



2010

OPD Newsletters

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# OPD Monthly Newsletter

## *Table of Contents*

Page	Month – Topic
1	March – <i>Welcome from the Omaha Pipes and Drums</i> (first edition)
2	April – <i>The Story Behind our Cap Badge</i>
3	May – <i>The Evolution of the Great Highland Bagpipe</i>
4	June – <i>An Abbreviated History of the Kilt</i>
6	July - <i>Piobaireachd</i>
8	August – <i>Why Scotland is called, "Scotland"</i>
9	September – <i>Piper to the Sovereign</i>
10	October – <i>The Scottish Highlands and Lowlands</i>
11	November – <i>The Band Uniform</i>
13	December – <i>Traditional Christmas Yule</i>





The Omaha Pipes and Drums  
[www.omahapipesanddrums.com](http://www.omahapipesanddrums.com)

**Celebrate St. Patrick's Day in style with the Omaha Pipes and Drums at one of these fine establishments**

McFly's – 4503 Center Street  
(11:30 AM and 6:30 PM)

Barry O's – 420 S. 10th  
(noon and 4:00 PM)

Barrett's – 4322  
Leavenworth  
(noon and 5:30 PM)

Marlybone – 3710  
Leavenworth  
(1:00 PM)

Two Fine Irishmen – 18101  
R Plaza  
( 2:00, 6:00 and 8:30 PM)

Clancy's East – 7120 Pacific  
(2:30 PM)

Clancy's Southwest – 168th  
& West Center  
(2:30 PM)

Interlude – 7643 Pacific  
(3:00 PM)

Holiday Lounge – 84th &  
Dodge  
(3:30 PM)

Clancy's West – 777 N 114th  
(4:00 PM)

Old Mattress Factory – 501 N  
13th  
(4:30 PM)

Upstream Brewery – 514 S  
11th  
(5:00 PM)

Cohen's & Kelly's - 13075  
West Center Road  
(7:00 PM)

Choo-Choo's – 14240 U  
Street  
(7:30 PM)

Brook Park Lounge – 3015 N  
90th  
(8:00 PM)

Pat & Mike's – 9163 Bedford  
(8:30 PM)



## Welcome from the Omaha Pipes and Drums

If you are receiving this email, you attended the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Concert by the Omaha Pipes and Drums and indicated that you would like to be on the mailing list for our electronic newsletter. So, **Thank You** again for attending and welcome. Feel free to share this email with others and to invite them to join the list.

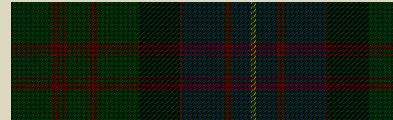
Let's begin with a bit of background information.



Early Photo of the Omaha Pipes and Drums in front of Joslyn Castle - Omaha, NE

The Omaha Pipes and Drums have been thrilling audiences with their repertoire of traditional Scottish and Irish music since 1970. The Band is a registered non-profit 501.C3 teaching organization providing **FREE** highland bagpipe and drumming lessons.

The Band wears the Cameron of Erracht tartan in honor of its founder, Tony Smith, who was a Cameron Cadet. The 79<sup>th</sup> (Cameron of Erracht) Tartan was unique among Scottish Regiments owing to the fact that it was not derived from the 42<sup>nd</sup> Government (Black Watch) Tartan. It was created by taking the MacDonald sett, omitting three red lines, and imposing the yellow line of clan Cameron.



Cameron of Erracht Tartan

The Band performs for numerous service, military, civic, police, fire, and private functions each year. The Omaha Pipes and Drums is a member of the [Midwest Pipe Band Association](#) and is registered to compete as a Grade 4 Band.



Pipers from the Omaha Pipes and Drums leading the Survivors Lap at one of many Cancer Walks



The Omaha Pipes and Drums performing with the UNO Marching Mavericks band

In 2004, the Omaha Pipes and Drums competed in three games in Scotland; North Berwick, Bridge of Alan, and the World Pipe Band Championships in Glasgow. The Band finished in 6th place in Grade 4 at Bridge of Allan, 8th Place in Grade 4 at North Berwick, and 7th place in the qualifying rounds of Grade 4B at the World Pipe Band Championships.



The Omaha Pipes and Drums competing at The World Pipe Band Championship - Glasgow Scotland 2004

Watch for future emails of topics of interest and Band events. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome and watch check our website for further events and updates.

## Sláinte





The Omaha Pipes and Drums  
[www.omahapipesanddrums.com](http://www.omahapipesanddrums.com)

### Lessons

**Free** piping and drumming lessons are offered every Saturday from 9-10 AM at St. Andrews Episcopal Church (84<sup>th</sup> & Pacific Streets).

### Annual Concert



The Omaha Pipes and Drums played to an overflowing sanctuary at St. Andrews Episcopal Church on Tuesday night March 9th at the Band's 8th Annual Concert - *The Parting Glass*. The hour and a half concert featured traditional favorites as well as guest artists and ensembles. The concert is the Band's way of thanking the church for allowing us to use their facilities for practices.

### Irish Fest 2010



The Omaha Pipes and Drums once again performed for the Catholic Charities benefit - Irish Fest - on Saturday, March 13th. The Band has performed regularly at this annual fund raiser for several years.

### St. Patrick's Day



The Band performed 25 times in a 13-hour period at 18 locations on St. Patrick's day. Two mini-bands traveled throughout the area and on both sides of the river playing for 15 minutes at each location.

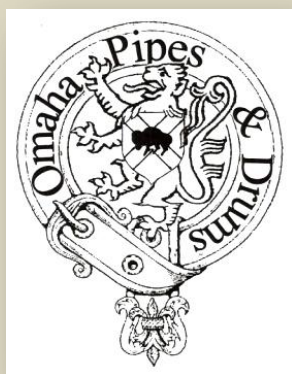


## The Story Behind Our Cap Badge

A cap badge, also known as head badge or hat badge, is worn on uniform headgear and distinguishes the wearer's nationality and/or organization. The wearing of cap badges is a convention commonly found among military and police forces, as well as uniformed civilian groups.

Cap badges are a modern form of heraldry and the design generally incorporates highly symbolic devices. The concept of regimental badges appears to have originated with the British Army.

The arms of the Omaha Pipes and Drums was originally designed by George Lynch.



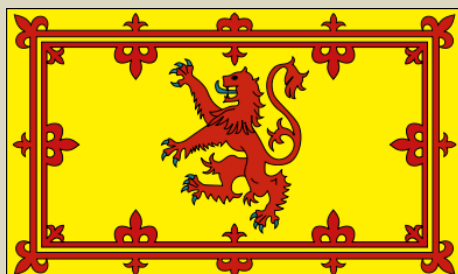
In 2001, the Band adopted the current version incorporating George's original design with "Omaha Pipes and Drums" on a "belt and buckle." What follows is an explanation of the major components.

### The Lion Rampant

A **charge** is any object or figure placed on a heraldic shield or on any other object in an armorial composition. Any object found in nature or technology may appear as a heraldic charge in armory. Charges can be animals, objects, or geometric shapes. The beast most often portrayed in heraldry is the lion. It traditionally symbolizes bravery, valor, strength, and royalty, since it is traditionally regarded as the king of beasts. "Rampant" means the body is drawn roughly vertical, forepaws raised to strike (or to display the claws to best advantage). The position of the hind legs varies according to local custom: the lion may stand on both hind legs, braced wide apart, or on only one, with the other also raised (armed) to strike.

The lion in the Band arms is stylized after the Royal Standard of Scotland. In heraldic terms it is blazoned (described as):

*"A lion rampant Gules (red) armed."*



The Royal Standard of Scotland, also known as the Royal Standard of the King of Scots or more commonly The Lion Rampant is the flag used historically by the King of Scots. It is a banner of the Royal Coat of Arms of the former Kingdom of Scotland. The Lion is commonly thought to have been adopted in the early 12th century by William I (known as "William the Lion"), but there is no evidence of its use as "the Arms of Dominion of Scotland" before 1222, when it appeared in the seal of his son, Alexander II.

### The Shield

The central element of a coat of arms is the shield. In heraldry, an **ordinary** is a simple geometrical figure on the arms. The ordinary in the OP&D shield is a white Saltire, a *crux decussate* (X-shaped cross) representing the cross of the Christian martyr Saint Andrew, the patron saint of Scotland, on a blue field. It is named the **Saltire** or the **Saint Andrew's Cross**.



According to legend, in 832 A.D. King Óengus (II) (or *King Angus*) led the Picts and Scots in battle against the Angles under King Aethelstan of East Anglia near modern-day Athelstaneford in East Lothian. King Angus and his men were surrounded and he prayed for deliverance. During the night Saint Andrew, who was martyred on a saltire cross, appeared to Angus and assured him of victory. On the following morning a white saltire against the background of a blue sky appeared to both sides. The Picts and Scots were heartened by this, but the Angles lost confidence and were defeated. This saltire design has been the Scottish flag ever since.

### The Bison

On the shield is the silhouette of an American bison. The American bison is the largest terrestrial mammal in North America. In heraldic terms, this is blazoned:

*A bison passant (walking) Sable (black)*

The complete blazon of the Omaha Pipes and Drums badge would be something like...

*A lion rampant Gules armed, overall a shield Azure, a saltire Argent, charged with a bison passant Sable. Around all is a belt and buckle inscribed Omaha Pipes and Drums.*

Until next month...

## Sláinte



The Omaha Pipes and Drums  
[www.omahapipesanddrums.com](http://www.omahapipesanddrums.com)

**2010  
Competition Season**



**May 15**  
Illinois Highland Games  
and Celtic Festival  
Chatham, IL



**June 19**  
Chicago Highland Games  
Oak Brook, IL



**August 14-15**  
Rocky Mountain Games  
Highlands Ranch, CO



**September 25**  
McPherson Games  
McPherson, KS

*And don't miss us at...*



**June 12**  
Kansas City Games  
Kansas City, KS



**September 18**  
Greeley Irish Festival  
Greeley, NE

Check our website for  
additional details



## The Evolution of the Great Highland Bagpipe

Scotland's national instrument, the Bagpipe or in Gaelic "piob-mhor" (the great pipe) is not, contrary to popular belief, an instrument which has its origins in and has diffused from Scotland. The bagpipe is an instrument of great antiquity, an instrument which has its origins in the Middle East and traveled through and evolved in Europe alongside the diffusion of early civilization.

The "Oxford History of Music" makes mention of the first documented bagpipe being found on a Hittite slab at Eyuk. This sculptured bagpipe has been dated to 1,000 B.C. Biblical mention is made of the bagpipe in Genesis and in the third Chapter of Daniel where the "symphonia" in Nebuchadnezzar's band is believed to have been a bagpipe. These early pipes or "Pan" pipes, without the bag or reservoir, were probably the second musical instrument to evolve. Musical history dictates that pipers have to take a back seat to percussion instruments in this case. These early pipes used materials with a natural bore (hollow reeds, corn stalks, bamboos, etc.)

The Roman bagpipes or "tibia utricularis" represented a major innovation, the addition of the reservoir. Historians have noted that Roman coins depict Nero playing the bagpipe, not the fiddle.

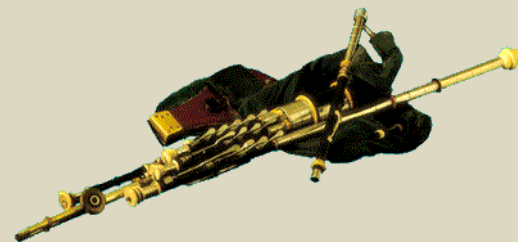
The early "Dudel-Sack" gave rise to a number of European, Asian and African folk bagpipes, namely, the Volynka (U.S.S.R.), the Bock (German), the Zukra (North Africa), the Gaita (Portugal and Spain), the Zampogna (Italy), the Cornemuse (France), the Moshug (India), the Zumarah (Egypt), and Flemish, Polish, Greek and Hungarian examples. An extensive and thoroughly documented collection of these instruments can be found in the Musical Instrument section of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. In addition, examples of early folk bagpipes can be found in the paintings of Breughel, Teniers, Jordaens and Durer.

The French Musette can be seen as a logical explanation for the evolution or refinement of the instrument into a number of examples of chamber pipes (i.e. those that operate via the use of bellows rather than the tradition bags as a reservoir).

Examples of different forms of such chamber pipes can be found throughout Ireland, France and England. The Northumbrian region of England has been a "hotbed" for bagpipe evolution. It has not only witnessed the emergence of its indigenous shuttle pipes, but also its own small pipes, half longs and great war-gathering pipes.



Northumbrian Pipes



Uilleann Pipes

Likewise, Ireland has experienced the evolution of its own Uilleann (chamber/bellows pipe) and war pipe (Brian Boru). The evidence exists to substantiate the belief that pipes may have been common throughout the remainder of Britain prior to their emergence upon the Scottish landscape.

Nevertheless, there is no question that the Bagpipe was very popular throughout England. Middle Ages Pre-Reformation churches reveal carvings of bagpipes. Chaucer refers to the Miller playing pipes in "The Miller's Tale," "A bagpipe well couth he blowe and sown."

Documents from the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland (1498 and 1506) refer to payments to the English piper. Shakespeare's "Henry IV" refers to the "Drone of a Lincolnshire Bagpipe". The Irish are believed to have played pipes for Edward I at Calais in 1297 and at the Battle of Falkirk in 1298. In fact, both Henry VII and Henry VIII are believed to have enjoyed pipers.

Questions remain as to when and where the first, second and third drones were added to the "piob-mhor" along with the questions as to when and where the bagpipe entered Scotland. However, the fact remains that this is an instrument whose growth and movement parallel civilizations and early history. It is a musical instrument which not only reflects Scotland's early history, but also the evolution of culture through history.

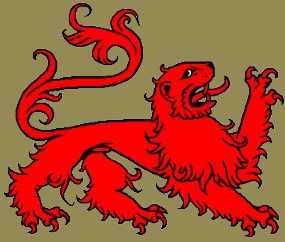
When they arrived to Scotland, they quickly became a part of Scottish life. Every town would hire a bagpiper, usually out of special taxes from the wealthy families in the area, who would pipe for townspeople on all occasions. In some places the piper would play in churches in place of an organ. As time went on, the bagpipes in the British Isles evolved and various types of pipes and piping were developed. Marches, strathspeys, hornpipes, and reels were perfected and played on the Highland Bagpipes, the Lowland Bagpipes, the Northumbrian pipes, and the Irish Union pipes.

The Scottish people have made the bagpipes one of the outstanding parts of their culture. In some many songs, stories, and poems, the Scots have celebrated their pipes, and unlike many other cultures they have kept the pipes alive as part of their musical tradition. But still, if you don't have a great Uncle Fergus from Ayr who played the Lowland pipes, you might have an Uncle Garcia from Madrid who played the Gaita.

Until next month...

## Sláinte





The Omaha Pipes and Drums  
[www.omahapipesanddrums.com](http://www.omahapipesanddrums.com)

### Band Officers



Jay Jolley – President



Pride Lynch – Secretary



Mike Barnes – Treasurer



Joe Fuchs – Pipe Major



Pete Heineman – Pipe Sgt.



Andy Ryba – Drum Sgt.



## An Abbreviated History of the Kilt

The history of the kilt stretches back to at least the end of the 16th century. Although the kilt is an item of traditional Scottish highland dress, the nationalism of that tradition is relatively recent. It was only with the Romantic Revival of the 19th century that the kilt became irreversibly associated with Highlanders, and was subsequently adopted by Lowlanders and the Scottish Diaspora. Other modern Celts such as the Irish, Cornish, Welsh and Manx, have also adopted tartan kilts in recent times, although to a lesser degree.

The word *kilt* comes from the Scots word *kilt* (fancy that) meaning to tuck up the clothes around the body. The Scots word derives from the Old Norse *kilting*, from Norse settlers who wore a similar, non-tartan pleated garment.

### The Great Kilt



Highland chieftain wearing belted plaid, around 1680.

The *Breacan an Fhéilidh* or *Féileadh Mòr* was originally a length of thick woolen cloth made up from two loom widths sewn together to give a total width of 54 to 60 inches, and up to 7 yards in length. The great kilt, also known as the belted plaid, was an untailored draped garment made of the cloth gathered up into pleats by hand and secured by a wide belt. The upper half could be worn as a cloak draped over the left shoulder, hung down over the belt and gathered up at the front, or brought up over the shoulders or head for protection against weather. It was worn over a *léine* (a full sleeved garment gathered along the arm length and stopping below the waist) and could also serve as a camping blanket. For battle it was customary to take off the kilt beforehand and set it aside, the Highland charge being made wearing only the *léine* or war shirt.

### The Small Kilt

Sometime early in the 18th century the *fèileadh beag* or philabeg using a single width of cloth hanging down below the belt came into use and became quite popular throughout the Highlands and northern Lowlands by 1746, though the great kilt also continued in use. The small kilt developed into the modern tartan kilt when the pleats were sewn in to speed the donning of the kilt.

### The “Dress Act”

The Jacobite Risings demonstrated the dangers to central government of warrior Highland clans answering only to their chieftains, and as part of a series of measures the government of King George II imposed the "Dress Act" in 1746, outlawing all items of Highland dress including the new kilts (though with an exception for army uniforms) with the intent of suppressing highland culture. The ban remained in effect for 35 years.

Although the kilt was largely forgotten in the Scottish Highlands, during those years it became fashionable for Scottish romantics to wear kilts as a form of protest against the ban. This was an age that romanticized "primitive" peoples, which is what Highlanders were viewed as. Most Lowlanders had viewed Highlanders with fear before 1745, but many identified with them after their power was broken. The kilt, along with other features of Gaelic culture, had become identified with Jacobitism, and now that this had ceased to be a real danger it was viewed with romantic nostalgia.

Once the ban was lifted in 1782, Highland landowners set up Highland Societies with aims including "Improvements" (which others would call the Highland clearances) and promoting "the general use of the ancient Highland dress". The Celtic Society of Edinburgh, chaired by Walter Scott, encouraged lowlanders to join this antiquarian enthusiasm.

The kilt became identified with the whole of Scotland with the pageantry of the visit of King George IV to Scotland in 1822, even though 9 out of 10 Scots lived in the Lowlands. Scott and the Highland societies organized a "gathering of the Gael" and established entirely new Scottish traditions, including Lowlanders wearing the supposed "traditional" garment of the Highlanders. At this time many other traditions such as clan identification by tartan were developed.

After that point the kilt gathered momentum as an emblem of Scottish culture as identified by antiquarians, romantics, and others, who spent much effort praising the "ancient" and natural qualities of the kilt. King George IV had appeared in a spectacular kilt, and his successor Queen Victoria dressed her boys in the kilt, widening its appeal. The kilt became part of the Scottish national identity.



Military Use



2nd Lieutenant Donald Callander commissioned in *The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders* (the Tartan we wear) prior to fighting with the *British Expeditionary Force* in May 1940 at the *Battle of Dunkirk*. The last time a Highland Battalion fought in the kilt.

From 1624 the Independent Companies of Highlanders had worn kilts as government troops, and with their formation into the Black Watch regiment in 1740 their great kilt uniform was standardized with a new dark tartan. Army uniforms were exempt from the ban on wearing kilts in the "Dress Act", and as a means of identification the regiments were given different tartans. These regiments opted for the modern kilts for dress uniforms, and while the great kilt remained as undress uniform this was phased out by the early 19th century.

Many Scottish units wore kilts in combat during WWI. In particular, the ferocious tactics of the Royal Highland Regiment led to their acquiring the nickname "Ladies from Hell" from the German troops that faced them in the trenches. The kilt was last worn in action at the start of WWII. Irish troops have no tradition of wearing the kilt in battle, though pipers in Irish regiments of the British Army have traditionally worn a mustard-colored saffron kilt.

Fabric

The typical kilt as seen at modern Highland games events are made of twill-woven worsted wool. The twill weave used for kilts is a 2-2 type, meaning that each weft thread passes over-and-under two warp threads at a time. The result is a distinctive diagonal weave pattern in the fabric which is referred to as the twill line. This kind of twill when woven according to a given color pattern, or *sett*, is called **tartan**. In contrast, the Irish kilt traditionally was made from solid color cloth, with saffron or green being the most widely used colors.

Kilting fabric weights are given in ounces per yard. They run from the very heavy regimental worsted of approximately 18–21 oz. down to a light-worsted of about 10–11 oz. The most common weights for kilts are 13 oz. and 16 oz. A kilt for a typical adult uses about 6–8 yards of single-width (about 26–30 inches) or about 3–4 yards of double-width (about 54–60 inches) tartan fabric. Double width fabric is woven so that the pattern exactly matches on the selvage (uncut edge). Kilts are usually made without a hem, since it would make the garment too bulky and cause it to hang incorrectly. The exact amount of fabric needed depends upon several factors, including the size of the sett, the number of pleats put into the garment, and the size of the person.

Setts (Tartan Patterns)

One of the most distinctive features of the authentic Scottish kilt is the tartan pattern, or *sett*, they exhibit. Many of these patterns have come to be associated with Scottish clans or families, but there are also tartans for districts, counties, countries, corporations, States and Provinces, schools and universities, individuals, commemorative, and simple generic patterns that anybody can wear. Setts are always arranged horizontally and vertically, never on the diagonal. They are specified by their thread count, which is the sequence of colors and their units of width.

Setts are further characterized by their size which is the number of inches (or centimetres) in one full repeat. The size of a given sett depends not only on the number of threads in the repeat, but also on the weight of the fabric. This is so because the heavier is the fabric weight, the thicker the threads will be and thus the same number of threads of a heavier weight fabric will occupy more space when woven.

The colors given in the thread count are specified as in heraldry, although tartan patterns are not heraldic. The exact shade which is used is a matter of artistic freedom and will vary from one fabric mill to another as well as from one dye lot to another within the same mill. Tartans are commercially woven in four standard color variations that describe the overall tone. "Ancient" or "Old" colors are characterized by a slightly faded look intended to resemble the vegetable dyes that were once used. Ancient greens and blues are lighter in shade, while reds appear orange. "Modern" colors are bright and show off modern alkaline dyeing methods. The colors are bright red, dark hunter green, and usually navy blue. "Weathered" or "Reproduction" colors simulate the look of older cloth weathered by the elements. Greens turn to light brown, blues become gray, and reds are a deeper wine color. The last color variation is "Muted" which tends to earth tones. The greens are olive, blues are slate blue, and red are an even deeper wine color. This means that of the nearly 5,000 registered tartans available there are four possible color variations for each, resulting in nearly 20,000 tartans.

Setts are registered with the Scottish Tartans Authority which maintains a collection of fabric samples characterized by name and thread count. In all, there are approximately 5000 registered tartans. Although many tartans being added every year, most of the registered patterns available today were created in the 19th century by commercial weavers who had a large variety of colors to work with. The rise of Highland romanticism and the growing Anglicization of Scottish culture by the Victorians at the time led to registering tartans with clan names. Before then, most of these patterns had little or no connection to any clan. There is therefore nothing symbolic about the colors, and nothing about the patterns is a reflection on the status of the wearer.

Pleating

A kilt can be pleated with either box or knife pleats. A knife pleat is a simple fold, while the box pleat is bulkier, consisting of two knife pleats back-to-back. Knife pleats are the most common in modern civilian kilts.



Pleats can be arranged relative to the pattern in two ways. In pleating to the stripe (left), a vertical stripe is selected and the fabric will be folded so that this stripe runs down the center of each pleat. The result is that horizontal bands appear along the back and sides of the kilt, which will look different from the front than it does from the back. It is often called military pleating because this is the style adopted by most military regiments. It is also widely used by pipe bands. In pleating to the sett (right) the fabric is folded in such a way that the pattern of the sett is repeated all around the kilt. This is done by taking up one full sett in each pleat, or two full setts if they are too small. This causes the kilt to look much the same both front and back.

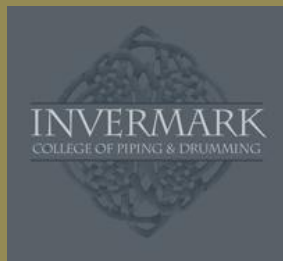
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#### Schools for Pipes & Drums



#### NORTH AMERICA ACADEMY of Piping and Drumming



[Balmoral School of Piping & Drumming](#)



[College of Piping](#)



## Piobaireachd

Music written for the Great Highland Bagpipes falls into one of three categories:

- **Ceol Mor**—the Great Music: a repertoire consisting of salutes, gathering tunes, marches, *cumha* (laments), and *brosnachadh* (incitements to battle)
- **Ceol Meadhonach**—the Middle Music: slow airs and jigs
- **Ceol Beag** (or **Ceol Aotrom**)—the Little Music: strathspeys, marches, hornpipes and reels

Piobaireachd (pronounced *pea-broch*, with that guttural *ch* sound) is another name for the *Ceol Mor*, the classical music of the bagpipe. The word itself is Gaelic for "what the piper does," from the root words *piob* (pipe) and *piobaire* (piper).

Like other forms of classical music in Europe, piobaireachd focuses on a single central theme. Serial variations are presented until the theme is said to have been exhausted; the piece then reverts to the original theme at the finish. Depending on the nature of the composition and the number of variations explored, a piobaireachd tune can last anywhere from eight to 25 minutes. Every tune in the piobaireachd repertoire follows a similar, regimented pattern and structure.

### Tune Structure in Piobaireachd

In the specific case of piobaireachd, the theme is called the *urlar*, meaning ground or floor. This is the starting point for any piobaireachd tune, as well as the ending. This is the basic air, a slow melody ornamented by grace notes. In the next stage, known as *siubhal* (wandering), variations are introduced that are regular and rhythmic. The variations get increasingly complex and technically challenging in the next stage, the *taorluath*, which leads into the *crunluath*, or crowning movement, during which three notes are added to every bar of the music. The *crunluath* may be the final section of the piece, or it may be followed by a *taorluath a-mach* or *crunluath a-mach* segment before the mandatory return to the theme of the *urlar*. This return to the *urlar* brings the tune full circle, and underscores the cultural concept that the piobaireachd, as a musical form, has no end.

### Historical Notes: The Repertoire

Some experts think that piobaireachd must be a very ancient art form. By the time the MacCrimmons touched off the gilded age of piobaireachd during the 16th century, it was even then already very highly evolved and complex as a musical form, as if it had been in existence for several centuries.

The whole piobaireachd repertoire comprises slightly more than 300 tunes, some dating back to that golden age, and some composed only within the last century. The playing limitations of bagpipes have had a fundamental impact on the repertoire itself. Because the bagpipes are not capable of dynamic emphasis of notes (playing some notes louder for emphasis), composers of music for the pipes have instead had to extend the length of certain notes to emphasize them over others.

With this built-in predisposition for drawing notes out, it's no wonder why the piobaireachd repertoire is characteristically slow and meditative. Another characteristic of the repertoire is its highly emotional quality. Included in the repertoire are laments, salutes, gathering tunes, and marches, each type designed to stir a different set of feelings. It is said that in the right hands, the bagpipes can convey the entire spectrum of human emotions, as well as mimic any sound in nature.

Historical quibbling aside, the piobaireachd truly begins with the advent of the most influential family in the history of piping—the MacCrimmons. The MacCrimmons were not only blessed with musical genius, but seemingly cursed as well, enduring tragedy after tragedy—the family survived deaths, murders, incarcerations, and epidemics, but never ceased piping and composing. This interplay between genius and despair led to the creation of many of the finest pieces in the entire piobaireachd repertoire.



*A romanticized portrait of a MacCrimmon piper*

### The MacCrimmons

The MacCrimmons of Skye were hereditary pipers to the clan MacLeod of Dunvegan for more than 200 years. Back in the day, pipers were esteemed professionals, well-paid by the clan chief who employed them, and it was not all that unusual for their compensation to include an endowment of real estate. Early in the 16th century, the MacCrimmons received use of the MacLeod estate at Boreraig, rent-free for as long as the MacCrimmons remained pipers to clan MacLeod. The family lived and worked at Boreraig until 1770, when the last hereditary MacCrimmon piper, Iain Dubh, quit his tenure and surrendered the lands to the MacLeods.

Boreraig became the center of piping in Scotland, for it was there that the MacCrimmons established a world-renowned academy to which chiefs or lords would send their pipers for instruction. The MacCrimmon course of study took at least seven years to complete; to become MacCrimmon-certified as a master of composition and theory of pipe music, a piper had to learn a minimum of 196 tunes, but even learning this portion of the repertoire was a daunting task that took some students over a decade to accomplish.



The MacCrimmons were famed not only as the most sought-after teachers of piobaireachd (they worked out an oral system for teaching the repertoire, called **canntaireachd**—see below), but also as its finest composers and pipers. If the legends surrounding MacCrimmon family history are to be believed, then some of the piobaireachd tunes composed by the MacCrimmons must have been created under some pretty amazing circumstances. Here are two notable examples of tunes with astounding origin tales behind them.

**A Flame of Wrath for Squinting Patrick**

Donald Mor MacCrimmon, then-occupant of the position of hereditary piper to the MacLeods, had a brother, Padruig Caogaich. This brother's facial tics earned him the derogatory nickname Squinting Patrick. Patrick was slain by his foster brother following a dispute, and Donald Mor MacCrimmon was hell-bent on revenge. His patron MacLeod interceded, and guaranteed Donald Mor that justice would be delivered within a year's time. When 12 months came and went without satisfaction, Donald Mor resolved to take matters into his own hands. He traveled with friends to Kintail, the village of Squinting Patrick's murderer, and knocked on many doors demanding his surrender. At each house, he was told that the murderer had gone out. This was the last straw for Donald Mor and his friends; they nailed the doors shut and set fire to 18 houses, at a cost of several lives. Donald Mor's song inspired by these events, *A Flame of Wrath for Squinting Patrick*, is said to demonstrate the power of bagpipes to invoke any of the human emotions, even rage and anger.

**Cumhadh na Cloinne ("Lament for the Children")**

This heartbreakingly beautiful lament is one of the most famous tunes in the entire piobaireachd repertoire, composed by the son of Donald Mor MacCrimmon, Patrick Mor. Patrick Mor had eight sons, all grown up. Father and sons were extremely close, the sons frequently accompanying their father on errands around town. One day, a ship from abroad arrived in Dunvegan port whose crew and passengers had contracted a deadly fever. The epidemic claimed all of Patrick Mor's sons save one, and the resulting lament expresses every shred of Patrick Mor's overwhelming sense of grief and loss.

Among piobaireachd instructors, lineage and tradition can be of critical importance in establishing a reputation and successful career. Some of the best piobaireachd instructors working today can trace their educational pedigree back hundreds of years, to a teacher who studied directly under one of the MacCrimmons.

**The Fairy Chanter of the MacCrimmons: Soumsair Airgid na Mna Sithe**

The line of MacCrimmons linked to the MacLeod family began with Iain Odhar, the first hereditary piper to the MacLeods. Iain Odhar was born circa 1500, but little else (of a factual nature, anyway) is known about him. The legends, however, abound -- including the tale of the fairy chanter. The unprecedented playing abilities of the MacCrimmons were said to derive from their ownership of the **Soumsair Airgid na Mna Sithe** -- the silver chanter of the fairy woman -- given to Iain Odhar in a place called **Uamh nan Piobairean** (the Pipers' Cave).

Legend also has it that Iain Odhar received the tune for his first piobaireachd piece while fasting and meditating in the Pipers' Cave. The spirit of an ancestor appeared to Iain Odhar, and played a tune on the pipes for him. To his dismay, the tune was too long and complex for Iain Odhar to learn in one sitting. He continued his meditation and fast for two more nights; both nights, the spirit piper appeared and played the tune. By the end of the third night, Iain Odhar had learned the tune perfectly. (The tune in question, by the way, is known as *MacCrimmon's Sweetheart*.) For hundreds of years afterward, the MacCrimmons went on retreat to the Pipers' Cave whenever a new composition was required for a special occasion, steadfastly refusing to break their fast until the tune was completed.

**Canntaireachd**

The first book containing written music for the piobaireachd repertoire, compiled by Joseph MacDonald, was published in 1803. Prior to the onset of written notation, however, how was the music of the early composers of piobaireachd handed down?

The MacCrimmons are credited with developing the strong oral tradition known as **canntaireachd** (pronounced *can*-troch, with the guttural *ch* sound), which has been used to teach pipers the piobaireachd repertoire for almost five centuries now. In canntaireachd, the teacher sings the tune using a system of vocables, consisting of combinations of vowels that represent the melody notes, and consonant combinations representing the grace notes and embellishments.

Other than the bagpipes, the human voice is the only other musical medium that is capable of accurately conveying the nuances of a piobaireachd tune—its emotion and shading—with the requisite power and subtlety. For this reason, the canntaireachd tradition continues to be handed down from teacher to piper, to this very day. Around the middle of the 18th century, canntaireachd lost its rigid standardization; nowadays, each individual teacher or school is likely to employ their own method, system, and collection of vocables.



**The Legacy of Piobaireachd**

The Great Highland Bagpipes have maintained their standing as the central instrument in Scottish music, and efforts continue to research and revive ancient piping traditions, from centuries-old instruments to playing styles. At the same time, the appreciation and playing of the Great Pipes has extended to every continent on the globe. The Great Highland Bagpipes are more popular today than they have been for the last several centuries, and many feel that the key factor behind the bagpipes' longevity and continued popularity is the timeless, enduring quality of the piobaireachd repertoire itself

**Modern Appoint of Hereditary Piper of MacLeod**

The MacCrimmon piping dynasty is honored in the form of a cairn built in 1933, at Borreraig. This cairn, which overlooks Loch Dunvegan across to Dunvegan Castle, was paid for by clan societies and donations from around the world. The Gaelic inscription on the cairn reads in translation as: "The Memorial Cairn of the MacCrimmons of whom ten generations were the hereditary pipers of MacLeod and who were renowned as Composers, Performers and Instructors of the classical music of the bagpipe; *Near to this post stood the MacCrimmons' School of Music, 1500 – 1800*".

In the last century, with a revival in clan interest, the modern chiefs of Clan MacLeod have instated two MacCrimmons as hereditary pipers to the chief. Malcolm Roderick MacCrimmon, a Canadian born in 1918, started piping at the age of eight. With the start of the Second World War he joined the Calgary Highlanders and subsequently joined the pipe band. At some point in time he wrote to Dame Flora MacLeod, chief of Clan MacLeod, asking for approval and support of his decorating his bagpipes in the MacLeod tartan. The chief then wrote to the regiment's Commanding Officer and permission was granted. In 1942, MacCrimmon is said to have made a verbal agreement with the clan chief and became the ninth "hereditary piper" to the Chief of Clan MacLeod. MacCrimmon claimed there was proof of his descent from the MacCrimmons of Borreraig, and as such, that he was a descendant of the hereditary pipers to the Chief. In 1978, John MacLeod of MacLeod, 29th chief of Clan MacLeod, while visiting Calgary, Alberta, Canada, formally made Malcolm's son, Iain Norman MacCrimmon, the tenth hereditary piper to the Chief of Clan MacLeod.

Until next month...

**Sláinte**





The Omaha Pipes and Drums  
[www.omahapipesanddrums.com](http://www.omahapipesanddrums.com)



### Scottish Society of Nebraska

The Scottish Society of Nebraska was founded in 1971. They are the ambassadors of Scottish culture for this area. With the Scottish Society of Nebraska Country Dancers, the objectives of the Society are the preservation, nurturing, and promotion of the culture, customs, and traditions of Scotland.



The Omaha Pipes and Drums perform regularly for the Scottish Society events.



### Upcoming Events

St. Andrew's Highland Ball  
November 19



## Why Scotland is called, “Scotland”

The word *Scotland* was derived from the Latin *Scoti*, of uncertain origin, applied to Gaels of Hibernia, the Roman name for modern Ireland. The Late Latin word *Scotia* (*land of the Gaels*) was eventually used only of Gaelic-speaking Scotland. This name was employed alongside *Albania* or *Albany*, from the Gaelic *Alba*.

**Alba** is the Scottish Gaelic and Irish name for Scotland. It is cognate to *Albey* in Manx, the other Goidelic Insular Celtic language, as well as similar words in the Brythonic Insular Celtic languages of Cornish (*Alban*) and Welsh (*Yr Alban*) also meaning Scotland.

The Goidelic word is ultimately loaned from Latin *alba* "white", probably referring to the whole island of Great Britain after the white cliffs of Dover. Hence also the early classical name *Albion*. It was used by the Gaels to refer to the island as a whole until roughly the ninth or tenth centuries, when it came to be the name given to the kingdoms of the Picts and the Scots (Pictavia and Dál Riata), north of the River Forth and the Clyde estuary, traditionally considered to have been unified by Kenneth Mac Alpin.

As time passed that kingdom incorporated others to the south. It became Latinized in the High Medieval period as "Albania" (it is unclear whether it may ultimately share the same etymon as the modern Albania). This latter word was employed mainly by Celto-Latin writers, and most famously by Geoffrey of Monmouth. It was this word which passed into Middle English as Albany, although very rarely was this used for the Kingdom of Scotland, but rather for the notional Duchy of Albany. From the latter the capital of the U.S. state of New York, Albany, takes its name.

The use of the words *Scots* and *Scotland* to encompass all of Scotland became common only in the Late Middle Ages. In a modern political context, the word Scot is applied equally to all inhabitants of Scotland, regardless of their ancestral ethnicity. However, a 2006 study published by the University of Edinburgh suggest that segments of Scottish society continue to distinguish between those who claim to be Scots on ethnic grounds and those who claim to be Scots on the grounds of civic commitment. "Scots" is also used to refer to the Scots language, which a large proportion of the Scottish population speak to a greater or lesser degree.



### Significance of the Thistle

The prickly purple thistle is the national emblem of Scotland. Ever present in fields and pastures throughout Scotland, thistle has been Scotland's emblem for centuries. The first use as a royal symbol was on silver coins issued by James III in 1470. The plant, which grows to a height of five feet, has no enemies because of vicious spines that cover it like armor plating.

There are many different stories of how the Thistle became Scotland's symbol, but most point to the events surrounding the Battle of Largs in 1263. It is generally forgotten that for more than 600 years most of Scotland was part of the Kingdom of Norway. By 1263 Norway seemed to have little interest. King Alexander III proposed to buy back the Western Isles and Kintyre, still Norwegian territory. However this re-awoke Norse interest and King Haakon IV attacked with a large force, but was finally defeated at Largs. At some point during the campaign the Norsemen tried to surprise the Scots with a night attack. They removed their footwear for a silent approach but found themselves on ground covered with thistle.

It is said their leader steeped on thistle and cried out. His shout warned the Scots who then saw off the Norsemen, thus saving Scotland. The role of the thistle was then understood, and was chosen as Scotland's symbol, with the motto "Nemo me impune lacessit", "No-one harms me without punishment" but more commonly translated as "Wha daurs meddle wi me".

Until next month...

## Sláinte



The Omaha Pipes and Drums  
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### Sovereign's Piper Trivia

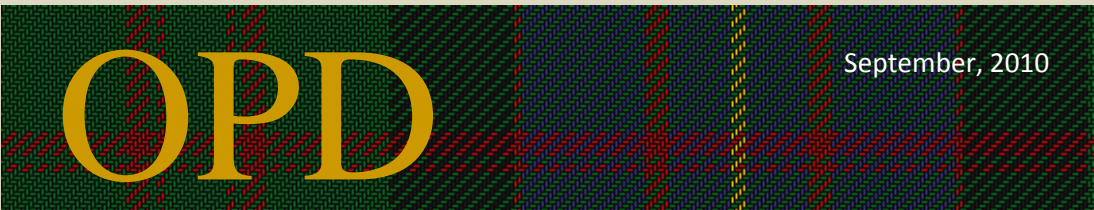
Pipe Major John "Gabby" Roe (Scots Guards) is the only known piper to have refused the post of Piper to Her Majesty. Apparently, the wages were so low at the time that he would have not been able to support his family. Understandably, this resulted in some murmuring, but he stuck to his guns and took a civilian job instead. After this occurrence, wages were reviewed and consequently raised. While the Sovereign Pipers are simply compensated with their military pay, most would rather spent their time at a palace and play tunes than perhaps be shot at!

The Balmoral tartan is worn only by those pipers employed in service to the Royal family and the members of the Royal family themselves. The Balmoral tartan is always worn by the Sovereign's Piper when at Balmoral in Scotland. (In England, the Royal Stewart is worn on ceremonial occasions.)

The Sovereign's Piper wears two eagle feathers in his headwear, versus one such feather for other pipers serving in some capacity to the Royal family (i.e. Balmoral estate pipers).

### Piper to the Sovereign

1843–1854: Angus MacKay  
1854–1891: William Ross  
1891–1910: James Campbell  
1910–1941: Henry Forsyth  
1941–1945: *None*  
1945–1965: Alexander MacDonald  
1965–1973: Andrew Pitkeathly  
1973–1980: David Caird  
1980–1995: Brian MacRae  
1995–1998: Gordon Webster  
1998–2003: Jim Motherwell  
2003–2006: Jim Stout  
2006–2008: Alastair Cuthbertson  
2008–To Present: Derek Potter



September, 2010

## Piper to the Sovereign

Queen Victoria took a trip, with her husband Albert, to Taymouth Castle in 1842 to visit the Marquis of Breadalbane and heard the famous bagpiper John Ban MacKenzie play. She was delighted. She sent a letter to her mother, the Duchess of Kent, exclaiming, *"We have heard nothing but bagpipes since we have been to the beautiful Highlands and I have become so fond of it that I mean to have a piper."* When asked for a recommendation, the Marquis suggested Angus MacKay as a piper for the Queen. Angus accepted the post and moved to London, England to become the first Piper to the Sovereign.

### Duties

Duties for Sovereign's Pipers—"Piobair na Bhan Righ"—were not limited to just piping. Official duties outlined in 1854 included serving as footman in the garden in the morning, waiting at dinner as needed, greeting visitors and escorting them to dinner and generally taking orders from the Sergeant Footman in general service around the household.

Currently, the Sovereign's Piper's primary duty is to play Monday through Friday at 9 a.m. for about fifteen minutes under The Queen's window, a tradition that tourists appreciate! Regardless of inclement weather, he pipes every morning when Her Majesty is residing at Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, and the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh or at Balmoral. (He usually takes his vacation when the Queen is at Sandringham in Norfolk.) He also plays for special events. The piper lives in the royal residence and travels with the Queen acting as a Page of the Presence, escorting the Queen to the various audiences.

One unofficial rule is the piper cannot play the same tune twice for the morning performance the entire duration of the Queen's stay at Balmoral in the summer months. (The Queen likes fresh material!) At official state banquets, the Piper to the Sovereign is responsible for coordinating a dozen bagpipers who play in the dining room after the Heads of State have finished dinner. At Balmoral, Holyroodhouse, and Windsor he plays each evening at The Queen's dinner table.



Derek Potter – Current Piper to the Queen

### Appointment and Duration of Duty

Early on (Angus MacKay and William Ross), since this position was a lifetime appointment, another piper might unofficially take over duties of a Sovereign's Piper if he was unable to perform, but the title was usually held until death. This is no longer the case, as evidenced by James Campbell ending his service with retirement in 1910. These days, service is limited by the individual's remaining enlistment (maximum of twenty-two year term), so it will depend upon at which point in his term the individual is appointed. (For example, if appointed twelve years into enlistment this would leave a decade of service to the sovereign as piper.) It was decided in 1965 that appointments be removed from the Civil List and be made only from serving army pipe majors. Like a business, these pipers are interviewed by the Queen before she makes her appointment, and is based much on whether she feels their personalities are compatible as they will be interacting on regular basis.

### Other Pipers

Before Queen Victoria's death in 1901, it was common to have several pipers at the Queen's disposal. For instance, at one point James Campbell was 1st Piper and his nephew William Campbell was 2nd Piper. After her death, one piper was retained but it became the practice to employ several pipers at Balmoral as gamekeepers, deerstalkers or fishing gillies. These "extra" pipers would join the Sovereign's Piper in entertaining the king or queen. Two very famous such estate tenders/pipers were the "Bob's of Balmoral", Bob Brown and Bob Nicol. This practice continues to this day.

In 1932, the Scots Guards granted a warrant as "Household Pipers to the Sovereign" and were required to provide a dozen pipers to perform at State Banquets.

Until next month...

Sláinte



The southernmost counties of Scotland, nearest the border with England, are also known as the Borders. They are sometimes considered separately to the rest of the Lowlands. Many descendants of the Scots-Irish, as they are known in the United States, or Ulster-Scots, originated from the lowlands and borders region before having migrated to the Ulster Plantation in the 17th century and later the American frontier, many prior to the American Revolution.

In music, there is believed to be a distinguishable line between the cultures of the native Irish and the Ulster-Scots living in Ireland. In Ireland the traditional music is focused around the 19th century 'session' or until the 1990s, 'kitchen session'. This is a regular meeting, often weekly, and is marked by informal arrangement of both musicians and audience, although Irish traditional music is one of the most influential types of music known to the modern world, and can be heard in some of the Ulster Scots music and in Country and Appalachian musics.

Protestant Scottish traditional music is sometimes similar to Irish and Scottish Gaelic-centered music, in that it is usually informal. A popular example of Protestant Ulster-Scots musical events is the marching bands. Here a formal and organized structure is more obvious. Although they play less frequently, these bands meet regularly in community halls to tune their instruments and to practice popular tunes and songs.

The strong Scottish Unionist roots of the Ulster-Scots musical scene is evident through the continuing celebrations during the Marching Season, which has caused much controversy in Northern Ireland.



## The Scottish Highlands and Lowlands



Geographically, Scotland is divided into three distinct areas: the Highlands, the Central plain (Central Belt), and the Southern Uplands. The **Lowlands** cover roughly the latter two. Strictly speaking, the northeast plain is also *low-land*, both geographically and culturally, but in some contexts may be grouped together with the Highlands.

The **Scottish Highlands** (Scottish Gaelic: *A' Ghàidhealtachd*) include the rugged and mountainous regions of Scotland north and west of the Highland Boundary Fault. The Great Glen divides the Grampian Mountains to the southeast from the Northwest Highlands. The Highlands are popularly described as one of the most scenic regions of Europe.

The area is generally sparsely populated, with many mountain ranges dominating the region. Before the 19th century however the Highlands was home to a much larger population, but due to a combination of factors including the outlawing of the traditional Highland way of life following the Second Jacobite Rising, the infamous Highland Clearances, and mass migration to urban areas during the Industrial Revolution, the area is now one of the most sparsely populated in Europe.

Culturally the area is quite different from the Scottish Lowlands. Most of the Highlands fall into the region known as the Gàidhealtachd, which was, within the last hundred years, the Gaelic-speaking area of Scotland. The terms are sometimes used interchangeably but have different meanings in their respective languages. Highland English is also widely spoken.

In traditional Scottish geography, the **Highlands** refer to that part of Scotland north-west of the Highland Boundary Fault, which crosses mainland Scotland from Dumbarton to Stonehaven. The Highlands includes the Inner and Outer Hebrides, parts of Perthshire and the County of Bute, but excludes Orkney and Shetland, the northeast of Caithness, the flat coastal land of the counties of Nairnshire, Morayshire and Banffshire, and most of East Aberdeenshire. This Highland area differed from the Lowlands by language and tradition, having preserved Gaelic speech and customs centuries after the Anglicization of the latter; of the latter; the result of which led to a growing perception of a divide with the cultural distinction between Highlander and Lowlander first noted towards the end of the 14th century. The City of Inverness is usually regarded as the capital of the Highlands. However, there are several definitions of the Highland line, which create further confusion.

The Scottish Reformation, which began in the Lowlands, achieved only partial success in the Gaelic-speaking Highlands. Roman Catholicism remained strong in much of the Highlands, aided by Irish Franciscan missionaries who regularly came to the area to perform Mass, as they shared a similar language. The Highlands are often described as the last bastion of Roman Catholicism in Great Britain, with significant strongholds such as Moidart, Morar, South Uist and Barra. The Scottish Highlanders' strong Catholicism led to much of their historical antipathy towards the Protestant English. This was in contrast to the Lowland Scots, most of whom converted to Protestantism and thus were more willing to unite with the English to create the United Kingdom. On the other hand, some Outer Hebrides islands (like Lewis and Harris) have large populations belonging to the Free Church of Scotland or the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

The **Scottish Lowlands** (*a' Ghalldachd*, meaning roughly 'the non-Gaelic region', in Gaelic), although not officially a geographical area of the country, in normal usage is generally meant to include those parts of Scotland not referred to as the Highlands (or Gàidhealtachd), that is, everywhere due south and east of a line (the Highland Boundary Fault) between Stonehaven and Helensburgh (on the Firth of Clyde). Confusingly, some parts of the Lowlands, such as the Southern Uplands are not physically 'low', and some sections of the Highlands, such as Islay are low-lying.

Until next month...

**Sláinte**



## Highland Attire

### Casual wear



### Daywear – semiformal



### Eveningwear – formal



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highland wear

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November, 2010

## The Band Uniform

Proper attire, deportment and attitude are crucial elements in establishing a professional demeanor and gaining respect on and off the competition field. While not part of the scoring system in the United States, Dress and Deportment is judged in Scottish competitions.

Pipe Bands around the world wear a variety of uniform styles reflecting the culture of the country and history of the Band.



*Early photo of the band in front of Joslyn Castle*

The uniform worn by the Omaha Pipes and Drums has changed over the Band's 40-year history. The white, then black traditional military looking "Class A" (shown above and below)...



was replaced with the more comfortable and modern civilian looking uniform of today.



Each component of the uniform has its own history and significance. Starting from the bottom and working up...



**Ghillie Brogues**, or Ghillies, are a type of shoe with laces along the instep and no tongue. Ghillies originated as a shoe that would drain water and dry quickly due to the lack of a tongue, and not get stuck in the mud because of their laces above the ankle. A ghillie or gillie is a man or boy who attends to someone (originally his employer and/or guests) on a hunting or fishing expedition. The word "brogue" is derived from the Scottish Gaelic word bròg meaning "shoe". The plural ("shoes") is "brògan".

The very first type of **Kilt Hose** worn – the *cadadh* – were cut and sewn from tartan cloth. They were not necessarily the same tartan as the kilt – most often they were a different tartan entirely. In fact, two tone red and white (or red and black, blue and white, and other color combinations) were popular. The earliest portrait of anyone wearing the *cadadh* with a kilt is from the early seventeenth century. The Band wears two colors of hose (not at the same time); green for competitions and informal events, and white for formal events.

The Band wears contrasting red garter **Flashes** underneath the folds of the kilt hose with just a few inches of the tips showing. These are symbolic of the original flashes that were wrapped around the leg and tied to keep the hose in place.



The **Sgian Dubh** (pronounced "skee(a)n doo") is a ceremonial dagger. It is worn tucked into the hose with only the pommel visible. The name comes from the Gaelic meaning "black knife", where "black" may refer to the usual color of the handle of the knife. It is also suggested that "black" means secret, or hidden.

When the sgian dubh first began to be worn full time in the stocking top, it is shown in oil paintings of the early to mid 1800's. The sgian dubh has been banned on a number of occasions in the USA and even in Scotland. Because of this, the Sgian Dubh is an option band uniform item.



The Band **Kilt** is the Cameron of Erracht tartan in honor of its founder, Tony Smith, who was a Cameron Cadet (see the June newsletter for a history of the kilt).



A **Sporran** is a pouch (the word is simply the Scottish Gaelic for 'purse'). Now a decorative part of Highland dress, it was originally an everyday practical item. Since the traditional kilt does not have pockets, the sporran serves as a wallet and container for any other necessary personal items. Historically, the sporran was used to carry a day's rations. It is worn on a chain or **Sporran Belt** around the waist, allowing the sporran to lie below the waist.



Belted Plaids were worn as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century. While once worn to hold the Great Kilt closed, the modern Kilt Belt is primarily an accessory – if a kilt fits properly, a belt is not needed. The **Kilt Belt** worn by the Band is a traditional military style and is not worn with the waistcoat.



The **Waistcoat** (or vest) is one of the few articles of clothing whose origin historians can date precisely. King Charles II of England, Scotland and Ireland introduced the waistcoat as a part of correct dress during the Restoration of the British monarchy. It was derived from the Persian vests seen by English visitors to the court of Shah Abbas. The band wears the waistcoat with both a short- and long-sleeve **White Shirt** and **Black Tie**.



**Glengarry** - is a type of cap which Alasdair Ranaldson MacDonell of Glengarry invented; a boat-shaped cap without a peak made of thick-milled woolen material with a *toorie* or bobble on top and ribbons hanging down behind, capable of being folded flat. It became part of the uniform of a number of Scottish regiments, with differences in whether or not the cap had a diced band around above the brim and in the colors. The Band wears a black Glengarry with a red toorie.



The **Inverness Cape** has come to be almost universally adopted for rainy weather by pipe bands the world over, and many other kilt wearers also find it to be the preferable garment for such conditions. Unlike most raincoats, the Inverness cape has no sleeves. Instead, there is a wide cut in the sides to accommodate the arms. This enables the wearer to access a sporran without unbuttoning and opening up the cape. The opening in the side is covered by a short cape, which can be buttoned in the front. The Band rule is that if one member of the Band forgets his or her Inverness and it is raining, the entire Band goes without wearing theirs.

**What's Worn Under the Kilt?**

The question of what is worn *under* the kilt is a source of endless speculation and tiresome attempts at humor. Many traditional Scots will tell you, "Nothing is *worn* under the kilt; it is all in working order."

You'll have to learn the answer to that question on your own.

Until next month...

Sláinte



#### Hogmanay Websites

##### [Aberdeen](#)

Granite City hogmanay.

##### [Burghhead](#)

Burning of the Clavie.

##### [Biggar](#)

Bonfire in the Borders.

##### [Comrie](#)

Small scale hogmanay.

##### [Dornoch](#)

Town square Hogmanay.

##### [Dumfries](#)

Party on the

Whitesands.

##### [Edinburgh](#)

Capital hogmanay.

##### [Glasgow](#)

Fest in the West.

##### [Inverness](#)

Highland hooley.

##### [Maeshowe](#)

Megalithic solstice clock.

##### [Orkney](#)

Spot the ba'

Fire procession.

##### [Stonehaven](#)

Great swinging balls of fire.

##### [Stirling](#)

Hogmanay revels in the castle.



December, 2010

## Traditional Christmas Yule

Although Christmas and its customs were in disfavor for only a short time in England (during the reign of Cromwell), Scotland ignored the holiday far longer. Bear in mind that "Christmas" is "Christ's Mass" and mass was banned in Scotland. There are records of charges being brought against people for keeping "Yule" as it was called in Scotland. Amazingly, this dour, joy-crushing attitude lasted for 400 years. It has only been in recent years that the Scots observed December 25 as a special day at all. So if there is a specifically "Scottish" aspect to Christmas it is that it was not celebrated!

Christmas in Scotland is now a time for going to church, food, presents, parties, holidays and all sorts of other good things. It's a time for celebration because it's the birthday of Jesus.

Planning for Christmas starts weeks before the events. Children are busy writing their Christmas lists for Santa Claus, parents are busy buying presents, cleaning the house and organizing food for the great day.

Houses are decorated with tinsel, holly wreaths candles and decorations. Mistletoe is hung to catch a kiss from anyone who stands under it. The Christmas tree, decorated with baubles, takes pride of place in any household.

On Christmas Eve, children prepare for Santa Claus by hanging up their stockings in anticipation of their being filled with presents while they sleep. They leave out a small glass of whisky or milk for Santa along with a mince pie. They also leave out carrots for the reindeer - particularly Rudolph - the red nosed reindeer that guides his sleigh through the dark skies. Then the children are ready to go to bed. In all the excitement children find it difficult to get to sleep. Some waken up VERY early in the morning.

Christmas day finally arrives and is marked by screams of delight at the surprises Santa has left. Once the presents are opened, many people get ready to go to church. Christmas carols are sung during the hour long service.

On return, parents prepare the Christmas lunch while children play with their toys. Christmas dinner is a time when families get together - grannies, grandpas, aunts, uncles, cousins. Once it is finished and the clearing up done, there is generally a party. People sing songs, dance or play games. All the preparation has been worth it. People go to bed happy yet exhausted. Christmas is over for another year!

## Hogmanay

Pronounced hog-muh-NAY is the Scots word for the last day of the year and is synonymous with the celebration of the New Year in the Scottish manner. Its official date is 31 December (Old Year's Night). However this is normally only the start of a celebration which lasts through the night until the morning of **Ne'erday** (1 January).

The roots of Hogmanay perhaps reach back to the pagan celebration of the winter solstice among the Norse, as well as incorporating customs from the Gaelic New Year's celebration of Samhain. In Europe, winter solstice evolved into the ancient celebration of Saturnalia, a great Roman winter festival, where people celebrated completely free of restraint and inhibition. The Vikings celebrated Yule, which later contributed to the Twelve Days of Christmas, or the "Daft Days" as they were sometimes called in Scotland. The winter festival went underground with the Protestant Reformation and ensuing years, but re-emerged near the end of the 17th century.

There are many customs, both national and local, associated with Hogmanay. The most widespread national custom is the practice of *first-footing* which starts immediately after midnight. This involves being the first person to cross the threshold of a friend or neighbor and often involves the giving of symbolic gifts such as salt (less common today), coal, shortbread, whisky, and black bun (a fruit pudding) intended to bring different kinds of luck to the householder. Food and drink (as the gifts, and often Flies cemetery) are then given to the guests. This may go on throughout the early hours of the morning and well into the next day (although modern days see people visiting houses until the 3 January). The first-foot is supposed to set the luck for the rest of the year, so it is important that a suitable person does the job. A tall, handsome, and dark-haired man bearing a gift is strongly preferred. According to popular folklore, a man with dark hair was welcomed because he was assumed to be a fellow Scotsman; a blond or red-haired stranger was assumed to be an unwelcome Norseman.

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and Happy Hogmanay from the Omaha Pipes and Drums!

Until next month...

## Sláinte







The Omaha Pipes and Drums have been a Celtic tradition since 1970, thrilling audiences with their repertoire of traditional Scottish and Irish music. The OP&D is a registered non-profit 501.C3 teaching organization providing free Great Highland Bagpipe and Highland Drumming lessons.

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