

**A CIRCUMSTANTIAL ACCOUNT of the COMPETITIONS for the PRIZES given by the HIGHLAND SOCIETY IN LONDON, to the best Performers on the GREAT HIGHLAND BAGPIPE, from the year 1781.**

The Highland Society of London, of which one of the first Dukes in Scotland, was then President, being desirous that the ancient spirit of the Great Pipe, which in former times called the Clans in Scotland to war, should be revived, were pleased to order Annual Prizes to be played for, and to be adjudged to the best performers on that instrument, who should appear as candidates at the Falkirk Tryst. The first prize to be a set of new Pipes, made by Hugh Robertson, Edinburgh, and forty merks Scots money; the second prize thirty merks; and the third the like sum. Some gentlemen as a deputation from the Society at Glasgow, and the agent from Edinburgh, made their appearance at Falkirk, the day preceding that appointed for the competition. They met on the following morning, and adjourned to the Mason Lodge; when, after hearing an excellent Gaelic poem recited by an old grey-headed bard, which he composed for the occasion in the presence of a select company of ladies and gentlemen, thirteen competing Pipers, and the maker of the Prize Pipes, the deputation and the agent, proceeded to the election of a preses, and six gentlemen to be judges of the merits of the performers. The Preses chosen on this occasion, was universally allowed to be not only a very fine player himself, but one of the first judges of the instrument in Scotland; and one of the judges chosen from the Glasgow deputation, was likewise acknowledged to be an excellent performer on that warlike instrument, and every way qualified for determining on the merits of the candidates. A mode of trial was next adopted, which reflected great honour upon the impartiality of the judges. The competitors were conducted to a room, apart, where from one of their bonnets, they drew lots for priority of performance. This done, the person who drew lot No. 1 was conducted by a private door, to a small court below the windows of the lodge, in such a manner, that the judges neither could see nor know the particular performer. Each person was made to play four different tunes, while the judges continued taking accurate notes of the performance. The judges almost unanimously awarded the first prize to Patrick MacGregor, Piper to Henry Balnaves, Esq. of Adradour, in the parish of Mullin and county of Perth;\* the second prize to Charles MacArthur, Piper to the Earl of Eglinton; and the third to John MacGregor senior, aged 73, Piper to Lieutenant Colonel John Campbell of Glenlyon, in the parish of Fortingall.

**October, 1782** – The competition for the prizes given annually by the Highland Society of London, for the encouragement of performers on the ancient martial instrument of Scotland, was determined by a select jury of gentlemen in presence of a numerous and respectable audience. After a long trial, carried on with the utmost attention and solemnity by the judges, the first prize was voted to John MacAlister, first Piper to the West Fencible regiment: the second, to John MacGregor the father, then turned of 74

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\* Although this Piper wanted almost the whole third finger of the upper hand (on the chanter), yet he managed his Pipes with the greatest dexterity; he used the little finger instead, and was known by the appellation of Patrick *Na Coraig*. This man's son became Piper to High Royal Highness the Duke of Kent, Earl of Strathearn, and officiated with

great applause at the meetings of the Highland Society of London, he died suddenly from apoplexy.

years of age; and the third, to John MacGregor the son.

**October, 1783** – At the annual competition for prizes, given by the Highland Society of London, which was held at Falkirk; the first prize was adjudged to Neil MacLean, Piper to Major Campbell of Airds; the second prize to Archibald MacGregor, fourth son of John MacGregor, Piper to Colonel Campbell of Glenlyon; and the third to John MacGregor, Piper to the city guard of Edinburgh. The bard *Ma can T'sior* was introduced, and pronounced his annual Gaelic poem, in praise of the martial music and prowess of the Caledonians; and the whole was concluded with a grand procession to the church-yard, where the victors at the three competitions, viz. MacGregor, MacAlister, and MacLean, marched thrice round the tombs of the immortal heroes Sir John Stuart, Sir John *the* Graham, and Sir Robert Munro, playing the celebrated MacCrummen's Lament, in concert on their prize Pipes. On the return of the Pipers from Falkirk, by Edinburgh, it was conceived by many gentlemen, that an exhibition of their abilities would be a very agreeable entertainment to the public; it was accordingly arranged, that it should take place on the following Wednesday, in Dunn's Assembly Rooms, when the following artists gave each of them a specimen of his skill: -

John MacGregor, Piper to Colonel Campbell of Glenlyon, was desired to begin by playing Clanranald's March. With respect to this performer, it is remarkable that at the age of 75, he braved the fatigue of a long journey to attend the Falkirk competition in obedience to a minute of the Highland Society of London, appointing him their Piper, an intermediate person betwixt the judges and competitors; that he was the father of four sons, all Pipers, one of them eminent in that profession, who was for some time at Dunvegan; and a grandson, not above twelve years old, who was then able to play the Pipes: Colin MacNab, Piper to the Laird of MacNab, and Donald Fisher, second Piper to the Earl of Breadalbane, both played the same with the first: Paul MacInnes, from Fasnacloch, in Argyleshire, *Piobaireachd na Paire*: John MacGregor, of the City Guard, MacGregor's March: Donald Gunn, of the 77<sup>th</sup> regiment, *Failte Phrionnsa*; James Munro, Piper to the Canongate, Clanranald's March; John MacKay, from Lord Reay's country; MacKintosh's Lament; John MacAlister, Piper to MacAlister of Loup, *Cogadh na Sith*; Allan MacIntyre of the 71<sup>st</sup> regiment, *Failte Phrionnsa*; Donald MacIntyre, Piper to Sir R. Menzies, *Failte Mheincaraich*; John MacArthur, commonly called Professor MacArthur, the grocer in Edinburgh, *Cumha Oberchàrnaig, agus Fàilte Oberchàrnaig*, after which he and Donald MacIntyre played in concert. During one of the intervals, the *Bàrd Donn* MacIntyre, in the City Guard, was introduced, who repeated a poem in the Gaelic, in praise of that language and ancient music of the great Pipes, which was much approved of by those who understood that language. The Pipers then marched round St. Andrew's Square, all playing Clanranald's March. The first prize was voted to Donald MacIntyre, - a handsome bagpipe, with the following inscription, "A prize given by the managers of the Edinburgh exhibition on the Bag-Pipe, to Donald MacIntyre, 1783;" and the like inscription upon a silver horse-shoe, with a coronet, for the bonnet of Colin MacNab: to Donald Fisher and Paul MacInnes, each an elegant Highland dress, with silver epaulettes, double silver loops, buttons, and feathers in the new bonnets, and money to each of the above to defray their expense. One of the greatest Highland Chieftains in Scotland a member of the London Highland Society, who honoured the

exhibition with his presence as President, ordered Hugh Robertson to make one of the handsomest Highland Bag-Pipes he possibly could, at his expense, which was to be delivered to the so much celebrated performer upon the warlike instrument, Professor MacArthur, as a mark of approbation of so great a performer's merit, accompanied with the signed declaration of the whole Pipers then present.

**October, 1874** - The annual competition, &c. which was formerly held at Falkirk Tryst, was performed in the Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, before a numerous and fashionable audience. There were sixteen competitors, all of whom were esteemed good performers by the judges. The prizes were this year awarded as follows: The first to John MacGregor, senior, from Fortingall: the second to Donald Fisher: and the third to Dugald MacDugall, Piper to Dugald MacDugall, Esq. of Gallanach; the money collected by the sale of tickets was distributed among the candidates.

**July 1785** - The first prize was unanimously voted to Donald MacIntyre, senior, from Rannoch, a man of 75 years of age; the second to Colin MacNab, Piper to Francis MacNab, Esq., of MacNab; and the third, to Paul MacInnes, Piper to John Cameron, Esq., of Callert. There were present twenty-five performers and competitors. The competition was introduced by a salute played by Professor MacArthur, Piper to the Highland Society of Edinburgh, and by a piece performed by John MacGregor, who won the first prize last year. A piece was also played by Patrick MacGregor, and the whole concluded with Clanranald's salute, played in a very masterly style by Professor MacArthur.

**July 1789** - The first prize was voted to Rederick Mackay, Piper to Sir Hugh Dalrymple of North Berwick: the second, to Dugald MacDugall: the third, to Archibald MacDonald from Invera, late Piper to the 78<sup>th</sup> regiment.

**July 1787** - The annual competition, &c. was held in the New Assembly Rooms. The judges having determined, the first prize was voted to Archibald MacGregor, Piper to the Laird of Glenlyon: the second to Archibald MacDiarmot: and the third to Robert MacIntyre, Piper to John MacDonald, Esq., of Clanranald.

**July 1788** - The first prize was adjudged to John MacGregor from Strathtay: the second to Robert MacIntyre; and the third to Alexander Lamont.

**August 1789** - The first prize was awarded to Duncan MacNab, from Lorne, Argyleshire: the second, to John MacDonald, from Findynate, in Strathtay: and the third, to John MacGregor, junior, son of John MacGregor, first Piper to the Earl of Breadalbane.

**July 1790** - The first prize was voted to Robert MacIntyre: the second, to Alexander MacGregor, fourth son of John MacGregor, who gained the first prize in 1784: two others of his sons having each of them gained a first prize at former competitions: and the third, to Donald MacLean from Kintyre. The following is a list of the competitors, &c. with the pieces performed: *Act First.*- Salute to the Prince of Wales, composed and

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performed by Professor MacArthur. MacGregor's March, Patrick MacGregor. The Cameron's Gathering, John MacGregor, Piper to the Earl of Breadalbane. The Grant's March, Archibald MacGregor, Piper to Glenlyon. *Act Second.* A favourite piece, Donald MacLean, Kintyre. The Prince's Salute, Ronald MacDonald, Culloden. A favourite piece, Robert MacDougall, Fortingall. *Act Third.* The Duke of Hamilton's Lament, Robert MacIntyre. The Cameron's Gathering, John MacGregor, junior, son of the Earl of Breadalbane's Piper. Boisdale's Salute, John Cameron, a boy, Piper to John MacDonald of Lochgary. Prince's Salute, Alexander MacGregor, Fortingall. MacGregor's March, Donald Fisher. Salute to the Highland Society of Scotland, composed and performed by Professor MacArthur.

**July 1791** – At the annual competition of Pipers in the Circus, the first prize was awarded to Donald MacRae from Applecross, Ross-shire: the second, to John MacGregor, from Breadalbane: and the third, to Duncan Stuart, Piper to the Right Honourable Lord Mountstuart.

**July 1792** – The Most Honourable the Marquis of Huntly, preses. The first prize was unanimously voted to John MacKay, Piper to Mr. MacLeod of Raasay: the second, to Allan MacDonald, Piper to Colonel Robertson of Strowan: and the third to John MacGregor Tertins, a boy of twelve years of age, son of Patrick MacGregor, Piper to Edradour.

**July 1793** – The competition, this and the following years, was performed in the Theatre Royal. The first prize was adjudged to John MacGregor, Piper to the Breadalbane Fencibles:\* the second, to Angus Cameron, Piper to Donald Cameron, Esq. of Lochiel: and the third to Donald MacEarchar, Piper to the Scot Royals.

**July 1794** – The annual competition of Pipers was held in the Theatre Royal. The prizes were voted to the following competitors: the first to Angus Cameron; the second, to Dugald MacIntyre from Lorne; and the third, to Peter MacGregor, son of the Earl of Breadalbane's Piper.

**July 1795** – At the annual competition this year, the first prize was awarded to Peter MacGregor; the second, to Donald MacLean from Kintyre: and the third, to Peter MacNiel, Piper to Sir James Grant of Grant, Bart.

**July 1796** – The first prize was awarded by the Committee of judges to Donald Fisher, second Piper to the Earl of Breadalbane: the second, to Donald MacEarchar: and the third, to Donald MacKenzie, Pipe-major to the Sutherland Fencibles.

**July 1797** – The first was adjudged to the Alexander MacGregor, Piper to the Laird of Glenlyon: the second, to Donald Mackenzie: and the third, to Donald MacNab, Pipe-Major to the 4<sup>th</sup> or Breadalbane Fencibles.

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\* This man succeeded his father as Piper to the Earl of Breadalbane; he died about eight years ago, at the age of 59.

**July 1798** – The first prize was voted to Donald MacEarchar; the second to John MacGregor, son of Patrick MacGregor, Piper to Edradour; and the third, to Donald MacLean, a boy, son of Donald MacLean, Piper to the Highland Society of Scotland,

**July 1799** – The first prize was adjudged to Dugald MacIntrye: the second, to George Graham, Pipe-Major to the Perthshire militia: and the third, to Hugh MacGregor, Pipe-Major to the Scots Royals. In the course of the performance, Madame Frederick of the Theatre Royal, dressed in an appropriate garb, danced Strathspeys, Jiggs, and other dances, with her accustomed dexterity and effect.

**July 1800** – The first prize was adjudged to George Graham: the second, to William Forbes, Piper to the 42<sup>nd</sup> regiment: and the third, to Adam Ross, Pipe-Major to the Ross and Cromarty Rangers,

**July 1801** – The first prize was awarded to William Forbes: the second to Donald Robertson, Piper to the Royal Perthshire Militia; and the third to Donald MacDonald, Piper to the Caithness Highlanders. Among the competitors, John MacDonald, a veteran of near four-score, and who fought with the 42<sup>nd</sup> at Ticanderego, &c. attracted particular attention, and received from the judges a suitable premium; he had been Piper to the Glengary family for some generations.\* The judges were much gratified to find, that from the very considerable receipts of the theatre, on the day of the competition, with the sum allowed by the Highland Society of London, they were enabled to make an addition in money, to the competitor who obtained first prize, and to triple the second and third prizes, besides making a very handsome division among all the unsuccessful candidates, and likewise among the dancers.

**July 1802** – The prizes were delivered by Lord MacDonald the Preses, as adjudged by the Committee; the first to John Buchanan, Pipe-Major to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Highlanders: the second to Murdoch MacKenzie of the 92<sup>nd</sup> Highlanders and the third to Malcolm MacGregor, from Glasgow. At this contest, there were thirty performers and competitors.

**July 1803** – The prizes were voted as follows: The first, to Donald Robertson, Piper to the Edinburgh Volunteers: the second, to Malcolm MacGregor; and the third, to John MacGregor, Piper to Sir R. Menzies of Weem, Bart.

**July 1804** – The first prize was adjudged by the Committee, and the Pipes delivered by Colonel A. MacGregor Murray, their Preses, to Malcolm MacGregor: the second, to Finlay MacLeod, 79<sup>th</sup> regiment; and the third, to John MacArthur, Piper to Ranald MacDonald, Esq. of Staffa. On the suggestion of J. Sinclair, the Committee directed a certain number of copies of a treatise “On the Theory, Principle, and Practice of the

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\*The lady of Glengary, observed one day to John, that it was a matter of surprise he did not employ his leisure hours in doing something. “Indeed, madam” said John “it is a poor estate that cannot keep the Laird and Piper without working.”

Great Highland Bag-Pipe Music,” published by the Rev. Patrick MacDonald, Minister of Kilmore and Killbride, Argyleshire, to be delivered to such of the performers as had made the greatest improvement. This work was composed upwards of seventy years ago, by Mr. John MacDonald, the brother of the publisher, then an officer in the service of the East India Company, and discovered in Bengal, by Sir J. MacGregor Murray, and sent to the brother of the composer, who has given it to the public.

**July 1805** – The theatre on this occasion was crowded in every part, and many ladies and gentlemen of the first distinction, who were late of arriving, had difficulty in obtaining seats. The first prize was awarded to Duncan MacMaster, Piper to the Laird of Coll: the second, to Donald MacNab, Piper to the Laird of MacNab: and the third, to Peter Forbes, from Foss. In addition to the dancing, the broad sword exercise was performed this year for the first time.

**August 1806** – The first prize was voted to John MacGregor, Piper to the Highland Society of London: the second was awarded to John MacArthur, but he having declined it, it was given to Allan MacLean, Piper to Alexander MacLean, Esq. of Ardgower: and the third, to John MacDonald, son of Donald MacDonald, now Pipe-maker in Edinburgh. Sir J. Sinclair, by desire of the Committee, called Donald MacDonald; and informed him that a prize had been voted to him by the judges, for producing the greatest number of Pipe-tunes, set to music by himself; and it was recommended to him, to continue his exertions in that way, and to instruct such others as might apply to him to be taught.

**August 1807** – The first prize was voted to Donald MacNab: the second, to Alexander Bruce, Piper to Captain MacLeod of Gesto: and the third to John MacGregor, Piper to W. Farquarson, Esq. of Monaltry. To vary the entertainment, Mr. Fitzmaurice played several beautiful airs on Union Pipes, which was received with great applause.

**July 1808** – The first prize was voted by the Committee, to John MacGregor, Pipe-major, 73<sup>rd</sup> regiment: the second, to Peter Forbes: and the third to Alexander MacDonald from Skye. John MacDonald, son of D. MacDonald the Pipe-maker, received a premium for setting to music a collection of ancient Pipe-tunes, submitted by him to the judges.

**August 1809** – For the more effectual encouragement of performers on the ancient warlike instrument, the judges resolved, that instead of three prizes, as formerly allowed, five prizes should be given on this, and future occasions. There were decided as follows: the first, to Peter Forbes, from Foss: the second, of sixty merks, to Norman MacPherson, Pipe-Major to the Inverness-shire Militia: the third, of fifty merks, to Duncan MacGregor, Pipe-Major to the centre battalion of Perthshire Militia: the fourth, also of fifty merks, to Donald MacGregor, Piper to the Perthshire Militia, son of the Earl of Breadalbane’s Piper: and the fifth of, or forty merks, to James MacNie, from Balquidder. The prizes were delivered by Admiral Sir Edmund Nagle.

**July 1810** – The prizes this day were voted, as follows: viz, the first to Allan Maclean, from Mull: the second, to John MacGregor, Piper to the Laid of Monalty: the third, to Donald MacGregor: the fourth, of forty-five merks, to John MacKay, from Sutherland: and the fifth to James Monro, also from Sutherland.

**July 1811** – The first prize was adjudges to John MacGregor: the second to Donald MacDonald, Pipe-major, Argyleshire Militia: the third, to Adam Graham, Pipe-major Ross-shire Militia; and the fourth, to William MacKay, Inverness-shire Militia: and the fifth to Alexander Sutherland, a boy, Piper 25<sup>th</sup> regiment.

**July 1812** – The prizes were decided by the judges as follows: the first prize, to Donald MacGregor: the second, to Adam Graham: the third, to John MacKay; the fourth, and the fifth to Donald Serumgeour, from Strathtay. Sir John Sinclair, Preses. The Committee voted a handsome premium to Malcolm MacGregor, Piper and musical instrument maker to the Highland Society of London: for essential improvements made by him on the Great Highland Pipe, and the Union and Northumberland Pipes, on which last instruments he played several tunes in an excellent style, and was highly applauded.

**July 1813** – The prizes were adjudged this year to the following competitors, the first to Finlay MacLeod: the second, to Robert MacKay, from Lord Reay's country: the third, to Kenneth Logan, Piper-major, 71<sup>st</sup> regiment; the fourth to Alexander MacGregor, from Fortingal: and the fifth, to Francis MacNicoll, Piper to the Scots Royals. Sir John Sinclair in his speech, after alluding to the small number of pipers present, owing to the different Highland regiments being then on foreign service, said the Piers attached to those corps of course accompanied them, some of who might otherwise have been present at the competition; but they were better employed in animating by the martial strains, the spirit of their countrymen. The valorous conduct of those warlike corps does not require any additional eulogium; and, said Sir John, it may be sufficient to remark, that there is no sound which the immortal *Wellington* hears with more delight, or the Marshals of France with more dismay, than the notes of a Highland *Piobaireachd*.

**July 1814** – The first prize was adjudged to Robert MacKay, from Lord Reay's country: the second, to Kenneth Logan: the third, to Donald Serumgeour, piper to Col. Kinloch, of Kilrie: the fourth, to Murdoch MacLean, Pipemaker, Glasgow; and the fifth, to Farquhar MacRae, Piper to Hugh Innes, Esq., of Lochalsh, M.P.

**July 1815** – The first prize, being a handsome Pipe of superior tone and workmanship, constructed by Malcolm MacGregor of London, Pipe-maker, and one of the Pipers to the Highland Society there, with 40 merks in money, was adjudged to John MacKay, from Lord Reay's country; the second, to Murchoch MacLean: the third, to Donald Gunn, Piper to the Perthshire Mititia: the fourth, to John Campbell,\* from Nether Lorn: and the fifth, to Donald Campbell (a boy) from Breadalbane. Sir John Sinclair, as Preses of the judges, then addressed the audience, at the conclusion of which he said that George Clark, Pipe-major 71<sup>st</sup> regiment, having formerly received a stand of Pipes, from the Highland Society of Scotland, for his gallant conduct at the battle of Vimeira, in continuing to play after he was wounded, it was thought proper to vote him a gold

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\* Late Piper to W.F. Campbell, Esq. of Islay, M.P.

medal instead of considering him as a candidate for one of the prizes; George Clark was then called in and distinguished by the attention of the audience, when the resolution of the judges was communicated to him.

**July 1816** – Twenty-three competitors appeared, besides several performers who had obtained prize Pipes at previous competitions. The audience was highly respectable and numerous, and among them not a few of the fairest daughters of Caledonia, cheering the performers. The plan of the competition having been arranged at a rehearsal, with a list of the ancient Pipe tunes to be performed, given in Gaelic and English, was printed by desire of the judges, for the information of the company. First prize, to Donald MacKay, Piper to the Highland Society of Glasgow: second, to William MacKay: third to John Campbell: fourth to John Gordon, from Fincastle; and the fifth, to James Kennedy, from Strathtay. Sir John MacGregor Murray, addressed them severally in the native language, the pure Gaelic, which appeared to gratify them highly.

**July 1817** – The prizes were adjudged as follows. The first prize, to Donald MacDonald, Piper to the Argyleshire Militia: the second, to Donald Gunn, Piper to the Perthshire Militia: the third, to Duncan MacTavish, Piper-major 42<sup>nd</sup> regiment: the fourth, to Peter MacKenzie, from Breadalbane: and the fifth, to John MacPherson, Piper to Colonel MacPherson of Cluny.

**July 1818** – The first prize was voted to Allan MacDonald: the second, to John Campbell: the third, to John Gordon; the fourth, to John Forbes, from Killichassie: and the fifth, to Alexander Sutherland, Piper-major 79<sup>th</sup> Highlanders. The Piper (said Sir J. MacGregor Murray in addressing the audience,) has always held an honourable rank in the estimation of our ancestors, and his post was in front of his comrades on the day of danger. This honourable place had still been continued to him; and it was his duty to march forward with the cool determination of a true Highlander, stimulating his companions to heroic deeds by the sound of the favourite *Piobarieachd* of his country.

**July 1819** – The first prize was voted to John Campbell: the second, to Duncan MacTavish: the third, to John Forbes: the fourth, to Duncan Smith, 92<sup>nd</sup> regiment: and the fifth, to Alexander Dewar, from the estate of Sir John MacGregor Murray, Baronet.

The judges felt themselves on this occasion enabled to notice the merits of Kenneth Logan, by voting him a new annual prize, placed at their disposal, through the liberality of Mrs. H. Siddons, who had requested permission in this manner, to promote the annual competition, as a token of the grateful sense she entertained of the liberal support, afforded by the public to the Edinburgh Theatre, with reference more especially to the *national* play of *Rob Roy*. The prize was an elegant *sporan mollach* or highland purse of the finest material, with gold tassels, a silver plate, and inscription.

**July 1820** – The first prize was awarded to William MacKay, Piper to the Celtic Society: the second, to Donald Scrimgour: the third, to Donald MacKay, Piper to James MacLeod, Esq., of Rasay: the fourth, to John MacKenzie, Piper to F. MacKenzie, Esq., of



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Allangrange: and the fifth, to James MacDoanld, son of Donald MacDonald, Edinburgh. The annual extra prize, an elegant *sporan mollach*, the fit of Mrs. H. Siddons, was voted to Adam Graham.

**July 1821** – The first prize was voted to Adam Graham: the second, to Donald MacKay, Piper to R. G. Mac Donald, Esq. of Clanranald:\* the third, to John MacKenzie, Piper to Duncan Davidson, Esq. of Tulloch:\*\* the fourth, to John Cameron, Piper to the 5<sup>th</sup> Lanarkshire Militia: and the fifth, to Donald MacDonald, son of Donald MacDonald, Edinburgh. The extra prize, an elegant mounted dirk, was voted to Duncan MacTavish.

**July 1822** – No fewer than thirty competitors appeared this year; the house was crowded in every part; in the boxes particularly, there was a most brilliant assembly of our fair countrywomen, some of whom were remarked in the full Highland costume of tartan robes and bonnets. When the curtain was raised, the whole competitors, Pipers, and dancers, were seen (as on former occasions) arranged around the stage, and the various chequers of the lively tartans worn by above sixty fine Highlanders in their full native dress, had a very grand effect. When the Pipers had done playing, the Judges retired to determine prizes. Upon their return, the decision of the several prizes was announced by Sir John Sinclair, as follows: The first prize to Donald MacKay: the second, to John MacKenzie: the third, to Kenneth MacRae, Piper to the Honourable James Sinclair:\*\*\* the fourth, to Alexander Dewar: and the fifth, to John Smith, Piper to the Hon. Col. Grant of Grant. The extra prize of a brace of very handsome Highland pistols was voted to Donald Scrymgeour.

**July 1823** – The first prize was voted to John MacKenzie: the second, to Kenneth MacRae: the third, to John Cameron: the fourth, to Donald MacDonald: and the fifth, to William Fraser from Breadalbane.

**1824** – The first prize, to Donald Scrimgeour: the second, to Donald Stewart, Piper to the 79<sup>th</sup> regiment: the third, to Donald MacDonald; the fourth, the John Smith; the fifth, to William Gunn, from Glasgow. The extra prize of a superbly mounted Highland Powder Horn, was awarded to Kenneth MacRae. This is the only prize which Pipers who had already gained a second prize could receive, until they obtained the first prize, and in this situation it had been awarded to Kenneth MacRae. On his being called forward to receive the prize, he declined it, conceiving as he said, that he should have obtained the Pipes. The committee again retired, and voted this extra prize to Alexander Dewar.

**1825** – The first prize was voted to Donald Stewart: the second, to John Gordon, Piper to the Atholl Club: the third, to Ranald MacKenzie, from Rosshire\*\*\*\* the fourth the William Smith, Piper to the Inverness-shire militia, and the fifth, to John MacDonald,

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\*- Now Piper to His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex, Earl of Inverness.

\*\* - Now Piper to the Marquis of Breadalbane.

\*\*\* - Now Piper to the Earl of Caithness.

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\*\*\* - This promising young man entered the service of Sir Joseph Radcliffe, and was drowned on board the Comet between Goureck and Greenock in 1826. He is said to have been playing on board at the time of the accident.  
from Fortingall, a promising young player only thirteen years of age.

**June 1826** – His Grace the Duke of Gordon, President of the Highland Society of Scotland, took his seat as Preses of the committee of judges for deciding the prizes given by the sister Society of London. After the Pipers were done playing, the judges retired to decide the prizes, an interlude of Highland reels to the music of the Bag-pipe and Orchestra, alternatively followed. On the return of the judges, his Grace delivered the prizes as follows, viz. the first, to John Gordon: the second, to Donald MacDonald, Piper 72d Highlanders: the third, to James MacDonald his brother: the fourth, to Angus MacKay, a boy fourteen years of age, son of John MacKay, Piper to Lord Gwyder: and the fifth, to Donald Farquhar, from Breadalbane, also a boy.

**1829** – The first triennial competition of performers on the Great Highland Bag-pipe, was held in the Theatre Royal on the 28<sup>th</sup> of July, before a crowded, brilliant, and fashionable audience. The first prize was voted to John MacNab, Piper to the 92d Highland Regiment: the second, a dirk, superbly mounted, besides a sum in specie, to Adam MacPherson, Piper to the Stirling and Bannockburn Caledonian Society: the third, a beautiful Highland purse and a sum in specie, to John MacDonald from Fortingall: the fourth, wholly in specie, to Roderick MacDonald, Piper to Aeneas MacDonnell, Esq. of Glengary: and the fifth, also in specie, to John Scott, Piper to Archibald Butter, Esq. of Fascally.

**1832** – The triennial competition of performers on the Bag-pipe, took place in the Theatre Royal. After the usual salute upon the Prize Pipe, to the Highland Society, played by John MacKenzie, Piper to the Earl of Ormelie, the performance of the day commenced. The different candidates having played their tunes, the judges retired. And on their return, awarded the prizes as follows; the first, the Prize Pipe, &c. to Roderick MacKay, Piper to James Moray, Esq., of Abercairney: the second, a handsome Highland sword, to Donald MacInnes, Piper to Col. MacNeill, of Barra: third, an elegant mounted dirk, to John MacBeth, Piper to the Highland Society of London: fourth, a Highland Pistol, to John Scott: and the fifth, a Sporrans Mollach, to George Murchison, Piper to Duncan Davidson, Esq. of Tulloch.

**July 1835** – The triennial competition on the Bag-pipe, &c. took place in the Theatre Royal, before a brilliant and crowded audience. So great a number of candidates for fame had never been attracted together, nor had a warmer interest in their exertions been excited in the public. Independently of the wonted triennial prizes to the five performers of highest proficiency, there was now offered for the first time, a Gold Medal, to the best performer among those who previously gained the first prize at any ordinary competition. Of five such candidates who had competed at a rehearsal, three were selected for the public performance; and of no less than thirty, who had offered themselves also in rehearsal, thirteen were chosen. The competitors for the ordinary prizes performed in succession. The performance was relieved, as formerly, by the interspersion of Reels and

Highland Dances, to the great entertainment of the audience, for the best dancers were called on repeatedly for a renewal of their exertions. Amongst, the dances, *Gillie Callum*, or the Sword Dance, so renowned from all antiquity, was executed in excellent style by John MacKay, one of the competing Pipers. This dance is known to have been exhibited before King Charles I, at Perth, by thirteen persons, during his visit to Scotland, in the year 1633. The three candidates for the Gold Medal having next performed in succession, the Committee of judges retired to determine the merits of the whole competitors. On their return, Mr. Farquharson of Invercauld, the preses, in a spirit of reserve which demands great approbation, requested Mr. MacDonald of Staffa as more familiar with the subject, to explain to the audience and to the candidates the objects of the institution, and the resolutions of the Committee, after which the names of the successful candidates were announced, and the prizes, as in the subjoined list, delivered to them by John MacDonald, Esq., Secretary to the Highland Society of London, who came to Edinburgh to assist on this occasion. The prizes were awarded as follows: the gold medal to John MacKenzie, Piper to the Marquis of Breadalbane. An extra medal to Donald MacRae, from Kintail, who gained the prize Pipe in 1791, and who now came forward in the 80<sup>th</sup> year of his age, as a competitor for the gold medal.

The prize Pipe, being the highest prize among the ordinary competitors was awarded to Angus MacKay, son of John MacKay, Piper to Lord Willoughby de Eresby. The second, a handsome Highland sword, to John Stewart, Piper to the 79<sup>th</sup> regiment: the third, a superb dirk, to Archibald Munro, from Oban, Argyleshire: the fourth, a pair of Highland pistols, to John MacKay, Piper to the Right Honourable Sir Robert Gordon of Balmorell, G.C.B.: and the fifth, a silver mounted powder-horn, to James MacPherson, lately Piper to MacPherson of Cluny.

An extra prize to John MacDonald, a boy of fourteen years of age, Piper to R. MacDonald Seton, Esq. of Staffa,

**July 1838** – The triennial competition of performers on the Great Highland Bag-pipe was held in the Theatre Royal, before a most numerous and distinguished audience. Of many candidates, some of whom had travelled a great distance, the Committee of Judges on their merits, at a previous rehearsal, selected fifteen for the public performance – a choice which is indispensable, both that the competition may not be unnecessarily prolonged, and to avoid the introduction of any who may be insufficiently qualified. On the judges entering their box at 12 o'clock, the rising of the curtain exhibited between fifty and sixty competitors for the different prizes, ranged on the stage, all equipped in the tartan of their respective clans – a sight most unusual and interesting to strangers. The length of the performance was relieved by frequent interspersions of dances, among which was the *Reel of Tulloch*, and the ancient *Gillie Callum* or Sword Dance.

On the return of the judges, who had retired to determine the merits of the respective candidates in the three subjects of competition, – music, dancing, and dress, Cluny MacPherson explained, in an elegant and appropriate address to the audience, the nature and purpose of the competition, after which the following prizes were delivered by Cluny to the successful candidates: First, a Bag-pipe handsomely ornamented, to John MacBeth, Piper to the Highland Society of London: second, an elegant broadsword, with an addition in money, to Donald Cameron, Piper to Mr. MacKenzie of Seatwell: third, a Highland dirk, handsomely mounted, to Duncan Campbell from Foss: fourth, a Highland

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pistol, to Peter Bruce from Glenelg: fifth, a powder horn, with an addition in money, to Duncan MacKay, Piper to Cluny MacPherson.

#### Dancers

First, to Thomas MacIntyre from Perth: second, to John MacBean from Strathspey: third, to Donald Robertson from Athol: fourth, to John Dunbar from Strathdon. An extra prize to Alexander Stewart from Kinloch-Rannoch for *Gillie Callum*.

#### For the Best Dressed

First, to James MacPherson, Piper to A. Campbell Esq., of Monzie, the competitor best dressed at his master's expense: second, to John MacAlister, Piper to D. Davidson, Esq. of Tulloch.

In the class best dressed in the home-made tartan, the first prize was awarded to John Loudon from Laggan: second prize, to Thomas MacDonald from Blair-Athol.

And in the class best dressed at the own expense, the prize for ornamental dress was awarded to Daniel Munro, from Ross-shire: and for plain country-made dress, the first prize was awarded to George Mackay from Badenoch, the second prize to John Robertson from Athol.

The following Pipers also appeared but were unsuccessful: - John Stewart, Piper-Major, 79<sup>th</sup> Regiment; Kenneth Stewart, from the Isle of Skye; Angus MacInnes, Piper to the Most Noble the Marquis of Huntly; James MacPherson, Peter MacLaren, William Smith, Piper, 92d Regiment; Evan Cameron, Piper, 78<sup>th</sup> Regiment; Roderick MacPherson from Ross-shire; William Gunn, Pipe-maker, Glasgow; Alexander Stewart, from Kinloch-Rannoch, Alexander MacLeod, John MacAlister, Angus Cameron, Malcolm MacPherson from Breadalbane, Archibald Stewart, from Rannoch, and John Bruce from the Isle of Skye.