sponsored by their branch or band.

The full spectrum of pipe band music was studied. Classes were divided into Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced and specialist lectures were given on piobaireachd and writing music.

The closing concert was well attended by parents and supporters, and each student received a certificate from Mr Campbell to show that they had completed the course work satisfactorily.

The closing concert was very well attended by parents and supporters, and each student received a certificate from Mr Campbell to show that they had completed the course work satisfactorily.

Mr Nevins said: ‘This was a very good week of study and we are now looking forward to next year.’

DESERVED HONOUR FOR PIPE MAJOR ROBERT SHEPHERD MBE

Honorary Life Membership of the RSPBA has been conferred on P/M R.T. Shepherd. After a lifetime of dedication to the pipe band movement and to the Association, there can be no more deserving candidate for the honour. Bob is pictured receiving his award from RSPBA President George Ussher at the World Championships in August.

After leading his band, Dysart & Dundonald, to two World Championship titles, P/M Shepherd joined the Adjudication Panel where he made an outstanding contribution to training and organisation. In addition to this he ran, and still runs, his own world-renowned instrument, reed and pipe band supplies company RT Shepherd & Sons based at Cardenden in Fife.

Bob said: ‘I would like to thank the Association for this recognition. I have enjoyed every minute of my time working for the pipe band movement.’ Earlier in the season long-standing adjudicator and servant of pipe bands, Davie Clark received his Life Membership at the British Championships. Also receiving Life Memberships this year for their outstanding contribution to pipe bands over many years were Alistair Aitken, another adjudicator with an impressive record of contribution to our movement, Neil Hodgson, former National Councillor from the Ayrshire Branch, and Bert and Charlotte McFedridge. Everyone will wish to join Pipe Band Magazine in wishing all of our Honorary Life Members sincere congratulations.

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He has just secured his tenth Worlds Grade 1 title and is now on course for a record equalling five in a row for a civilian pipe band. In this interview we discuss this latest success with……

P/M RICHARD PARKES MBE

Well Richard this must be getting boring, is it no?

No, this will never get boring! Winning the world Championship will never get boring!

What do you put your success down to, because the conditions were particularly trying today?

I think it was the preparation that we had done in the previous few days. The sound was already set up and when we blew up yesterday for the qualifiers we didn’t really have to do any work. We knew when we came today that the weather was quite bad, but we knew as soon as we blew up the sound would be almost there when we started and that was the case.

You didn’t have to adjust your pipes at all?

No, not at all. The pitch adjusted because of the coldness of the day but it still stayed together. There were a few bits of tape moved here and there but generally it was really good when we started.

In terms of your medley selection, you changed it round a bit?

Well it was a tactical move because of the people who were adjudicating on the day. I felt that a particular medley would suit the judges that were in place better and that was the case.

That’s what makes you the greatest pipe major in the world Richard! Thanks very much (laughs).

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STOP PRESS: GRADE 1 WORLDS 2015 TO FOLLOW THE SAME QUALIFYING FORMAT AS 2014

To have achieved ten Worlds titles is incredible, especially for a civilian band. P/M Ian McLellan won 12 championships but people always say it was with a police band and point out the advantages Ian my have had, though his achievement is a brilliant one nevertheless. But you are civilian band and you are split over two cities, Belfast and Glasgow. It makes the achievement all the remarkable. It seems incredible to me now as well and thanks for saying that. Also the standard of bands at the minute is very high. It is getting tighter every year and getting harder every year. The bands are playing better and hopefully we have done something to raise the standard. The other bands obviously want to try to beat us and they are getting closer.

What impressed many listeners Richard was your technical brilliance in your fingering. You must spend hours getting the technique just right.

Well we do. I spend a lot of time in one on ones and so drone... harmonics between the chanters and the drones... So it is all about basics, getting the movements played with precision and all together.

That’s the fingering but how do you prepare the pipes?

I think we do have a sound of our own. We have a great…

In the bag...FMM leave the field with another Worlds title

Given the conditions on the Saturday at the Worlds was it not the case that the cane reeds would have started to move a little?

We didn’t play more than 30 minutes [on the Saturday] on both occasions. When we finished the first time we took the reeds out and let them dry. We all did that. Cane reeds work well for a short time so half an hour was what we used on both occasions. It is getting a result that is always the big ambition and you were seen yesterday looking up at the clouds and the sun,generally checking the weather.

Was this so that you could judge your run to the line with the optimum sound? And how much of all that experience comes into it?

Experience does come in to it but for the Grade 1 Qualifier we tuned up in the clouds and then the sun started to peek its head through and that change the temperature by four or five degrees and the pipes will just change but we were lucky enough that the clouds came back over and covered the sun. Just to finish Richard, you said earlier that the other bands are getting closer to you. Inveraray and the other bands are really pushing you hard. Obviously you will have to keep your standards to a very high level and the target has now got to be number 11?

Absolutely; it has got to be.
A first major win and a top six finish at all the big contests meant a terrifically successful season for Worlds runners-up Inveraray & District. Here are excerpts from an interview their Pipe Major, Stuart Liddell, gave to the Oban Times newspaper……

We had a consistent run this season, whereas last year we were hot and cold,' Stuart admitted. 'It must filter through to people now that we mean business. People started sitting up and listening to what we were doing. A lot of people said we should have got a better result but Field Marshal were excellent. We made a few radical changes in the winter. There is more focus on how we tune up and every practice is like we are competing. We also have new chanters and different reeds. 'We have done away with the age old practice of repeatedly playing competition pieces in order to fine-tune the band. Instead we have opted for fewer practices with higher intensity. We have a more positive attitude towards practice now. If the run through is not good enough we accept that as a missed opportunity to make it better. Every practice is with purpose but there are fewer than last year. We are being very careful with reed selection and we are being very critical of ourselves. You do everything you can to avoid things going wrong when it counts.

'You prepare well during the winter not in the week of a championship with quick fixes. We were guilty of the latter before, but now we are better prepared. 'The perfect run-through is never possible but it is important to deliver a consistent level every time. That's what Field Marshal do.' The pipe major concedes his 'radical' regime change was not universally embraced at first, but the band, which practices on a Sunday and Wednesday, still have nine members from the original juvenile band that Stuart began to mould and they have now ‘bought into the idea’. 'We don’t look at the winning,' adds Stuart, 'we look for excellence and achieving it every time we play. The result in the circle at the worlds...everything ‘clicked’ on the day is out of our hands and we don’t dwell on the competition too much because that distracts from the performance. 'It is the pursuit of excellence that drives me on. During the medley at the Worlds everything seemed to click into place and seemed to be happening with ease. I've never felt that before. I was able to enjoy it because when it comes together like that it is a special feeling. 'All the hard work and nonsense you go through is suddenly worth it in that small window of performance.' Having taken the band so far in the last decade, a focussed Stuart refuses to embrace nostalgia at this stage. 'Once I retire I'll maybe look back at what we have achieved,' he admits.

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**Police Rock Home City in Concert Spectacular**

OH WHAT A NIGHT! Spectacular would be the only word for it. From the moment Greater Glasgow Police took to the stage in front of 1700 people at Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, to the moment they left playing 6/8s up through the aisles they had us captivated. One wondered when hearing the sound of their pipes just how they have struggled to make the prizelists this season. One thing is for certain, had there been a prize for a concert pipe band last night then the ‘Polis’ would be stepping forward for the trophy. Unquestionably the biggest happening of the week, the pre-Worlds concert has become something of an institution, and thanks to the efforts of Douglas Orr and his colleagues in the Glasgow Skye Association Pipe Band, the promoters, it looks like continuing for many years to come. Last night was their triumph too. The highlights? The sheer quality of sound from the band, and when accompanied by the piano, organ, guitar and bass, we reached heights of musical delight. There cannot be better accompanists on the planet than Allan Henderson, Ewan Robertson and James Lindsay. There was not a chord out of place all night - and that is not something that is easy to achieve with the bagpipe. It takes real musical skill, and a lot of the bagpipe. It takes real musical skill, and a lot of credit for this rewarding subtlety must go to P/M Duncan Nicholson. He demonstrated an unerring gift for arrangement - Quincy Jones in a kilt. Stand out sets for me were the hornpipes and jigs at the start of the night, Back to Glasgow, Farley Bridge, Lightly Swims the Swan and the MSR with a full fat Ross-shire Volunteers instead of the semi-skinned version we heard at Dumbarton. These tracks will be the big selling points on the concert CD, of that I am in no doubt. Band selections were interspersed with solos from Scott Barrie, mellifluous Gaelic singer Rachel Walker (subtitles on the overhead screen would have been useful for us unbelievers), and Scott Giffin. Both pipers played well, but what can one say about young Barrie? Three words: gifted, gifted, gifted. With the correct tuition and diligence there is only one place this boy is headed - the stratosphere. Let’s hope we don’t lose him to the Gods somewhere. The tom-tom tenors were too loud in the first half and overall the side drummers were too loud from where I was sitting. But these are small grumbles for a three hour show that captivated. It was a special night from a very special group of pipers and drummers.

Duncan Nicholson. He demonstrated an unerring gift for arrangement - Quincy Jones in a kilt. Stand out sets for me were the hornpipes and jigs at the start of the night, Back to Glasgow, Farley Bridge, Lightly Swims the Swan and the MSR with a full fat Ross-shire Volunteers instead of the semi-skinned version we heard at Dumbarton. These tracks will be the big selling points on the concert CD, of that I am in no doubt. Band selections were interspersed with solos from Scott Barrie, mellifluous Gaelic singer Rachel Walker (subtitles on the overhead screen would have been useful for us unbelievers), and Scott Giffin. Both pipers played well, but what can one say about young Barrie? Three words: gifted, gifted, gifted. With the correct tuition and diligence there is only one place this boy is headed - the stratosphere. Let’s hope we don’t lose him to the ceilidh bands.

Humour was also a strong feature of the show, with police sirens, cops chasing hoodies, and stick throwing drummers all bringing a smile to the faces of the assembled pipe band world. Underpinning the light touch was a strong Gaelic theme, and as compère John Wilson said, the band showed a lot of bravery in tackling a fund of melodies not always suited to the bagpipe. They proved that with thought and application it could be done.

Of course Glasgow Police have always had a close rub with the Gaeltachd, their ranks brimming with characters from the Highlands and Islands over many decades. Where would they all be without the great city of Glasgow pulling them together, providing the crucible of creativity that has produced multiple World Championships and the sort of wonder show we heard last night? A few minor negatives: Those of us whose interest in pop music ended with Elvis may not have appreciated the set ‘Belfast’s Child’ featuring Mick O’Neil from Simple Minds, and the medley which ended the second half got lost in the Gods somewhere. The tom-tom tenors were too loud in the first half and overall the side drummers were too loud from where I was sitting. But these are small grumbles for a three hour show that captivated.

It was a special night from a very special group of pipers and drummers.

**This review is abridged from a version first published in the Piping Times Editor’s Blog by Robert Wallace earlier this year.**
Dear Sir,
A friend and I were chatting not so long ago about pipe band judges. We were musing that it seemed that in a very short space of time there had been a run of losses at the top end of the judging spectrum. While there is a system to bring in new recruits, the losses are of seasoned and respected (usually) stalwarts. New blood needs time and experience to fill the void effectively.

Adjudicator Malcolm Mackenzie and I were having the same conversation and in chewing the cud he confirmed his own impending demise from the performance arena. I said I would update the magazine of this further departure from the performance spectrum. While there is a system to bring in new recruits, the losses are of seasoned and respected (usually) stalwarts. New blood needs time and experience to fill the void effectively.

Malcolm Mackenzie has many stories to tell of the Troubles years, and of top men like Eddie McVey, John Crosier, George McLean, Tommy Geddes, Tom McCarroll, Fred Russell, Sam Baillie and Anthony Fitzpatrick. He tells me he has part of Northern Ireland in his genes as his grandfather came from Portadown.

Can we afford to lose experience like this?

On another topic, last summer Malcolm was presented with a golden disc by KRL (Monarch Recordings) in recognition of his having completed 35 years of productions of various recordings for them. These include many discs of the World Pipe Band Championships dating back to the early 80s and all the discs in the ‘Pipeports of Distinction’ series. More recently he has been in charge of recording the World’s Week concerts given annually by a top pipe band. One of Malcolm’s most recent productions is one he treated P/M Chris Armstrong completing 10 years at Scottish Power Pipe Band.

When I put together a biography of Malcolm a few years ago, I said something to the effect that there will be few, if any, piping specialists who over the years will have produced more recordings than him.

Malky, born in 1939, in lives, as he has done for more than forty years, in the commuter town of Bearsden on the outskirts of Glasgow with his wife Janet. Aged nine he had the great fortune to become a pupil of the renowned piper and composer Pipe Major Peter R. McLeod of Partick. Like so many Partick boys, Malky became a member of the Boys Brigade when he joined the 108th Glasgow Company. There he enjoyed his early development in a pipe band environment and recalls with pride and thanks all that the BB gave him. He is currently Honorary President of the vibrant and significant 108 Ex-Members Association.

Pipe Major Alex MacVey of the 214 BB in Whiteinch took Malky as a 16 year old to join the Rutherglen Pipe Band and, under the tutelage of their highly respected Pipe Major Jimmy Baxter, he competed with them in Grade 2 and then in Grade 1. When he left school he joined Yarrows Shipbuilders and was to remain successfully in their employment for all of his working life. As a teenager he worked for them in the North of England. Piping became sidelined while he played soccer professionally, only for a burgeoning career to be cut short by injury. He was by then back on Clydeside and took the step which was to play such a huge part in his subsequent piping experience, when he joined The Red Hackle Pipes & Drums. The ‘Hackle’ were based in Otago Street in Glasgow directly opposite The College of Piping. Many will not know the immense contribution played by Red Hackle’s owners, Hepburn & Ross, in the establishment and ongoing development of the College. At the beginning of what was to be a career with the Hackle lasting some twenty years, his first Pipe Major was Angus McLeod, followed by Donald Murray. Both Angus and Donald played their part in the continuing development of Malky’s pipe band knowledge and experience.

In 1963 Pipe Major John Weatherston MBE BEM resigned his position as Pipe Major of the pipe band of the 277th Territorial Army Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. In 1962, John Jack had led the 277 (which was previously the 402nd), to win the Grade One World Championship in Belfast. Malky, together with a board member of Hepburn and Ross, was successful in convincing
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Richard Wilson
City of Regina Pipe Band (Grade 2)

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INTRODUCING A QUICKER WAY TO TUNE YOUR BAGPIPES.
In 1973, with Malky as ‘wee Jock’s’ Pipe Major and fourth overall, the world championship in Lanark secured third place for piping. This was a period in pipe band evolvement when medleys were in their infancy. Most bands even within the top echelon were somewhat staid. This could not be said about the John Weatherston, Malky McKenzie’ collaboration.

Many of their developments helped to encourage new collaborations for pipe band performances introducing the playing of other instruments with the bagpipe. In 1985 Malky retired from band life and took to the bagpipe. This in due course was to lead him to succeed John as Pipe Major of the Hackle. Thanks in no small part to John Weatherston’s influence, Malky would become an RSPBA judge and was encouraged to pursue with vigour and enthusiasm his role as a producer of piping recordings.

During Malky’s time as a player and subsequently as Pipe Major of the Hackle (and then the Clan Campbell which subsequently became Britoil Pipe Band), only the premier prize of the Grade One Worlds title would elude him. In 1978 as Pipe Major he took the Hackle to the line at the Worlds in Lanark securing third place for piping and fourth overall.

In 1973, with Malky as ‘wee Jock’s’ Pipe Sergeant, the Hackle (see picture) were winners of the prestigious ‘Inter Continental Pipe Band Championships’ in Canada. As a Pipe Sergeant and Pipe Major, Malky was musically inventive and bold enough to try new methods of presenting pipe band music. One key example of an important initiative of his was to play a big part in the bands early and successful records. Tommy Wilson, a colleague of Malky’s in Yarrows, was an accomplished organist. Their friendship led to Tommy’s introduction to John Weatherston and the band experimenting with Tommy’s accompaniment playing his electric organ. Two tunes in particular, George Stoddart’s ‘Longueval, and The Gareloch, written by Archie McNeill’ ‘The Blind Piper’, were to benefit from this novel musical interpretation. Both of these pieces would become signature tunes for the band. This was for its time a revolutionary step, setting new benchmarks for others to follow. This was a period in pipe band evolvement when medleys were in their infancy. Most bands even within the top echelon were somewhat staid. This could not be said about the John Weatherston, Malky McKenzie’ collaboration.

Many of their developments helped to encourage new collaborations for pipe band performances introducing the playing of other instruments with the bagpipe. In 1985 Malky retired from band life and took steps to become an adjudicator in which capacity he has judged all major championships at every level. He undertook drumming lessons with Wilson Young including the Drumming Judges Qualification. He felt that to provide effective informed understanding of the vagaries of the drummer’s role, he has judged all major championships at every level. He undertook drumming lessons with Wilson Young including the Drumming Judges Qualification. He felt that to provide effective ensemble judging he should be able to show an informed understanding of the vagaries of the drummer’s role.

He has judged in many parts of the world including Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and many European countries. He is one of the most senior of the RSPBA judges and is currently Convenor of the Adjudicators Management Board.

Best regards,
Hector Russell,
Helenburgh via email.
played four sets and ‘met with a cordial reception’. By May 1890 the Police Pipers had a new Pipe Major, Constable Alexander Hamilton, a native of Bower Madden in Caithness. His time in charge was to be short and he left the police a few years later and moved to Glasgow, where he was employed in the gasworks at Provan. The large number of officers involved in the main police band, around 45 musicians, was to prove unsustainable in a small city police force and the band ceased to exist around 1891 when the Music Committee of Edinburgh City Council suggested that a town band be established in its place. The piper’s uniforms were advertised for sale, but appear never to have been sold as they would prove to be on show again a decade later.

The year 1900 saw the appointment of a new Chief Constable, Roderick Ross, who had been Chief Constable of the Bradford City Police but was a Highlander, born in West Helmsdale, Sutherland. His arrival was soon followed by the formation of the Edinburgh City Police Pipe Band under the leadership of Pipe Major Norman Graham. Pipe Major Graham had been a member of the Edinburgh City Police Pipers in the 1880s. The band wore the Red Ross tartan in honour of the Chief Constable. Although there is no record of any major prizes being won during his time in charge, photographs show that Pipe Major Graham had assembled a good sized band with an impressive pipe corps of twelve players. P/M Graham was also well travelled attending the Celtic Congress at Caernarfon, Wales, along with his Pipe Sergeant as part of a Scottish delegation in 1904. When Pipe Major Graham died in 1910, the leadership of the band was passed to this Pipe Sergeant, Hugh Calder, a Police Inspector at that time. Calder was also a Highlander, from the Assynt area of Sutherland. He led the band to its first World Championship title at Cowal Games in 1919, winning the Argyll Shield. This was the first time a police pipe band had triumphed and the win was followed by Pipe Major John McDonald’s Glasgow Police Pipe Band triumph the following year. Hugh Calder had previously won the Harry Lauder Shield twice at the same contest. He progressed to the rank of Superintendent by the time he retired from police service ten years later. He must also have had close connections with the well known piper and composer Roderick Campbell who wrote the classic pipe march Edinburgh City Police Band. Roderick Campbell also wrote a march and a strathspey in honour of Hugh Calder and his wife which were later published in Book 1 of Pipe Major Willie Ross’s Collection in 1925.

The year 1923 saw the appointment of Pipe Major Alexander Henry. William Sutherland, who was Pipe Sergeant under Alexander Henry and was one of three brothers from Sutherland who were in Edinburgh City Police, then took charge briefly until his retirement in 1930. He was in turn followed by Hance T Gates. Hance Gates, who had been named after a Norwegian friend of his family, was born on the south side of Edinburgh and played in the Portobello Pipe Band as a young boy. He served in the 9th Battalion Royal Scots (The Dandy Ninth) as a piper before joining Edinburgh City Police and playing in the band which won the Harry Lauder Shield at Cowal Games in 1912 and 1913. During World War 1 he re-enlisted in the Army and served with the Scots Guards before being taken prisoner. He was freed at the end of the War and was a member of the World Championship winning band at Cowal in 1919.

Over the next 15 years the leadership of the band saw several changes. Alexander Henderson, who had spent time during World War 1 as Pipe Major of the Harry Lauder Pipe Band which had toured the country recruiting on behalf of the War Office, succeeded Hugh Calder as Pipe Major in 1920. He was followed in 1923 by Pipe Major Alexander Henry. William Sutherland, who was Pipe Sergeant under Alexander Henry and was one of three brothers from Sutherland who were in Edinburgh City Police, then took charge briefly until his retirement in 1930. He was in turn followed by Hance T Gates. Hance Gates, who had been named after a Norwegian friend of his family, was born on the south side of Edinburgh and played in the Portobello Pipe Band as a young boy. He served in the 9th Battalion Royal Scots (The Dandy Ninth) as a piper before joining Edinburgh City Police and playing in the band which won the Harry Lauder Shield at Cowal Games in 1912 and 1913.

The band wore the Red Ross tartan in honour of the Chief Constable...
Pipe Major Gates was to introduce the band to a much wider audience by competing as far afield as the Isle of Man and recording a radio broadcast for the BBC in 1937 which received great acclaim from listeners around the world. He remained in charge until midway through the Second World War when he retired from the police. He continued for many years to teach piping in Edinburgh schools and was also to become one of the best known faces in the pipe band world, when a photograph taken of him in 1939 at Hampden Park, Glasgow, was reproduced on thousands of Scottish souvenirs.

During the lean years of World War 2 the band again found itself with a new Pipe Major. When Hance Gates retired the Pipe Sergeant, Duncan R. Cameron, a native of Islay, took charge and, although the band’s numbers were to fall to an all-time low, Duncan Cameron must be given great credit for keeping the band together when many players were leaving to return to the Forces.

At the end of the War the band took part in a massed victory parade in Princes Street, Edinburgh, along with the police bands from the cities of Aberdeen, Dundee and Glasgow, and which were inspected by Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

The end of the war also saw more players becoming available and, assisted by his lifelong friend Ronnie Ackroyd, Duncan Cameron began recruiting players who would see the band return to the top of the competition field and a period now considered to have been the band’s ‘golden years’. One of these players was Donald Shaw Ramsay BEM, a name which would become synonymous with the Edinburgh City Police Pipe Band over the years to come. The band also changed to the Prince Charles Edward Stuart tartan which was to be the hallmark of the band’s uniform thereafter.

Donald Shaw Ramsay BEM was appointed Pipe Major in 1949. Donald had previously served as a Pipe Major in the 10th Highland Light Infantry. He was born in Blackstone on the outskirts of the village of Avonbridge, and he had played with the local Torphichen Pipe Band before joining the Army. He arrived with a reputation as a fine player and composer and, although this change was not without opposition, it proved to be a highly successful one for the band.

Donald Ramsay (above right) quickly introduced a strict practice regime and had them practicing five nights a week for a time. This soon paid dividends as the band secured its second World Championship title at Dundee in 1950, followed by another win at Aberdeen in 1954. In March 1957, however, Donald Ramsay’s time with the Edinburgh City Police Band unfortunately came to an abrupt end. While serving as a sergeant at Drylaw Mains Police Station in Edinburgh, he was involved in a shooting incident which forced him to retire from the Police Service as a result of his injuries.

He emigrated to the USA for a period where he recuperated in the warmer climate of California. While there he also re-generated his pipe band career as Pipe Major of San Francisco Caledonia Pipe Band before eventually returning to Scotland and further success in 1964 as Pipe Major of the Invergordon Distillery Pipe Band.

Next in charge was another big name on the piping scene, a young constable stationed at Leith Police Station named John D. Burgess. John Burgess was in charge of the Edinburgh City Police Pipe Band for only one memorable season before leaving the Police Service at the end of 1958, having led the band to victory at Cowal Games and the British Championships, as well as a top three finish at the World Championships.

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Robert Short (Bert) was born in 1935 the eldest of three piping sons of the late Pipe Major Bob Short, founder of the Hawick Boys Brigade Pipe Band. Bert started playing the chanter at age seven and, though still in the Life Boys (then the BB’s Junior Section), played in the BB band with boys much older than he was. On reaching the age of 12 he was able to compete in the Borders BB Championships where he placed first in both the junior and senior March, Strathspey and Reel for the next five years. He gave a recital on the BBC’s Children’s Hour radio programme aged 12. He played and competed with the Hawick band until called up for National Service. His two years in the Army were with the 1st Battalion Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). On 19th March 1953, after basic training, he joined the pipe band under P/M George Stoddart and also P/M William Denholm, who was waiting to be demobbed. The band played at the Edinburgh Military Tattoo and also a Highland tattoo in Inverness. That October the Battalion sailed to the Far East stopping off at Hong Kong for three months, then on to Korea. The pipe and military bands had a mini tour of Japan. The pipe major on this tour was P/M Denholm. In July 1954 the Battalion moved to the Middle East, to Egypt and the The Suez Canal Zone. During November the band travelled to Moascar for a massed band display joining The Scots Guards and the Seaforth Highlanders on parade. A trip to Libya followed and then home. Bert held all his three Army P/Ms in high regard. Following National Service he resumed piping with the BB band and then took over as pipe major of the adult Hawick pipe band. Under his leadership the band progressed through the RSPBA’s competitions, their most successful years being 1972 and 1973 when the band was upgraded to Grade 2. From 1973 to 1980 Bert helped at different locations teaching at Summer Schools for Piping through the Scottish Amateur Music Association and organised by Donald MacPherson. He was a committee member and Chairman of the Lothian and Borders Branch and helped with others to run the Branch competitions. He was also, for many years, a member of the RSPBA’s National Council. Bert had a great Army friend in P/M Bill Robertson (New Zealand), formerly pipe major of The Royal Scots. Right until the end of his life Bert still practised regularly with his brother Angus and good friend Jim Webb. Bert was married to Edith and they had three children, Maureen, Aileen and the late Graham. He had six grandchildren and two great grandchildren. A private family cremation was held on 13th August, 2014.

Bert’s former Pipe Major Bill ‘Robbie’ Robertson, added: ‘I was very sad to learn about Bert’s passing. He was a very good friend all the years and a valued piper in his National Service days with me (then a corporal). When I came to New Zealand fifty-five years ago we kept in touch every year with Christmas cards, exchange of calendars, and the odd telephone call and email. Also he sent me recorded tapes of BBC piping programmes over the years that kept me well informed with the piping standards in Scotland, both solo and bands – so valuable especially before the years of personal computers and email. Many good memories - and condolences to all the family.’

Aileen Cook (daughter)
RAF pipers were to the fore earlier this year for the Commonwealth Games medal ceremonies in Glasgow. All of the medal ceremonies at the Games had a piper as part of the musical support. A total of nine pipers took part, three from the RAF, four from the Scots Guards and two from the Army School of Piping and Drumming. Among them were Pipe Major Finlay MacGhee and SAC Hannah Wright of the RAF Waddington Pipes & Drums along with Chief Technician Al Sharp from 15 Squadron at RAF Lossiemouth. The RAF Waddington pipers home base is four miles from the historic cathedral city of Lincoln, Lincolnshire. RAF Waddington is the main operating base for airborne intelligence systems including the Sentinel R1 and the E-3D Sentry aircraft. It is home to no less than six RAF squadrons, including both our ground based and flying squadrons. The band was formed in January 1967 as the 1 Group (Bomber Command) Pipes & Drums and the musicians are very proud of their Bomber Command roots. From those early days the band has gone from strength to strength and is currently one of the largest pipe band units in the armed services. Held in high regard across the piping community, the Waddington Pipes and Drums are in great demand for performances at home and overseas. The band wears the RAF tartan, the colours of which can be interpreted in many ways; the blues reflect the changing mood of the skies that they protect, the white stripe for the clouds and the blood-red stripe in honour of the fallen. During a busy 2014 the band had members playing at the Commonwealth Games, the Basel Tattoo as well as the competition band doing well at the major pipe band championships. The pictures show P/M MacGhee leading the band on parade in two different modes of dress. For further information please contact Pipe Major MacGhee at

London Branch event, but some Branch bands travel north to take part, and once again University of Bedfordshire and RAF Waddington and Halton appear in the prize list. The judges were J Campbell for piping and M O’Neil for Drumming. There was also a well supported Drum Major contest for which the judges was I McGreechan. Solo piping also had a large entry. It was a pleasure to be at Ashbourne on a sunny day after so many wet ones. RAF Waddington/Halton won Grade 3A in the British Championships in May and were second in the Scottish Championships in July, so congratulations to them and their competition Pipe Major Ian Westgate. The whole band has been having a busy time during the summer. Those who were not competing at Ashbourne were taking part in the Military Tattoo in Basel, Switzerland. At the World Championships Wing Commander Nasar, Director of Music for the Royal Air Force of Oman, presented former colleague, Pipe Major Finlay MacGhee of RAF Waddington, with a unit shield (above). Finlay was the Piping Instructor for the RAF Oman Pipe Band for seven years met up with his former pupils on Glasgow Green as they competed for the first time in this major. Finlay commented, ‘They performed really well and it gave me great pleasure to welcome so many old friends to Glasgow’.
Scotland. members hail from Australia, Canada, the Republic and from all over the world. As well as Northern Ireland, While based in Lisburn, players in the current band come permission to use his name. 

The band was founded in 1945 by a group of farmers’ sons in the townland of Drumalig, on the outskirts of Belfast. Keith Orr. 

Not only has 2014 been a remarkable year for the Field Marshal in terms of results but in June the band was asked to perform for Her Majesty the Queen at an even held in Belfast’s City Hall. 

In Grade 2, County Armagh’s Bleary & District also continued to dominate the scene securing a second place at the Worlds. This is a band that has surpassed all expectations in such a short time since reforming for the 2013 season. They managed to secure the Scottish Champion of Champions Shield for their success in 2014. We are very proud of our bands and drum majors, so keep up the good work.

* The 2nd Annual Belfast Tattoo was a great success in the Odyssey Arena, Belfast, and in this show many of Northern Ireland’s top bands were on show to the public. Last year was such a huge success and this year’s tickets sold so fast that an extra night had to be scheduled to accommodate the ticket sales.

* One of Northern Ireland’s leading composers, Derek Boyce, has just released his first book of compositions. The book contains over 60 tunes with most of them his own compositions. There are contributions to the book from William Garrett from Kilkeel, Kenny Moan from Omagh, Christy Russel from Dublin, Elaine Brinklow, Scotland, and Colin Magee, Canada. The book contains all standard tunes for the pipes - marches, strathspeys, reels, jigs etc..

The book also contains all of Derek’s winning tunes from competitions over the past 15 years, including tunes to commemorate the death of Princess Diana. This was the competition that got Derek into composing back in 1998. It was organised by the National Piping Centre in Glasgow. Other competition winning tunes in the book include a hornpipe for Andy Murray winning Wimbledon last year. This competition was run by the College of Piping in Glasgow and also a 3/4 march which was played at the unveiling of the Pipers Memorial Statue in France, The statue was erected in honour of all pipers and drummers to bolster their numbers. The Colinton and Currie band has a historical position in Scotland as it was one of the first civilian pipe bands ever to be formed in this country. Founded in 1887 in Juniper Green, the band has since that time continued to exist as a local and independently-funded community organisation. Its members want to continue that tradition.

Historically the band had strong links with the former paper mills in Kinloch and Balerno, a close affinity with the Army, many of the early players coming from the Royal Scots and the Colinton Company of Volunteers; and had considerable success until the 1970s in competitions run by the RSPBA. The band competed in the first World Pipe Band Championships organised by the then SPBA in 1947. Although it no longer competes, the band has, in the past, achieved Champion of Champions status in Grade 4, second place in Grade 3 at the World Pipe Band Championships and many placings at other Major Championships. In recent years the band has concentrated on public performances and parades rather than competitions but there is nothing to prevent revival of the competitive spirit as a longer term objective. The band continues to offer the teaching of learners to high standards. It can provide an obvious progression route for pupils from local schools who are learning these instruments in their school music class, and its current members are very willing to work in conjunction with the local primary and high schools to maximise the development of the musical skills of these pupils.

The band also needs to ensure that it maintains a central core of experienced pipers and drummers to perform at public events. Practices are held on Wednesday evenings at the Brownie’s Hall (behind the Gibson Craig Hall) in Lanark Road, Currie (beside the Bank of Scotland), between 7.30pm and 9.30pm. Anyone interested in joining should contact the Band Treasurer, Denis Owens on 0131 441 1830, or by email at drowens2643@btinternet.com - or just turn up at a practice.

OCTOBER 2014 Pipe Band Magazine

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The summer band season has certainly been a busy and, in some cases, a very successful one for the local bands of the Dundee, Perth and Angus Branch. At the British Championships, MacKenzie Caledonian started their achievements this season with a 6th place in Grade 2 whilst Arbroath RBL picked up a 5th in Grade 4A. Local contest Strathmore Highland Games provided its all too familiar wet weather conditions, but was well attended by most local bands and some from neighbouring areas. Arbroath took honours in Grade 4, while Kinross took the MSR. City of Brechin took 1st place in Grade 4B, Arbroath with another 5th in Grade 4A, closely followed by six bands taking prizes overall: Carnoustie 5th in Grade 4 and Grade 3A scooping both the Grade 3 and 2 top spots. Perth and District took 1st place in the Grade 4 MSR contest.

The Branch Committee wishes to pass on congratulations to all the branch bands for all the successes of this year and for also taking part and making local and major contests work and remain in existence. A bit of nostalgia now - local Crieff man Owen Sweeney recently set himself the task of reforming the Gleneagles Strathearn Pipe Band for one day only. The band had a few rehearsals and gave a memorable street parade through Crieff following a performance in James Square, on Saturday 9th August 2014. The band thereafter held a social get together in a local public house where cold lemonades were on offer for everyone!

To the right next to Owen Sweeney the organiser. Well done Owen and a big Happy Anniversary to all of you. Bye for now.

iancampbell96@hotmail.co.uk
GARY'S REMARKABLE NORTHERN BEAT

Up in the far north-west of Scotland, schools instructor Gary Nimmo is doing wonderful work teaching piping and drumming over a wide area of some of Scotland's most remote communities. Here Gary gives us a brief outline of his career to date:

I started playing through the Falkirk Council schools system, starting in Primary 5 and being taught by Logan Tannock. I continued to learn through the school system and then was employed as a piping tutor for the council’s Youth Music Initiative at the age of 16. I continued to work for Falkirk Council until November 2012 when I was asked to move to Highland Council as a supply tutor covering tutor absence. The job in the Highlands is certainly a demanding one. I cover the entire Wester Ross area from Gairloch to Ullapool, right through to Achiltibuie and cover around 1,500 miles a month. That’s not including any additional mileage required for the Gairloch & District or Ullapool & District Pipe Bands. On average I do around 2,000 miles a month. My pipe band history is quite varied. I started off with the Royal Burgh of Stirling Pipe Band under Stuart Cassells for four years before having a season with Craigmount High School Pipe Band under Kris Clezy. It was from there I joined The Clan Gregor Society Pipe Band which included winning the Scottish, European, Cowal and World Pipe Band championships in Grade 2, before being promoted to Grade 1 and managing to qualify for the finals of the Worlds each subsequent year. Clan Gregor Society disbanded at the end of the 2008 season and I was asked to take on my local band, Camelon and District. I was Pipe Major of the band for five years and had some great success including helping them move up from 4b to 4a. Towards the end of my time at Camelon, I also played with Strathclyde Police with spells under Don Bradford and Duncan Nicholson. The last band I played for was the Denny & Dunipace Gleneagles band in Grade 2 then Grade 1, the high points being winning the G2 European, Cowal and World Pipe Band Championships. Last year I had passed my audition for the Inveraray and District Pipe Band under Stuart Liddell but due to the massive commitments required my audition for the Inveraray and District Pipe Band under Stuart Liddell but due to the massive commitments required my audition for the Inveraray and District Pipe Band under Stuart Liddell but due to the massive commitments required my audition for the Inveraray and District Pipe Band under Stuart Liddell but due to the massive commitments required my audition for the Inveraray and District Pipe Band under Stuart Liddell but due to the massive commitments required my audition for the Inveraray and District Pipe Band under Stuart Liddell but due to the massive commitments required my audition for the Inveraray and District Pipe Band under Stuart Liddell but due to the massive commitments required my audition for the Inveraray and District Pipe Band under Stuart Liddell but due to the massive commitments required my audition for the Inveraray and District Pipe Band under Stuart Liddell but due to the massive commitments required my audition for the Inveraray and District Pipe Band under Stuart Liddell but due to the massive commitments required my audition for the Inveraray and District Pipe Band under Stuart Liddell but due to the massive commitments required my audition for the Inveraray and District Pipe Band under Stuart Liddell but due to the massive commitments required my audition for the Inveraray and District Pipe Band under Stuart Liddell but due to the massive commitments required my audition for the Inveraray and District Pipe Band under Stuart Liddell but due to the massive commitments required my audition for the Inveraray and District Pipe Band under Stuart Liddell but due to the massive commitments required my audition for the Inveraray and District Pipe Band under Stuart Liddell but due to the massive commitments required my audition for the Inveraray and District Pipe Band under Stuart Liddell but due to the massive commitments required. "There is no drumming provision in the area and the classes have allowed us to create an additional two pipe bands. There are now Ullapool & District Pipe Band, Ullapool & District Development Band and Gairloch & District Pipe Band. The Ullapool bands now boast over 60 members at practices and a healthy stream of young talent following on. There was no pipe band in Gairloch prior to November 2013. Piping and Drumming in Wester Ross certainly seems to be on the ascendancy at the moment, which makes it an exciting time to be involved with the kids. They have been extremely busy in the last 18 months with trips to Lorient Festival and Germany twice. They have had a good first year competitively as well qualifying for the final of the World Pipe Band Championships against a pool of 66 bands. They were also in the prizes at the European Championships in Forres and won the NA Alba National Trad Awards Pipe Band of the Year. We've had a good hard winter behind us now and were ready to hit the ground running this competitive year and also I've been lucky enough to secure the assistance of members from Denny & Dunipace Gleneagles Pipe Band to help with our drummers. Gary is looking for a part time drumming tutor. Email him on gary.nimmo@hotmail.co.uk.

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A Fitting Collection to mark Association's 50th Anniversary

By the Editor, Robert Wallace

The Western United States Pipe Band Association was founded in 1963 and for most of that time has been affiliated to the RSPBA. To celebrate their 50th birthday they have produced a book of tunes written by pipers in member bands, and by those with a connection with that part of America. Before we get to the book, a little background on WUSPBA or 'wus pa ba' as everyone calls them. Jeffrey Mann, the current president, writes in his Foreword to the collection: ‘The Association originated in 1963 as the Pacific Coast Pipe Band Association, with two branches to cover the state of California... Today WUSPBA consists of four branches and over 50 bands with hundreds of solo pipers, drummers and drum majors.’ ‘We believed a 50th anniversary tune collection would be fitting for such an occasion. We have solicited tunes from composers throughout WUSPBA to include in this book. ‘This has been a project of passion and love. The submission of original tunes by our membership, the beautiful cover design and all of the hours of typesetting and production work have made this a respectable collector's item.’ ‘He's not too far wrong. It is a pretty good book with quite a few original compositions which, I believe, would suit many pipe bands. It is very well laid out, clear and concise, and I spotted no typographical errors either in the text or in the music scores. Having been involved in the production of a number of books myself, I know the work that must have gone into the proofing. A very commendable effort by all involved. Here's the breakdown of tunes: 22 marches (including WUSPBA's 50th Anniversary by Tom Robinson and WUSPBA's Next 50 by the same composer), seven strathspeys, two reels, 14 slow airs, two waltzes, 28 hornpipes, one polka, 32 jigs and one pipe band suite. This last, by Martha Yates, looks to have considerable potential for the pipe band concert platform, though admittedly it is difficult to gauge the full impact when trying it over on the practice chanter and imagining the three-part and two-part harmony. Other tunes I liked were Gold Medallist James MacColl’s setting of the Piper and the Dairymaid reel, the entertainingly named Irn Boru by Phil Shields, Aaron and Lesa, a slow air by our own Harry McNulty, the hornpipe Nunc Est Bibendum (Now is the Time to Drink - they're well schooled in the classics these Californians if that is where composer Michael Gordon is from), JR O'Neill's jig setting of the strathspey standard 'The Ewe Wi' the Crookit Horn, and his Flat Broke and Hungover may chime with a few readers and offer potential in pipe band ensemble. There will be other good tunes that I have missed in what is a thoroughly worthwhile book and one the Western United States Pipe Band Association should be very pleased with. It costs $25US and the web address is: www.wuspba.org
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