

(2) The Late Eighteenth Century

Such was piping in its hey-day in the context of the Clan Society. This work takes up the story of the bagpipe in 1781, when there was a distinct fear that the art of piping was in decline.

This has often and erroneously been attributed to the belief that the bagpipe was actually banned as an instrument of War in the 1746 Disarming Act which followed Culloden [e.g. "Caberfeidh" PT Aug 1950: 6]. The bagpipe in fact was not mentioned in the Disarming Act [19 Geo. II c.39] which concentrated on weaponry and the Highland garb, although it is true that a young unfortunate in the Ogilvie Regiment was hanged in York in November 1746, for acting as a piper in the Jacobite cause. His name was James Reid, and his court case was reported as follows:

"The court observed ... that any person who joined any set of people engaged in open rebellion, though they did not bear arms, were yet guilty of High Treason; that no regiments ever marched without musical instruments, such as drums, trumpets or the like; and that a Highland regiment never marched without a piper, and therefore his bagpipe in the eyes of the law, was an instrument of war". [Scots Mag 9 (Nov. 1746): 543].

This, clearly, set a precedent, although there is no indication that the pipe was in practice branded an illegal instrument north of the Border. It should be born in mind also that during the winter of the '45 several Hanoverian units marched with the pipes, notably the Highland

Independent companies, and the Argyllshire Militia. [MacLeod R.H. 1984].(14) It would certainly be wrong to assume that the playing of the pipes in the Highlands suddenly ceased with Proscription from 1746 to 1782, and, indeed, there are indications to the contrary. (For instance, we know of several tunes composed during this period(15); we know of many pipers who were active at the time, such as George MacLeod, Lord Reay's piper, "brother in music" to the Reay poet Rob Donn [Grimble 1979: 75]; we might cite several court cases involving pipers (for offences unrelated to piping!)(16); we know that Joseph MacDonald was collecting his music in Ross and Sutherland during the 1750's [QV IV.3(a)]; that Hugh Robertson was making pipes on the Castle Hill - a mere stone's throw from Parliament Square - in the 1760s [SRO GD 221]; that in the Edinburgh Oyster cellars of the 1770s Hugo Arnot and fellow socialites were dancing to "the music of fiddle, harp and bagpipe". [Arnot 1778: 354]).

Yet, as shall become clear in the following chapters, there was a distinct belief towards the end of the century that there had been a severance of the piping tradition in the post-Culloden period. This was undoubtedly to some extent true, but the cause lay not in legislation against the pipe per se, but rather in the generality of restrictive legislation directed against the Highland lifestyle and mores, and in the particular legislation against the Hereditary Jurisdictions introduced in 1747 [Scots Mag 10 (Feb.1747): 61]. This effectively ruined

many of the old clan chiefs, and contributed to the breakdown of the old social order, to be replaced by new ideas of land management and social obligation. In this context the traditional learned and musical orders were anachronistic, and many of the chief practitioners (such as Donald Ruadh MacCrimmon in the 1770's), sought refuge in emigration.

Social history, however, never stands still, and the events of the '45 did not for long leave a political and cultural vacuum. New leadership was thrown up in the Highlands, and new economic forces came into play. [Smout 1969: 321]. This work will examine several ways in which the Highland bagpipe and its music adapted to the changing economic circumstances of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, to emerge as a potent and healthy musical force, not just in the Highlands, but in Scotland at large. The survival of Highland piping at this time was a direct reflection of the degree of patronage it enjoyed from the military, and from the new landed classes - and was in direct contrast to its sister instrument the Lowland pipe, pronounced dead by John Leyden in 1801, a victim of the reshaping of the Lowland urban environment. [Leyden 1801: 150; MacInnes 1986].

The Highland Societies of London and Scotland directly represented the interests of the landed classes, and led the way in the encouragement of the instrument. Their influence was three-fold: they established piping competitions; they employed Highland pipers to work on

their estates; and they patronised the publication of pipe music. These three subjects constitute the matter of this thesis. As shall become clear, the influence of the Highland Societies is felt to this day, from the very nature of competitive piping, to the music we play.

Table I/1

a. OBJECTIVES OF THE HIGHLAND SOCIETY OF LONDON

1. The restoration of the Highland Dress.
2. The preservation of the Ancient Music of the Highlands.
3. The cultivation of Gaelic, and the rescuing of the valuable remains of Celtic Literature.
4. The establishment of useful public institutions.
5. The Incorporation of a Society for the Extension of British Fisheries.
6. The relief of Distressed Highlanders, particularly when at a distance from home.
7. The keeping of the Martial Spirit; and rewarding the Gallant achievements of the Highland Corps.
8. The promotion of Agricultural improvement and general welfare in the Northern part of the Kingdom.

[Sinclair J. 1813:6]

b. OBJECTIVES OF THE HIGHLAND SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND (Est. 1784)

1. An inquiry into the present state of the Highlands & Islands of Scotland, and the condition of their inhabitants.
2. An inquiry into means of improvement via. new settlement, extending communications, trade, manufacturing, the fisheries, agriculture etc.
"The Society shall also pay a proper attention to the preservation of the Language, Poetry and Music of the Highlands."

[T.H.S.S. I(1799):iii]

(3) The Highland Societies

The Highland Society of London was founded by a group of 25 expatriate Scots gentlemen in May 1778. Lord Lovat was appointed president, and John MacKenzie, a London lawyer of Highland background, Secretary. By June membership had considerably increased, and before long the Society was established as a rather exclusive club attracting Highland Chiefs, Parliamentarians, and others with landed interests north of the border. The initial enthusiasm and undoubted political clout of the members led swiftly to the successful repeal of the 1746 Disarming Act, a cherished initial objective, and thereafter the Society relaxed into an easy existence with ample emphasis on its social remit.

The active interest of Royalty considerably enhanced the Society's prestige. HRH the Duke of Sussex was appointed president in 1806 (also 1813 and 1825), while his brothers the Duke of Kent (president 1814) and the Duke of York (president 1815, '19, '21), also took enthusiastically to the Highland trappings which were a hallmark of Society meetings. Four meetings were held annually, with a resplendent annual dinner fixed (after 1801) on or near the anniversary of the Battle of Alexandria (March 21st). [Campbell A. 1983:3]

In June 1782 a list of 9 objectives was drawn up, which attest to a more philanthropic side to the Society's activities. [Table I(1)]. A large ledger book entitled

Military Pensioners 1799-1816 [268, 45] charts early charitable work in funding homeward passages for war casualties; in 1786 the Society helped establish the "British Society for extending the Fisheries", an interesting blend of philanthropy and capitalism; in 1813 it established a Gaelic chapel in London; in 1815 it founded the Royal Caledonian Asylum for Orphaned Children of Servicemen; and in 1798 it raised the London-based Royal Highland Volunteers (transformed in 1803 into the Loyal North Britons). [Campbell, A. 1983: 12-21, 31, 34].

On the musical front the Society demonstrated an early interest in both harp and bagpipe. Interest in the former, however, ended in disappointment when a young Highlander, brought to London for tuition in 1784, proved thoroughly inept, and soon found himself on a boat for Jamaica with the Society's blessing. [HSL 268, 21: 21, 31; 34: 1784-6]. Enthusiasm for the bagpipe took two main forms: the employment of individuals to play at Society meetings; and the inauguration, in 1781, of the first piping competition of its type, which the Society continued to subsidise until 1844. Both issues are discussed fully below.

The Society's literary enthusiasms were mainly addressed towards the debate over MacPherson's Ossianic verse, which raged most fiercely towards the end of the eighteenth century. In 1784 the Society raised a large sum of money (much of it coming from Sir John MacGregor Murray in India) to publish MacPherson's purported original

Gaelic texts. Much of this found its way into MacPherson's pockets, but unfortunately no publication was forthcoming, and on his death in 1796 his papers passed to his executor, John MacKenzie (the Society Secretary). [Campbell A. 1983: 9]. On MacKenzie's death in 1803 the papers passed in turn to the HSS, which was engaged in an enquiry into the authenticity of MacPherson's works. [QV Ch II.8].

The Highland Society of Scotland, by contrast, was an altogether more complex organisation in terms of both membership and objectives. Remarkably, it was born of a dispute in 1783 over the results at the piping competition in Falkirk, when, in order to redress the competitors' grievances, a group of local gentlemen (led by John Clerk of Elden) arranged an alternative competition in Edinburgh a week after the main event (on October 22nd). [E.E.C. 27/10/1783]. This went off rather well, and the organisers convened to

"talk over the good that might result to the country at large by the institution of a Society for the improvement of the Highlands". [Ramsay A. 1879: 45].

A follow-up meeting was swiftly arranged for November 3rd 1783, when the company adjourned to Fortune's Tavern where "... the claret went round freely and ... the Professor [John MacArthur] played some delightful old Highland tunes perfectly new to us". [Trigge 1783: 5; E.E.C. 27/10/1783].

Here, indeed, was Highland culture in the Nation's

capital, and by early 1784 the Society was cemented into a formal body with the Duke of Argyll at its head. [Ramsay 1870: 46]. From the outset, however, there was a dichotomy of interests. Undoubtedly one spur to the Society's formation had been the massive crop failure of 1782 which ruthlessly exposed the dangerously over-specialised Highland economy. [Ramsay 1879: 45]. Agricultural "improvement" was a topical issue in Edinburgh at the time, where the Enlightenment encompassed more than the mere cultural and academic: landowners with an eye to the future were anxious to promote agrarian reforms, and they saw in the Highland Society a potential vehicle for their interests. The Society's objectives, formulated in January 1785 [Table I(1)] demonstrate that from the very outset the economic remit was a major constituent of the Society's activities: this was to be a practical agency for economic reform in the Highlands.

The cultural remit, as can be seen, was relegated to a sub-clause in the original objectives, but in practice, as long as the founding fathers remained active, this side of the Society's activities received due attention. A bard, piper and "professor" of Gaelic were appointed [Black 1986: 7-10], and various literary projects were commissioned, such as John Gunn's excellent report on the Scottish harp. [Gunn 1807]. The Society also promoted some very substantial Gaelic scholarship, discussed below in Ch.II.8. Three members in particular sustained this cultural interest: Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster (1754-

1835), Sir John MacGregor Murray (1745-1822), and Henry MacKenzie (1745-1831), lawyer and man of letters,(17) who was the real guiding hand behind the early years of the Society's activities. The former two were a particular influence on the piping activities of the Society. Sir John Sinclair, first chairman of the Board of Agriculture, and compiler of the Statistical Account (1790), was also the man who first promoted the writing of pipe music on the stave, and was in constant attendance at the Edinburgh piping competitions. [D.N.B., Black 1986:6]. Sir John MacGregor Murray was for much of his life an Officer in the East India Company, and it was in India that he discovered Joseph MacDonald's Compleat Theory written in 1760. He too frequently presided over the Edinburgh competition. [D.N.B.; Black 1986: 6].

This competition was run by a hard-core of enthusiasts from the Society, such as John Clerk of Elden, James Grant of Corrymony, and John Graham Dalryell. These men worked in committee, and their task was to organise the minutiae of the competition, which was funded, in its entirety, by the HSL. This was an important division of responsibilities which has often been confused: the HSL provided the money; the HSS provided the organisation.

The Impetus for Competition

The HSL's motivation for inaugurating the competition

was two-fold. On the one hand it was concerned with the preservation of a distinctively Highland music which it feared was "fast hastening to oblivion". [Sinclair J. 1813: 13]. On the other hand it was anxious to promote an instrument which had been found to have distinct military utility.

The Cultural Objective

Although the relevant minutes of the HSL are lost, an account written retrospectively in 1811 recorded that "it was determined to institute a competition of Highland pipers annually, as the only means within the reach of the Society of preserving and cultivating antient pipe music". [HSL 268, 25: 99,100].

Pipe music was, by virtue of its charter, an object of interest to the Society, but there was also a wider fear that pipe music had suffered much in the inimicable climate of the post-Culloden Highlands. This was expressed most forcibly by the contemporary writer John Ramsay of Ochtertyre:

"Though the pipers have survived their brethren, the harpers, almost a century, they themselves will, ere long, share the same fate. The present ones are already inferior to their predecessors in knowledge and execution. Nor are they to expect encouragement from their chieftains and gentry, whose manners are formed on a new model ..." [Ramsay J. in P. MacDonald 1784: 15].

That this fear did contribute to the Society's patronage of piping was confirmed by J.G. Dalyell. [1849: 15]. Another influence at the time might well have been the precedent set by the advent of harp competitions in Ireland, the first of which took place in Longford in 1781, and which culminated in the foundation of the Belfast Harp Society in 1807. [Bunting 1796: 65; Dalyell 1849: 247].

The Military Objective

In 1781 the HSL had more than a fair-share of high ranking military officers in its ranks. Several members, indeed, had raised their own regiments (The Duke of Gordon, The Earl of Seaforth, Lord MacLeod, the Earl of Eglinton, and others), and all were undoubtedly aware not only of the utility of the bagpipe in battle, but also that there was a finite supply of pipers for the apparently insatiable demands of the War effort.

The history of the bagpipe in the British army has yet to be chronicled, but would appear to have roots in the Scots mercenary regiments which fought in the service of European powers from the sixteenth century. [vide Fischer 1902: 281]. After the Treaty of Nordlingen in 1633 three such units, including Lord Reay's "MacKay's Invincibles", were united to form the Green Brigade under Lord Hepburn in the service of France. In 1660 this unit was recalled to Britain to form the 1st Regiment of Foot (The Royal Scots), and it was in this unit in 1679 that the first official

appointment of a Pipe Major has been documented. [Boag 1975: 27; Royal Scots 1981: vii].

The first Highland Regiment, the 42nd (Black Watch) was raised in 1739, and certainly had pipers in its ranks [Barnes 1956: 67], but it was with the 7 Years War in 1756 that the Government discovered the utility of the Highlander in the service of the British Army, and commissioned two further Highland regiments, the 78th Fraser Highlanders (under Lord Lovat), and the 77th Montgomerie's Highlanders (under Archibald Montgomerie of Eglinton). This latter was of particular interest in that it was raised almost exclusively in the North-West Highlands, and included no fewer than 30 pipers and drummers in its ranks. [Stewart of Garth 1822 II: 14].

At the storming of Quebec in 1759 the Fraser Highlanders, with their pipers, did sterling work: Pennant [1774: 303], and after him the Encyclopedia Britannica [1778 Edn.], recounted how the pipers had helped turn the tide at Quebec, and from that time onwards anecdotes concerning the piper in battle began to circulate widely, and often assumed heroic proportions.(18) Individuals such as George Clarke at Vimiera (1808), Kenneth MacKay at Waterloo (1815), and, much later, piper Findlater at Dargai (1897), returned home from battle as national heroes, and undoubtedly this bolstered the army's enthusiasm for the instrument.

The American War of Independence (1776-1781), Britain's campaigns in the East and West Indies, and the

outbreak of the Napoleonic Wars in 1793, combined to make the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries a period of almost incessant warfare. Highlanders took to soldiering with enthusiasm, both in the regular regiments of the line, and in the innumerable auxiliary regiments raised for home defence.(19) The value of the bagpipe for recruiting purposes had long been acknowledged [vide Burt c.1730 (1818 Edn I: 70)], and from Skye to Perth in the 1770s the recruiting sergeant's summons was accompanied by the pibroch. [vide Grant 1959: 512; Scots Mag 40: 218]. During a recruiting drive for the Fraser Highlanders in Inverness in 1776, for instance ...

"For three days nothing was heard but the hoarse-sounding pipe ... Saturday evening the Laird of MacIntosh, followed by several friends, the family piper and sixty recruits, marched round the town". [Scots Mag 38 (March 1776): 162].

Significantly, after the 1783 piping competition, John MacArthur was urged to establish a school for teaching pipe music,

"the utility of which in recruiting His Majesty's army, and the military ardour with which it inspires the Highland regiments, are too well known to say anything further." [E.E.C. Oct. 27, 1783].

Although the utility of the pipe was thus acknowledged, pipers often continued to serve in an unofficial capacity (for instance as "drummers", or at the Regiment's expense), until in 1854 the War Office finally sanctioned an establishment of six pipers for certain of

the Highland regiments.(20) With the implementation of the Cardwell proposals in 1881 pipers became a permanent fixture in all Highland regiments. [Boag 1975: 30].

In the 1780's, however, the problem was simply one of finding enough pipers to meet the army's needs. It is recorded that when Campbell of Lochnell raised the 91st Highlanders in 1794, he was obliged to pay a bounty of 30 guineas for each piper, such was the shortage [Dunn-Pattison cited in PT June 1968], and it seems a strong likelihood that the supplying of this need, through the financial encouragement of piping, was a major incentive in the HSL's inauguration of the piping competition. Significantly, the competition was proposed by the Society member who possibly had the greatest first-hand experience of the value of the bagpipe in battle - Colonel Archibald Montgomerie of Eglinton (1726-1796), former Commander of the 77th Highlanders. [Sinclair J. 1813: 13].

Notes for Ch. I

- (1) The MacCrimmons were the most famous of piping instructors. Valuable early references in this context are
 1. A document dated 1698, in which Campbell of Glenorchy arranges for his piper MacIntyre to be sent on his "prentiseship with McCrooman ... to the Isles". [Barcaldine Papers cited R.H. MacLeod 1975].
 2. An indenture, dated 9/3/1743, binding David Fraser to service as piper to Lord Lovat, and arranging tuition under "the famous Malcolm Mcgrimen". [Quoted verbatim Scotsman 9/10/81].
 3. Other early literary references to the "college": Pennant, [1774: 301]; Johnson, 1773 [1924 Edn: 152]; Boswell 1773, [1936 Edn. 264]; Encyclopedia Britannica [1778 Edn]; Ramsay of Ochertyre [in P. MacDonald 1784: 14]; Newte [1791: 164].
 4. The last of the hereditary MacCrimmons, Donald Ruadh, is discussed in depth, ch. III.
- (2) Each of these subjects is well-documented. Early sources which attest to the range of the utility of the bagpipe are: MacPherson J. [1768: 328]; Dalrymple [1771 I: 50]; Pennant [1774: 301]; MacDonald P. [1784: 12]. Donald MacDonald's views [1820: 4], are representative of early 19th century writings on the issue.
- (3) A much-cherished modern piping myth is that the old pipers only played Ceòl Mòr [e.g. Gordon S. 1929:III; Ross N. 1925: 163]. This, however, is abundantly disproved by poetic, literary and graphic evidence, and by the evidence of the music repertory.
- (4) The MacArthurs are discussed in some detail in Ch IV.3(c).
- (5) Valuable sources on the Rankins are: MacKay [1838: 13]; Matheson [1938: 251]; Gordon [1923: 105-111]; Morrison N.R. [1934]; Whyte [Celtic Monthly 19 (1911): 195-7].
- (6) vide MacKay J.G. [T.G.S.I 30 (1921): 142]; Matheson W. [1953: 166].
- (7) This information derives from:
 1. The Contullich Papers (compiled 1706-1722). [T.G.S.I XLIV (1966): 310-348].
 2. A Data sheet of Dunvegan estate rentals, compiled by Alick Morrison [Morrison n.d.], subsequently used by Dr. I.F. Grant in her history of the Clan MacLeod. [Grant I.F. 1959: 361-377, 490-91,

- 560-61].
3. MacLeod R.H. [1977: (a-c)].
 - (8) Patrick og's successor, his son Malcolm (piper c.1730-1767), initially occupied the farm of Borreraig, and later (from 1751), Borrodale. Malcolm's successors, his sons Iain Dubh and Donald Ruadh, occupied Borreraig. Other members of the family lived in Scarista, Harris, and Lowerkill, Skye. [Sources as (7) above, and Poulter and Fisher 1936/1938/1939].
 - (9) See, for instance:
 1. Niall MacMhurich Seanachas Sloinnidh No Pìoba Bho Thùs [MacKenzie J. 1841: 67].
 2. Archibald MacDonald of Keppoch [A.M. Sinclair 1896 I: 94].
 3. John MacLean Moladh Na Pìoba [O'Baoill 1979: 30]
 4. Lachlan MacLean Ascaoin Molaidh Na Pìoba [O'Baoill (ibid): 54].
 5. John MacCodrum Diomaladh Pìoba Dhomhnaill Bhain [Matheson 1938: 63].
 6. Alexander MacDonald Moladh air Pìob-Mhòir Mhic Cruimein [Watson W.J. 1959: 104].
 7. Duncan Ban MacIntyre. A series of Praise poems [vide ch.II.8(b)].
 - (10) vide MacLean J. [1951].
 - (11) Latter-day members of this family appear in the Edinburgh competition records, viz:
 1. Donald Ban MacIntyre, competed 1783/1785 (aged 75). [Trigge 1783; Cal Merc 3/9/1785; MacKay 1838: 14].
 2. Donald Jnr, competed 1785-1793. Piper to Menzies.
 3. Robert, competed 1785-1793. Son of Donald Ban, and piper to Clanranald. [Cal Merc 15/7/1790, MacAulay 1963].
 - (12) For early sources on the MacGregors see Murray J. [1908 III: xxxix]; Tullibardine [1908: 41]; Logan (1876 II: 268]; Whyte [1912: 207].
 - (13) Tunes ascribed to Ronald MacDonald of Morar are A Ghlas Mheur [PS: 8], An Tarbh Breac Dearg [PS: 105], and A Bhoilich [PS: 193]. There is also a tradition current in Morar that he wrote Maol Donn [PS 205], not to a cow, as is normally supposed, but rather to a sea shell. [MacLean C. 1958: 86]. This ascription might be supported by the sub-title for the tune in Peter Reid's 1826 Collection namely Morar's March [Reid 1826: 42].
 - (14) For piping during the '45 see: Woodhouselee MS [1907]; MacLeod W. [1890]; MacKay Scobie [1941]; MacLeod R.H. [1980] (a-c)].

(15) eg My King Has Landed in Moidart, Lament for Donald Bàn MacCrimmon, The Duke of Perth's March, Lord Lovat's Lament, Prince Charles' Lament, Abercainey's Salute.

(16) Court Cases involving Pipers -
Scots Magazine 1746-1782

	NAME	OCCUPATION	CRIME	SOURCE IN SCOTS MAGAZINE
Sept 1754	Angus Kennedy	Piper/ Invernessshire	Theft	(16):449
June 1759	James Wilson	Vagrant Piper/ Perthshire	House- breaking	(21):329
Aug 1759	Donald MacLean	Piper/Mull	Abduc- tion	(21):441
Jul 1769	Thomson	Piper/ Edinburgh	Murder	(31):390

(17) He is best remembered for the sentimental novel The Man of Feeling.

(18) Examples of military anecdotes are to be found in Manson (1901); MacKay Scobie (1908); Seton and Grant (1920); Malcolm (1927).

(19) e.g. 1. Militias Raised by conscription. 3 year term in U.K. 1797-1815.
2. Fencibles Volunteer Regiments. Full time U.K. Service. 1793-1802.
3. Volunteers Part-time volunteer service. Transformed into Local Militias from 1808-1816.
4. Yeomanry Mounted auxiliary. [Thorburn 1975: 249-53].

(20) Exceptions were the Scots Fusilier Guards; the 73rd, 75th and 91st Highlanders. [Boag 1975: 30].

(1) 1781-1785 : The Formative Years

The inaugural competition was held in the Masonic Lodge, Falkirk, during the time of the Tryst, on October 12th 1781. It was a modest affair in comparison with later events. Duncan Bàn MacIntyre opened the proceedings with a suitable oration in praise of the piòb mhòr, and thirteen pipers attended in homely attire to play to the judges, but to no audience.

"The competitors were conducted to a room apart, where, from one of their bonnets, they drew lots for order of performance. This done, the person who drew Lot No. 1 was conducted by a private door, to a small court below the windows of the lodge, in such a manner, that the judges could neither see nor know the particular performer. Each person was to play four different tunes, while the judges continued taking accurate notes of the performance." [MacKay A. 1838: 9].

It is scarcely surprising (given that some 52 tunes were played) that the competition is said to have extended over three days. [Dalyell Gen 351D: 50]. The top prize, awarded on this occasion to Peter MacGregor of the "Clann an Sgeulaiche", consisted of 40 merks in cash, plus a specially-made prize bagpipe (a feature retained in subsequent years). Two secondary prizes of 30 merks went to Charles MacArthur, piper to the Earl of Eglinton, and John MacGregor, Peter's father; and all other competitors were provided with travel expenses in "testimony of

approbation of their merit". [E.E.C. 15/10/1781; Scots Mag 43: 553].

The competition was organised on this occasion (and also in 1782 and 1783) by a committee from the Glasgow Gaelic Club, founded in 1780, and recruited by the HSL as "the only public meeting, connected with the Highlands, at that time in existence". [Sinclair J. 1813: 13]. The judges included members of the Glasgow Society, and others, presided over by "a very fine player ... one of the first judges of the instrument in Scotland" (unfortunately unnamed). [MacKay 1838: 9].

The 1782 competition followed very similar lines, one major difference being that the competition was now held indoors in the presence of a "numerous and respectable company". [HSL 268, 15: minutes]. Another innovation was the introduction of a procession around the Falkirk Kirkyard, on the following morning, the prizewinners playing in unison. [E.E.C. 19/9/1782]. This experiment was repeated the following year in Falkirk, and in succeeding years in Edinburgh, where one observer was to bear an enduring memory of "... thirty of these musicians with colours flying, puffing, strutting and swelling through the High Street". [MacCulloch J. 1824 II: 375](2).

1783 proved a most fascinating year in the history of the competition. The Glasgow Committee demonstrated an alarming bias in awarding the prize pipe to a young favourite of their own; the competitors were outraged; and a group of local gentlemen repaired to Edinburgh where

they organised an alternative competition, out of which was born the Highland Society of Edinburgh (later Scotland).

Fortunately the whole proceedings were graphically recorded by a local businessman, Mr. David Trigge, who had been appointed by the HSL to act as their agent in Falkirk. [Trigge 1783]. He recorded how on the morning of the competition (14th October), he proceeded to Falkirk with

"... Mr Menzies of the Customhouse, an excellent judge of our favourite ancient musick,(3) and upon horseback Professor McArthur, and afoott old McIntyre from Rannach, Gun late of the 77th, and McGrigor of the City Guard getting his lesson upon the road from McIntyre" [Trigge 1783: 1].

At Falkirk the competition was postponed for a day due to the late arrival of the Glasgow Committee, who on Trigge's evidence "were not an hour in bed, and during the competition the mug went round freely with drink to quench the druth occasioned by the overnight cups". [Trigge 1783: 2]. Matters worsened when the prize pipe was awarded to young Neil MacLean (piper to Campbell of Airds), with second prize going to Archibald MacGregor ("fourth son of old McGrigor"), and third to John MacGregor of the City Guard, whom Trigge described as "so very bad a performer that I thought the poor fellow would not have been permitted to performe." [Trigge 1783: 1].

All were astonished by the result, not least the prizewinners who were "dashed that the prizes were bestowed upon them when so many able performers were there ..." [Trigge 1783: 3]. The competitors threatened to boycott

any future event, and an alternative competition was promptly arranged in Edinburgh for the following week in order to pour oil on troubled water. [E.E.C. 20/10/1783].

This was advertised as a gathering of "a number of the oldest and the best Highland pipers, eager to give a specimen of their performance upon the bagpipe " [E.E.C. *ibid*], and in the event proved most successful, the prize pipe on this occasion going to the old Rannoch veteran Donald MacIntyre. Another specially-made bagpipe was awarded to "professor" John MacArthur, an eminent performer of Skye origins. [E.E.C. 27/10/1783].

Not surprisingly the HSL thereafter informed the Glasgow Gaelic club that their services would no longer be required, an arrangement to which the Club felt "no wise indisposed, but rather the contrary" [HSL 268, 1: Letter 7/10/1784], and the responsibility for running the competition devolved on the new-formed Edinburgh Society. In 1784 they appointed John Clerk of Elden to deal with the arrangements. The competition, on the HSL's request, was again advertised for the Falkirk Tryst [E.E.C. 29/9/1784], but on arriving there Clerk found that the event had been postponed for two days, and promptly returned to Edinburgh where he arranged an alternative venue, in the Assembly Hall on the High Street. [E.E.C. 16/10/1784]. Clerk felt this a superior venue for more than one reason: a much larger audience was to be had in Edinburgh than in Falkirk; judges were easier to procure in Edinburgh than in Falkirk, where suitable candidates were "engaged in the disposal of

their cattle and managing their affairs during the market"; and most of the pipers, in actual fact, lived in Edinburgh or the vicinity - factors which suggested the capital as "the most convenient, central and expedient place of competition". [HSS Sd. Bk. I: 50].

Sixteen pipers attended in 1784, and one remarkable feature of this competition was the appearance of several pipers representing the old hereditary orders - the very last of their type. Beyond John MacArthur, these included David Ross, piper to the Duke of Atholl; John Cumming, piper to Sir James Grant of Grant; Alexander Lamont, piper to the Laird of Lamont; Colin MacNab, piper to the Laird of MacNab; and Dugald MacDugald, piper to MacDougall of Hayfield. [E.E.C. 20/10/1784]. 1784 was also interesting in that for the first time a test piece (A Ghlas Mheur) was prescribed for all the competitors, in addition to a tune of their own choice. This experiment was repeated in 1785, but thereafter abandoned, being too time-consuming for the new highly public competitions. [Scots Mag 46: 552].

In 1785 the HSL finally agreed that "the time of the Leith Races and the central situation of Edinburgh" were most suitable for the competition [HSL 268, 21: 31], and the format discussed in the following pages was established, if only in fledgling form. 27 performers appeared, of whom no fewer than 6 were Fortingall MacGregors! Donald MacIntyre again won the prize pipe; Clanranald declared his "approbation of the whole performers"; and the scene was set for 47 years of

exhilarating competition. [Cal Merc: 3/9/1785]. Duncan
Bàn, in contemplative mood, solemnly intoned from the stage
of the Assembly Rooms:

Tha coi-thionail rioghail Ghaidheil,
An tràths 'am baile Dhun-Eidin,
A' cumail 'am prìs na Gaelic,
A thaobh nàduir o's coinn Beurla;
'S a' gleidheadh Pìob mhòr nar b'abhaist,
O's cionn clàrsaich, na ceol theudan;
'S an dà thìol-inntin sin fhàgail
Aig' an alach thig 'nar déigh-ne.

(The Royal Highland Gathering
is now in Edinburgh town,
rating Gaelic as being
inherently superior to English;
holding the great pipe, as of yore,
above the harp or music of strings;
and handing on those two delights
to the generation that succeeds us.)

D. MacIntyre "Rann Do'n Ghaelic, 's Do'n
Phìob Mhoir", 1785
[In A. MacLeod 1952]