IN THIS ISSUE

From the Archive (4); Repertoire (7); Promiscuous Dancing (11); Stock Imagery II (12); What’s in a Name? (18); A Piper Falls (28); Colleague 2010 (30); The Thread that Binds (36); Cauld-wind from the Steppes (37); Coming Events (48); Web Threads (49); Event Reports (50)
Welcome to the winter 2010 edition of Common Stock.

In my first editorial, in the previous issue, I described the work that had been done on the records that survive in the Society's archive. Since then this work has gone on apace, and its importance was stressed by our retiring president Julian Goodacre at this year's Collogue. The day after that Collogue, a small group of nostalgia enthusiasts gathered in Roslin to sort through and identify where possible the pipers pictured in literally hundreds of photographs, most of them presented to the Society by Bill Sutherland. You will read more of this topic in various places in this issue, and I plan to continue to plunder this remarkable resource for treasures in issues to come.

Which leads me to the observation that next spring will be the 30th anniversary of the publication of what was probably the first discussion of bellows piping generally published in Scotland, an article which resulted in the formation of the Society. I hope that next year will see at least one commemoration of this significant publication and the gathering that followed it.

On a completely different subject, I have been privileged, as the Membership Secretary of the Society, to have direct access to the details of all our members around the world. I have often remarked to myself how some of our members seem to exist in what looks like total isolation and I have wondered what kind of experiences have led them to our society. It was not surprising then that when I began editing this journal I seized the opportunity to seek answers to my question. The immediate result has been a collection of emails from the Russian Federation, here compiled into a brief description of bellows-piping there. If there are other members in far-flung places who have stories to tell...
piping history I should be delighted to hear from them.

Colin Ross' letter brings up again the intriguing question about the tuning and fingering of the high G and G#. Over the past year I have been fortunate enough to have the loan of a set of Lowland pipes that Colin made in 1982; one of the real joys of this set is that it has a G#, which, whilst it does not finger in the way Colin described, does have two alternative fingerings and opens up a view onto the lowland and border repertoire which has been illuminating. I was fascinated to see that one of the charts described by Ross Anderson during his presentation on the Pastoral pipes at this year's Collogue showed exactly the same fingering for G#/G as this chanter. Again, I would be happy to receive news of others' experiences on this topic.

This issue re-introduces a section of this journal which has been less than well-represented of late; the Society has always offered technical advice as a service to members though, perhaps due to shortcomings in our advertising of this service few, if any, have taken advantage of it. As a first step in promoting this service, I have asked makers to provide advice on certain topics and hope to publish their responses in an on-going series.

At the heart of this issue of Common Stock is an extended article by Keith Sanger which shines the clear light of scholarship into the murky origins of the division between bagpipes in the Highlands and in the Lowlands. The subject remains less than totally elucidated, not least in the area of iconography, the variety of pipes displayed and the authenticity of their depiction, but it is only by the kind of diligent searching through contemporary documentary evidence that Keith has drawn on here that we are likely to be able to reach more certain conclusions.

In the process of pursuing the sad history of the piper formerly known as the 'Thornhill Piper', as described in the Collogue Report, I have been made aware of two other carvings of pipers which probably date from the early 17th century, one of which certainly has a mystery attached. I hope to include a further exploration of these and other carvings in a future issue.

I note that at the close of my first editorial I promised an article on the so-called 'border piobroch'. Although I have failed to fulfill this promise, I was lucky enough to be introduced to some of the contents of it, in the form of performances of two extended pieces, one a 'Battle' piece and one a 'Fox Chase'. I hope that we shall soon see recordings of these pieces appear on the Society Youtube channel, and perhaps even the finished essay in the next issue of Common Stock. In the meantime, your editor is off to Australia for the season (he is hopefully on the beach as you read this), so he takes this opportunity to wish all his readers a winter festival as full of piping as they would like it to be, and that they will find a moment's peace to enjoy this issue.

Pete Stewart, Pencaitland, Nov 30th
A Collection of Pipe Tunes

I was involved in producing the reprint of Jock Agnew’s book of tunes from the NPS and LBPS publication of the Peacock Collection of tunes for the Northumbrian small pipes where the tunes were reset and also put into the key of A major in a lot of cases. This was seen to be the correct thing to do for tunes that did not owe their origin to the Highland tradition but more to do with the Border tradition.

What is the solution to playing these tunes as written? A G# can be obtained by another cross fingering on a chanter tuned like the GHB by placing two fingers of the top hand over the G and F# holes and raising the back thumb on the A hole. However, this is not as convenient or easy to do as the G natural or the open fingering, and my research into the Border pipes indicated that chanters in the Bagpipe Museum in Morpeth had the seventh note of the scale drilled in a position that would produce a G# note and not the G natural note commonly found on the Highland chanter. The tunes sounded better anyway with the sharp seventh which led to the resetting of the key signature. The G natural note can still be played by cross fingering with the second finger of the top hand on the E hole.

This is a radical solution that maybe should be left to the pipemaker but it does involve drilling a hole halfway between the top F natural hole and the A back thumbhole about 3mm in diameter that should give the G# required. The original hole can be taped over when not used and vice versa. On the other hand a new chanter can be ordered with the top finger hole drilled to give an open G#. I think that this matter has to be addressed if a more authentic way of playing the tunes from this tradition is to be achieved.

In the reprinting of the Peacock tunes what slipped through without me noticing was the advice given regarding the playing of the tune ‘Meggy’s Foot’. It is essentially a smallpipe tune which be played with pauses; this of course is not possible on an open ended chanter. Controlling the bag to obtain the rests or pauses, as advised, cannot be done without stopping the supply of air to the drones as well. My advice is to leave the tune alone or ignore the rests [which will not harm the tune] rather than the ridiculous effect of letting go the bag pressure. It is not even amusing.

Colin Ross
NAALBP reborn as APNA

I was just re-reading your June 2010 editorial in Common Stock and noted that you made mention of our effort to restart a version of the NAALBP. As you may have noted in some recent posts to the Dunsire Forum, we’ve launched a website which we eventually decided to call Alternative Pipers of North America. After a few months of e-mail discussions between Nate Banton (New York and Connecticut), Barry Shears (Nova Scotia), John Dally (Washington) and myself (Connecticut) we decided to cast a wide net. While we four are mainly involved with the piping traditions of the British Isles, there are pockets of other traditions in our vast continent that we hope will also contribute to the discussion. The effort is something of a continuation of Brian McCandless and friends work with the NAALBP journal in the early 1990s, but with an even broader scope. Nate Banton has done a great job of setting up the website (in a blog format for now), and I’ve done what I can as an editor. Only time will tell if there will be enough contributions from interested pipers to keep the site going, but I think it is off to a good start.

On another topic, your first issue of Common Stock is really fantastic, chock full of much food for thought and music making. Keep up the good work.

Best wishes,
Glenn Dreyer

[Ed. Indeed it is off to a roaring start, I encourage all our readers, not just the North American ones, to take a look; perhaps it will be possible to archive the best of the old NAALBP files there someday too. You can visit the site, now known as ‘Alternative Pipers of North America’ at http://theotherpipes.wordpress.com/]

A lost Border Air

Found while browsing Iain MacInnes’s thesis (1997; www.piob.info)

“1838 St Ronan’s Border Club;

At 10 o clock piper Angus [Cameron] from Rannoch struck up the Border Air ‘Come gather, come gather, brave sons of the Heather’ …”

[from Caledonian Mercury, 9/8/1838; MacInnes 14 p 309]

We should very much like to know more about this ‘Border Air’; it has something of the flavour of Hogg or Scott; in fact, Walter Scott had been indirectly responsible for the institution of the St Ronan Border Club games, which were started in 1827 as a response to the influx of tourists into Innerleithen seeking the location of Scott’s ‘St Ronan’s Well’, published in 1823. Another in the list of Scottish traditions Scott had a hand in creating.
The following article and image appeared in *The International Piper* Vol. 3 No 12 in April 1981. It describes the first gathering of what, two years later, was to be formally constituted as the Lowland and Border Pipers’ Society.

**THE CAULD WIND PIPES**

The final day of the 3rd Edinburgh Folk Festival (1981) was the occasion for a meeting in the Festival Club in Teviot Row, which had as its object the revival of the Lowlands pipes. Much interest has been shown in the last decade or so in musical instruments and musical traditions which have been overwhelmed by changes in taste, fashion and technical detail. The Lowland bellows bagpipe is such an instrument, but so far, with one or two distinguished exceptions, it has escaped the revivalist net.

It was known that there was a number of people around the country interested in the bellows pipes and it was felt that the time was long overdue to have a get-together to see what could be done about the apparent eclipse of the instrument.

The meeting decided that a *Lowland Pipers’ Society* should be formed without delay and accordingly those present agreed that the aims of such a Society should be:

1. To promote the playing of the Lowland Pipes.
2. To study the music and traditions of the Lowland or Border Bellows Bagpipe.
3. To revive the making of Lowland Pipes.

One or two folk still play the Lowland Pipes or have taken up the instrument as an extra, being mostly Highland pipe players. Others have seen these instruments languishing in Museums and wondered what had happened to the Lowland piping tradition. One or two more ambitious souls have tried their hand at repairing old sets or reconstructing them from measurements taken from old sets of pipes.

There is considerable scope in a subject such as this. You did not march in the military fashion playing the Lowland pipes. It was best to play sitting down. It was a social instrument for ceilidhs, weddings, dances and feasts. So what did folk play on the Lowland pipes? Do you
know the tune *Buttered Pease*? it is a Border or North of England tune, first published under this name in the early eighteenth century. The same tune also appears as *Stumplie* in the eighteenth century, and probably in the first half of the nineteenth century, was developed into the six part 2/4 March *Highland Wedding*. The original simpler tune has been obscured and the name lost, except for the vague tradition that this is a tune to play at weddings. Certainly we know that *Stumple* was a traditional wedding tune, by which fun was had at the bridegroom's expense and perhaps his manhood called into question at a critical moment in his career. Another old Lowland tune with a varied history is the Strathspey *The Bob of Fettercairn*. Originally this melody was called *Had I the wyte she bade me* and had the reputation of being a bawdy song. It then appears as *Brew Lads of Jeddart* and as *Highland Hills*, then as *Fettercairn Reel* and later *The Bob of Fettercairn*, also a reel, 'bob' being an old Scots word for 'dance.' Finally the tune became a Strathspey. Some tunes have disappeared from pipe music altogether such as *Soor Plooms o' Galashiels* and the sinister *Gillatrypes* which was known as the Devil's tune in the seventeenth century and was quoted at the witch trials of that period.

Those present at the Edinburgh meeting agreed to meet on 3rd October 1981, the first Saturday of the month, in Linlithgow. Not only is this a central venue but also it is an appropriate one because Linlithgow was probably the first and certainly the last Burgh to have a town piper in the good old Lowland tradition.

Anybody interested in the formation and aims of a Lowland Pipers' Society should come to the Autumn meeting in Linlithgow. If you want more information about this and the Society, contact any of the following people:

- Mike Rowan, Mains Castle, East Kilbride;
- Gordon Mooney, 2 Lionwell Wynd, Linlithgow;
- Hugh Cheape, National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, Queen Street, Edinburgh

[Ed: remember these are 1982 addresses; don't attempt to use them!]
A Certificate of Appreciation

At this year’s Annual Collogue, retiring president Julian Goodacre presented Bill Sutherland with a Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of the vast amount of work Bill has done over the years in photographing the Societies activities. Bill has now presented his collection to the Society archive.

The following day a group of members gathered at Jim Buchanan’s house in Roslin to annotate and index these photographs. In this section of the previous issue of Common Stock we reprinted the account David Hannay gave of the meeting held at the Folk Festival in 1982, a year after the Hugh Cheape’s article in The International Piper. We were delighted to find that the earliest photos in Bill’s collection actually preserved the occasion. Here David and Iain MacDonald herald the ‘Proclamation of the Folk Festival’ at the Mercat Cross, March 27th, 1982.

We can only wonder now who was recording the event, and where is that recording?
Torphichen’s Rant

In our previous issue we included a page from Robert Riddell’s 1794 publication ‘A Collection of Scots, Galwegian and Border Tunes’, as now available on Ross Anderson’s website www.piob.info. For this issue we have chosen Riddell’s setting of ‘Torpichen’s Rant’. Riddell’s original is in G and has 6 strains; here it raised a tone to put it into a familiar pitch for pipers, and the last 2 strains, which include high c#’s, have been omitted. This tune shows to perfection the question of G#/Gnatural that Colin Ross addressed in his letter. By Riddell’s time at least, the subtleties of the change between A major and G major were being exploited and notated. Riddell however, has clearly made an error in the penultimate bar here; he has F#[G# as transposed ] at note 8, where he presumably intended to cancel his key signature F#[G#] with a natural., as edited here.

Of this tune Riddell says in his notes: “In the Southern parts of Scotland, the Rant resembled that species of composition called in the Northern parts, Ports. The one here may have been composed in honor of the family whose name it bears.” In 1794 James Sandilands (1770–1862) was Baron of Calder and 10th Lord Torphichen. The family seat is at Calder House, Mid Calder, West Lothian.
Kirk session records in the Scottish lowlands make it clear that one of the most significant aspect of a piper’s life was playing at weddings; it seems to have been accepted that a ‘wedding without a piper is like a funeral’. It is a shame therefore that, although the tradition is, not surprisingly, rich in music for such occasions, most of it is seldom heard, at weddings or any other time. In the hopes of reversing this situation, here is a tune called ‘The Bride Has a Bonny Thing’, versions of which were played in Orkney as a wedding processional; this version is from Thompson’s ‘Compleat Collection of 200 Favourite Country Dances’, (vol 1, 1757)

This title first appears attached to a tune in David Young’s 1740 manuscript written for McFarlane of that Ilk [you may want to know, should you be playing this tune at a wedding, and are asked by the bride’s mother, that it later appears called ‘The Bride Is a Bonny Thing’]

The harmonic structure of this tune is somewhat different although they clearly have something in common; in fact, if you begin Thomson’s tune at bar 6 and play the first strain ending at bar 5, the harmonic structure fits much more closely to that of David Young’s tune; they do appear to be related.

Northumbrian pipers will immediately recognise Young’s tune as ‘Felton Lonnen’ and indeed the first time it appears in Northumbrian sources it is almost identical

A Bonny Thing
to Young’s version, including the extended set of variations. Felton Lonnen has long been recognised as a treasure, although it is not heard as often as it deserves. It appears in the now lost manuscript of John Smith, written around 1750. Smith’s version, however, has a different title; he calls it ‘Joy go down the Lonning with her’. During an internet discussion earlier this year, a fascinating new insight into the tune and its title emerged. Dave Rowlands provided the following verse which he had spotted in the manuscript known as the Mansfield/St Clair manuscript, a collection of Scots songs and poems compiled in Edinburgh around 1781-85:

Joy gae down the Loaning wi’ her
An joy go down the Loaning wi’ her
She wadna hae me but she’s taen anither,
An a’ man’s joy but mine gae with her

David Young’s manuscript also includes an apparently related tune called ‘Joy Go with my love’ which may perhaps be the original; it is somewhat simpler and seems to fit the rhythm of the words, although a number of later version differ more or less from this one, and seem to part company with these words.

Joy Go with my love

Whatever the actual history of the development of this tune, it seems that the original song connected with it was one of marital disappointment; perhaps not the ideal wedding celebration song then; best stick to the ‘Bonny Thing’; maybe one day someone will turn up the words of that song. Nevertheless, whichever version you choose, this tune is a gem in the repertoire, offering the opportunity for both celebratory and regretful interpretations; it deserves, and will reward, your close attention.

[With the exception of David Young’s ‘The Bride is a Bonny Thing’ the versions of tunes given here are different to those published in Pete Stewart’s ‘Welcome Home My Dearie’. Matt Seattle, who first pointed us to the Smith version, has written a comprehensive discussion of the many versions of the Felton Lonnen tune, whose development extended at least up to the version composed by Johnny Handle and is probably still being explored; Matt’s work can be read alongside the scans of the many Northumbrian sources which feature it on the FARNE site, http://www.asaplive.com/archive/index.asp: at the time of going to press the search facility was not available - hopefully this has now been fixed.]
Felton Lonning

[Peacock’s version - transposed from G;

The original manuscript version is available at the FARNE website]

An edited version of Peacock’s setting, with an additional strain from Clough, is included in ‘A Collection of Pipe Tunes’ [‘The Yellow Book’], available from the LBPS at the website and from the NPS.
“Upon the 7th June 1646 year

The which day because of the great abuse at penny bridals by the multitude of people convened thereto, for restraining whereof there is an act of the general assembly, 1645, recommending the same to all presbyteries and kirk sessions within the kingdom and also because of the lascivious carriage of men and women by promiscuous dancing and playing of pipers; therefore it is ordained that every Bridegroom or Bride shall only have in all time coming every one of them three or four [Ness] at the most and that they have no pipers nor dancing and whosoever shall fail therein shall forfeit every one a dollar for pious uses ...”

—Promiscuous Dancing and Playing of Pipers—

“Abuse at Brydals

Upon the 16th Jan 1648 year

The which day because of the great abuse at bridals of promiscuous dancing of men and women whereupon there doth arise pleas and tumults and many contumacious words and oaths often to the dishonour of and offence of good christians all which wickedness flows chiefly by the multitudes of people called to these bridals and the presence of Pipers; Therefore for removing hereof it is appointed that hereafter the persons married shall have every one of them at the most four or five mess under the pain of five pounds and there shall no pipers be suffered to play under pain of losing their pann [bann], which they shall lay down when they give up their names, and every parishioner that shall be found dancing shall pay for the first fault six shillings and eight pence for the second thirteen shillings and four pence and make their public repentance”

These two records were extracted from the records of the parish of Gargunnoch, Perthshire, by Keith Sanger. They show that despite the vast efforts of the kirk, people continued to dance at weddings as they always had done, and that pipers were an essential part of the celebrations. ‘Promiscuous dancing’ at the time meant, as it says here, men and women dancing together, sometimes described as ‘gynecandrical dancing’.

The parish of Gargunnoch contains the location of Ballinton House, where the piper described on page 28/29 appears to have begun life; it also contains within its bounds an area of land marked on early maps as ‘Piperland’; indeed, a house on the site retains that name. We hope to have more information about this location and its piper/s in a future issue.
In the first part of this article I reproduced a number of illustrations of bagpipes, mostly originating in London, showing a form of bagpipe quite unlike the standard highland great pipe. In this part I will introduce several more images, which clearly show bellows pipes, often in some detail. All the images in this part come from the British Museum collection of prints, are copyright of the British Museum and are used with their permission.

The first of these images is the one reproduced on the current cover. It is one of a series of watercolour sketches of Edinburgh life painted around 1750 by the English artist Paul Sandby, who participated in the Survey of Scotland then underway. Another of his bagpiper sketches I reproduced in my ‘Welcome Home My Dearie’. This one is almost certainly showing a ‘pastoral pipe’, the extended length of the chanter being the distinguishing feature. As in his other sketch, Sandby has had trouble with the drone stock and bag connection, but both of these sketches are almost certainly taken from life, as all the others in the sketchbooks were.
With the exception of Sandby’s Dunstaffnage print [p. 17], all the remaining images discussed here were printed in London in the latter part of the 18th century. The first dates from 1773 and is a depiction of the Earl of Bute, a member of the Government of Lord North at the period, and often caricatured as a piper (see also part one of this article). Reproduced here is a detail of a print titled ‘The State Cotillion’ which shows the government ministers engaged in a dance in the Treasury in which each of the figures is trampling on a particular paper or state document with titles such as "National Debt" and "Grievances", "Appeals, Decrees" and so on [opposite page; detail].

The second image again features The Earl of Bute, this time playing for ‘The Mitred Minuet’ [right; detail]. The explanatory text is a violent attack on the Quebec Act, passed 22 June 1774, from the No-Popery standpoint: the bishops' "crossing of hands was to show their approbation and countenance of the Roman religion". Although the Quebec Act was generally welcomed by most Canadians, ie was counted as one of the ‘Intolerable Acts’ for Americans, and in part led to the Revolution.
- Iconography -
The third print also features Bute in another satire on the Quebec Bill, this one dated 1775. However, in this print Bute is not the piper; that role is preserved for Old Nick himself [opposite page; detail].

This image is perhaps one of the most succinct depictions of a bellows pipe so far. It makes it quite apparent that this was the form of bagpipe known in detail to Londoners. Even when the artist clearly had no idea how the elements of a bagpipe were put together, the bellows remain a feature. Here, for instance is a detail of a print dated 1799 [below left; detail], showing Dundas (another Scottish member of the Government frequently shown playing bagpipes): it also shows William Pitt playing what appears to be a bass viol. The print is titled ‘The deliverance of Europe or Union with Ireland’. It is a bizarre set of pipes if ever there was one, but clearly bellows-blown, even if Dundas has the ‘chanter’ in his mouth …

This plundering of the British Museum database was inspired by a print sent to ‘Chanter’, the journal of the Bagpipe Society, by Clive Matthews. The print he had found was dated 1794 and showed Dundas in his kilt dancing to the music of William Pitt; the bagpipe Pitt is playing has a bagful of coins and is labeled ‘Union Pipes’ [below right; detail].
The familiarity of Londoners with bellows pipes is made even clearer by the sad attempts made to represent what we would recognize as Highland pipes. This is Lord Mansfield [left; detail]: perhaps this is the same set we saw Dundas playing earlier? Notice that there still seems to be a second bag under his right elbow.

Even when we might well expect to see highland pipes, as in the satire on Charles Fox ‘A Modern Patriot haranguing his constituents’, ie the good people of Orkney, the artist settles for a common-stock pipe [opposite top left]. Paul Sandby himself seems to have been in a similar position when he drew the observers of his views of Dunstaffnage Castle; he gave the piper what appears to be a common-stock pipe.
These images range from reasonable representations of bagpipes to something approaching the absurd, but seldom anything other than common-stock and bellows-blown. It seems reasonable to conclude that for late 18th century London at least, and quite possibly for Edinburgh too, this is what a bagpipe was.

There are, however, always some who fail to grasp the point:
For the past two hundred years piping in Scotland has been dominated by the image of the Great Highland bagpipe. From the beginning of the revival in interest in bellows-blown pipes it has been necessary to define the Lowland bagpipe as something distinct, something definitely not the Highland pipe. The question I was invited to address was 'do we know when the term 'Highland pipe' was first applied specifically to the instrument rather than the player? Sufficient written evidence survives for an answer to be proposed; evaluating it, however, requires a brief survey of the current knowledge of the history of piping in Scotland. It is also important to note that the description 'highland pipe', (or piper for that matter), is Lowland Scots or English and was never used within the Gaelic speaking community to which it was being applied.

Like most really early sources, written records of piping have limitations, they do not tell us exactly what the instrument referred to was like, although they do provide the firmest dateable evidence by which certain aspects of an instrument had been developed and used within a particular geographical locale. The earliest written record of a bagpipe within the British Isles so far, is what looks like a colloquial use of the term 'bagepipa' which appears in the otherwise Latin come Norman French treasurers accounts for Edward 1 of England, written in 1285/86. If by the thirteenth century the bagpipe was known at the English Court then given the interconnections by marriage and land holdings between the leading families of Scotland and England at that time, then the 'bagepipe' was also likely to have been known in Scotland. Either by familiarity with the English Court, or in this period of normality prior to the problems that led to the Wars of Independence, directly through Scotland's many trade connections with continental Europe.¹

The earliest written reference to a 'bagpipe' that has been found to date in Scotland also appears in a colloquial form which suggests that the scribe who wrote the court record of an assize held
at Selkirk in November 1510 was completely familiar with the word. The instrument which along with a horse and household goods had been stolen from a George Weyr, and was listed among a number of crimes committed by a Robert Haw in Heavyside who was sentence to being Warded by the Sheriff for forty days and if he was unable to find sureties he was then to be hanged. By the end of that century the written evidence starts to refer to a 'great pipe' which implies there was another type sufficiently small enough to notice a difference and this is confirmed by a record in 1600 of a piper who played both a 'small pipe and a great pipe'.

Turning to the first appearance of 'pipers' in Scotland there is an element of uncertainty regarding whether the early use of the term always meant a bagpipe was involved, but taken within context there is hardly any difference in time between the first references to pipers in Gaelic Scotland and the rest of the country. The Book of the Dean of Lismore, a compilation of Gaelic verse and other material made between circa 1512 and 1529 contains a name list of what are thought to be entertainers including musicians, some of whom are clearly described as such. It includes one 'piobaire Mac Ille Dhuibh', the earliest named 'Highland Piper' and fittingly occurring in a Gaelic source. Since some of the other unspecified names in the list can be identified from other sources with known harpers the possibility of there being more pipers cannot be ruled out. 'Piper Black' as the name translates was just the first in the widespread appearance of pipers in Gaelic Scotland during the 16th century, and in most cases as they occur as witnesses to legal documents written in either Latin or Scots their presence implies some measure of status within their communities.

In all of these appearances their description mirrors that of their lowland counterparts in that they are simply described as 'piper'. Not surprisingly the occasions on which the term 'highland piper' appears occurs only when the piper is within a lowland setting, the earliest example perhaps being one 'Edmond Broun ane Hieland pyper' who got into a bit of trouble over his dog in Stirling in 1574. This reference is interesting for several reasons, as apart from the piper being familiar enough in Stirling to have acquired an Anglicised form of his name, it is also an early example of the use of 'Highland' rather than 'Irish' to describe the Gaelic Speaking Scots from a lowland perspective. The fact that the piper had a dog with him also leads to speculation that he might have been an early example of a Drover, (a 19th century account of droving suggests that a piper could certainly help move a herd along).

In those cases where reference is made to the instrument rather than just the piper, which was usually when the musician had for what ever reason become the object of official attention, then in nearly all cases no matter what cultural background the piper came from the
descriptions used were either 'Great Pype' or 'Large Pype', with the few exceptions just using the more generic term of 'bagpype'.

To return to how the instrument was described within its own Gaelic speaking community, for contemporary usage we are mainly dependent on the corpus of surviving Gaelic verse, but the picture it presents continues to mirror that used in contemporary Scots documentary sources except that it is the Gaelic equivalents of 'piob' and 'piobair' that appear instead of 'pype' and 'pyper'. The use of the qualifying adjective 'Mor', (large or great), is comparatively rare, at least until we reach the series of poems praising the 'Great Pipe' composed by Duncan Ban MacIntyre between 1781 to 1789, for the Highland Society Piping Competitions, by which time the poet was already conscious of the expectations of his audience.

It also needs to be remembered that much of the surviving written material produced in the Gaelic speaking areas relates to administration and legal matters and was therefore mostly conducted in Scots, albeit that the writers and readers were native speakers of Gaelic. If that background had any influence on their use of Scots, and occasionally there are hints that it did, then it adds nothing that materially changes the picture described so far with possibly one exception. The term 'Bagpype' is occasionally found in Scots usage, although even-handedly applied over the whole country both highland and lowland, but a direct Gaelic equivalent does not appear to have been used, although in context references to the bag do frequently occur, especially in the poems addressed specifically to pipes or pipers.

In terms of references among Gaelic speaking sources, albeit usually conducting their written business in Scots, the earliest to refer to bagpipes is a note from the Earl of Breadalbane to his chamberlain in 1679 to give £20 Scots to the piper to go to Edinburgh to buy his pipes, which is less than informative regarding the nature of the instrument. More relevant by far is a letter dated 1712 from the MacDonald chamberlain in Skye to MacLeod of Dunvegan concerning the purchase by MacLeod of two sets of pipes following the death of their previous owner. The letter expressed some disappointment that the price of 30 merks for both sets was less than their owner had 'expected for the great pype' alone when he was in life.

This letter tends to confirm that at that point the defining feature in describing a set of pipes was the size of the instrument, whether it was called a Piob Mhor in Gaelic or a 'Large or Great Pipe' in Scots. So what changed? Well the earliest firm reference to the term Highland
Pipe being specifically directed at an instrument is to be found among the MacDonald papers with a receipt dated 19 September 1748, from the Edinburgh Turner, Adam Barclay, for payment for making a set of 'Hyland Pipes of cocao-wood mounted with ivory' at a cost of £3-3.9 The timing of this purchase is a little odd given the historical background but the date does give the first hint of a military connection in regard to the description.

The MacDonald estate had gone from one piper in Trotternish in 1717 to having three, one in each division of Trotternish, North Uist and Sleat by 1746, but the death from a chill of Sir Alexander MacDonald in 1746 left a young heir who elected to go to school at Eton thereby setting a pattern for the future generations of lairds and the start of the slide away from a more permanent residence on the estate.

Ewen MacIntyre the Sleat piper, seems to have been the first of the pipers sitting rent free to be retrenched and he subsequently turns up in the Black Watch and it is tempting to suggest that the pipes were in fact purchased for him as a sort of payoff and goodbye. Neil the youngest of the MacArthur family also headed into the army and in 1747 he enlisted in Loudoun's Highlanders. When the regiment was stood down in 1749 he presumably returned to Skye, until he next appears in Montgomery's Highlanders where he served in the Americas from 1757 to his death in 1762.

MacArthur's death led to a belated series of events when in 1767 Lady MacDonald on behalf of Neil's heir arranged the recovery from the officer holding it of the money that was in Neil's possession at the time of his death. The formal testament was recorded in Edinburgh on the 18th July and Neil's son John inherited the sum of £30-7-6, Sterling, (£364-10 Scots). Five days later on the 23 July '44lbs of Cocko Wood' had been purchased and by the 3 August Hugh Robertson, the Edinburgh Turner had received his payment for making a set of 'Highland Pipes mounted with ivory'. According to the MacLeod archives at Dunvegan a 'pair of Highland pipes' had also been supplied to them by Robertson in 1765, so it would seem that by this time, from the perspective of two Edinburgh turners there was an instrument they were calling a Highland Pipe. It does not necessarily follow that this was the appearance of a new instrument rather than a new description for an existing one and as the Gaelic sources make no suggestion at that time of any changes to the instrument from their perspective then there are grounds for suggesting the latter.

‘the earliest firm reference to the term Highland Pipe being specifically directed at an instrument is a receipt dated 19 September 1748’
To explain what seems to have been happening requires a restatement of the few hard facts we have regarding the evolution of the bagpipe in Scotland. At the start of the 17th century there were references to a large and a small pipe being used and it is likely that both at that period were mouth blown. What was referred to as the Large or Great pipe was basically the same instrument that appears with an equivalent Gaelic name form in contemporary Gaelic sources, albeit that what was played on it would have reflected a Gaelic cultural background. Over the course of the 17th century bellows pipes begin to appear and were sufficiently prominent by 1670 to be noticed as a 'Scotch bagpipe' by an English playwright. Bellows blown pipes along with the common stock then became the dominant form in lowland Scotland which on the evidence of the picture of the Haddington Burgh Piper included the larger instruments played by the burgh pipers as well.

It was the military use of pipers which leads directly to the appearance of the 'Highland pipe' but although more information regarding the early regimental pipers now exists, the nature of the pipes they played is still an open question, except to say that like the burgh pipers it is more likely to have been the larger louder instrument which was used. The 17th century regiments were simply known by the name of the Commanding Officer and there was no specific geographical recruiting bias, although the various surviving regimental returns naturally show names that proportionally often reflect the officers own home backgrounds, there is no evidence to suggest that they were thought of as anything other than just a Scottish regiment neither specifically highland or lowland and the pipers, when they were present, were simply just 'pipers'. For example the Earl of Lothian writing to his father concerning his regiment in 1641 described how,'we are well provided of pypers, I have one for every companie in my regiment and I think they are as good as drumms'.

The change of approach came in 1729 when the now post 1707 'British' Government authorised the raising of a number of Independent Highland Companies to police the highlands. Then subsequently in 1739 these formed the core of the first full Highland Regiment of the line to be placed on the establishment of the British Army, when the 43rd (later to be renumbered the 42nd) Foot was raised. The idea of independent highland companies was not new, under the pre 1707 Scottish military structure there were a number of 'independent companies', (including Dragoons), a necessary requirement when a peacetime army had to be spread widely around the
country in more of a policing function. By 1702 one of these headed by Captain Campbell of Fonad was actually being referred to in the records as 'Fonad's Highland company and by 1704 the number of these companies so designated had reached three. But there was a subtle although significant difference in the use of the term 'highland' when applied to them, a point illustrated by the order for forming the third one by reducing ten men, a sergeant and one piper from the other two companies and adding to them among others, one soldier from each company of the two dragoon regiments, (presumably without their horses). The description highland in other words had more to do with where they were to be deployed rather than background and in terms of dress and structure they were no different to the rest of the Scottish regiments.

This was a complete contrast to the later independent companies who wore highland dress which was retained in 1739 when they were augmented with a further four companies and formed into the 43rd Regiment, the first full battalion strength 'Highland Regiment'. A second Highland Regiment commanded by the Earl of Loudoun was in process of being formed when it was overtaken by the events of 1745. Following the rebellion tartan and the kilt were both banned other than as uniforms for soldiers in these new Highland regiments, ironically creating and re-enforcing a distinctiveness which the banning laws were designed to remove when applied to the civilian population. In a further quirk, the commanding officers of these new regiments, the Earl of Loudoun and for the 43rd, Lord Crawford followed by Lord Semple were themselves lowlanders although they seem to have enthusiastically adopted the regimental 'highland' dress and persona.

Therefore, to a Scots speaking Edinburgh turner like Adam Barclay, who simply on a numerical population basis would be satisfying a greater demand for bellows pipes, by 1748 the mouth blown 'Great Pipe' would have become an instrument associated more with Gaelic speaking parts of Scotland. A culture now seen through lowland eyes as represented in the visually eye catching Highland Regiments and by association their 'Highland Pipes'. Over the course of the 18th century with the increasing demand for military pipers, (especially during the period from 1793 to 1815, the longest continuous war the UK had fought), along with the refining effects on the instrument created through the Highland Society prize pipes, not only was the description of 'highland' embodied with the instrument, but its production was to become the main throughput of subsequent bagpipe makers.

‘a Scottish regiment neither specifically highland or lowland and the pipers, when they were present, were simply just 'pipers’
If the confusion created by the term 'Highland Pipe' is stripped away and the instrument is viewed from the perspective of its native Gaelic background, then the Piob Mhor can be seen simply as the surviving descendent of the mouth blown 'Large' or 'Great Pipe' that was once common throughout Scotland.

It also allows attention to re focus on the important questions. Firstly, when and why did that mouth blown version acquire three drones, (see note), and then it would appear in some cases lose one again; and secondly when did the Large Pipe used by the Burgh and other Lowland pipers change from being mouth blown to using a bellows with a common stock. The answer to that question also has implications for more conventional piping history. Even if the change was gradual, it increases the probability that some if not all the instruments played by the Lowland pipers in the Jacobite army between 1745 to 1746, whose numbers reflected the true ethnic composition of that army, would have had bellows and a common stock.

This would of course include James Reid the piper whose trial and execution gave rise to the myth that bagpipes were subsequently banned. However, given the continuing persistence of that belief, I wonder if the 'Highland' piping diaspora are ready yet for the possibility that his instrument was actually a bellows blown burgh pipe?

NOTE

The earliest firm evidence for a bagpipe with one bass and two tenor drones comes from the picture of the Grant piper William Cumming painted in 1714. Although it has usually been seen as an example of 'the typical clan piper', in reality the military aspect is not far away. The piper first comes into view listed as a drummer in the muster rolls of Captain William Grants company in 1702. The Captain was later to become Grant of Ballindalloch, a cadet of the Grants of Rothiemurchus and it was with Patrick Grant of Rothiemurchus and a number of his retainers that William Cumming, now described as piper to the Laird of Grant, next appears in a Bond of Caution by Alexander Grant of Grant, dated 22 May 1708, for their appearance at the Tolbooth of Edinburgh to answer for charges raised against them. Who counted as the 'Laird of Grant' at that time is a moot point as Ludovick Grant of Grant had already formerly passed the headship of the family to his son Colonel Alexander Grant, a career soldier whose regiment, raised later that year, then spent almost three years abroad in the Low Countries of Holland. Colonel, later Brigadier Grant combined his military duties and...
running the estate with the help of his sister who had married the by now Lt Col William Grant of Ballindalloch. The Brigadier was back in 1710 and again after 1713 when his regiment was stood down and was in residence at Castle Grant during 1714, the period when the portrait was commissioned. It therefore seems likely that the piper would also have been serving in the regiment with the effective head of the Grant family and it is tempting from the appearance of the pipes in the portrait to speculate on a continental influence in their design.25

References:
2 Pitcairn, Robert, Criminal Trials in Scotland from 1488 to 1634, (1833). vol 1, p 70 - 71
4 National Library of Scotland MS 14870 f 19, my thanks to Ronald Black for a transcript.
5 Register of the Privy Council of Scotland, vol ii, p 418 - 419.
6 Scott, Daniel, Bygone Cumberland and Westmoreland, (1899), p 222;
'Occasionally herds of Highland cattle passed this way and when the far-trav-elled animals showed signs of fatigue, it was no uncommon thing to see one of the men who carried a bagpipe play some lively air as he marched in front of the drove. The animals seemed to enjoy the music and evidently appreciated this relief to the tediousness of the journey, by walking, as they often would with a brisker step, while some of them that had lain down in the road would quickly rise at the novel far-sounding strains, which brought many a cottager also to his feet from his home in the echoing glen'.
7 National Archives of Scotland, GD112/15/504; This was probably the instrument known as the 'MacIntyre pipes', the surviving parts of which are currently on deposit at the West Highland Museum in Fort William.
8 Piping Times, 36, No 4, (January 1984), 22-24; The letter which originally came from the MacLeod Papers at Dunvegan is now in the College of Piping Museum in Glasgow.
9 Sanger, K, Who Paid the Pipemaker, Piping Times, 40, No 8, (May 1988); A line of verse written in 1589 as part of a praise to the Lord for deliverance from the Spanish Armada, by the poet and Minister Alexander Hume, has sometimes been interpreted as referring to a specific highland instrument, but all Hume’s musical references lack clarity, especially what may or may not be a reference to the clarsach: see, Lawson Alexander, The Poems of Alexander Hume, (1902), p 54, line 58 and notes.
Angus MacArthur, who had part of Hungladder, was the only piper listed on the estate in 1717, but by 1746 Angus and his son Charles held the whole of Hungladder while Ian MacArthur was in North Uist and Ewen MacIntyre was based in Sleat, all of them sitting rent free. Neil MacArthur appears occasionally in the accounts receiving the odd payment but was presumably a sub tenant of his father or brother Charles at Hungladder, an indication perhaps that the number of 'official pipers' had reached saturation point.

National Library of Scotland, MS 1309, f 168 and f 173

National Archives of Scotland, (NAS), CC8/8/120/873

Quoted in Grant, I. F, The MacLeods, the History of a Clan, (1959), p 491, but with Robertson's initial probably being misread as 'R'.


Laing, David, ed. Correspondence of Sir Robert Kerr, first Earl of Ancram and his son William, third Earl of Lothian, (1875), vol 1, p 108.

Groves, P, History of the 42nd Royal Highlanders - 'The Black Watch', (1893). Although in 1725 some highlanders had been armed and admitted to the service of the crown, under General Wade, they were not formally 'embodied' as part of the regular domestic military force of Scotland for duty in the mountain districts until 1729.

See NAS series E100

Grant, J, ed. Seafield correspondence from 1685 to 1708, (1912), p369-370. The inclusion of the Dragoons who were predominantly Lowland Scots indicates that being a 'highlander' was not an essential qualification for a 'highland company' at that time.

The series of poems composed by Duncan Ban MacIntyre for the initial piping competitions contains the earliest intimation from a native Gaelic source of an instrument in the process of change or 'improvement'. See MacLeod, Angus, Orainn Dhonnchaidh Bhain/ The Songs of Duncan Ban MacIntyre, (1952), 270-299.

Among the additions to Joseph MacDonalds MS, as printed in 1803, is the statement that some pipers had layed aside the use of the great Drone. Two-drone pipes were still around until discouraged by the Highland Society Competitions circa 1822.

The real 'highland' component of Prince Charles Edward Stuart's forces were at best no more than 50% of the total. For an overview of the relative numbers deployed on both sides see:- Pittock, Murray, The Myth of the Jacobite Clans, (revised and expanded edition, 2009), and Reid, S, The Jacobite Army at Culloden, in Pollard, T. ed, Culloden, The History and Archaeology of the Last Clan battle, (2007).

four pipers in highland dress with three drone pipes, but the authenticity of that section has been questioned. The pre-1707 Scottish Parliament had certainly legislated for the provision of pipers in their regiments, but the pipers, like the regiments, contained both highland and lowland members in one standard uniform (Common Stock 24, No 1, June, 2009). In the case of the regiment contributed as part of the UK military force in Tangier, the responsibility for funding that regiment was passed to the English Treasury and its expenditure on the 'Scotch Regiment of Foot' only shows a payment for one piper in the Colonel's Company, (Shaw, W A, Calendar of Treasury Books, Volume 7: 1681-1685, (1916). Furthermore, the four pipers in the picture uniformly have their pipes on the left shoulder, whereas Grant's piper along with those in another ten pictures of Scottish pipers painted during the 18th century uniformly have their pipes on the right side. It is only in the early part of the 19th century that pictures start to show both right and left sided pipers, before the left side became the predominant position.

23 NAS, E100/38/4/4
24 NAS, GD86/840. It was an interesting charge of 'alleged convocation and violation of burial places'.
25 NAS, GD248/106/6, An account for the company expenses of 'Colonel Alexander Grant and Captain of a Company' running from December 1708 to December 1709, shows that he had three personal servants and the company had two 'drummers'. According to the account which was all rendered in Guilders, a payment was made 'To 1 new Drum at Antwerp at a cost of Guilders 9 - 15'.

A Common Bagpipe at the Highland Society Competition
[From the Kilerry Notebooks, compiled from the early competition papers by Campbell of Kilberry and quoted in Iain MacInnes' thesis]

“1821
James Budge from Caithness. Played the Common Bag Pipe.

[Under Payments;]
James Budge who came forward to play Bellows Pipes but was not permitted to perform given 10sh 6d.”

An internet search found 3 possible James Budges in Caithness at this time; the Budge family had been land-holders there since the 15th century; another contender is the James Budge born on Skye to a Caithness father; this James was an accomplished violinist and had been a militia drummer from 1808-1811.
At this year’s Colloque in November, Pete Stewart told the story of ‘The Thornhill Piper’. Here he reprises the sorry tale of this well-travelled image, which for the time being we should perhaps call ‘The Abercairny Piper’

In the December 2008 issue of Common Stock, I told how, at the last moment before publication of my book ‘Welcome Home My Dearie’, I was shown the story of the carving which I had come to know as the ‘Thornhill Piper’, and which I had reproduced on the cover. That issue of Common Stock featured a reproduction of the photo in the library of the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments for Scotland, where it was identified as the ‘Fowlis Piper’ and was said to be located in the Stables at Abercairny House. Ever since that discovery I had been intending to visit Abercairny in the vague hope that the stables had escaped when the house was destroyed in 1960. This was still my intention when earlier this year disturbing news came through that this carving, having survived in 1960, had fallen and broken earlier this year. Eventually Keith Sanger and I managed to get to Abercairny where we found the strange sight shown here. The carving had sheared off, probably during a thaw after the intense frosts of March this year. We were then introduced to the broken pieces where they are currently held, in two cardboard boxes.

A feasibility study is now being prepared for the restoration of this important, early 17th century carving, probably the earliest depiction of a common stock bagpipe in Scotland. It is hoped that the funds to restore the piper can be raised by a combination of grants and individual donations.

The photo below was taken in 2009. A comparison with that on the December 2008 Common Stock cover shows that
the intervening 86 years had worn away the paint that had been added to the piper’s tunic. There is plenty of evidence of multiple layers of paint, as is visible in the cover picture of my book. Another intriguing aspect of this restoration project is that, as I interpret what we know of its history, this carving, though it may appear to have been a relief for the past 150 years or so, is in fact a free-standing, 3-dimensional figure, as one might expect from a carving said to have stood, at different stages of its career, on a gate post and a bridge parapet. Should this be the case, it adds even more challenges to the contentious process of restoration, not least because, being short of a leg, it is far from free-standing now.

By the time of the next issue of Common Stock it is to be hoped that these issues, and those of the funding of the project, will have been resolved sufficiently for the fund-raising to have been launched. I also hope that the June 2011 issue will contain a more detailed description of the history of this carving, and several other 17th century examples which have hitherto been undescribed.
A rriving at this year’s annual gathering of the Lowland and Border Pipers’ Society was a new experience for many attending, since it involved passing through an armed guard. No-one seems to have fallen foul of this novelty however, and after a brief space for greetings and coffee the gathering got underway on time at 9:30 with a presentation by Iain MacInnes.

Iain will be well-known to many pipers as a presenter of the BBC’s ‘Pipeline’ program, a venture he told me he had been involved in for some twenty years. He was thus well-placed to give a fascinating trawl through the BBC’s piping archive, with words and music from some distinguished figures of the piping world and some striking recordings. He opened with two tracks from Skiddley-brees, the smallpipe trio (Malcom Robertson, Derek Grahame, Dave McNally), recorded in 1995, playing two Bulgarian tunes and a Gavotte by Handel. He went on to offer a number of early recordings of Highland piping from Angus Campbell (playing ‘My King Has Landed in Moidart’ on Culloden pipes, recorded in April 1938), a description of Orkney Weddings from Mrs Sinclair in 1938 and two recordings of Northumbrian piping, Jackie Armstrong playing Border Fray (Stumpie) in July 1950 and Bill Pigg playing his Keel Row variations in 1959.

Memorable amongst this selection of recordings was that of the Allied troops crossing the Rhine (March 1945), with Scotland the Brave sounding clearly amongst the heavy artillery; Willie Ross also featured in a recording of the Pipes and Drums of the Army School of Piping (April 1944); in conversation with his mother (June 1944) and playing ‘Too Long in this Condition’ (May 1944); these recordings were especially poignant since Willie Ross’s practice chantier is on display in the room where Iain was speaking.

We were then brought more up to date with an item from the history of Scottish smallpiping, featuring Barnaby Brown playing Julian Goodacre’s reconstruction of the Montgomery smallpipes, accompanied by Bill Taylor on the wire-strung clarsach, playing tunes from from the Patrick MacDonald Collection (1784) recorded in July 2006. Iain followed this with moments from the Irish past with a recording of Seumas Ennis ‘Tuning and Improvisation’, recorded in September, 1949, and a story from Frank McPeake on meeting John O’Reilly at the railway station in 1907 (recorded July, 1952).
Expanding horizons further, Iain played us an interview with Francis Baines (double bass player) and John Amis about the French cornemuse, recorded in July 1959, suggesting that the BBC was well ahead of its time in pursuing European piping traditions. We then returned to the border regions to hear W J Stafford playing ‘Noble Squire Dacre’ on the half-long pipes with their prominent baritone drone (recorded in Oct 1949).

Iain then gave us the first of two recordings from Fred Morrison and Jamie McMenemie, this one the opening set of tunes from a 2004 Celtic Connections concert. This was followed by two interviews by Hamish Henderson preserved in the School of Celtic and Scottish Studies archive in which he talks to Dr James Hunter and to Geordie Robertson, both of Turriff (Banffshire) re ‘Francie Markis’, whose story as one of the few bellows pipers surviving into the 20th century has been told before in Common Stock, though these were recordings so far unprinted; we hope to have them transcribed in our next issue.

Continuing the bellows-piping theme, Iain played a recording of Angus Macpherson (recorded in 1971, age 94) talking to Seumas MacNeill re bellows pipes and Quicksteps in the Highlands, including his use of the term ‘Piob Shionnich’ (‘the fox pipes’) to describe them; again, we hope to transcribe this important recording in our next issue.

We then heard from across the pond with an unidentified MSR Piper in Sydney, Cape Breton recorded in 1952. The tradition of Cape Breton piping has been significant in the development of highland piping in recent years and it was fascinating to hear these recordings with their striking differences in tempo.

Iain then produced a recording of the group Seudan (Fin Moore, Calum MacCrimmon, Angus MacKenzie, Angus Nicolson) playing Hamish Moore’s arrangements of a set of quicksteps, recorded in February this year.

We were then back to the mid-20th century to hear the Brian Boru Pipes played by P/M John McLaverty and by the Crimson Arrow pipe band, recorded in 1951 and 1957 and these were followed by Bagad Cap Caval playing at Celtic Connections in 2009.

Iain then offered two conversations with renowned highland pipers, one Neil Angus Macdonald recorded in 1972 talking with Duncan Johnstone and one with George McLennan (son of GS) telling the Willie Ross story of ‘The Skook’, recorded in 1994.

He then finished off in fine style with the second of the two sets from Fred Morrison and Jamie McMenemie; the final set of their 2004 Celtic Connections concert with Fred in his inimitable fashion playing a manic ‘Sandy Cameron’, an astonishing finish to a whirlwind tour through the piping archive.
After a mid-morning break the gathering reconvened to hear a report from retiring president Julian Goodacre about his work with the Society archive. In his inimitable style, Julian used a story from his experience with items from his own family archive (Queen Victoria was involved) to stress the importance and value of the records that a Society such as ours produces. We were, he reminded us, particularly fortunate that so much had been preserved from the very beginnings of the revival and he introduced us to a number of letters written by those who first came together to share their enthusiasm.

Julian then presented a certificate of Appreciation to Bill Sutherland who has donated to the Society archive his extensive collection of photographs from the earliest days [see page 6]. Bill was later seen busy recording the afternoons playing sessions.

Pete Stewart then gave two short presentations. An expanded version of the first is described on page 28/9. The second introduced the meeting to the upgrading of the Society website that he has been commissioned to produce. The intention was to design a website that would act as a hub for all those interested in Lowland and Border piping and particularly to be attractive to younger generations than those that currently keep the society afloat. The site he introduced us to contained the kind of interactive facilities found on community networks, to access their subscription accounts and to enter into discussions on a dedicated forum. The Society's online shop would now be self-contained, allowing members to access their account history and maintain delivery and account addresses. Authorized members would be able to edit and submit material direct from their web-browser and it would be possible for members to search the membership list. Pete then outlined the changes that were being discussed regarding subscription plans, proposing that members would pay a flat fee to include downloading Common Stock, with an optional for the posting of printed copies of Common Stock at rates which reflected the postage costs. It is hoped that a beta version of the site will be available in the New Year.

The Society’s Annual General Meeting was then convened. A brief report is available on page 35.

The afternoon session began with a presentation on the Pastoral and Union pipes given by Ross Anderson. Ross should be well known to pipers for the wonderful resource of his web site (at www.piob.info) which gives access to historical recordings and manuscript sources. He has also given a lot of time to exploring the history of the pastoral and union pipes, work which he described in his presentation.

The pastoral pipe and its general history are not unknown now, thanks to both Ross’s work and the chapters in Hugh Cheape’s 2008 book ‘Bagpipes’. What
Ross’s talk offered, in addition to the opportunity to actually see the instruments, [and two sets brought along by Hamish Moore] was to hear them played. For most, if not all of the audience, this was a first. Ross has restored to playing condition a set of pastoral pipes made around 1780 by Hugh Robertson of Edinburgh, and it was surprising to hear how the earliest pastoral pipes already had the basics of that sound which has become so characteristic of today’s Uilleann pipes.

By surveying the musical sources, starting with the Geoghegan ‘Tutor for the New or Pastoral Bagpipe’ and looking at successive manuscript sources from 1760, 1783, 1804 and 1830, Ross showed how the instrument developed its character from its first appearance up to the emergence of today’s Uilleann pipes. The musical history begins with a combination of Scottish and Irish music with pieces for the oboe in the mid-18th century, moves towards an emphasis on the Scots and Irish repertoire plus minuets in the late 18th century and then towards a more universal selection of popular music in the early 19th century.

Ross’s opening point, which he continued to develop throughout the talk, was that this was a bagpipe that spanned two traditions; it could be played ‘standing up’, that is, in the Scottish tradition, using essentially a Highland fingering system, or, by removing the separate foot-joint, could be played sitting down, using a fingering that today would be considered more Irish in character. Over time the fingering changed slightly: the 18th century sources all have a natural top leading note, as on the highland pipes, while by the early 19th century chanters have acquired a sharp top leading note as the uilleann pipes have today. Also, the foot joint passed out of use, with the seven-finger bell note being common in the mid-18th century sources but found in only three tunes in the Sutherland manuscript in the 1780s. The reason may be simple enough: playing
“on the knee” allows more expressive performance.

Ross went on to echo Hugh Cheape’s question: how did it come about that the pastoral/union pipe tradition, once common enough to leave dozens of instruments in museum collections, was replaced so completely by the Great Highland Bagpipe? The answer, he suggested, lay in the events of 1822 and Walter Scott’s ‘invention’ of the Highland Scots myth.

Ross’s experience of restoring these instruments to playing conditions led him to believe that some chanters were built to play mostly closed or mostly open from the way they were voiced: with some the closed scale is more in tune, and with others the open scale. Changing preferences seem to be reflected in the manuscript sources particularly in the upper octave. It was also possible, he suggested, to spot pastoral pipe music in the playing of some Irish pipers, and particularly players who received their musical tradition via travellers, since it was amongst the travelling pipers that the pastoral pipes seem to have survived longest. Ross recounted a conversation with Sam Grier of a Scots traveling family whose father and grandfather played a pastoral set between the wars.

Ross concluded his talk with suggestions for further research: get more sets going to get more data, or where whole sets can’t be restored, at least reed and play the surviving chanters; and – potentially a PhD topic – analyse the tunes in the manuscripts and books that survive, as well as in Irish sources such as the Goodman manuscript that clearly contain a lot of pastoral material. Finally, as music lives through performance, we can hope that pastoral and union pipe music will again become part of Scotland’s living tradition, as the small-pipes and border pipes have done.

The final part of the Collogue afternoon saw pipers divide into three groups for playing sessions, one for border pipes, one for smallpipes and a ‘slow’ session for those who like to take things easy. After a leisurely meal, the survivors gathered for a joint session into the evening. Thanks are due to all those who helped organise such a successful day.
Once again the AGM was chaired by Martin Lowe, who after the usual formalities, invited Iain Wells, Society Treasurer to give a report. Referring to the report that had been circulated, Iain was pleased to be able to describe the healthy state of the Society’s finances, due particularly to the continued growth of merchandise sales. Martin then gave the Chairman’s report, summarizing the activities the Society had promoted or taken part in over the past year. The full report is available online on the lbps.net website, (as indeed is the treasurer’s report).

The term of office of the Society Chairman expired this year; it was proposed that Iain MacInnes be appointed to the position and he was elected nem con. The Committee office bearers were all re-elected and a special presentation was made to Anita Evans on her retirement, in recognition of the work she has done for many years maintaining the web site.

The issue of Technical Advisors was brought up and two new advisors were appointed (Ed; see bottom of page 40). George Greig then gave a quick report on the Society’s teaching weekend. The meeting generally felt that the weekend should be continued, but a new venue should be sought. The meeting then approved the proposed revisions to the constitution which had been circulated and agreed that the issue of subscriptions should be left in the hands of the committee, providing that any decision should not significantly increase membership costs or decrease Society income.

An extract from The Times newspaper for May 15th 1781; three days earlier it had carried an advert for a concert in which Denis Courtney was to play the Union Pipes, perhaps for the first time in London; it seems to bear out the point made by Ross Anderson at the Collogue that in some sense the Union pipes were seen as a combination of the Irish and Scottish pipes and were named accordingly; that certainly seems to have been the opinion of the leading player.
The Thread That Binds

The LBPS retains a number of makers who have agreed to act as ‘Technical Advisors’; they are available for consultation by members on pipe-maintenance questions; here Jon Swayne answers a question about thread posed by your editor.

It's stating the obvious that the thread which is used to bind the various joints of a bagpipe performs a vital function. In fact the function is two-fold; one holds the parts together physically, the other keeps them airtight. How well it does this job depends a little on the condition of the pipes, but much more on how well the thread is applied. No doubt there are many ways of doing this job; here's how I do it.

When servicing pipes, I've found it's quite common to see a mixture of threads on one joint, where some maintenance has taken place. It could be yellow 'hemp' underneath, with maybe a few spaced turns of red cotton over that, perhaps some dental floss, and over the top a bit of PTFE tape. So what is the best thread to use?

I put hemp in inverted commas, because although we all say 'hemp', when you buy the yellow stuff, the label, if it has one, says 'linen'. I've no idea whether real hemp is or has been used, but from what I've seen of the real stuff I would say would be too hard and inflexible to be ideal for our purpose, though it may well be available in formulations which I've not seen. The thread that I believe is most commonly used, and what I use, is a yellow linen thread. It measures about 0.5mm in diameter, is fairly soft and quite loosely woven. The label on the reel in front of me now says 'Coats Barbour. Linen Single Shoe. Made in Northern Ireland'. It usually comes in two formats; one is a somewhat loose hollow ball; the other is a much tighter cylinder wound on a cardboard tube. The latter is rather easier to manage. Both weigh about 50grams. The first type can quite easily get out of hand in use. A tip is to pierce the lid of an empty clean jam jar from the inside of the lid with a sharp object such as a nail, to make a 3mm hole. Lead the free end of the reel of thread through the hole and replace the lid. Thread can then be drawn off the ball as required, without the ball getting lost under the bench and tying itself in knots. The second type can be treated in the same way, though you could equally place the cardboard tube over a spike in a small baseboard. You can get it from suppliers of highland pipes and accessories. I've also given another supplier at the end of the article.

Why do we use this type of thread? Simply because in general it has the best combination of properties for the job. It's neither too thick nor too thin, where
ordinary sewing cotton would be regarded as too thin, and, say, crochet cotton as too thick, though it is quite possible to think of more extreme situations with very small finely made pipes or a very large medieval pipe where the latter materials might be more appropriate. Nor is it too hard or too soft. It has some resilience, which is important. I also say to those who enquire that it swells less with moisture than cotton, but this may be a bit of folklore I've picked up which has no basis in fact. I've not carried out any scientific tests, but it would be interesting to try.

In commissioning this piece, the editor described a recent experience where in attempting to tune a drone, the whole drone had come out of the stock. He observed that the same thread had been used for the stock joint as for the tuning joint, and wondered whether this was correct, and how you ensure that the stock joint stays tighter than the tuning joint. In fact in my opinion you use the same material for both joints, but there is a difference both in the method of application and the degree of tightness, which I will describe in what follows.

Here is what you need:
1. Reel of thread in jam jar as above, under bench.
2. Small bottle of liquid shellac with brush built into lid. This can be in the form of french polish or button polish, or you can make it yourself by dissolving shellac flakes in methylated spirit. The consistency should be about that of thin cream. The solvent used for gluing plastic models comes in the sort of bottle I've described, though these days it annoyingly has a childproof lid, which I advise you to disable.
3. Sharp pair of scissors or knife.
4. A small spike about 80mm long, 2 or 3mm in diameter coming to a gradual point (a bamboo kebab skewer works quite well) placed vertically in a small vice near at hand.
5. A small block of wood about 120mm x 70 x 35 and a small baseboard about 150 x 80 x 15 (the latter is optional as you can simply use the surface of the table or bench at which you are working, if it is clean and smooth). Purpose explained below.

Method:
1. The seating for the thread will usually be an area of slightly reduced diameter with 'combing' – incised lines at short regular intervals – intended to assist the thread in staying put. Paint this area with a light coat of shellac. It's very sticky but dries quite quickly. It will hold the bottom layer of thread and prevent it from sliding on the underlying wood. Otherwise it's not unknown for the whole body of thread to merely revolve on the tenon when you try to remove a joint from its socket.

2. Holding the joint in your left hand parallel to the front of your body with the tenon to be wrapped to the right (assuming your are right-handed), pinch the free end of the thread between your left thumb and the wood some-
where to the left of the seating. Take a turn of the thread round the third or fourth finger of your right hand (this will enable you to place more tension on the thread), and feed the thread onto the tenon between your finger and thumb, starting from the extreme right of the seating. You are taking the thread over the top of the joint away from you in the first place, and winding in a clockwise direction from the point of view of the person sitting on your right. I aim to wind pretty much as tight as I can without the thread breaking. This type of thread is not nearly so consistent as sewing cotton and the breaking strain can vary quite dramatically over quite short distances, so it pays to be aware of that. You will be winding back over the thread coming from your left thumb, and after a few turns the thread will be trapped and you can if you wish adopt a more comfortable handhold; you can also trim the beginning end of the thread to within the seating area now, or leave it until last. Attempt closely spaced turns till you get to the left hand end of the seating. Continue winding on more turns back towards the right, perhaps paying attention to filling in any gaps left in the first layer.

3. The finished binding needs to be reasonably flexible both in order to provide an airtight seal and also in order to take up small changes in the wood due to changes in ambient temperature and humidity. In my opinion three wound layers is normally a minimum for a new set of pipes. More than four layers is probably a waste of thread, but less than three does not give enough 'give'. I say 'for a new set of pipes' since the junction you are working on may not have enough room for more than two layers, so you make the best job you can.

4. If you think you may have put on enough thread, you can now use your block and baseboard (or work surface) in 5. above. Grasp the block so that one of the 120 x 35 faces is downwards. Putting your weight on the block, roll the bound tenon under the block backwards and forwards so as to compact and flatten the surface of the thread. (I find it easier to stand up to do this, so that I can apply more pressure). It is surprising how a joint which seems tight when applied can become slacker over the first few months. The above process of rolling under pressure helps to bed the thread in quicker.

5. Try the tenon in the socket. If you have put on an odd number of layers, the free end of the thread will come off the outer end of the tenon when the latter is pushed into the socket. If an even number, the free end will come off the far end which will therefore go into the socket first. The result in the latter case is that the thread leading to the ball or reel will cause the binding to be very slightly tighter than it would be if the thread were tied off and finished, and allowance should be made for that. It's annoying if after having finished as in 7. below, the result ends up too loose.

6. If the fit is just slightly too tight, try rolling it some more. It may ease up.
If it is too loose, apply more thread. At this stage it pays to pay attention to whether the body of the thread conforms to a reasonably accurate smooth cylinder, not wider at one end than the other, or at one point than elsewhere.

7. When you have the fit you want, end with a whipped finish. The illustrations below from an old handbook of sailors knots given me by my father when I was about ten show the sequence of events, though of course in this case there is only one layer. Unwind say five turns and cut the thread from the ball a foot and a half or so from the binding; if you have ended at the left hand end of the tenon, lay the free end of the thread along the axis of the tenon, leaving the final four or five inches to the right, and trap it to the left of the binding with your left thumb; you now have a loop of thread hanging down; replace the five turns (however many you removed) over the top of thread lying along the axis of the tenon; there will be a small loop remaining, which you will remove by pulling on the free end of the thread. It ensures a neat and almost invisible finish, without any knots or lumps and bumps to get in the way of the smooth operation of a tuning slide. If you have ended at the right hand end of the tenon (as in the photo), after removing a few turns then you will trap the free end of the thread placing your left thumb somewhere in the middle of the top layer of binding, replace the removed turns, and finally remove what remains of the loop by pulling on the free end.

8. When pulling on the free end to remove the loop, there is a tendency for the natural twist in the thread to cause a little tight bunch to form which will not be pulled through the final turns. If you use excessive force, the thread is sure to break, leaving not enough free thread to finish off properly. Here is where the spike in 4. above comes in. Before pulling to remove the loop, place the loop over the spike. Use the spike to keep a little tension in the loop as it closes, lifting the loop off the spike at the last moment, and it will avoid the formation of that pesky bunch.

9. Of course the fit of a drone in the stock needs to be tighter than the fit of a tuning slide,
otherwise the drone will come out of the stock when you try to tune, or you will need two hands for tuning which is clearly inconvenient. To achieve this it helps when applying the thread to make as close turns as possible for stock joints; this makes the joint more compact and less flexible. For tuning slides, make the turns a little more widely spaced and more overlapping to give greater flexibility. Last year we had a student in the workshop for a few days who had already had a couple of years experience working for a pipemaker in Germany. When it came to applying thread, he asked whether I would prefer him to do it 'neatly' or 'chaotically' – an intelligent question, which expresses the above two possibilities admirably. There is definitely a case to be made for a little managed chaos when working on tuning slides.

Any other questions:?

1. Thread dressing: in the past I've tried using waxed thread. It forms a compact mass which if the fit is good can act as a very effective piston. But it can be sticky, and usually needs greasing. I've come to the conclusion that unwaxed thread works better and lasts longer. On the other hand I feel that the thread on a mouthblown blowpipe tenon benefits from being greased with a non-drying grease, for example with petroleum jelly stiffened by melting together with a little beeswax, to help protect it from the effects of moisture.

2. Ideal results can only be obtained if the pipes are well made and in good condition. In the case of antique pipes, the parts can have changed dimension to the extent that there is hardly any room for more then one layer of thread. Unless you are prepared to make alterations to the wooden parts, as I said above, you just have to do the best job you can, if necessary using a thinner type of thread.

3. If the bores of the stocks and tuning sockets especially are not parallel and preferably smooth, it is impossible to get perfectly satisfactory results because the fit will vary according to the tuning position. In that case it is advisable to try for the best fit at the most likely tuning position.

---

**LBPS Technical Advisors**

Jon Swayne [js@swayne.demon.co.uk]
Richard Evans [evansbagpipes@gmail.com]
Julian Goodacre [julian@goodbagpipes.com]

Technical Advisors are available to members for advice on all aspects of bellows-pipe maintenance. Please contact them directly; phone numbers are available in the Members’ Directory.
According to musician Pavel Stepanov, who both studies Russian musical traditions and makes and teaches Russian bagpipes, “Russians played the bagpipe the most often under Ivan the Terrible. The Tsar ordered the construction of a settlement specifically for bagpipers. The bagpipe grew still more important under Tsar Fyodor Ivanovich Romanov. Musicians were invariably invited to the entertainment rooms to play music, and were paid for their work. But the situation made a U-turn, once Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich ascended the throne [in 1645]. He was western-minded, liked European classical music, but could barely stand the Russian folk instrument bagpipe. So he banned the bagpipe throughout the country. Bagpipes were brought to the Moskva-river by cartloads and burnt down. A whole cultural stratum was thus destroyed in Russia.”

However, it is clear that during the last ten years enthusiasm has been growing in Russia for Scottish piping; both St Petersburg and Moscow have Pipe and Drum bands; in September of 2009 the Moscow band took part in a festival of military music in Red Square, Moscow. More surprising, however, and rather more exclusive, is the small group of players of bellows pipes.

Sergey Romanenkov has been a Society member since January 2008; he described to me his experience of Russian piping:

“The most people in the Russia very likes celtic music- Scottish, Irish, but our celtic scene develop only 10 years (or so) ago. I think it was a "Fresh wind from the West" :-) and now, we have a lot of the Scottish Festivals every year, such as Burns’ Supper and St. Andrews Day. In Moscow there are several Scottish Dance Schools.

“During this time, in the big cities there began to appear celtic-folk groups and pipers. Most pipers first played only the GHB (and me too). Sometime later, some of us buy the smallpipes. But we don't know about Scottish Lowland piping tradition and play on them highland and Irish tunes with other instruments. Some pipers in Russia play the Gaita and...
uilean pipes. In the Belarus are more pipers, playing the ‘duda’ and this tradition is still alive there. Today I don’t play the GHB regularly, I concentrate on the Scottish smallpipes -my main and favourite instrument and I play on them lowland repertoire regularly, travelling to the Russian towns and playing with fiddler and bodhran player.

Sometimes to Moscow come folk bands from the Scotland and Ireland-Anna Murray, Burach, Solas, Paddy Keenan, Paul Martin and many more. I think is great and very interesting for Russian people who loves Scottish music and piping. And I hope, what the more and more greatest musicians from Scotland will comes to Russia and will take pleasure of our friendship and Russian grateful listeners!

I playing on the pipes made by Ian Kinnear A/D combo set, blackwood and cocobolla. Maybe the next year, I’ll come to Scotland on the master class. Thank you for your interest and sorry for my english! All the best, Sergey.”

This summer Sergey was joined on the LBPS eastern wing by Phil Ershov; here’s his reply to our enquiry:

“As far as I know - there are 6 players [of bellows pipes] in Russia: 5 in Moscow and one in Saint-Petersburg (this is me). Most of them come to bellows-pipes from great highland pipes. Two of them have grade certificates of College of Piping. First, Anatoly Isaev; he is holder of the Senior Certificate of the College of Piping. He also plays on smallpipes and border pipes, but he prefers highland style, even on these pipes. He plays in the Tin Thistle Ceilidh Band. Also he teaches the bagpipes - the great highland bagpipes, and the smallpipes. Recently however he has played the button accordion more than the pipes. Second is Sergey Kovalev. He has 3rd Grade Certificate. He also plays the smallpipes as well as the highland pipes. He is the founder member of The White Heather Band. Third of the Moscow pipers is Sergey Romanenkov. I can’t say anything about the other two.
I began learning in highland tradition too, but I'm interested in lowland tradition and dance music. I played the shuttle-pipe until recently, but about week ago I received a set of smallpipes from Ian Kinnear and begin learning to play bellows-blown pipes. My general instrument is the fiddle. I play in an Irish traditional music band, called "The Sloggers". We play some Scottish tunes too, but in the band I play only on the fiddle now. We play dance tunes and slow airs and some ballads (mostly because of my love to Phil Cunningham, Aly Bain and Battlefield Band), but I think about playing Scottish dance tunes too.

Here in St Petersburg we have the Bagpipes & Drums of Saint-Petersburg Band, but there isn't any other piper, except me, who is interested in bellows-blown pipes now. But I think that when I will play the smallpipes, there will be musicians interested in this amazing music.

I came to Irish and Scottish Music from dances. Firstly I've discovered dances and then I thought about playing for dancers. All musicians in my band also began from dances, but it is exception in the Russia. Most of the musicians, who play trad. music, don't know dances. Irish and Scottish dances are popular in Russia - most of our bands play for dancers. Our bands often play in two or more traditions - Scottish and Irish or Irish and Breton. But White Heather Band play only Scottish tunes and Slua Si (one of the oldest and most popular band in the Russia) play only Irish music and songs. Tin Thistle generally play Scottish tunes and songs, but also they have some Irish and Cape Breton tunes in their repertoire.
The Lowland piping tradition is almost unknown in Russia. Russian pipers know that it exists, but don't know much about it. We all play in highland fingering style - almost all pipers play highland pipes first. I didn't play highland, but I learn piping from the College of Piping Tutor. And we play with the drone over the bellows arm too. By the way, many of our musicians, who play Irish and Scottish music aren't professional musicians. They have some kind of the job and play music as a hobby. But sometimes this hobby takes much more time and energy than a job.

I know of only two pipers who play the border pipes in bands: Anatoly Isaev plays the border pipes made by Nate Banton which he has had since the beginning of the autumn. And Alexander Anistratov plays the border pipes of his own make.”

Informed by Sergey and Philip we investigated a little more and learnt that Sergey Kovalev, founder last autumn of the White Heather Band, started his bagpipes studies in 2006 in Moscow, class of Anatoly Isayev. In 2008 he came to the College of Piping in Glasgow, class of PM Joe Wilson where he got his Level 3 Piping Certificate. In June 2010 he participated in the 1st Moscow International Piper Festival and became the Laureate of the first Russian Piper Contest. His band plays mostly Scottish traditional songs and dancing sets of jigs, reels, strathspeys, waltzes and polkas and co-operates with leading Moscow schools of Scottish traditional dance, such as Tartan Dreams and Moscow School of Scottish Dance.

Pipe-making

Sergey Ramonenkov put us in touch with Alexandre Anistratov, known not only in Moscow, but also in many other cities of Russia as a musician playing a variety of “celtic” instruments of modern and ancient music. He sent this response to our interest in his pipe-making:

“I started to paint and sculpt around 2 years old, because my father is a famous...
Russian sculptor. Partly my choice of profession was predestined. I use to try many materials everyday which gave me the right feeling for the materials I work with now. At 6 years old I started to play a recorder, it has shown that I have a talent for music. Afterwards I play a bagpipe and make it nowadays.

It is curious that at the end of my studies, inspired by some pictures for a story from the middle-ages I even made a sculpture which was named “Bagpipers”. However everybody knew nothing about bagpipes at the end of 90’s in Russia. I didn’t know that there are so many varieties and styles of bagpipes.

Just at the end of 90’s I got a chance to listen to a concert of Vladimir Lazerson and his band. Vladimir Lazerson is a patriarch of bagpipe music in Russia. At that moment he was the only one to play a bagpipe in Russia. There are rumors that he had started playing on an oxygen bag. After this concert my conception has changed totally. I couldn’t think about anything except for the bagpipes and Scottish and Irish folk music. Vladimir Lazerson became my teacher for a long time. He was the one who had shown me such masters as Hamish Moore, Colin Ross, Robert Mathieson, Gordon Duncan, Martyn Bennett, Nigel Richards, Alan MacDonald. Those are whom I follow nowadays. At some sense they are my teachers too.

The Galician gaita was the one I started to study making. Gaitas and dudelzaks became prevalent in our country. Maybe it is the influence of the ancient music that was present at our conservatories. My second bagpipe was the Scottish smallpipe. That was the first smallpipe with bellows in Russia. So, I’ve had to study how to play on it by myself. And only afterwards I’ve learned to play on Highland – usually it happens vice versa.

I had no intention to become a master. I’ve just started to make a reed for my own instruments because I needed it. Later on I needed to make bags and bellows. I needed to tune up the instruments that I’ve been taught by Moscow musical master Fedor Nekrasov, an expert of the wind instruments at the museum of Glinka. During my visits to his studio I was watching all his accessories, his engineering tools; step by step I’ve learnt everything: how it’s made, how to work with different materials and so on. Knowledge from that period really has helped me when I started my own workshop.

I had a workplace because I’m a member of Moscow Union of Artists. Little by little I’ve transformed one half of it to my workspace for bagpipe production. My main tools were bought from the professional manufactories. But some of the tools did not exist at all so I had to invent and to make it by myself. I ordered certain details at the factories. And afterwards I constructed it all myself - from the handles for my chisels to vacuum plant for impregnation of wood.

At this moment I had graduated from the Russian Academy of Painting, Sculp-
ture, and Architecture as a sculptor. Many hours I’ve spent studying World history of Art. I spent plenty of time meeting the variety of the bagpipes and their design from different countries and ages. I was interested not only in the bagpipes but all the woodwind instruments. Final conclusion was that such complicated instrument as the smallpipes or border pipes is the harmonic consolidation of lines, shapes and values that make a unique sound for each instrument and it influences the relationship of instrument and its owner. Some of my designs are inspired by my architectural view of plants and also by the designs of baroque and classicism. For example, the design of my border pipes model “Dal Riata” was based on a lithograph of 19th century from The New York Public Library.

I use all range of wood. Most of the exotic wood I get from Germany. My favourite wood is boxwood, which grows not in Europe but in Caucasus. This type of wood has much in common with south English boxwood that was highly rated by the masters of baroque instruments, like Stanesby, for example. Its steadiness and acoustic properties are similar. I take the boxwood 20 years after cutting. And then I keep it for about a year cut by parts. The exterior and the sound could be incomparable if the conditions of drying and other phases were done right.

I use fruit trees such as plum, pear or cherry for the medieval and renaissance instruments, never for the smallpipes. Of course, I prefer to use for my instruments metals such as brass, silver, nickel silver, anodized bronze (golden or silver plated) and natural materials as horn, mammoth ivory (Russia is motherland of the mammoth) and the tooth of the sperm whale.

The instruments are authentic so the materials should be the authentic too. It is also valid for the reeds that I use for my instruments. Certainly I make drone reeds of ebonite and carbon or of ebonite and glass-fibre plastic, chanter reeds of plastic because it is easy to use for the client. But the fact is that the cane reeds have inimitable sound. So, I play only the bagpipes with the cane reeds myself and popularize this way at my master-classes. I am aware that we live in a modern world where everything keeps changing and simplifying, but I never replace the authentic details by modern and easier ones. In my work I try to keep
an authenticity. This is important, because the fineness and the materials alone keep the tradition living.

I get orders from all over Russia from Vladivostok to Murmansk. Also I have clients from Australia, England, Spain and Germany. Unfortunately most of the potential clients from Russia don’t know the difference between types of bagpipes.

I teach master classes and other events to popularize the bagpipes in Russia, and I’m proud of playing for Princess of Kent my own smallpipes D set at the banquet at the opening of a design exhibition.

I try to tell a little bit of history of this instrument at my concerts at different clubs and concert halls such as The Moscow International House of Music. In such concerts border and smallpipes combine their sound with that of lute, harp, baroque guitar and harpsichord. We are working on an album which I hope will be out next year.

Each year more and more people become interested in Lowland bagpipe, buy this kind of instrument and start to play. I hope that our collaboration with LBPS would promote an information support for this music trend, which is new for Russia.”
- Coming Events -

LBPS Annual Competition

Edinburgh, April 2nd

The Society’s annual competition will again be held in Edinburgh under the auspices of the ‘Ceilidh Culture’ festival, 25 March – 16 April 2011.

The venue is still in the process of confirmation, but the date is fixed for Sat April 2nd. Full details will be posted on the Society website and circulated to members via the Newsletter. For those who start practicing early, the competition rules are available on the website. Competitors are reminded that whilst half the marks are awarded by an experienced judge, the other half are awarded by members of the audience for musicality and enjoyment.

[lbps.net/events/competition.htm]

Sound files of last year’s winners are now available on the website.
http://lbps.net/2010_competition/

Morpeth Gathering 29th April-1st May

There were no entries last year’s Border Pipes competition; members are encouraged to take part http://www.northumbriana.org.uk/gathering/competitions.htm

Celtic Connections - Borders Night

Saturday 22nd January 2011, 8.00pm, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall :

“A showcase of the region’s cultural treasures “

“The Scottish Borders are a richly distinctive stronghold of tradition, whose landscapes and folklore continue to inspire its native musicians today, as they’ve done for centuries past. Headlining this showcase of the region’s cultural treasures are the Borders Tunesmiths, a cross-generational collective including such luminaries as Archie Fisher, Matt Seattle, Shona Mooney, Lori Watson, Iain Fraser and Elspeth Smellie, who’ve been writing new music together since 2008. Elsewhere on the bill, Mooney also features with her piper father Gordon, and in dynamic all-female sextet The Shee, while Watson leads her highly-praised Rule of Three line-up, and accordion ace Ian Lowthian duets with drummer Ben Redman.”

[Tickets £12.50 from the website
http://www.celticconnections.com/whatson/event/103929-Borders-Night]
The following conversation took place sometime ago on the Bob Dunsire bagpipe forum with the title

**Bellows and Boobs**

*Helvetica:*

“I've recently acquired a set of bellows blown pipes, and have discovered that the part of the rib cage where I'd feel most comfortable having the bellows strap is in a rather "anatomically inconvenient" location. Ahem. So I'm basically faced with the choice of over or under...

Under might work if I had a beer gut, but the problem is that no matter how tightly I do up the strap, it slips down because I have a relatively small waist, and my rib cage tapers towards it.

Over is a bit too high to be comfortable, and tends to squish things a bit so it looks like I'm trying to emulate the Bavarian beer wench look.

Any of you ladies have any tricks for making the bellows stay put, or know of an alternative way to strap the bellows on? I almost feel like I could get away with under if I had a strap over one shoulder to keep the torso strap from slipping down. But I'd be interested to hear if anyone has any advice to offer.”

*Nate Banton re Dan Houghton*

“[He has] a black strap that goes over his shoulder. This strap, added by him, attaches to the front of his bellows waist belt, goes diagonally over the left shoulder and again attaches, at the back, to his bellows waist belt. He just has to slip that over his head when he puts on the bellows.

I made something almost exactly like this for Tim Cummings who is similarly built, and I'm making another for another friend. I haven't tried this with a female however, so I don't know if the added strap would "fit". But it might.

Dan made his from seat belt-like nylon strapping (I think he took it from a shoulder bag), I've made mine from leather. “

*Helvetica replied:*

“I tried this harness idea last night with some extra strapping we have lying about and it worked like a charm! It was very easy to adjust the positio of the shoulder strap so it was both comfortable and snug.

Everything stayed in place so well I completely forgot I was playing bellows, which is a good sign! Normally I spend half my concentration trying to make sure I maintain control of the bellows, and my fingering suffers. [cont.]"
I’d highly recommend this setup to anyone, male or female, large or small. It really does make the whole bellows system a lot easier to manage.”

Tim Cummings recently added the following comment

“I’d like to add that I’ve found the improvised shoulder strap (which took Nate only minutes to make), to be extremely comfy.

And, incidentally, for those of you interested in pipe-singing, the shoulder strap is a great aid, helping the whole bellows-and-pipe contraption stay put while the rib cage deflates during a sung phrase. Without the shoulder strap, the bellows-and-pipes sink right down to my waist as I sing. Further, the additional strap means you can loosen the torso strap enough to allow a full intake of air.”

[Ed: you can see this strap in action in the photo below. The Bob Dunsire web forum is at http://forums.bobdunsire.com/forums/]

Prince Edward Island Fiddle Camp

June 20-26 2010

The first year of the PEI Fiddle camp featured a variety of instructors for various instruments including several styles of fiddle as well as; guitar, piano, accordion, whistle, step dancing, Scottish smallpipes, border pipes, and highland pipes. The piping tuition was handled by Ellen McPhee — a PEI native— and Tim Cummings of Vermont.

“Overall, this is a real gem of a workshop. It is truly one not to miss. Between the fantastic staff, the friendly people, and the beautiful beach front location… there are so many great reasons to make the trip. Don’t miss it next summer!”

[Ben Miller reporting from the event on the APNA website http://theotherpipes.wordpress.com]

The 2011 Fiddle Camp will run from June 19th -25th

full details at http://www.peifiddlecamp.com/
Five pipers, all LBPS members, took part in this year’s Common Ground Week held in the West Park Centre, Dundee, and a very enjoyable week it was. The Centre is a large extended Victorian villa complete with meeting rooms, bar, dining rooms and so on, with ample parking, and excellent, comfortable accommodation.

Three of our members had travelled considerable distances to attend, Kinclaire in the Highlands, Pembroke in Wales and from Berlin, the economics of a five day event with both tuition and variety proving beneficial for them.

The piping course was once again excellently tutored by Neil Paterson. The structure of the week involved two sessions in the mornings one in the afternoon session and then a "talk to the piper session". The morning sessions concentrated on new tunes, learning by ear and music, group playing and harmonies. The Talk to the Piper was for individual problems and pipe maintenance.

Common Ground Week is an all-encompassing experience with top class tuition being given in fiddle, mandolin, whistle, harmonica, ukulele, and bluegrass guitar and fiddle. This is complemented by an Arts section involving felting, weaving, song writing, painting etc. - a tremendous mix which participants have the afternoons to explore as they fancy.

One of the afternoon sessions was called "mixed music" and all the pipers opted to attend this. This consisted of taking a tune and examining and exploring harmonies and playing arrangements with other instruments. We had six pipers with small, border and Irish guitars, fiddles, mandolin, accordion and whistles. These were really enjoyable sessions and it was amazing to see how our instrument blended in and enhanced what you would imagine to be some quite bizarre combinations of instruments.

The week was further enhanced by a top-class concert every evening ranging from fiddle and harp to bluegrass, followed by sessions designed to be inclusive of everyone.

Common Ground is organised by Living Tradition; the website and booking arrangements could have been better, but the week itself was a truly enjoyable one.

The 2011 Common Ground school will be held between July 31st - Aug 5th details at http://www.livingtradition.org.uk/ltss-commonground/
The Pipers’ Gathering Aug 13 -16 2010

Glen Dryer reports from the annual gathering of ‘alternative pipers’ in Killington, Vermont

This celebration of bellows blown piping continues to be the premier North American event for those of us who think beyond the Great Highland Bagpipe. August 2010 was the fifth year that the Gathering was held at the high-end Killington Grand Resort, a huge hotel and snow skiing complex in central Vermont. This year the management located the piping in a separate “snow shed” at the base of the slope, probably to mitigate conflicts with the multiple wedding parties also using the facility. All lessons, workshops, vendor tables and concerts were held in this large building.

The stellar roster of instructors from Scotland, England, Ireland, Canada and the US included Dan Houghton and Tim Cummings for border pipes, Jim McGillivray and EJ Jones on Scottish smallpipes, Anthony Robb and Ian Lawther for Northumbrian small pipers, Jon Swayne with English pipes, Anthony Santoro, Brian McNamara and Bill Ochs on uilleann pipes, plus John Skelton and Laura MacKenzie teaching whistles. The schedule for Saturday and Sunday started with two sessions of small group lessons, followed by two sets of afternoon workshops on a wide range of topics and amazing concerts by the instructors each evening. I think everyone would agree that the concerts alone are worth the total cost of the weekend, with everything else a fabulous bonus.

As for my own experience, I was particularly impressed with Anthony Robb’s ability to take a group of Northumbrian small pipers with very varied experience and create a situation where we all participated, learned a lot and had fun as well. The instructors were approachable and friendly as were all the participants.
For many, it was an annual reunion, for others an eye-opening introduction to a brave new world of traditional music. For the first time in many years, Alan Jones, who organized the original gatherings starting in 1985 in North Hero, Vermont, was in attendance. The small group of dedicated individuals who spend a whole year planning this weekend deserve the thanks and support of the bellows piping world.

“There were many wonderful parts of the weekend that went beyond just the instruction I was seeking. The two concerts were incredible. The opportunity to see old friends like Ian Lawther, and meet new ones from around the world was most enjoyable. Finally, seeing the sense of camaraderie and passion for music was amazing. I witnessed pipe makers, who in a different line of work would consider themselves to be competitors, generously sharing techniques. Having attended The Pipers’ Gathering I now have the tools necessary to enhance my playing ability, and the knowledge that this musical tradition will not only continue, but will grow. “

[from Bob MacDonald’s report on the APNA website- http:theotherpipes.wordpress.com]

The 2011 Gathering will run from August 5th to 8th
Details at pipersgathering.org
The Burn Weekend

Iain Kinnear reports on his annual teaching weekend

On the 15th October 2010 The Burn Estate near Edzell in Angus was ringing to the sound of smallpipes when a group of 16 enthusiastic and cheery folk gathered for the annual smallpiping weekend held by Ian Kinnear. Robert Watt from Ireland was the visiting tutor for this year’s course bringing with him his unique and most accomplished playing and teaching expertise. As well as introducing some of his own compositions to the teaching material, Robert gave an insight into his own approach and method for practicing and developing his playing which has helped him achieve the level of competition and international performing standard for which he is acclaimed.

Folk attending the course came from Scotland, Ireland, England, France and Belgium – both male and female! There was a good mix of standards with everyone coming with their own particular aims for the weekend – ranging from mastering the bellows technique, learning more about tuning and reed management to extending repertoire to cover both Scottish and Irish tunes for session playing with other instruments.

The weekend began with a welcome dram in the drawing room in front of a roaring fire. On Friday evening Ian spent time with each individual checking over their pipes to make sure they were in good playing order and finding out what each person hoped to gain from the weekend. After the evening meal, everyone gathered in the drawing room for some informal tunes and songs as well!

On Saturday morning the pipers split into 2 groups. Robert led one focusing on several of his compositions and in particular the technique involved. The other was led by Ian with the focus being bag and bellows positioning, bellows technique with the aim being to get everyone comfortable with their pipes and blowing a steady tone. Ian then taught the group “The Chanters Tune” by ear. Despite their preconceptions about their ability to learn by ear, and much to their surprise, they were all able to do it! The rest of the day was taken up with playing sessions; everyone then got together and the 2 groups shared with each other the tunes they had been working on, finishing with everyone playing Robert’s tune “Anne’s Waltz”.

On Sunday, as well as having several playing sessions, Ian also gave a talk on repertoire and playing with other instruments. The aim here was to get pipers to think about what key tunes are in, whether tunes have been adapted to fit the pipes and if so will they still be compatible with versions played on other instruments.
Here are some words directly from a couple of the participants from this year’s course:

“I had bought a set of pipes from Ian a few years ago with a view to adding them to my highland pipe playing but being away at sea a lot they rarely left the box – when they did I struggled with the technique. This course was the perfect opportunity to sort that out, and it did. Ian’s patience and ability to explain, observe and adjust was exceptional and I am now a happy piper on both highland and small pipes. Still not sure if the small pipes will come to sea with me due to the salty environment but they definitely do not live in the box anymore at home or in the band room.”

Campbell de Burgh.

“As a newcomer to smallpipes, I was apprehensive about joining this workshop, but was made to feel welcome by even the most accomplished players present. The first evening, reassured by finding two of my Scots Music Group beginners classmates present, and no doubt aided by whisky, I even dared to contribute a couple of my old school band 2/4s. I was inspired by Robert's playing and fascinated by Ian's talk on session playing. Another eye-opener was the importance of the key of a tune. With the GHB I just bashed through whatever was presented, without giving the key a second thought. Now I may have opened a can of worms!

The Burn was a great location, grand in scale but not over posh. Very friendly welcome, good food, blazing fires and set in Glen Esk, (my father's homeland) which is really bonny in autumn. The biggest lesson of the weekend was that smallpipes are fun! I'll be signing up for next year.”

Allan Sturrock
I returned to playing pipes in August 2008 after a twenty plus year gap, only occasionally picking up the big pipes over the years. It was a chance visit to a pub in Portree that I first came across someone playing a set of mouth blown smallpipes. Returning from my Skye holiday I looked in to smallpipes and came across Ian Kinnear and his sets of Scottish Smallpipes. Ian invited me to join his weekend course in October 2008 where he was joined by the fantastic Andrew Stephenson of Skipinnish.

This year I returned to join Ian and his guest tutor Robert Watt, one of the new generation of a piper’s piper, a fantastic piper. Ian works hard at mixing people at the right level of their ability so everyone can enjoy themselves. In my first visit to Ian’s weekend course in 2008, I joined the beginners using a set of Ian’s pipes that he was able to lend while mine were being made. This year I was a vet — well, at least I now had a small repertoire of tunes and was able to join the other players every so often during the open session evenings we had, which was a sheer joy.

The tutor sessions with Robert were a pure delight. It is great to see and hear how a professional musician works their magic. I am pleased to say that I will now be one of Ian’s regulars and my summer will end each year with a visit to Ian’s weekend workshop. There is not a friendlier and more welcoming place to go and enjoy playing good music and meeting good people."

Ken MacIntyre

Lord Chesterfield to his son in Italy

"AS YOU are now in a musical country, where singing, fiddling, and piping, are not only common topics of conversation, but almost the principal objects of attention ... If you love music, hear it; go to operas, concerts, and pay fiddlers to play to you; but I insist upon your neither piping nor fiddling yourself. It puts a gentleman in a very frivolous, contemptible light; brings him into a great deal of bad company; and takes up a great deal of time, which might be better employed."

(April 14th, 1749)
Steenie Steenson, well-kent grumpy old piper, sends us his ramblings and rattlings

Your old pal was delighted, quickly browsing through these pages, to see a few references to the plight of we poor pipers back in the 17th century. Now I’ve heard it said more than once of late that the repeated quoting of this sort of record gets pipers a bad name, tars them all with the brush of drunkenness and undermines the value of the Lowland piping tradition. Well I want it to be clear - in my opinion we can’t hear enough of this kind of record. It has to be said, over and over it seems, there was a thread of piping tradition that was entirely dance-based. It’s almost completely gone today, I’m sad to say. Time was when wherever people gathered for rest and relaxation there had to be a piper to play for dancing. If it happened that life was organised so that the only opportunity for relaxation coincided with the Lord’s Day it was unfortunate for the Kirk, but there seems to have been no way in which the Session’s blustering could put a stop to it; weddings needed dancers and dancers needed pipers; nothing more to be said.

So maybe a hundred years later this tradition had gone and pipers now sat in Gentlemen’s grand houses and played sets of variations, and being ‘fit only to play reels to oyster-women’ became an insult. In my day that would have been the best compliment you could pay a piper, oyster-women being well-known for their love of and skill at dancing. Keep all your variorum, give me a stott o’ the spring anytime.

There was, for a while, something I gather was called ‘Tinker piping’. This, it seems was a phrase invented by the gentlemen guardians of the Highland piping world to describe the kind of playing I imagine Lovat took such exception to. You might call this ‘uncultured’ piping, if you were the sort of person who doesn’t have a clue what culture is. In Lovat’s case, it seems that a sufficient quantity of claret was what it took to help him understand.

And while we’re talking of piping and dancing, I’m reminded of hearing not so long ago a piper playing the old lowland reels the way I remember them being played, in my youth that is, before it was all swept under the tartan carpet. Somewhere between a Kerry polka and American Old Time was how he described it, whatever that means. Sounded like the old border dance music to me, but then, I’m a grumpy old fogey, as you well know.
Celtic Connections, Glasgow
Sat 15th, Sun 16th Dave Shaw - Learn the Small Pipes in a Day with Dave Shaw 
Sat 22nd Borders Night

LBPS Annual Competition
April 2nd, Edinburgh; venue to be confirmed, www.lbps.net

Morpeth Gathering
29th April-1st May, http://www.northumbriana.org.uk/gathering
Border Pipes competition; there were no entries last year ...

Prince Edward Island Fiddle Camp

Barga School of Piping, Traditional Music and Dance, Tuscany
20th-26th June, www.hamishmoore.com

Newcastleton Traditional Music Festival, Scottish Borders
Border Pipe Competition, Novice and Open Classes

Ceòlas music and dance summer school
3rd- 8th July 2011, South Uist, www.ceolas.co.uk/

Common Ground Summer School
31st July - 5th August, West Park Centre, Dundee

Pipers’ Gathering
5th-8th August, Killington, Vermont,

Sessions
London: The London session has ceased to function; anyone interested in